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ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE

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FROM BEOWULF TO STEVENSON

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

HENRY S. PANCOAST

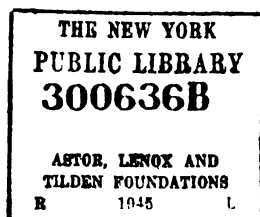
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TO
FELIX E. SCHELLING
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
JUSTLY EMINENT AS
SCHOLAR, TEACHER, AND WRITER
AND AS CONSTANT AND GENEROUS
IN FRIENDSHIP AS HE IS
UNWEARIED IN THE SERVICE
OF LEARNING

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PREFACE

THE present collection is intended to serve as a supplement to a general course in the history of English literature, from its beginnings to the end of the Victorian era. With our modern methods of teaching, which insist upon some knowledge of the works of the authors, in addition to the study of literary history and biography, collections of this kind have become almost indispensable. In the rapid survey of the whole extent of English literary history, which is often undertaken before any careful and minute study of an especial author, or period, or literary form, is begun, the student is apt to find himself confused and discouraged by references to authors whose names mean nothing to him, and to works with whose very titles he is unfamiliar. Many of the books referred to are expensive, or, for some other reason, not readily accessible;¹ some of these are only obtainable in an English which repels him by its strangeness, or which he finds wholly unintelligible. In any case, to master all of the works mentioned in such a general course would be the labor not of a college year, but of a life time. Even if it were possible, such omnivorous reading would be far from desirable in this early stage of literary study. One whose immediate purpose is to fix clearly in his mind the topography of a whole continent, who seeks to see distinctly the general trend of its coast-line, the general disposition of its great mountain ranges, its rivers, and its plains, will do well to disregard for the time the windings of some obscure and tributary stream. The familiar words of Bacon have lost none of their force by frequent repetition: "Some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." A few pages are enough to give one a very fair notion of the general character of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and a chapter or two of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* will at least help to make that book something more than a disembodied title, and clothe it with the form and substance of reality. That such a method of approach is, and should be, a mere preliminary to fuller studies, is obvious enough: that it is a wise, almost a necessary, preliminary, few sensible persons will, I think, be disposed to deny.

To represent a vast, varied, and ancient literature like the English,—a literature practically limitless,—in a book of reasonable compass, and in a manner at all adequate to the student's needs, is no easy task. The present collection is the result of more than twenty years of effort and experiment. As long ago as 1892, I published a volume containing a number of representative English masterpieces in prose and verse, with a setting of historical and biographical comment. This was followed by a collection of *Standard English Poems, from Spenser to Tennyson*; a companion book of *Standard English Prose, from Bacon to Stevenson*; and a collection of *Early English Poems*, translated or modernized in collaboration with Dr. J. Duncan Spaeth, of Princeton University. The three books last named have been used freely in the making of the present collection; but while many of the old selections have been retained, I have taken advantage of this opportunity for revision and rearrangement, so that the present book is not a mere consolidation

¹ Rolle's *Pricks of Conscience*, is a glaring example of a book which is constantly referred to, and practically very difficult to procure. I know several large libraries that have not a single copy of it in any form, and have, so far, been unable to secure one.

of its predecessors into one volume, but virtually a new collection. In the interests of proportion, some of the poetical selections in the Old and Middle English periods have been omitted; illustrations of English prose before Bacon have been introduced; while many new selections, most of them from 18th and 19th century authors, have also been added. ~~So much space~~ So much space has been saved by increasing the size of the page, and by greatly reducing the length of the notes, that the amount of text in the present volume is materially greater than that in its three predecessors combined.

In a book of this character, the needs of the teacher must be the first consideration. To be practically useful, such a supplementary collection as this must include at least a large proportion of the authors usually considered or incidentally referred to in the class-room; it must contain, at least, certain famous poems, with which every cultivated reader is familiar; and it must contain, at least, well-known passages from the monumental masterpieces of prose. To supply these needs, one must be content to follow in the well-beaten track, made smooth by innumerable anthologists; he must, of necessity, provide again those inevitable masterpieces which no well regulated anthology could possibly be without.

But, when this primary requirement has been met (as fully and faithfully as space and the personal limitations of the editor allow), there still remains a wide field for liberty of choice. The treasures of English literature are practically inexhaustible; we can say of it, as the English Chancellor said of the law, "the Lord forbid, that any man should know it all." When the paramount needs of teacher and student shall have been satisfied, an editor will do well, I think, in the interest of freshness and variety, to give some hint of the queer nooks and less-trodden paths that wait to be explored. We are sometimes prone to become a trifle narrow and conventional in our literary judgments, to regard not so much what we like as what we are expected to like, and to pay too exclusive a reverence to the "canonical books." We must remember, moreover, that a book like the present is, after all, intended to awaken and foster a love of literature in readers whose taste is at best immature. While such a book ought certainly to give the inevitable and indispensable masterpieces, we should remember that for some the real quickener of the spirit may prove to be a comparatively obscure and little-regarded work, long relegated, perhaps, to the literary apocrypha. "The appreciation of Lycidas," said Mark Pattison, with a rare wisdom, "is the last reward of a consummated scholarship."

While I have not made any very daring innovations, I have, accordingly, not hesitated to follow my own judgment, and include some authors and selections, both ancient and modern, not usually found in a book of this kind. For instance, in the earlier literature, the thirteenth, early fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries (times fuller of vital literature than we are apt to realize), have been represented with comparative fullness; while in recent times, I have included such writers as John Richard Green, F. W. H. Myers, Leslie Stephen, and two living authors, Frederic Harrison and Austin Dobson, who, as I had resolved to exclude contemporary authors, were not strictly eligible. The choice of selections must be of necessity a compromise between the often conflicting claims of many requirements; but, so far as I could do so in justice to other needs, I have tried to make a book that would be not merely "educational,"—in our restricted sense,—but one that could be read with interest and pleasure.

On the other hand, especial care has been taken to make the book practically helpful and suggestive on the historical side. Besides the chronological arrangement, the division into literary periods, the insertion of biographical dates, and such obvious aids to the student, wherever it was practicable the selections have been so chosen, that the authors speak for themselves, and reveal their own characters, or the plan and purpose of their works. Thus, Bede, Alfred, Layamon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Caxton, Burton, and many others, tell us directly about their lives, their characters, or the making of their books. We learn of Spenser's hot anger at the intrigues and procrastinations of the Court, from his own lips; we listen to Greene's tragic self-reproaches; while Milton's unconquerable nobility of spirit under the chastisement of blindness and disappointment, and Scott's no less splendid fortitude, lie open to us, with no medium of critic or commentator between their souls and ours. To study literary history in such a fashion is to drink from the fountain-head.

Care has also been taken to introduce selections illustrative of literary history, and, so far as possible, to make one selection explain or supplement another. For instance, we can follow up our reading of Cædmon's *Hymn* and Bede's *Death Song*, with Bede's story of Cædmon, and with Cuthbert's *Letter on the Death of Bede*; we can study Dr. Johnson in his prose and poetry, we can see him through the eyes of Boswell "in his habit as he lived," or again, we can look back and, with Macaulay and Carlyle, regard both Johnson and Boswell in that perspective which time only can supply. Many of the biographical and critical selections can be made in this way to serve a double purpose, for when one great author writes of another, he tells us something not only of his subject but of himself. Or again, we can see how the same experience, or the same problem, has impressed different minds. As we read the account of the fire of London in Evelyn or in Pepys, we see something more than confusion, terror, and burning houses,—we see with an equal distinctness the contrasted natures of the two men. Or if we would understand the widely different impressions made upon thoughtful men by the material progress and scientific spirit of the last century, we can gain some notion of it by contrasting the utterances of Macaulay and Newman, of Huxley and of Ruskin and Carlyle. Hence, while a general adherence to chronology in the arrangement of the selections was manifestly advisable, the order in which the selections are read may be modified by the teacher at his discretion, for many selections may be found to belong together in spirit and to be separated only by the accident of time.

As the book is intended primarily for students who are approaching the subject from the purely literary side, all the selections from the Old and Middle English periods (with the single exception of Chaucer) have been translated or modernized. For a few of the renderings I have gone to Tennyson, Henry Morley, or others; some of them have been made by Dr. Percy V. D. Shelly for the present book; but by far the greater number are versions, made by Dr. J. Duncan Spaeth or by myself, which have already appeared in the *Early English Poems*. In any case, the object has been to furnish the student with a version which, while it gives the meaning of the original, preserves something, at least, of its illusive spirit and its poetic form. Every one agrees, that to be good a translation must be accurate; but many confuse the deeper faithfulness to one's original, with a merely servile and literal accuracy, forgetting that, especially in translating poetry, there is an

obligation to be faithful to the spirit as well as to the letter, and that the letter without the spirit is dead.

Translation or modernization was necessary if the earlier literature were to be made generally accessible, but the original texts have been changed as little as was consistent with this object, and in many cases obsolete words or quaint and unusual expressions have been retained and explained. In order that the student may have some idea of the nature and extent of these changes, and have some concrete reminder of the slow growth of the language, short passages from the earlier authors are given in the appendix in their original form.

To give the reader ready access to the author, it was not enough to clear away the barriers of an unfamiliar language, there were also obscure allusions, involved or ambiguous expressions, or other difficulties, which it was necessary to explain. In such cases the necessary explanation has been given at the foot of the page. I have tried to make these notes as few in number, as brief and as unobtrusive as I possibly could. Except in a few cases, I have confined myself to a short explanation of some real difficulty in the text. Biographical and critical matter has been introduced very sparingly, and I have often refrained from giving the source of a quotation, believing that the formal reference to an ancient and little-read book was of no real help to the student. The traditional commentator is not unlike the traditional policeman, always on hand except when he is really needed, and the middle path between the too-little and the too-much is a hard one to hit or to follow.

The practice of giving complete works, rather than fragments or "extracts," has been followed in this book, as in its predecessors, wherever circumstances allowed. But to hold rigidly to this practice in all cases (and especially where one is dealing with prose) would entail too great a sacrifice. Most of the selections are, however, either literally or essentially complete; while in cases where this was impracticable, I have tried to make the selection intelligible by explanatory notes, or by an abstract of the portion omitted. As the drama and fiction could not be adequately represented by extracts, and as it was obviously impossible to give an entire novel or play, it seemed best to leave these two important divisions of literature unrepresented. I have, however, given a few passages, not scenes,—from the Elizabethan dramatists, which can be read purely as poetry, and, for the convenience of the teacher, I have inserted a short specimen of a *Miracle*, and of a *Moral play* in the appendix.

One personal conviction it may, perhaps, be permissible for me to express here, for a preface is a spot which even an impersonal editor can call his own. The chief business of the teacher of English literature is to lead the student to read the right things in the right way. The student must be taught to interpret, possibly "to contradict and to confute," but he must, above all, be taught to *enjoy*. The range of his enjoyment must be widened; his taste must be made more catholic, excluding nothing that is really significant or really excellent of its kind; yet he must be taught to discriminate, and trained to prefer in all sincerity the good to the inferior, and even above the good, to set the best. To this supreme object, all others, however curious or praiseworthy, must, after all, be made subordinate and contributory. The historical development of the literature, the lives, the characters, the personal peculiarities of authors, the "chatter about Harriet," the study of philology, the study of dates, or "sources," the problems of text and

authorship, all such things, fascinating and important as they undeniably are, must be regarded as means to an end, for, as Tennyson said of Knowledge,—they are “the second not the first.”

This business of teaching people to read is really a matter of incalculable, of national, importance to us in America. I doubt whether there was ever a country on the face of the earth which contained such multitudes of people who knew how to read, and so few true readers; a country which contained so few who were illiterate, and so many who were uneducated. With all this we have quite unparalleled opportunities for the reader. We teach him the mechanical process of reading, and we establish innumerable agencies to provide him with reading matter at a small cost, or at no cost at all. We have a great host of writers, who produce books without number, yet we make but a trifling contribution to the permanent literature of the world. I suspect that the true reader is almost as rare as the great writer, and I suspect that to teach a child to read without teaching him to prefer a good book to a bad one, is very like giving a boy a loaded gun without showing him how to use it. Such a situation, and I do not think it is over-stated, imposes a heavy but an honorable responsibility upon the teacher of English. It is his task, subordinating all merely curious researches and vain disputations, to teach as many as he can among this multitude of un-read readers, to know and to delight in the best literature. “We need to be reminded every day,” says Frederic Harrison, “how many are the books of inimitable glory, which, with all our eagerness after reading, we have never taken in our hands.” Many works of this enduring and “inimitable glory” have been brought together here, gathered from the noblest utterances of more than a thousand years. If a book of this kind helps the teacher to bring these glories nearer to the minds and lives of his students, if it helps any reader in school or out, to come into closer and more human relations with great literature, it has its place and part (small as it may be) in an immeasurably important work.

My indebtedness to others is too great to be specifically acknowledged. I cannot, however, omit a word of especial gratitude to my friend Dr. Percy V. D. Shelly, of the University of Pennsylvania, who, besides contributing several translations from Old English and Latin, has worked with me faithfully in the preparation of this book.

H. S. P.

ISLESFORD, MAINE,
July 15, 1915.

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ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE

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I. FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

A CHARM¹ FOR BEWITCHED LAND

(From the translation by J. D. SPAETH)

Erce,² Erce, Erce, Mother of Earth, 49
 May the Almighty, Lord Everlasting,
 Grant thee fields, green and fertile,
 Grant thee fields, fruitful and growing,
 Hosts of Spear-shafts, shining harvests,
 Harvest of Barley the broad, 55
 Harvest of Wheat the white,
 All the heaping harvests of earth!
 May the Almighty Lord Everlasting,
 And his holy saints in heaven above,
 From fiend and foe defend this land,
 Keep it from blight and coming of harm, 60
 From spell of witches wickedly spread!
 Now I pray the Almighty who made this world,
 That malice of man, or mouth of woman
 Never may weaken the words I have spoken.
 Hail to thee Earth, Mother of men! 67
 Grow and be great in God's embrace,
 Filled with fruit for the food of men!

CHARM FOR A SUDDEN STITCH¹

(Translated by J. D. SPAETH)

Take feverfew, and plantain, and the red
 nettle that grows, into the house. Boil in but-
 ter. Say:—

Loud was their cry as they came o'er the
 hill;
 Fierce was their rage as they rode o'er the
 land.
 Take heed and be healed of the hurt they have
 done thee.

Out little spear if in there thou be! 4
 My shield I lifted, my linden-wood shining,
 When the mighty women mustered their
 force,
 And sent their spear-points spinning toward
 me.

I'll give them back the bolt they sent,
 A flying arrow full in the face.
 Out little spear if in there thou be! 10
 Sat a smith,
 A hard blade hammered.
 Out little spear if in there thou be!
 Six smiths sat,
 Fighting spears forged they. 15
 Out spear, out!
 No longer stay in!
 If any iron be found herein,
 The work of witches, away it must melt.

¹ The original charm includes directions (of which the selection given is one) for restoring fertility to land that was supposed to have been bewitched. The Charms are one of the characteristic types of old English verse, and are of great antiquity.

² Name of an ancient goddess of fertility, perhaps analogous to the Roman goddess Demeter.

³ *Stitch*, or rheumatism, was supposed to be caused by little spears or darts, shot by a god, elf, or hag.

Be thou shot in the fell,² 20
 Be thou shot in the flesh,
 Be thou shot in the blood,
 Be thou shot in the bone,
 Be thou shot in the limb,
 Thy life shall be shielded. 25
 Be it shot of Eæc,³
 Be it shot of Elves,
 Be it shot of Hags,
 I help thee surely. 30
 This for cure of Esa⁴-shot,
 This for cure of Elf-shot,
 This for cure of Hag-shot,
 I help thee surely.
 Witch fly away to the woods and the moun-
 tains. 34
 Healed be thy hurt! So help thee the Lord.

BEOWULF

THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER

(Translated by J. D. SPAETH)

[The Hero Beowulf grew up at the Court of his uncle Hygelac, King of the Geats or Jutes. Hearing how Heorot, the great Hall of the Danish King Hrothgar, was ravaged by a night-prowling monster named Grendel, Beowulf sailed with a chosen band to Hrothgar's kingdom, and offered to rid the Danes of their enemy. Alone and weaponless he fought with and killed Grendel in Heorot, and it was supposed that the Hall was again safe. But Grendel's mother, a wolfish water-wife, bent on revenge, broke into the Hall and carried off the King's best Thane. The next morning Beowulf, who had slept elsewhere, heard what had happened, and asked if he might undertake a second and more perilous adventure. Before going, the King describes to him the haunts of the monster.]

"I have heard my people, the peasant folk 1345
 Who house by the border and hold the fens,
 Say they have seen two creatures strange,
 Huge march-stalkers,¹ haunting the moorland,
 Wanderers outcast. One of the two
 Seemed to their sight to resemble a woman; 1350
 The other manlike, a monster misshapen,
 But huger in bulk than human kind,
 Trod an exile's track of woe.
 The folk of the fen in former days
 Named him Grendel. Unknown his father, 1355
 Or what his descent from demons obscure.
 Lonely and waste is the land they inhabit,
 Wolf-cliffs wild and windy headlands,
 Ledges of mist, where mountain torrents
 Downward plunge to dark abysses, 1360
 And flow unseen. Not far from here

¹ Skin.

² The gods.

³ Of the gods.

⁴ Creatures that stalk along the Marches, or Borders.

O'er the moorland in miles, a mere expands:
 Spray-frosted trees o'erspread it, and hang
 O'er the water with roots fast wedged in the
 rocks.

There nightly is seen, beneath the flood, 1365
 A marvellous light. There lives not the man
 Has fathomed the depth of the dismal mere.¹
 Though the heather-stepper, the strong-horned
 stag,

Seek this cover, forspent with the chase,
 Tracked by the hounds, he will turn at bay, 1370
 To die on the brink ere he brave the plunge,
 Hide his head in the haunted pool.

Wan from its depths the waves are dashed,
 When wicked storms are stirred by the wind,
 And from sullen skies descends the rain. 1375
 In thee is our hope of help once more.

Not yet thou hast learned where leads the way
 To the lurking-hole of this hatcher of outrage.
 Seek, if thou dare, the dreaded spot!

Richly I pay thee for risking this fight, 1380
 With heirlooms golden and ancient rings,
 As I paid thee before, if thou come back alive."

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
 "Sorrow not gray-beard, nor grieve o'er thy
 friend!

Vengeance is better than bootless mourning.
 To each of us here the end must come 1386
 Of life upon earth: let him who may
 Win glory ere death. I deem that best,

The lot of the brave, when life is over.
 Rise, O realm-ward, ride we in haste, 1390
 To track the hag that whelped this Grendel.

I tell thee in truth, she may turn where she will,
 No cave of ocean nor cover of wood,
 No hole in the ground shall hide her from me.

But one day more thy woe endure, 1395
 And nurse thy hope as I know thou wilt."

Sprang to his feet the sage old king,
 Gave praise to God for the promise spoken.

And now for Hrothgar a horse was bridled,
 A curly-maned steed. The king rode on, 1400
 Bold on his charger. A band of shield-men
 Followed on foot. Afar they saw

Footprints leading along the forest.
 They followed the tracks, and found she had
 crossed

Over the dark moor, dragging the body 1405
 Of the goodliest thane that guarded with
 Hrothgar

Heorot Hall, and the home of the king.
 The well-born hero held the trail;
 Up rugged paths, o'er perilous ridges,

Through passes narrow, an unknown way. 1410
 By beetling crags, and caves of the nicors.²
 He went before with a chosen few,

Warriors skilled, to scan the way.
 Sudden they came on a cluster of trees
 Overhanging a hoary rock, 1415

A gloomy grove; and gurgling below,
 A stir of waters all stained with blood.
 Sick at heart were the Scylding chiefs,

Many a thane was thrilled with woe,
 For there they beheld the head of Æscheré 1420
 Far beneath at the foot of the cliff.

¹ Sea-monsters, water-goblins.

They leaned and watched the waters boil
 With bloody froth. The band sat down,
 While the war-horn sang its summons to battle.
 They saw in the water sea-snakes a many, 1425

Wave-monsters weird, that wallowed about.
 At the base of the cliff lay basking the nicors,
 Who oft at sunrise ply seaward their journey,

To hunt on the ship-trails and scour the main,
 Sea-beasts and serpents. Sudden they fled, 1430
 Wrathful and grim, aroused by the hail
 Of the battle-horn shrill. The chief of the Jutes,

With a bolt from his bow a beast did sunder
 From life and sea-frolic; sent the keen shaft
 Straight to his vitals. Slow he floated, 1435

Upturned and dead at the top of the waves.
 Eager they boarded their ocean-quarry;
 With barb-hooked boar-spears the beast they

gaffed,
 Savagely broached him and brought him to
 shore,

Wave-plunger weird. The warriors viewed
 The grisly stranger. But straightway Beowulf
 Donned his corslet nor cared for his life. . . . 1442

To Hrothgar spoke the son of Ecgtheow: 1473
 "Remember O honored heir of Healfdené,
 Now that I go, thou noble king,

Warriors' gold-friend, what we agreed on,
 If I my life should lose in thy cause,
 That thou wouldst stand in stead of my father,

Fulfil his office when I was gone.
 Be guardian thou, to my thanes and kinsmen,
 My faithful friends, if I fail to return. 1481

To Hygelac send, Hrothgar beloved,
 The goodly gifts thou gavest to me.
 May the Lord of the Jutes, when he looks on

this treasure,
 May Hrethel's son, when he sees these gifts,
 Know that I found a noble giver, 1486

And joyed while I lived, in a generous lord.
 This ancient heirloom to Unferth give,
 To the far-famed warrior, my wondrous sword

Of matchless metal, I must with Hrunting * 1490
 Glory gain, or go to my death."

After these words the Weder-Jute lord
 Sprang to his task, nor staid for an answer.
 Swiftly he sank 'neath the swirling flood;

'Twas an hour's time ere he touched the bot-
 tom. 1495

Soon the sea-hag, savage and wild,
 Who had roamed through her watery realms at
 will,

For winters a hundred, was 'ware from below
 An earthling had entered her ocean domain.
 Quickly she reached and caught the hero; 1500

Grappled him grimly with gruesome claws.
 Yet he got no scratch, his skin was whole;
 His battle-sark shielded his body from harm.

In vain she tried, with her crooked fingers,
 To tear the links of his close-locked mail. 1505
 Away to her den the wolf-slut dragged
 Beowulf the bold, o'er the bottom ooze.

Though eager to smite her, his arm was help-
 less.

* The name of Beowulf's sword.

Swimming monsters swarmed about him,
 Dented his mail with dreadful tusks. 1510
 Sudden the warrior was 'ware they had come
 To a sea-hall strange and seeming hostile,
 Where water was not nor waves oppressed,
 For the caverned rock all round kept back
 The swallowing sea. He saw a light, 1515
 A flicker of flame that flashed and shone.
 Now first he discerned the sea-hag monstrous,
 The water-wife wolfish. His weapon he raised,
 And struck with his sword a swinging blow.
 Sang on her head the hard-forged blade 1520
 Its war-song wild. But the warrior found
 That his battle-flasher refused to bite,
 Or maim the foe. It failed its master
 In the hour of need, though oft it had cloven
 Helmets, and carved the casques of the doomed
 In combats fierce. For the first time now 1526
 His treasure failed him, fallen from honor.
 But Hygelac's earl took heart of courage;
 In mood defiant he fronted his foe.
 The angry hero hurled to the ground, 1530
 In high disdain, the hilt of the sword,
 The gaudy and jewelled; rejoiced in the strength
 Of his arm unaided. So all should do
 Who glory would find and fame abiding,
 In the crash of conflict, nor care for their lives.
 The Lord of the Battle-Jutes braved the en-
 counter; 1536
 The murderous hag by the hair he caught;
 Down he dragged the dam of Grendel
 In his swelling rage, till she sprawled on the
 floor.
 Quick to repay in kind what she got, 1540
 On her foe she fastened her fearful clutches;
 Enfolded the warrior weary with fighting;
 The sure-footed hero stumbled and fell.
 On his prostrate body she squatted enormous;
 Unsheathed her hip-knife, shining and broad,
 Her son to avenge, her offspring sole. 1546
 But the close-linked corslet covered his breast,
 Foiled the stroke and saved his life.
 All had been over with Ecgtheow's son,
 Under the depths of the Ocean vast, 1550
 Had not his harness availed to help him,
 His battle-net stiff, and the strength of God.
 The Ruler of battles aright decided it;
 The Wielder all-wise awarded the victory:
 Lightly the hero leaped to his feet. 1555
 He spied 'mongst the arms a sword surpassing,
 Huge and ancient, a hard-forged slayer,
 Weapon matchless and warriors' delight,
 Save that its weight was more than another
 Might bear into battle or brandish in war; 1560
 Giants had forged that finest of blades.
 Then seized its chain-hilt the chief of the
 Scyldings;
 His wrath was aroused, reckless his mood,
 As he brandished the sword for a savage blow.
 Bit the blade in the back of her neck, 1565
 Cut the neck-bone, and cleft its way
 Clean through her body; she sank to the
 ground;
 The sword was gory; glad was the hero.
 A light flashed out from the inmost den,
 Like heaven's candle, when clear it shines 1570

From cloudless skies. He scanned the cave,
 Walked by the wall, his weapon upraised;
 Grim in his hand the hilt he gripped.
 Well that sword had served him in battle.
 Steadily onward he strode through the cave,
 Ready to wreak the wrongs untold,
 That the man-beast had wrought in the realm
 of the Danes. . . . 1579
 He gave him his due when Grendel he
 found 1589
 Stretched as in sleep, and spent with the battle.
 But dead was the fiend, the fight at Heorot
 Had laid him low. The lifeless body
 Sprang from the blows of Beowulf's sword,
 As fiercely he hacked the head from the carcass.

But the men who were watching the water with
 Hrothgar 1595
 Suddenly saw a stir in the waves,
 The chop of the sea all churned up with blood
 And bubbling gore. The gray-haired chiefs
 For Beowulf grieved, agreeing together
 That hope there was none of his home-returning
 With victory crowned, to revisit his lord. 1601
 Most of them feared he had fallen prey
 To the mere-wolf dread in the depths of the sea.
 When evening came, the Scyldings all 1604
 Forsook the headland, and Hrothgar himself
 Turned homeward his steps. But sick at heart
 The strangers sat and stared at the sea,
 Hoped against hope to behold their comrade
 And leader again.

Now that goodly sword
 Began to melt with the gore of the monster; 1610
 In bloody drippings it dwindled away.
 'Twas a marvellous sight: it melted like ice,
 When fetters of frost the Father unlocks,
 Unravels the ropes of the wrinkled ice,
 Lord and Master of months and seasons. 1615
 Beheld in the hall the hero from Juteland
 Treasures unnumbered, but naught he took,
 Save Grendel's head, and the hilt of the sword,
 Bright and jeweled,—the blade had melted,
 Its metal had vanished, so venomous hot 1620
 Was the blood of the demon-brute dead in the
 cave.

Soon was in the sea the slayer of monsters;
 Upward he shot through the shimmer of waves;
 Cleared was the ocean, cleansed were its waters,
 The wolfish water-hag wallowed no more; 1625
 The mere-wife had yielded her miserable life.
 Swift to the shore the sailors' deliverer
 Came lustily swimming, with sea-spoil laden;
 Rejoiced in the burden he bore to the land.
 Ran to meet him his mailed comrades, 1630
 With thanks to God who gave them their leader
 Safe again back and sound from the deep.
 Quickly their hero's helmet they loosened,
 Unbuckled his breastplate. The blood-stained
 waves
 Fell to a calm 'neath the quiet sky. 1635
 Back they returned o'er the tracks with the
 footprints,
 Merrily measured the miles o'er the fen,
 Way they knew well, those warriors brave;

Brought from the holm-cliff the head of the monster;
 'Twas toil and labor to lift the burden,
 Four of their stoutest scarce could carry it
 Swung from a spear-pole, a staggering load. . 1638
 Thus the fourteen of them, thanes adventurous,
 Marched o'er the moor to the mead-hall of Hrothgar. 1641
 Tall in the midst of them towered the hero;
 Strode among his comrades, till they came to the hall.
 In went Beowulf, the brave and victorious, 1645
 Battle-beast hardy, Hrothgar to greet.
 Lifting by the hair the head of Grendel,
 They laid it in the hall, where the heroes were carousing,
 Right before the king, and right before the queen;
 Gruesome was the sight that greeted the Danes.

BEOWULF'S LAST FIGHT AND DEATH

[Beowulf left with the Danes his grisly trophies of battle, the head of Grendel, his huge forequarter, and the hilt of the giant sword with its mystical runic inscription. Loading his boat with the gifts of Hrothgar, he and his comrades sailed away home. After the death of Hygelac and his son, Beowulf became king of the Jutes, and ruled over them fifty years. In his old age his people were harried by a fire-dragon whom the hero went out to fight. It seems that an outlaw, banished and flying for shelter, had come upon a treasure hid in a deep cave or barrow, guarded by a dragon. Long years before, an earl, the last of his race, had buried the treasure. After his death the dragon, sniffing about the stones, had found it and guarded it three hundred years, until the banished man discovered the place, and carried off one of the golden goblets. In revenge the dragon made nightly raids on Beowulf's realm, flying through the air, spitting fire, burning houses and villages, even Beowulf's hall, the "gift-stool" of the Jutes. Beowulf had an iron shield made against the dragon's fiery breath, and with eleven companions, sought out the hill-vault near the sea. Before attacking the monster he spoke these words to his comrades:]

Beowulf said to them, brave words spoke he:
 "Brunt of battles I bore in my youth, 2512
 One fight more I make this day.
 I mean to win fame defending my people,
 If the grim destroyer will seek me out, 2515
 Come at my call from his cavern dark."
 Then he greeted his thanes each one,
 For the last time hailed his helmeted warriors,
 His comrades dear. "I should carry no sword,
 No weapon of war 'gainst the worm should bear,
 If the foe I might slay by strength of my arm,
 As Grendel I slew long since by my hand. 2522
 But I look to fight a fiery battle,
 With scorching puffs of poisonous breath.

For this I bear both breastplate and shield; 2525
 No foot will I flinch from the foe of the barrow.
 Wyrd is over us, each shall meet
 His doom ordained at the dragon-cliff!
 Bold is my mood, but my boast I omit
 'Gainst the battle-fier. Abide ye here, 2530
 Heroes in harness, hard by the barrow,
 Cased in your armor the issue await:
 Which of us two his wounds shall survive.
 Not yours the attempt, the task is mine.
 'Tis meant for no man but me alone 2535
 To measure his might 'gainst the monster fierce.
 I get you the gold in glorious fight,
 Or battle-death bitter shall bear off your lord."

Uprose with his shield the shining hero,
 Bold 'neath his helmet. He bore his harness
 In under the cliff; alone he went, 2541
 Himself he trusted; no task for faint-heart.
 Then saw by the wall the warrior brave,
 Hero of many a hard-fought battle,
 Arches of stone that opened a way; 2545
 From the rocky gate there gushed a stream,
 Bubbling and boiling with battle-fire.
 So great the heat no hope was there
 To come at the hoard in the cavern's depth,
 Unscathed by the blast of the scorching dragon.
 He let from his breast his battle-cry leap, 2551
 Swoln with rage was the royal Jute,
 Stormed the stout-heart; strong and clear
 Through the gloom of the cave his cry went ringing.

Hate was aroused, the hoard-ward knew 2555
 The leader's hail. Too late 'twas now
 To parley for peace. The poisonous breath
 Of the monster shot from the mouth of the cave,
 Reeking hot. The hollow earth rumbled.
 The man by the rock upraised his shield, 2560
 The Lord of the Jutes, 'gainst the loathly dragon.

Now kindled for battle the curled-up beast;
 The king undaunted with drawn sword stood,
 ('Twas an heirloom olden with edge of lightning)
 Each was so fierce he affrighted the other. 2565
 Towering tall 'neath tilted shield,
 Waited the king as the worm coiled back,
 Sudden to spring: so stood he and waited.
 Blazing he came in coils of fire
 Swift to his doom. The shield of iron 2570
 Sheltered the hero too short a while,—
 Life and limb it less protected
 Than he hoped it would, for the weapon he held
 First time that day he tried in battle;
 Wyrð had not willed he should win the fight.
 But the Lord of the Jutes uplifted his arm, 2576
 Smote the scaly worm, struck him so fierce
 That his ancient bright-edged blade gave way,
 Bent on the bone, and bit less sure
 Than its owner had need in his hour of peril. 2580
 That sword-stroke roused the wrath of the cave-guard;

Fire and flame afar he spirted,
 Blaze of battle; but Beowulf there
 No victory boasted: his blade had failed him,
 Naked in battle, as never it should have, 2585
 Well-tempered iron! Nor easy it was
 For Ecgtheow's heir, honored and famous,

This earth to forsake, forever to leave it;
 Yet he must go, against his will
 Elsewhere to dwell. So we all must leave 2590
 This fleeting life.—Erelong the foes
 Bursting with wrath the battle renewed.
 The hoard-ward took heart, and with heaving
 breast

Came charging amain. The champion brave,
 Strength of his people, was sore oppressed, 2595
 Enfolded by flame. No faithful comrades
 Crowded about him, his chosen band,
 All æthelings' sons, to save their lives,
 Fled to the wood. One of them only
 Felt surging sorrow; for nought can stifle 2600
 Call of kin in a comrade true;

Wiglaf his name, 'twas Weohstan's son
 Shield-thane beloved, lord of the Scylfings
 Ælfher's kinsman. When his king he saw
 Hard by the heat under helmet oppressed, 2605
 He remembered the gifts he had got of old,
 Lands and wealth of the Wægmunding line,
 The folk-rights all that his father's had been;
 He could hold no longer, but hard he gripped
 Linden shield yellow and ancient sword. . . . 2610
 For the first time there the faithful thane, 2652
 Youthful and stalwart, stood with his leader,
 Shoulder to shoulder in shock of battle.
 Nor melted his courage, nor cracked his blade,
 His war-sword true, as the worm found out 2656
 When together they got in grim encounter.

Wiglaf in wrath upbraided his comrades,
 Sore was his heart as he spake these words:
 "Well I mind when our mead we drank 2660
 In the princely hall, how we promised our lord
 Who gave us these rings and golden armlets,
 That we would repay his war-gifts rich,
 Helmets and armor, if haply should come
 His hour of peril; us hath he made 2665
 Thanes of his choice for this adventure;
 Spurred us to glory, and gave us these treasures
 Because he deemed us doughty spearmen,
 Helmeted warriors, hardy and brave. 2670
 Yet all the while, unhelped and alone,
 He meant to finish this feat of strength,
 Shepherd of men and mightiest lord
 Of daring deeds. The day is come,—
 Now is the hour he needs the aid
 Of spearmen good. Let us go to him now, 2675
 Help our hero while hard bestead
 By the nimble flames. God knows that I
 Had rather the fire should ruthlessly fold
 My body with his, than harbor me safe.
 Shame it were surely our shields to carry 2680
 Home to our lands, unless we first
 Slay this foe and save the life
 Of the Weder-king. Full well I know
 To leave him thus, alone to endure,
 Bereft of aid, breaks ancient right. 2685
 My helmet and sword shall serve for us both,
 "Shield and armor we share to-day."

Waded the warrior through welter and reek;
 Buckler and helmet he bore to his leader;
 Heartened the hero with words of hope: 2690
 "Do thy best now, dearest Beowulf,

Years ago, in youth, thou vowedst
 Living, ne'er to lose thine honor,
 Shield thy life and show thy valor.
 I stand by thee to the end!" 2695

After these words the worm came on,
 Snorting with rage, for a second charge;
 All mottled with fire his foes he sought,
 The warriors hated. But Wiglaf's shield
 Was burnt to the boss by the billows of fire;
 His harness helped not the hero young. 2701
 Shelter he found 'neath the shield of his kins-
 man,

When the crackling blaze had crumbled his own:
 But mindful of glory, the mighty hero
 Smote amain with his matchless sword. 2705
 Down it hurtled, driven by anger,
 Till it stuck in the skull, then snapped the blade,
 Broken was Nægling, Beowulf's sword,
 Ancient and gray. 'Twas granted him never
 To count on edge of iron in battle; 2710
 His hand was too heavy, too hard his strokes,
 As I have heard tell, for every blade
 He brandished in battle: the best gave way,
 And left him helpless and hard bestead.
 Now for a third time neared the destroyer: 2715
 The fire-drake fierce, old feuds remembering,
 Charged the warrior who wavered an instant;
 Blazing he came and closed his fangs
 On Beowulf's throat; and throbbing spirts
 Of life-blood dark o'erdrrenched the hero. 2720

Then in the hour of utmost peril,
 The stripling proved what stock he came of;
 Showed his endurance and dauntless courage.
 Though burnt was his hand when he backed his
 kinsman,

With head unguarded the good thane charged,
 Thrust from below at the loathly dragon, 2726
 Pierced with the point and plunged the blade in,
 The gleaming-bright, till the glow abated
 Waning low. Ere long the king
 Came to himself, and swiftly drew 2730
 The war-knife that hung at his harness' side,
 And cut in two the coiled monster.
 So felled they the foe and finished him bravely,
 Together they killed him, the kinsmen two,
 A noble pair. So needs must do 2735
 Comrades in peril. For the king it proved
 His uttermost triumph, the end of his deeds
 And work in the world. The wound began,
 Where the cave-dragon savage had sunk his
 teeth,

To swell and fever, and soon he felt 2740
 The baleful poison pulse through his blood,
 And burn in his breast. The brave old warrior
 Sat by the wall and summoned his thoughts,
 Gazed on the wondrous work of the giants:
 Arches of stone, firm-set on their pillars, 2745
 Upheld that hill-vault hoar and ancient.

Now Beowulf's thane, the brave and faithful,
 Dashed with water his darling lord,
 His comrade and king all covered with blood
 And faint with the fight; unfasted his helmet.
 Beowulf spoke despite his hurt, 2751
 His piteous wound. Full well he knew

His years on earth were ended now,
 His hours of glad life gone for aye,
 His days allotted, and death was near: 2755
 "Now would I gladly give to a son
 These weapons of war, had Wyrd¹ but granted
 That heir of my own should after me come,
 Sprung from my loins. This land have I ruled
 Fifty winters. No folk-kindred 2760
 None of the chiefs of the neighboring tribes,
 To touch me with sword or assail me with terror
 Of battle-threats. I bided at home,
 Held my peace and my heritage kept,
 Seeking no feuds nor swearing false oaths. 2765
 This gives me comfort, and gladdens me now,
 Though wounded sore and sick unto death.
 As I leave my life the Lord may not charge me
 With killing of kinsmen. Now quickly go,
 Wiglaf beloved, to look at the hoard, 2770
 Where hidden it rests 'neath the hoary rock.
 For the worm lies still, put asleep by his wound,
 Robbed of his riches. Then rise and hasten
 Give me to see that golden hoard,
 Gaze on the store of glorious gems, 2775
 That easier then I may end my life,
 Leave my lordship that long I held."

Swiftly, 'tis said, the son of Weohstan
 Obeyed the words of his bleeding lord,
 Maimed in the battle. Through the mouth of
 the cave 2780

Boldly he bore his battle-net in.
 Glad of the victory, he gazed about him;
 Many a sun-bright jewel he saw;
 Glittering gold, strewn on the ground,
 Heaped in the den of the dragon hoary, 2785
 Old twilight-flier,—flagons once bright,
 Wassail cups wondrous of warriors departed
 Stript of their mountings, many a helmet
 Ancient and rusted, armlets a many,
 Curiously woven. (Wealth so hoarded, 2790
 Buried treasure, will taint with pride,
 Him that hides it, whoever it be.)
 Towering high o'er the hoard he saw
 A gleaming banner with gold inwoven,
 Of broidure rare, its radiance streamed 2795
 So bright, he could peer to the bounds of the cave,
 Survey its wonders; no worm was seen.
 Edge of the sword had ended his life.
 Then, as they say, that single adventurer
 Plundered the hoard that was piled by the
 giants 2800
 Gathered together old goblets and platters,
 Took what he liked; the towering banner
 Brightest of beacons he brought likewise. . . 2776
 So Wiglaf returned with treasure laden 2783
 The high-souled hero hastened his steps,
 Anxiously wondered if he should find 2785
 The lord of the Weders alive where he left him
 Sapped of his strength and stretched on the
 ground.

As he came from the hill he beheld his comrade,
 His lord of bounty, bleeding and faint,
 Near unto death. He dashed him once more
 Bravely with water, till burden of speech 2791
 Broke from his breast, and Beowulf spoke,

¹ The Goddess of Fate.

Gazing sad at the gold before him:
 "For the harvest of gold that here I look on,
 To the God of Glory I give my thanks. 2795
 To the Ruler Eternal I render praise
 That ere I must go he granted me this,
 To leave to my people this priceless hoard.
 'Twas bought with my life; now look ye well
 To my people's need when I have departed. 2800
 No more I may bide among ye here.
 Bid the battle-famed build on the foreland
 A far-seen barrow when flames have burnt me.
 High o'er the headland of whales it shall tower,
 A beacon and mark to remind my people. 2805
 And sailors shall call it in years to come
 Beowulf's Barrow as back from afar
 O'er the glooming deep they drive their keels."

The great-hearted king unclasped from his
 neck 2810
 A collar of gold, and gave to his thane,
 The brave young warrior, his bright-gilt helmet,
 Breastplate and ring. So bade him farewell:
 "Thou art the last to be left of our house.
 Wyrd hath o'erwhelmed our Wægmunding line,
 Swept my kinsmen swift to their doom, 2816
 Earls in their prime. I must follow them."
 These words were the last that the warrior gray
 Found in his heart ere the flames he chose.
 Swift from his bosom his soul departed 2820
 To find the reward of the faithful and true.

CÆDMON'S HYMN

(c. 670)

(Translated by P. V. D. SHELLEY)

Now shall we hymn high heaven's Ward,
 The might of the Maker, His mind's desire,
 The works of the Father; how of wonders each
 one
 He, Lord everlasting, laid the foundation.
 First He framed for the first-born of men 5
 Heaven for a roof, holy Creator.
 Shaped He then earth, Shield of mankind,
 God immortal, and made thereafter
 Fields for the folk, Father almighty.

BEDE'S DEATH-SONG

(Translated by P. V. D. SHELLEY)

No man becomes, before death calls him,
 Wiser in thought than then he needs be
 Well to consider, ere the thread's severed,
 What to his ghost, of good or of evil,
 After the death-day is destined by doom. 5

THE DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIANS

(From the *Exodus*.¹ Translated by
 J. D. SPAETH.)

The host was harrowed with horror of drowning;
 Sea-death menaced their miserable souls. 448

¹ The *Exodus*, a poem of 589 lines, is the oldest extant epic of a series on Biblical subjects, written apparently in the north of England. No exact date can be given, but it was evidently written before the time of King Alfred (871-901).

The slopes of the hill-sides were splashed with blood.
 There was woe on the waters, the waves spat gore; 450
 They were full of weapons, and frothed with slaughter.
 Back were beaten the bold Egyptians, 450
 Flew in fear; they were filled with terror.
 Headlong they hastened their homes to seek.
 Less bold were their boasts as the billows rolled o'er them, 455
 Dread welter of waves. Not one of that army
 Went again home, but Wyrd from behind
 Barred with billows their backward path.
 Where ways had lain, now weltered the sea,
 The swelling flood. The storm went up 460
 High to the heavens; hugest of uproars
 Darkened the sky; the dying shrieked
 With voices doomed. The Deep streamed with blood.
 Shield-walls were shattered by shock of the tempest.
 Greatest of sea-deaths engulfed the mighty, 465
 Captains and troops. Retreat was cut off
 At the ocean's brink. Their battle-shields gleamed
 High o'er their heads as the heaped-up waters
 Compassed them round, the raging flood.
 Doomed was the host, by death hemmed in, 470
 Suddenly trapped. The salty billows
 Swept with their swirling the sand from their feet,
 As the Ocean cold to its ancient bed,
 Through winding channels the churning flood,
 Came rolling back o'er the rippled bottom, 475
 Swift avenger, naked and wild.
 With slaughter was streaked the storm-dark air;
 The bursting deep with blood-terror yawned,
 When He who made it, by Moses' hand
 Unbitted the wrath of the raging flood; 480
 Wide it came sweeping to swallow the foe;
 Foamed the waters, the fated sank;
 Earth was o'erwhelmed, the air was darkened;
 Burst the wave-walls, the bulwarks tumbled;
 The sea-towers melted, when the Mighty One smote 485
 The pride of the host, through the pillar of fire,
 With holy hand from heaven above.
 The onslaught wild of the angry main
 None might oppose. He appointed their end
 In the roaring horror. Wrath was the sea: 490
 Up it rose, down it smote, dealing destruction.
 Slaughter-blood spread, the sea-wall fell,
 Upreared on high, the handiwork of God,
 When the ocean He smote with His ancient sword,
 Felled the defence of the foam-breasted waves.
 With the death-blow deep, the doomed men slept. 495
 The army of sinners their souls gave up,
 The sea-pale host, ensnared and surrounded,
 When the dark upheaval o'erwhelmed them all,
 Hugest of wild waves. The host sank down,
 Pharaoh and his folk, the flower of Egypt 501
 Utterly perished. The enemy of God
 Soon discovered, when the sea he entered,

That the ocean's master was mightier than he.
 By the strength of His arm He decided the battle,
 Wrathful and grim. He gave the Egyptians 506
 Thorough reward for that day's work.
 Not one of that host to his home came back;
 Of all those warriors not one returned
 To bring the news of the battle's end, 510
 To tell in the towns the tidings of woe,
 Their husbands' doom to the heroes' wives,
 How sea-death swallowed the stately host,—
 No messenger left. The Lord Almighty
 Confounded their boasting; they fought against God. 515

Cynewulf¹

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE

(From *The Crist*. Translated by J. D. SPAETH.)

Our life is likest a long sea-voyage: 850
 O'er the water cold in our keels we glide,
 O'er Ocean's streams, in our stallions of the deep
 We drive afar. 'Tis a dreary waste
 Of ceaseless surges we sail across,
 In this wavering world, o'er wind-swept tracts
 Of open sea. Anxious the struggle, 855
 Ere we bring at last our barks to land,
 O'er the rough sea-ridges. Our rescue is near;
 The Son of God doth safely guide us,
 Helps us into our harbor of refuge; 860
 Shows from the deck the sheltered waters
 Where smoothly to anchor our ancient chargers,
 Hold with the hawsers our horses of the deep.
 Then fix we our hope on that haven of safety
 That the Prince of Glory prepared for us all, 865
 The Ruler on high, when He rose to heaven.

DOOMSDAY

(From *The Crist*. Translated by J. D. SPAETH.)

Lo! on a sudden, and all unlooked for,
 In the dead of the night, the day of the Lord
 Shall break tremendous on man and beast,
 O'erwhelming the world and the wide creation,
 As a ruthless robber, ranging at night, 871
 Who strides through the dark with stealthy pace,
 And suddenly springs on sleep-bound heroes,
 Greets with violence his victims unguarded.
 A mighty host on the mount of Sion 875
 Shall gather together glad and rejoicing
 The faithful of the Lord, they shall find their reward.

With one accord from the quarters four,
 And uttermost ends of the earth at once,
 Glorious angels together shall blow 880
 Their shattering trumpets; the trembling earth
 Shall shake and sink, as they sound together,

¹ Cynewulf, the greatest early poet of the north of England, lived probably in Northumbria at the end of the 8th century. The *Crist*, from which the two selections are taken, is his chief poem; it is 1664 lines long and consists of three parts, The Advent, The Ascension, and Doomsday.

Piercing strong to the starry track.
 Their music swells from the South and North,
 From East and from West, o'er the world's
 wide round. 885

They wake from the dead to the day of judgement

The children of men, with their challenge dread.
 Out of their ancient earth and mold,
 Forth from their sleep profound they wake
 them.

Howling with fear they shall huddle and flock,
 Moaning and groaning, aghast with terror, 891
 Bewailing the deeds that were done in the body.

Eye hath not seen a sight more awful,
 To men shall appear no portent more dread:
 Sinners and saints in strange confusion, 895
 Mingled together shall mount from their
 graves,

The bright and the black: for both shall arise,
 Some fair, some foul, as foreordained
 To different home, of devils or angels.

From South and East o'er Sion's top, 900
 In sudden radiance the sun shall flame
 From the throne of God; more gleaming-bright,
 Than man may imagine, or mind conceive.

Resplendent it shines, as the Son of God
 Dazzling breaks through the dome of heaven.
 Glorious appears the presence of Christ, 906
 The King as He comes through the clouds in
 the East,

Merciful and mild in mind to his own,
 But with altered mood of anger toward the
 wicked:

Unlike His looks for the lost and the blest. 910

The greedy spirit of consuming flame
 Shall leap o'er the land, and the lofty halls;
 With the terror of fire shall fill the world.
 The battle-thirsty flame shall blaze afar,
 Devouring the earth, and all therein. 915

Strong-built walls shall split and crumble;
 Mountains shall melt, and the mighty cliffs
 That buttress the earth 'gainst battering waves,
 Bulwarks upreared 'gainst the rolling billows,
 Shall fall on a sudden. The sweep of the fire
 Shall leave no bird nor beast alive. 921

The lurid flame shall leap along the world
 Like a raging warrior. Where the waters flowed
 In a bath of fire the fish shall be stifled;
 Sundered from life, their struggles over, 925
 The monsters of the deep no more shall swim.
 Like molten wax the water shall burn.

More marvels shall appear than mind may conceive,
 When tempest and whirlwind o'erwhelm the
 earth,

And rocks are riven by the roaring blast. 930
 Men shall wail, they shall weep and lament,
 Groan aghast with grovelling fear.

The smoke-dark flame o'er the sinful shall roll,
 The blaze shall consume their beakers of gold,
 All the ancient heirlooms of kings. 935

The shrieks of the living aloud shall resound
 Mid the crack of doom, their cry of fear,

Their howl of despair, as they struggle to hide.
 No guilty wretch shall refuge find,
 Not one shall escape the scorching flame; 940
 On all it shall seize, as it sweeps through the
 world.

It shall leap and run and ruthlessly bore
 In the bowels of the earth, it shall burn aloft,
 Till the ancient stains of earthly sin
 By the purging billows are burnt away. 945

THE RUIN¹

(Translated by STOPFORD A. BROOKE)

Wondrous is its wall of stone. Weirds² have
 shattered it!

Broken are the burg-steads! Crumbled is the
 giants' work.

Fallen are the roof beams; ruined are the
 towers;

All undone the door-pierced towers; frozen dew
 is on their plaster!

Shorn away and sunken down are the sheltering
 battlements, 5

Undereaten of Old Age! Earth is holding in
 its clutch

These, the power-wielding workers; all forworn
 are they, forlorn in death are they!

Hard the grip was of the ground, while a hundred
 generations

Move away of men. Long its wall abode
 Through the rule that followed rule, ruddy

stained, and gray as goat, 10

Under storm-skies steady! Steep the court
 that fell,

Still it falleth . . . (skilful ancient work it
 was)!

Strong in rede,³ (the builder strengthened),
 strong of heart, in chains he bound

All the wall-uprights with wires, wondrous-
 wrought together!

Brilliant were the burg-steads, burn-fed houses⁴
 many; 15

High the heap of hornèd gables, of the host a
 mickle sound,

Many were the mead-halls, full of mirth of men,
 Till the strong-willed Wyrd whirled that all to
 change!

In a slaughter wide they fell, woeful days of
 bale came on;

Famine-death fortook fortitude from men; 20
 All their battle bulwarks bare foundations were!

Crumbled is the castle-keep; those have cringed
 to earth

Who set up again the shrines! So the halls are
 dreary,

And this courtyard's wide expanse! From the
 raftered woodwork

¹ The Ruin here described is supposed to be that of one of the walled towns of Roman-Britain, probably Bath. The date of the poem is unknown, but its language is later than that of Cynewulf.

² The Fates.

³ Counsel, judgment.

⁴ Houses fed by springs of water. This passage, and the reference to the hot baths in lines 34-35 support the view that the city was Bath, where the ruins of Roman baths may still be seen.

(See) the roof has shed its tiles! To ruin sank
 the market-place, 25
 Broken up to barrows; many a brave man there,
 Glad of yore, and gold-bright, gloriously
 adorned,
 Hot with wine and haughty, in war-harness
 shone;—
 Saw upon his silver, on set gems and treasure,
 On his welfare and his wealth, on his winsome
 jewels, 30
 On this brightsome burg of a broad dominion!—
 There the stone-courts stood; hotly surged the
 stream,
 With a widening whirling; and a wall enclosed
 it all,
 With its bosom bright. There the baths were
 set
 Hot within their heart; fit [for health] it was! 35

THE WANDERER¹

(Translated by EMILY H. HICKEY)

'Still the lone one and desolate waits for his
 Maker's ruth—
 God's good mercy, albeit so long it tarry, in
 sooth.
 Careworn and sad of heart, on the watery ways
 must he
 Plow with the hand-grasped oar—how long?—
 the rime-cold sea,
 Tread thy paths of exile, O Fate, who art
 cruelty. 5
 Thus did a wanderer speak, being heart-full
 of woe, and all
 Thoughts of the cruel slayings, and pleasant
 comrades' fall:
 'Morn by morn I, alone, am fain to utter my
 woe;
 Now is there none of the living to whom I dare
 to show
 Plainly the thought of my heart; in very sooth
 I know 10
 Excellent is it in man that his breast he
 straightly bind,
 Shut fast his thinkings in silence, whatever he
 have in his mind.
 The man that is weary in heart, he never can
 fate withstand;
 The man that grieves in his spirit, he finds not
 the helper's hand.
 Therefore the glory-grasper full heavy of soul
 may be. 15
 So, far from my fatherland, and mine own
 good kinsmen free,
 I must bind my heart in fetters, for long, ah!
 long ago,
 The earth's cold darkness covered my giver of
 gold brought low;
 And I, sore stricken and humbled, and winter-
 saddened, went
 Far over the frost-bound waves to seek for the
 dear content 20
 Of the hall of the giver of rings; but far nor
 near could I find

Who felt the love of the mead-hall, or who with
 comforts kind
 Would comfort me, the friendless. 'Tis he
 alone will know
 Who knows, being desolate too, how evil a
 fere² is woe;
 For him the path of the exile, and not the
 twisted gold; 25
 For him the frost in his bosom, and not earth-
 riches old.
 'O, well he remembers the hall-men, the treasure
 bestowed in the hall;
 The feast that his gold-giver made him, the
 joy at its height, at its fall;
 He knows who must be forlorn for his dear
 lord's counsels gone,
 Where sleep and sorrow together are binding
 the lonely one; 30
 When him thinks he clasps and kisses his leader
 of men, and lays
 His hands and head on his knee, as when, in the
 good yore-days,
 He sat on the throne of his might, in the
 strength that wins and saves.
 But the friendless man awakes, and he sees the
 yellow waves,
 And the sea-birds dip to the sea, and broaden
 their wings to the gale, 35
 And he sees the dreary rime, and the snow com-
 mingled with hail.
 O, then are the wounds of his heart the sorer
 much for this,
 The grief for the loved and lost made new by
 the dream of old bliss.
 His kinsmen's memory comes to him as he lies
 asleep,
 And he greets it with joy, with joy, and the
 heart in his breast doth leap; 40
 But out of his ken the shapes of his warrior-
 comrades swim
 To the land whence seafarers bring no dear old
 saws for him;
 Then fresh grows sorrow and new to him whose
 bitter part
 Is to send o'er the frost-bound waves full often
 his weary heart.
 For this do I look around this world, and cannot
 see 45
 Wherefore or why my heart should not grow
 dark in me.
 When I think of the lives of the leaders, the
 clansmen mighty in mood;
 When I think how sudden and swift they
 yielded the place where they stood.
 So droops this mid-earth and falls, and never a
 man is found
 Wise ere a many winters have girt his life
 around. 50
 Full patient the sage must be, and he that
 would counsel teach—
 Not over-hot in his heart, nor over-swift in his
 speech;
 Nor faint of soul nor secure, nor fain for the
 fight nor afraid;

¹ Date and author unknown. Attributed to the 8th or 9th century.² Companion.

Nor ready to boast before he know himself well arrayed.
 The proud-souled man must bide when he utters his vaunt, until 55
 He know of the thoughts of the heart, and whitherward turn they will.
 The prudent must understand how terror and awe shall be,
 When the glory and weal of the world lie waste, as now men see
 On our mid-earth many a where, the wind-swept walls arise,
 And the ruined dwellings and void, and the rime that on them lies. 60
 The wine-halls crumble, bereft of joy the warriors lie,
 The flower of the doughty fallen, the proud ones fair to the eye.
 War took off some in death, and one did a strong bird bear
 Over the deep; and one—his bones did the grey wolf share;
 And one was hid in a cave by a comrade sorrowful-faced. 65
 O, thus the Shaper of men hath laid the earth all waste,
 Till the works of the city-dwellers, the works of the giants of earth,
 Stood empty and lorn of the burst of the mighty revellers' mirth.
 'Who wisely hath mused on this wallstead, and ponders this dark life well
 In his heart he hath often bethought him of slayings many and fell, 70
 And these be the words he taketh, the thoughts of his heart to tell:
 "Where is the horse and the rider? Where is the giver of gold?
 Where be the seats at the banquet? Where be the hall-joys of old?
 Alas for the burnished cup, for the byrned^{*} chief to-day!
 Alas for the strength of the prince! for the time hath passed away— 75
 Is hid 'neath the shadow of night, as it never had been at all.
 Behind the dear and doughty there standeth now a wall,
 A wall that is wondrous high, and with wondrous snake-work wrought.
 The strength of the spears hath fordene the earls and hath made them naught,
 The weapons greedy of slaughter, and she, the mighty Wyrd; 80
 And the tempests beat on the rocks, and the storm-wind that maketh afeard—
 The terrible storm that fetters the earth, the winter-bale,
 When the shadow of night falls wan, and wild is the rush of the hail,
 The cruel rush from the north, which maketh men to quail.
 Hardship-full is the earth, o'rtturned when the stark Wyrd say: 85

^{*} *Byrned chief*, i. e., chief arrayed in his "byrne," or war-shirt.

Here is the passing of riches, here friends are passing away;
 And men and kinsfolk pass, and nothing and none may stay;
 And all this earth-stead here shall be empty and void one day." . . .

THE SEAFARER¹

(Translated by HENRY MORLEY)

"I may sing of myself now
 A song that is true,
 Can tell of wide travel,
 The toil of hard days;
 How oft through long seasons 5
 I suffered and strove,
 Abiding within my breast
 Bitterest care;
 How I sailed among sorrows 10
 In many a sea;
 The wild rise of the waves,
 The close watch of the night
 At the dark prow in danger
 Of dashing on rock,
 Folded in by the frost, 15
 My feet bound by the cold
 In chill bands, in the breast
 The heart burning with care.
 The soul of the sea-weary
 Hunger assailed. 20

Knows not he who finds happiest
 Home upon earth
 How I lived through long winter
 In labour and care,
 On the icy-cold ocean, 25
 An exile from joy,
 Cut off from dear kindred,
 Encompassed with ice.
 Hail flew in hard showers,
 And nothing I heard 30
 But the wrath of the waters,
 The icy-cold way;
 At times the swan's song;
 In the scream of the gannet
 I sought for my joy, 35
 In the moan of the sea-whelp
 For laughter of men,
 In the song of the sea-mew
 For drinking of mead.
 Starlings answered the storm 40
 Beating stones on the cliff,
 Icy-feathered, and often
 The eagle would shriek,
 Wet of wing.
 Not one home-friend could feel 45
 With the desolate soul;
 For he little believes
 To whom life's joy belongs
 In the town, lightly troubled
 With dangerous tracks, 50
 Vain with high spirit

¹ The date and authorship are unknown. Some scholars think that the Seafarer is a dialogue between an old sailor and a young man who longs to go to sea, but as this is mere conjecture, no attempt has been made in the present version to indicate the respective parts.

And wanton with wine,
How often I wearily
Held my sea-way.

The night shadows darkened, 55
It snowed from the north;
The rime bound the rocks;
The hail rolled upon earth,
Coldest of corn:
Therefore now is high heaving 60
In thoughts of my heart,
That my lot is, to learn
The wide joy of waters,
The whirl of salt spray.
Often desire drives 65
My soul to depart,
That the home of the strangers
Far hence I may seek.

There is no man among us
So proud in his mind, 70
Nor so good in his gifts,
Nor so gay in his youth,
Nor so daring in deeds,
Nor so dear to his lord,
That his soul never stirred 75
At the thought of seafaring,
Or what his great Master
Will do with him yet.
He hears not the harp, 80
Heeds not giving of rings,
Has to woman no will,
And no hope in the world,
Nor in aught there is else
But the wash of the waves.
He lives ever longing 85
Who looks to the sea.

Groves bud with green,
The hills grow fair,
Gay shine the fields,
The world's astir: 90
All this but warns
The willing mind
To set the sail,
For so he thinks
Far on the waves 95
To win his way.
With woeful note
The cuckoo warns,
The summer's warden sings,
And sorrow rules 100
The heart-store bitterly.
No man can know,
Nursed in soft ease,
The burden borne
By those who fare 105
The farthest from their friends.

In the soul's secret chamber
My mind now is set,
My heart's thought, on wide waters, 110
The home of the whale;
It wanders away
Beyond limits of land:
Comes again to me, yearning

With eager desire;
Loud cries the lone-flier, 115
And stirs the mind's longing
To travel the way that is trackless,
The death-way over the flood.
For my will to my Master's pleasure
Is warmer than this dead life 120
That is lent us on land.
I believe not that earth-blessings
Ever abide.
Ever of three things one, 125
To each ere the severing hour:
Old age, sickness, or slaughter,
Will force the doomed soul to depart.

Therefore for each of the earls,
Of those who shall afterwards name them, 130
This is best laud from the living
In last words spoken about him:—
He worked ere he went his way,
When on earth, against wiles of the foe,
With brave deeds overcoming the devil. 135
His memory cherished
By children of men,
His glory grows ever
With angels of God, 75
In life everlasting
Of bliss with the bold. 140

Passed are the days of the pride
Of the kingdoms of earth!
Kings are no more, and kaisers.
None count out, 145
As once they did, their gifts of gold,
When that made them most great,
And Man judged that they lived
As Lords most High.
That fame is all fallen, 150
Those joys are all fled;
The weak ones abiding
Lay hold on the world:
By their labour they win.

High fortune is humbled;
Earth's haughtiness ages 155
And wastes,—as now withers
Each man from the world:
Old age is upon him 95
And bleaches his face;
He is grey-haired and grieves,
Knows he now must give up 160
The old friends he cherished,
Chief children of earth.
The husk of flesh, 165
When life is fled,
Shall taste no sweetness,
Feel no sore;
Is in its hand no touch;
Is in its brain no thought. 170
Though his born brother
Strew gold in the grave,
Bury him pompously
Borne to the dead,
Entomb him with treasure, 175
The trouble is vain:
The soul of the sinful

His gold may not save
From the awe before God,
Though he hoarded it heedfully
While he lived here. 180

Great awe is in presence of God:
The firm ground trembles before Him
Who strongly fixed its foundations,
The limits of earth and the heavens. 185
Fool is he without fear of the Lord;
To him will come death unforeseen:
Happy is he who is lowly of life;
To him will come honour from heaven:
The Creator will strengthen his soul
Because he put trust in His power. 190

Rude will should be ruled
And restrained within bound
And clean in its ways with men,
If every man 195
Kept measure in mind
With friend and with foe. . . . 198
More force is in fate,
In the Maker more might,
Than in thought of a man. 200

Let us look to the home
Where in truth we can live,
And then let us be thinking
How thither to come:
For then we too shall toil 205
That our travel may reach
To delight never ending,
When life is made free
In the love of the Lord
In the height of the heavens! 210
May we thank the All Holy
Who gave us this grace,—
The Wielder of glory,
The Lord everlasting,—
In time without end! Amen." 215

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH¹

(Translated by TENNYSON)

I
Athelstan King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons, 5
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge

There by Brunanburh, 10
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the lindenwood,
Hack'd the battleshield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II
Theirs was a greatness 15
Got from their grandsires—
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their hearths and
their homes.

III
Bow'd the spoiler, 20
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the shipcrews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great 25
Sun-star of morningtide,
Lamp of the Lord God,
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious creature 30
Sank to his setting.

IV
There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman 35
Weary of war.

V
We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we
hated; 40
Grimly with swords that were sharp from
the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

VI
Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of 45
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island— 50
Doom'd to the death.

VII
Five young kings put asleep by the sword-
stroke,
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen. 55

VIII
Then the Norse leader—
Dire was his need of it,

¹This poem appears originally in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the year 937. It celebrates a battle fought at Brunanburh, between the West Saxons led by King Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great, and Edmund the Atheling (or prince), and a combined force of Danes, Scots, and Britons led by Constantinus and Anlaf. The site of Brunanburh has never been satisfactorily established. The most likely place seems to be the old Brunne, now Bourne, in Lincolnshire. (See Ramsay's *Foundations of England*, I. 285.) Tennyson based his version of the poem upon his son's prose translation from the original Old English.

Few were his following—
 Fled to his warship;
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it 60
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX

Also the crafty one, *www.libtool.com.cn*
 Constantinus,
 Crept to his North again,
 Hoar-headed hero!

65

X

Slender warrant had
 He to be proud of
 The welcome of war-knives—
 He that was reft of his
 Folk and his friends that had
 Fallen in conflict,
 Leaving his son too
 Lost in the carnage,
 Mangled to morsels,
 A youngster in war!

70

75

XI

Slender reason had
 He to be glad of
 The clash of the war-glaive—
 Traitor and trickster
 And spurner of treaties—
 He nor had Anlaf
 With armies so broken
 A reason for bragging
 That they had the better
 In perils of battle
 On places of slaughter—
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,
 The wielding of weapons—
 The play that they play'd with
 The children of Edward.

80

85

90

XII

Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Normen, a
 Blood-redden'd relic of
 Javelins over

95

The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,
 Shaping their way toward Dyflen¹ again,
 Shamed in their souls.

XIII

Also the brethren,
 King and Atheling,
 Each in his glory,
 Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,
 Glad of the war.

100

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion, 105
 Many a livid one, many a swallow-skin—
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it, and

¹ Dublin. Some of the Norsemen (those under Anlaf) had come across the sea from Ireland.

Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge it,
 and
 That grey beast, the wolf of the weald.² 110

XV

Never had huger
 Slaughter of heroes
 Slain by the sword-edge—
 Such as old writers
 Have writ of in histories—
 Hapt in this isle, since
 Up from the East hither
 Saxon and Angle from
 Over the broad billow
 Broke into Britain with
 Haughty war-workers who
 Harried the Welshman, when
 Earls that were lured by the
 Hunger of glory gat
 Hold of the land.

115

120

125

THE GRAVE¹

(LONGFELLOW's translation, from *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*.)

For thee was a house built
 Ere thou wert born;
 For thee was a mould meant
 Ere thou of mother camest.
 But it is not made ready,
 Nor its depth measured,
 Nor is it seen
 How long it shall be.
 Now I bring thee
 Where thou shalt be.
 Now I shall measure thee,
 And the mould afterwards.

5

10

Thy house is not
 Highly timbered;
 It is unhigh and low,
 When thou art therein,
 The heel-ways are low,
 The side-way unhigh;
 The roof is built
 Thy breast full nigh.
 So thou shalt in mould
 Dwell full cold,
 Dimly and dark.

15

20

Doorless is that house,
 And dark it is within;
 There thou art fast detained,
 And Death hath the key.
 Loathsome is that earth-house,
 And grim within to dwell;
 There thou shalt dwell,
 And worms shall divide thee.

25

30

Thus thou art laid
 And leavest thy friends;
 Thou hast no friend
 Who will come to thee,

35

¹ The forest.

² Date and author unknown, but probably among the latest poems of the Old English period.

Who will ever see
How that house pleaseth thee,
Who will ever open
The door for thee,
And descend after thee;
For soon thou art loathsome
And hateful to see.

40

Bede

673-735

KING EDWIN CONSIDERS ADOPTING CHRISTIANITY

(Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, 731)

(Translated by J. A. GILES)

King Edwin,¹ therefore, delaying to receive the word of God at the preaching of Paulinus,² and using for sometime, as has been said, to sit several hours alone, and seriously to ponder with himself what he was to do, and what religion he was to follow, the man of God came to him, laid his right hand on his head, and asked, "Whether he knew that sign?" The king in a trembling condition, was ready to fall down at his feet, but he raised him up, and in a familiar manner said to him, "Behold by the help of God you have escaped the hands of the enemies whom you feared. Behold you have of his gift obtained the kingdom which you desired. Take heed not to delay that which you promised to perform; embrace the faith, and keep the precepts of Him who, delivering you from temporal adversity, has raised you to the honour of a temporal kingdom; and if, from this time forward, you shall be obedient to his will, which through me he signifies to you, he will not only deliver you from the everlasting torments of the wicked, but also make you a partaker with him of his eternal kingdom in heaven."

The king, hearing these words, answered that he was both willing and bound to receive the faith which he taught; but that he would confer about it with his principal friends and counsellors, to the end that if they also were of his opinion, they might all together be cleansed in Christ the Fountain of Life. Paulinus³ consenting, the king did as he said; for, holding a counsel with the wise-men, he asked of every one in particular what he thought of the new doctrine, and the new worship that was preached? To which the chief of his own priests, Coifi, immediately answered, "O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you, that the religion

which we have hitherto professed has, as far as I can learn, no virtue in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favours from you, and are more preferred than I, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if the gods were good for anything, they would rather forward me, who have been more careful to serve them. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination you find those new doctrines, which are now preached to us, better and more efficacious, we immediately receive them without any delay."

15 Another of the king's chief men, approving of his words and exhortations, presently added: "The present life of man, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before, or what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." The other elders and king's counsellors, by divine inspiration, spoke to the same effect.

But Coifi added, that he wished more attentively to hear Paulinus discourse concerning the God whom he preached; which he having by the king's command performed, Coifi, hearing his words, cried out, "I have long since been sensible that there was nothing in that which we worshipped; because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess, that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. For which reason I advise, O king, that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." In short, the king publicly gave his license to Paulinus to preach the Gospel, and renouncing idolatry, declared that he received the faith of Christ: and when he inquired of the high priest who should first profane the altars and temples of their idols, with the enclosures that were about them, he answered, "I; for who can more properly than

¹ The famous King Edwin of Northumbria, 617-733.

² An early English bishop, who had come to Northumbria with the princess Æthelburh of Kent, when she became Edwin's queen.

myself destroy those things which I worshipped through ignorance, for an example to all others, through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?" Then immediately, in contempt of his former superstitions, he desired the king to furnish him with arms and a stallion; and mounting the same, he set out to destroy the idols; for it was not lawful before for the high priest either to carry arms, or to ride on any but a mare. Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand, he mounted the king's stallion and proceeded to the idols. The multitude, beholding it, concluded he was distracted; but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned the same, casting into it the spear which he held; and rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to destroy the temple, with all its enclosures, by fire. This place where the idols were is still shown, not far from York, to the eastward, beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmundingham,¹ where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he himself had consecrated.

THE VISION OF CÆDMON

(From the same)

(Translated by J. A. GILES)

There was in this abbess's monastery¹ a certain brother, particularly remarkable for the grace of God, who was wont to make pious and religious verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him out of Scripture, he soon after put the same into poetical expressions of much sweetness and humility, in English, which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, but from God; for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those which relate to religion suited his religious tongue; for having lived in a secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of versifying; for which reason being sometimes at entertainments, when it was agreed for the sake of mirth that all present should sing in their turns, when he saw the instrument come

towards him, he rose up from table and returned home.

Having done so at a certain time, and gone out of the house where the entertainment was, to the stable, where he had to take care of the horses that night, he there composed himself to rest at the proper time; a person appeared to him in his sleep, and saluting him by his name, said, "Cædmon, sing some song to me." He answered, "I cannot sing; for that was the reason why I left the entertainment, and retired to this place, because I could not sing." The other who talked to him, replied, "However you shall sing."—"What shall I sing?" rejoined he. "Sing the beginning of created beings," said the other. Hereupon he presently began to sing verses to the praise of God, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was thus:—We are now to praise the Maker of the heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator and his counsel, the deeds of the Father of glory. How he, being the eternal God, became the author of all miracles, who first, as almighty preserver of the human race, created heaven for the sons of men, as a roof of the house, and next the earth.² This is the case, but not the words in order as he sang them in his sleep; for verses, though never so well composed, cannot be literally translated out of one language into another, without losing much of their beauty and loftiness. Awaking from his sleep, he remembered all that he had sung in his dream, and soon added much more to the same effect in verse worthy of the Deity.

In the morning he came to the steward, his superior, and having acquainted him with the gift he had received, was conducted to the abbess, by whom he was ordered, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream, and repeat the verses, that they might all give their judgment what it was, and whence his verse proceeded. They all concluded, that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. They expounded to him a passage in holy writ, either historical or doctrinal, ordering him, if he could, to put the same into verse. Having undertaken it, he went away, and returning the next morning, gave it to them composed in most excellent verse; whereupon the abbess, embracing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit, and take upon him the monastic life; which being accordingly done, she associated him to the rest of the brethren in her monastery, and ordered that he should be taught the whole series of sacred history. Thus Cædmon, keeping in mind all he heard, and as it were

¹ Goodmanham, about twenty-three miles from York, was a chief seat of the old worship. It was here that the *Witan* had met to consider the new religion.

² The monastery at Streonshalh, now Whitby, on the coast of Yorkshire. The abbess was Hild.

³ For a translation of the Old English version of Cædmon's hymn, see p. 8.

chewing the cud, converted the same into most harmonious verse; and sweetly repeating the same, made his masters in their turn his hearers. He sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis: and made many verses on the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the land of promise, with many other histories from holy writ; the incarnation, passion, resurrection of our Lord, and his ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles; also the terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of hell, and the delights of heaven; besides many more about the Divine benefits and judgments, by which he endeavored to turn away all men from the love of vice, and to excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions; for he was a very religious man, humbly submissive to regular discipline, but full of zeal against those who behaved themselves otherwise; for which reason he ended his life happily.

For when the time of his departure drew near, he laboured for the space of fourteen days under a bodily infirmity which seemed to pre- pare the way, yet so moderate that he could talk and walk the whole time. In his neighborhood was the house to which those that were sick, and like shortly to die, were carried. He desired the person that attended him, in the evening, as the night came on in which he was to depart this life, to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. This person, wondering why he should desire it, because there was as yet no sign of his dying soon, did what he had ordered. He accordingly went there, and conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner with the rest that were in the house before, when it was past midnight, he asked them whether they had the Eucharist there? They answered, "What need of the Eucharist? for you are not likely to die, since you talk so merrily with us, as if you were in perfect health."—"However," said he, "bring me the Eucharist." Having received the same into his hand, he asked, whether they were all in charity with him, and without any enmity or rancour? They answered, that they were all in perfect charity, and free from anger; and in their turn asked him, whether he was in the same mind towards them? He answered, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." Then strengthening himself with the heavenly viaticum, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked, how near the time was when the brothers were to be awakened to

sing the nocturnal praises of our Lord? They answered, "It is not far off." Then he said, "Well, let us wait that hour," and signing himself with the sign of the cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and falling into a slumber, ended his life so in silence.

Thus it came to pass, that as he had served God with a simple and pure mind, and undisturbed devotion, so he now departed to His presence, leaving the world by a quiet death; and that tongue, which had composed so many holy words in praise of the Creator, uttered its last words whilst he was in the act of signing himself with the cross, and recommending himself into His hands, and by what has been here said, he seems to have had foreknowledge of his death.

BEDE'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

(From the same)

(Translated by J. A. GILES)

Thus much of the Ecclesiastical History of Britain, and more especially of the English nation, as far as I could learn either from the writings of the ancients, or the tradition of our ancestors, or of my own knowledge, has, with the help of God, been digested by me, Bede, the servant of God, and priest of the monastery of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow;¹ who being born in the territory of that same monastery, was given, at seven years of age, to be educated by the most reverend Abbat Benedict,² and afterwards by Ceolfrid; and, spending all the remaining time of my life in that monastery, I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture, and amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing. In the nineteenth year of my age, I received deacon's orders; in the thirtieth, those of the priesthood, both of them by the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John,³ and by the order of the Abbat Ceolfrid. From which time, till the fifty-ninth year of my age, I have made it my business, for the use of me and mine, to compile out of the works of the venerable Fathers, and to interpret and explain according to their meaning these following pieces.⁴

¹ Bede entered the monastery of St. Peter at Wearmouth, in Durham, in his seventh year, and the associated monastery of St. Paul at Jarrow in his nineteenth year.

² The famous Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth. Ceolfrid was his successor.

³ John of Beverley, bishop of Hexham.

⁴ Here follows a list of Bede's works.

Cuthbert¹CUTHBERT'S LETTER ON THE DEATH
OF BEDE

(c. 735)

(Translated by F. V. D. SHELLEY)

To his most dear fellow-lector Cuthwin, beloved in Christ, Cuthbert, his co-disciple in God, sends greeting. The little gift you sent me I have received with pleasure, and with great joy have I read your letter, full of a devout learning, in which I learn, what I so greatly desired, that you are diligently celebrating masses and prayers for our father and master, Bede, beloved of God. Wherefore—more on account of my love for him than because of any confidence in my powers—I am pleased to tell you in a few words how he departed from this life, since this, I understand, is what you desire and request. About two weeks before the day of the Resurrection, he was afflicted with great weakness and with shortness of breath, although he was without pain; and so, happy and rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God every day and every night, indeed almost every hour, he lived until the day of our Lord's ascension, that is the seventh of the Kalends of June.² To us, his pupils, he continued to give lessons every day, and the rest of the day he spent in singing psalms. Ever vigilant, he would spend the whole night in rejoicing and in giving thanks, except when a little sleep prevented. Upon awaking, however, he would again repeat the customary prayers and with hands uplifted continue to give thanks to God. Truly I may say that I have neither seen with my eyes nor heard with my ears any one give thanks so diligently to the living God.

O truly blessed man! He was wont to repeat the words of St. Paul the Apostle, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,"³ and many other things from the Scriptures, by which he would admonish us to rouse ourselves from the sleep of the soul by thinking upon our last hour. Also he sometimes spoke in our tongue, the English, for he was very learned in our songs:⁴ . . . He would also sing Antiphons, according to his usage and ours, one of which is: "O King of glory, Lord of Hosts, who in triumph didst this day ascend above all the heavens, leave us not orphans, but send upon us the promise of the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Alleluia."⁵

And when he had come to the words "leave us not orphans," he burst into tears and wept much. And after a while he began to repeat what he had begun. And we, hearing these things, mourned with him. Now we read, and now we wept; nay, we read as we wept. In such gladness we passed the quinquagesimal days⁶ until the above mentioned day, and he rejoiced greatly and gave thanks to God because he had been worthy of such affliction. He would often say, "God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,"⁷ and much more from the holy scriptures. A saying of Ambrose's he would also repeat, "I have not lived in such a manner as to be ashamed to live among you; but neither do I fear to die, because we have a good God." In these days also, he strove to produce two works worthy of memory, in addition to teaching us and singing psalms. He translated into our tongue, for the use of the Church, the gospel of St. John, to where it is said, "But what are these among so many?"⁸ and certain excerpts from the works of Bishop Isidore, saying, "I do not wish that my pupils should read falsehood, or labor herein without profit after my death." When the third Tuesday before the Ascension of our Lord had come, he began to experience great difficulty in breathing, and a slight swelling developed in his feet. But he labored all that day, and dictated happily, and among other things said, "Learn quickly, for I know not how long I shall live, or whether in a little while my Maker shall take me." To us, however, it seemed that he knew well the time of his going forth. Thus he spent the night in vigils and thanksgiving. And at dawn, that is on Wednesday, he commanded us to write diligently what we had begun; and this we did unto the third hour. From the third hour we walked with the relics of the saints, as the custom of the day demanded. One of us remained with him, who said to him, "There is yet one chapter lacking. Does it not seem hard that you should be questioned further?" But he answered, "It is easy. Take pen and ink, and write quickly." He did so. At the ninth hour he said to me, "In my chest I have a few little valuables, pepper, napkins, and incense. Go quickly and bring hither the priests of our monastery, that I may distribute among them what gifts God has granted me. The rich men, in this day, may wish to give gold and silver and the like treasures; I, with great charity and gladness, shall give to my brothers what God has bestowed." And with fear I did this. Then addressing one and all, he besought them to sing masses for him and to pray diligently;

¹ Cuthbert, who must not be confused with the better known St. Cuthbert, was a pupil of Bede.

² May 26, 735.

³ *Hebrews*, x, 31.

⁴ Here follows the so-called *Bede's Death Song*, for a translation of which see p. 8.

⁵ The time between Easter and Pentecost.

⁶ *Hebrews*, xii, 6.

⁷ *St. John*, vi. 9.

which they freely promised. They all continued to weep and mourn, especially because he had said that they should not see his face much longer in this life. But they rejoiced because he said, "It is time that I return to Him who made me, who created me and formed me out of nothing. I have lived long, and my gracious Judge has ordered my life well; the time of my return is come, for I desire to die and to be with Christ."

This and much else he said, passing the day in gladness up to vespers. And the boy mentioned above said, "One sentence, dear master, is yet to be written." He answered, "Write quickly." After a little the boy said, "Now the sentence is written." "It is well; you spoke truly; it is finished. Take my head in your hands, for it pleases me greatly to sit opposite my holy place where I was wont to pray, so that sitting I may invoke my Father." And thus, on the floor of his cell, chanting "Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto," as he named the Holy Spirit he breathed his last, and so passed to the heavenly kingdom.

All who saw the death of the venerable father said that they had seen no one end his life in such devotion and tranquillity, for, as you have heard, while his soul was in his body, he chanted the Gloria Patri and other divine songs to the glory of God, and, his hands uplifted to the living God, he uttered thanks without ceasing. Know, dear brother, that I could record many things of him, but my lack of skill in speech makes my narrative short. Nevertheless, I purpose, with God's help, to write of him more fully what I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears.

King Alfred

849-901

THE STATE OF LEARNING IN ENGLAND

King Alfred's Preface to his Translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*

(Translated by P. V. D. SHELLEY)

Alfred, the king, greets bishop Werferth,¹ with his words lovingly and in friendly wise; and I let it be known to thee that it has very often come to my mind what wise men there were formerly among the English, both of godly and of worldly office, and what happy times were those throughout England; and how the kings who had rule of the folk in those days obeyed God and His ministers; and how within their

borders they maintained their peace, their customs, and their might, and at the same time extended their territory beyond; how they prospered both in war and in wisdom; and also how zealous were those of the religious life in teaching and in learning and in all those services which they owed to God; and how foreigners came hither to this land seeking wisdom and learning, and how we must now get them from abroad if we are to have them. So clean was learning fallen away among the English, that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their service-book in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English; and I ween there were not many beyond the Humber. So few of them were there that I cannot think of one south of the Thames when I came to the throne. To God Almighty be the thanks that we have any supply of teachers now. And therefore I bid thee, as I believe thou art willing, as often as thou art able, to free thyself from worldly affairs, that thou mayest apply the wisdom that God gavest thee wherever thou canst. Think what punishments came upon us on account of this world, when we neither loved wisdom ourselves nor allowed it to other men: the name alone of being Christians we loved, and very few of the practises.

When I remembered all this, I also recalled that I saw, before it was all laid waste and burnt, how the churches throughout England stood filled with treasures and books, and also a great number of God's servants; but they knew very little use of those books, since they were able to understand no whit of them, for they were not written in their own tongue. As if they had said, "Our elders, who held these places of old, loved wisdom, and through it they got wealth and left it to us. Here we can yet see their tracks, but we know not how to follow them; and therefore we have lost both the wealth and the wisdom, because we would not bend our minds to follow their path."

When I remembered all this, I wondered very greatly, concerning the good wise men who were formerly among the English and had fully learned all those books, that they had turned no part of them into their own language. But I soon answered myself and said, "They did not think that men would ever become so careless and that learning would so fall away; hence they neglected it, through the desire that there might be the more wisdom here in the land the more we knew of languages."

Then I called to mind how the law was first found in Hebrew; and again, when the Greeks learned it, they translated all of it into their own tongue, and also all other books. And

¹ Bishop of Worcester. Alfred intended to send a copy of this work to each of the English bishops.

again, the Romans likewise, after they learned them, translated the whole of them, through wise interpreters, into their own language. And also all other Christian peoples turned some part of them into their own tongue. Therefore it seems better to me, if it seems so to you, that we also translate some books that are most needful for all men to know, into that language which we are all able to understand; and that, as we very easily can with God's help if we have peace, we cause all the youth now in England of the class of freemen, who are rich enough to be able to apply themselves to it, to be set to learn, the while they can be put to no other employment, until they are well able to read English writing; and afterward let those be taught in the Latin tongue who are to be taught further and to be put in a higher office. When I remembered how, before now, the knowledge of Latin had fallen away among the English and yet many knew how to read English writing, I began, among other various and manifold concerns of this kingdom, to translate into English the book that in Latin is called "Pastoralis," and in English, "Shepherd's Book,"—at times word by word, and again according to the sense, as I had learned it from Plegmund my archbishop, and from Asser my bishop, and from Grimbold my mass-priest, and from John my mass-priest. After I had learned it, I turned it into English as I understood it and could most clearly expound it; and to every bishopric in my kingdom I wish to send one; and in each there is a book-mark worth fifty mancuses. And I command in God's name that no man take the book-mark from the book, nor the book from the minster. We know not how long there may be such learned bishops as, God be thanked, there now are nearly everywhere. Therefore, I would that they may always be in their place, unless the bishop wishes to have them with him, or they be lent anywhere, or anyone copy them.

THE CONSOLATION OF BOETHIUS

(Selections from King Alfred's Translation)

(Translated from the Old English by W. J. SEDGEFIELD)

THE KING AND HIS SERVANTS¹

"When Philosophy had sung this song she was silent for a time. Then the Mind answered, saying, 'O Philosophy, thou knowest that I never greatly delighted in covetousness and the

possession of earthly power, nor longed for this authority," but I desired instruments and materials to carry out the work I was set to do, which was that I should virtuously and fittingly administer the authority committed unto me. Now no man, as thou knowest, can get full play for his natural gifts, nor conduct and administer government, unless he hath fit tools, and the raw material to work upon. By material I mean that which is necessary to the exercise of natural powers; thus a king's raw material and instruments of rule are a well peopled land, and he must have men of prayer, men of war, and men of work. As thou knowest, without these tools no king may display his special talent. Further, for his materials he must have means of support for the three classes above spoken of, which are his instruments; and these means are land to dwell in, gifts, weapons, meat, ale, clothing, and what else soever the three classes need. Without these means he cannot keep his tools in order, and without these tools he cannot perform any of the tasks entrusted to him. "I have desired material for the exercise of government that my talents and my power might not be forgotten and hidden away," for every good gift and every power soon groweth old, and is no more heard of, if Wisdom be not in them. Without Wisdom, no faculty can be brought out, for whatsoever is done unwisely can never be accounted as skill. To be brief, I may say that it has ever been my desire to live honourably while I was alive, and after my death to leave to them that should come after me my memory in good works.'

FATE AND PROVIDENCE

"Then she began to speak in a very remote and roundabout fashion, as though she were not alluding to the subject, and yet she led up to it, saying, 'All creatures, both the seen and the unseen, the motionless and the moving, receive from the unmoving, unchanging, and undivided God their due order, form, and proportions; and, inasmuch as it was so created, He knoweth why He hath made all that He hath made. Nothing of what He hath made is without use to Him. God ever dwelleth in the high city of His unity and mercy; thence He dealeth out ordinances many and various to all His creatures, and thence He ruleth them all. But regarding that which we call God's providence and foresight, this exists as long as it abides with Him in His mind, ere it be brought to pass, and while it is but thought. But as soon as it is accomplished we call it Fate. From this every man may know that Providence and Fate are not only two names, but two things. Providence is the Divine Reason,

¹The passages in this, and in the following selection, not enclosed in double quotation marks, were composed by Alfred himself and inserted in his translation.

and lieth fast in the high Creator that knoweth how everything shall befall ere it come to pass. But that which we call Fate is God's working day by day, both that which we see, and that which is not seen of us. The divine forethought holdeth up all creatures, so that they may not fall asunder from their due order. Fate therefore allots to all things their forms, places, seasons, and proportions; but Fate comes from the mind and the forethought of Almighty God, who worketh whatsoever He will according to His unspeakable providence.

'Even as every craftsman thinks over and marks out his work in his mind ere he take it in hand, and then carries it out altogether, so this changing lot that we call Fate proceeds according to His forethought and purpose, even as He resolveth that it shall be done. Though it seem to us manifold, partly good, partly evil, yet it is to Him good, pure and simple, for He bringeth it all to a goodly conclusion, and doeth for good all that He doeth. When it is done, we call it Fate; before, it was God's forethought and His purpose. Now Fate He setteth in motion by means of the good angels or the souls of men, or the lives of other creatures, or through the heavenly bodies, or the divers wiles of evil spirits; at one time through one of them, at another through all. But it is manifest that the divine purpose is single and unchanging, and rules everything in orderly wise, and gives unto all things their shape. Now some things in this world are subject to Fate, others are in no way subject; but Fate, and the things that are subject to her, are subject to divine Providence. Concerning this I can tell thee a parable, so that thou mayest the more clearly understand who are the men that are subject to Fate, and who are they that are not.

'All this moving and changing creation turns round the unmoving, the unchanging, and the undivided God, and He ruleth all creatures as He purposed in the beginning, and still doth purpose. The wheels of a wagon turn upon its axle," while the axle stands still and yet bears all the wagon and guides all its movement. The wheel turns round, and the nave next the wheel moves more firmly and securely than the felly does. Now the axle is as it were the highest good we call God, and the best men move next unto God just as the nave moves nearest the axle. The middle sort of men are like the spokes, for one end of each spoke is fast in the nave, and the other is in the felly; and so it is with the midmost man, at one time thinking in his mind upon this earthly life, at another upon the divine life, as if he looked with one eye heavenwards, and with the other earth-

wards. Just as the spokes have one end sticking in the felly and the other in the nave, while in the middle the spoke is equally near either, so the midmost men are at the middle of the spokes, the better sort nearer the nave, and the baser nearer the fellies, joined, however, to the nave, which in turn is fixed to the axle. Now, the fellies are fastened to the spokes, though they roll on the ground; and so the least worthy men are in touch with the middle sort, and these with the best, and the best with God. Though the worst men turn their love towards this world they cannot abide therein, nor come to anything, if they be in no degree fastened to God, no more than the wheel's fellies can be in motion unless they be fastened to the spokes, and the spokes to the axle. The fellies are farthest from the axle, and therefore move least steadily. The nave moves nearest the axle, therefore is its motion the most sure. So do the best men; the nearer to God they set their love, and the more they despise earthly things, the less care is theirs, "and the less they reckon how Fate veers, or what she brings." So also the nave is ever sound, let the fellies strike on what they may; and nevertheless the nave is in some degree severed from the axle. Thereby thou mayest perceive that the wagon keeps far longer whole the less its distance from the axle, and so also those men are most free from care, both in this present life of tribulation and in the life to come, that are firmly fixed in God. But the farther they are sundered from God, the more sorely are they confounded and afflicted both in mind and in body.

"That which we call Fate is, compared to divine Providence, what reflection and reason are when measured against perfect knowledge, and as things temporal compared with things eternal, or, again, like the wheel compared with the axle, the axle governing all the wagon. So with the forethought of God; it governeth the firmament and the stars, and maketh the earth to be at rest, and measureth out the four elements, to wit, water, earth, fire, and air. These it keepeth in peace; unto these it giveth form, and again taketh it away, changing them to other forms and renewing them again. It engendereth everything that groweth, and hideth and preserveth it when old and withered, and again bringeth it out and reneweth it when it pleaseth." Some sages, however, say that Fate rules both weal and woe of every man. But I say, as do all Christian men, that it is the divine purpose that rules them, not Fate; and I know that it judges all things very rightly, though unthinking men may not think so. They hold that all are good that

work their will, and no wonder, for they are blinded by the darkness of their sins. "But divine Providence understandeth it all most rightly, though we in our folly think it goes awry, being unable to discern what is right. He, however, judgeth all aright, though at times it seems to us otherwise."

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE

Selections

(Translated by J. A. GILES)

A. 443. This year the Britons sent over sea to Rome, and begged for help against the Picts; but they had none, because they were themselves warring against Attila, king of the Huns. And then they sent to the Angles, and entreated the like of the ethelings¹ of the Angles.

A. 444. This year St. Martin died.

A. 449. This year Martianus and Valentinus succeeded to the empire, and reigned seven years. And in their days Hengist and Horsa,² invited by Vortigern, king of the Britons, landed in Britain on the shore which is called Wippidsfleet;³ at first in aid of the Britons, but afterwards they fought against them. King Vortigern gave them land in the south-east of this country, on condition that they should fight against the Picts. Then they fought against the Picts, and had the victory wheresoever they came. They then sent to the Angles; desired a larger force to be sent, and caused them to be told the worthlessness of the Britons, and the excellencies of the land. Then they soon sent thither a larger force in aid of the others. At that time there came men from three tribes in Germany; from the Old-Saxons, from the Angles, from the Jutes. From the Jutes came the Kentish-men and the Wight-warians, that is, the tribe which now dwells in Wight, and that race among the West-Saxons which is still called the race of Jutes. From the Old-Saxons came the men of Essex and Sussex and Wessex. From Anglia which has ever since remained waste betwixt the Jutes and the Saxons, came the men of East Anglia, Middle Anglia, Mercia, and all North-humbria. Their leaders were two brothers, Hengist and Horsa: they were the sons of Wihtgils; Wihtgils son of Witta, Witta of Wecta, Wecta of Woden; from this Woden sprang all our Royal families, and those of the South-humbrians also.

A. 540. This year the sun was eclipsed on the twelfth before the Kalends of July, and the

¹ Princes.

² Leaders of the Jutes.

³ Now, Ebbsfleet in the Isle of Thanet, on the east coast of Kent.

stars showed themselves full-nigh half an hour after nine in the forenoon.

A. 596. This year Pope Gregory sent Augustine to Britain, with a great many monks, who preached the word of God to the nation of the Angles.

Aelfric

c. 955-c. 1020

THE DAILY MIRACLE

(From the *Homilies*, 990-994, translated by P. V. D. SHELLY)

Many wonders hath God wrought, and daily doth work; but these wonders are much weakened in the sight of men because they are very common. That each day Almighty God feeds all the earth and directs the good, is a greater miracle than was that of feeding five thousand men with five loaves; yet men marvelled at that, not because it was a greater miracle, but because it was uncommon. Who grants fruit to our fields, and increases the harvest from a few grains, but He who multiplied the five loaves? The might was in Christ's hands, and the five loaves were seed, as it were not sown in the earth, but multiplied by Him who wrought the earth.

This miracle is very great and deep in its tokens. Often one sees fair letters written, and praises the writer and the letters, and knows not what they mean. He who has knowledge of letters, praises their fairness, and reads the letters, and understands what they mean. In one way do we view a painting, but in other wise, letters. In the case of the painting, one needs only to see it and praise it; but it is not enough that you look at letters without also reading them and understanding the sense. So is it with the wonder that God wrought with the five loaves; it is not enough that we marvel at the token or praise God for it, unless we also understand its meaning.

Wulfstan

SERMON TO THE ENGLISH

AT THE TIME OF THEIR GREAT SUFFERINGS
FROM THE DANES, THAT IS, IN THE
DAYS OF KING AETHELRED.¹

(Translated by P. V. D. SHELLY)

Beloved men, know it for sooth, that this world is in haste and neareth the end. Hence in the world is it ever the longer the worse, and so it must needs grow very evil from day to day before the coming of Antichrist, because

¹ This was apparently written in either 999 or 1014. The writer may have been Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, c. 1003-1023.

of the folk's sins; and indeed it will then be fearful and terrible far and wide in the world.

Understand also that the devil hath now for many years led this people too far astray, that there has been little faith among men, though they have spoken fair. Wrong hath reigned too much in the land, and of many men never hath one thought of the remedy as eagerly as he ought; but daily have we heaped evil upon evil, and reared injustice and un-law far too widely throughout the nation. And for this we have also endured many losses and insults, and if we are to expect any mending, then must we merit of God better than we have done ere this, for with great deserving have we earned the miseries that sit upon us, and with very great deserving must we obtain the remedy at God's hands, if things henceforth are to be better. We know full well that a mickle breach needs much mending, and a great fire, much water, if that fire is at all to be quenched. And great also is the need to every man that he willingly keep God's law henceforth better than he did before, and carry out His justice with uprightness.

Among heathen people no man durst hold back little or much of that which by law is due to the worship of idols; but everywhere we withhold God's rights, all too often. Neither among the heathen durst man injure, within or without, any of those things that are brought to the idols and are appointed for sacrifice; but we have clean despoiled God's house within and without. Also, God's servants are everywhere deprived of honor and protection; and some men say that among heathen peoples no man durst in any wise ill treat the servants of idols, as men now too generally do the servants of God, in places where Christians should hold to God's law and protect God's servants.

Sooth is it that I say—we have need of mending, for God's laws have been waning too long within this land on every side, and the folk-laws have become worse, all too much since Edgar died.* Sanctuaries are too generally unprotected, and God's houses are too clean bereft of their old rights, and are stripped within of all things befitting. Men of religion have now this long time been greatly despised; widows unlawfully are forced to marry, and too many are made poor and are greatly ill used. Poor men are sore deceived and miserably ensnared, and, though innocent, are sold out of the land into the power of foreigners; through cruel un-law children are enslaved for petty theft; free-right is taken away, and thrall-right curtailed, and alms-right dimin-

ished. Freemen cannot command their own persons, nor go where they will, nor do with their own as they wish; nor can thralls have what they possess, though they toiled for it in the time that was theirs, nor that which by God's grace good men have given them as an almsgift for the love of God; but each alms-right which each one in God's grace ought right gladly to perform, he decreaseth or withholdeth, since injustice and love of un-law are too common among men. In a word, God's laws are loathed, and learning is despised; and for this we all often suffer insults through God's anger, as he may understand who can; and the loss will be common to all this people, though men think not so, unless God save.

Certainly it's clear and manifest to us all that hitherto we have more often broken [the law] than bettered it, and hence this nation hath had many set-backs. This long time naught hath availed at home or abroad; there have been harrying and hunger, burning and bloodshed, on every hand often and often; stealing and slaughter, sedition and pestilence, cattle-plague and disease, slander and hate, and rapine of robbers have harmed us greatly; unjust taxes have afflicted us sorely, and often foul weather has spoiled our harvests; because, as it may seem, now for many years in this land there have been much unrighteousness and unstable faith among men everywhere. Often hath a kinsman protected his kinsman no more than a foreigner, nor the father his son, nor at times the son his own father, nor one brother the other. Nor hath any of us ordered his life as he should,—neither those in orders, according to their rule, nor laymen, according to the law; but the lust of crime is all too often a law to us, and we hold not to the learning or law of God or of men as we should. No one hath thought toward the other faithfully as he should, but for the most part each is deceitful and injures others by word and by deed; unrighteously and from behind, each striketh at his fellow with shameful calumnies and accusations; let him do more if he can.

Here in our land is much treachery toward God and the world, and likewise in divers ways traitors too many. Of all treasons in the world the greatest is that a man betray his lord's soul; and a full great treason is that also, that a man betray his lord's life or drive him living from the land; and both have been present in this realm. Edward² was betrayed, then murdered, and after that burned, and Aethelred⁴ was driven from the land. Gossips⁵ and

² Edward the Martyr, murdered in 978.

⁴ Aethelred the Un-red, or "ill advised," was obliged to flee to Normandy in 1014.

⁵ Sponsors.

* Edgar, King of Wessex, died 975.

god-children too many have been slain throughout this people, besides others all too many, who, without fault, have been destroyed. Too many holy places, far and wide, have perished, because certain men were lodged there, as they would not have been, if we had wished to know reverence for God's peace. Christian folk too many have been sold all the while out of this land. All this is loathsome to God, let him believe it who will. . . . Also we know full well whence hath come the evil that a father sell his son for a price, and the son his mother, and one brother the other, into the power of strangers outside this nation. All these are mickle and terrible deeds, as he may understand who will; and there are yet greater and more manifold that afflict this people. Many are forsworn and greatly purjured; pledges are broken again and again; and it is clear in this land that God's wrath sits heavily upon us,—let him who can, understand.

Lo, how can greater shame come upon men through God's wrath than cometh upon us, for our own deserts? Though a thrall escape from his lord and leave Christendom to become a Viking, and it come about afterward thatthane and thrall come together in battle, if the thrall foully slay the thane, the thane for all his relations must lie without wer-geld, and if the thane foully kill the thrall whom he formerly owned, he must pay the wer-geld of a thane.* Full evil laws and shameful tribute are, through God's wrath, common to us, as he who can may understand; and many misfortunes beset this people. This long time nothing hath prospered within or without, but harrying and hatred have been continual on every side. The English have now long been without victory, and too greatly dismayed, through God's anger; and the ship-men⁷ have become so strong, with God's consent, that in battle one of them will often put to flight ten of us, sometimes less, sometimes more, all because of our sins. . . . Often a thrall bindeth fast the thane who was formerly his lord, and maketh of him a thrall, through God's anger. Alas for the misery, alas for the shame in the eyes of the world, that Englishmen now suffer, all by God's wrath! Often two or three seamen will drive a

crowd of Christian men from sea to sea through the nations, huddled together, to the shame of us all in the sight of the world,—if in earnest we knew any shame or even would rightly understand. And all the misery that we continually suffer we repay with honor to them that shame us. We pay gelds⁸ to them continually, and they abuse us daily. They harry, they burn, they spoil and plunder, and carry off to the ships; and lo, what else in these troubles is clear and manifest but God's wrath towards this people?

No wonder misfortune is upon us, for we know full well that now for many years men have seldom recked what they wrought in word or deed; but this nation hath become, as it may appear, very sinful, through manifold sins and misdeeds, through murder and evil, through greed and covetousness, rapine and robbery, treachery and heathen vices, through treason and deceit, through law-breaking and sedition, through attacks on kinsmen, through manslaughter and violation of religious vows, through adultery and incest and divers fornications. Also, as we said before, through oath-breaking and pledge-breaking, and through divers falsehoods, more than should be are ruined and forsworn. Breaches of the peace and of fasting are wrought again and again. Also here in the land are reprobate apostates and hostile persecutors of the Church, and cruel tyrants, all too many; despisers of divine law and Christian customs; and everywhere in the nation foolish mockers, most often of those things commanded by God's ministers, and very often of those things that belong of right to God's law. Therefore hath now come about the wide-spread evil custom that men are more ashamed of good deeds than of misdeeds, for men too often deride good deeds, and all too much revile the pious, and blame and greet with contumely those who love right and have in any measure the fear of God. Because men despise all that they ought to praise and continually loathe what they should love, all too many are brought to evil thoughts and deeds, so that they are not ashamed though they sin greatly and work in all things against God himself; but because of idle calumnies they are ashamed to better their misdeeds, as books teach,—like those fools who for their pride will not save themselves before that time when they cannot though they would. . . .

An historian there was in the time of the Britons, Gildas⁹ by name, who wrote of their misdeeds, how by their sins they so greatly

* The thane was of the higher rank, and the thrall of the lowest rank in old English society. *Wer-geld*, or *Man-price*, was the sum at which a man's life was valued according to law, the amount varying for the different ranks of society. If one murdered another, the murderer could atone for his crime by paying *wer-geld* to the kinsmen of the one slain. Wulfstan's complaint is that the law pertaining to *wer-gelds* was no longer administered with justice, and that in the case described, the thane who should kill his escaped thrall, or slave, would have to pay the same *wer-geld* as if he had killed a thane, and this in spite of the fact that the thrall had joined the enemy.

⁷ The Danes, or Vikings.

⁸ Payments of money to buy off the Danes.

⁹ A Romanized Briton who, about 547, wrote a history of Britain from Roman times to his own day.

angered God that He very soon let the army of the English win their land and entirely destroyed the flower of the Britons. This, he said, came about because the clergy broke their vows, and laymen the law, because of plundering by the rich, extortion, evil laws of princes, false judgments; ~~because of the sloth and~~ ignorance of bishops, and the wicked cowardice of God's ministers, who all too often were silent concerning the truth, and mumbled within their jaws when they should have called out. Through foul wantonness of the folk, through gluttony and manifold sins, they ruined their land, and themselves perished.

But let us do, as is needful for us,—take warning by such. Sooth is it that I say, worse deeds we know have been among the English than we have heard of anywhere among the Britons, and therefore have we great need to reflect and to reconcile ourselves to God. Let

us do as we have need to do, turn to the right and in some measure shun and forsake unrighteousness, and eagerly better what we have heretofore broken. Let us seek Christ on our knees and often call upon Him with trembling heart and earn His mercy. Let us love God and fulfill God's laws, and perform eagerly what we promised when we received baptism, or those promised who at baptism spoke for us. Let us rightly order words and works, and willingly cleanse our inner thoughts, carefully keep oath and pledge, and without weakness have some faith amongst us. Let us often consider the great judgment we shall all come to, and eagerly save ourselves from the raging fire of hell's torment, and earn for us the glory and the gladness that God hath prepared for those who work His will in the world. May God help us. Amen.

II. THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER

1066-c. 1350

POEMA MORALE¹

(Before 1200)

I am now older than I was, in winters and in
 lore,
 I wield more power than I did, my wit ought
 to be more.
 Too long a child I have been, in word and eke
 in deed;
 And though I am in winters old, too young I am
 in rede.²
 My life methinks a useless one, like that I've
 ever led;
 When I bethink me well thereon, full sore I am
 adread.
 Mere idleness and childishness seems most that
 I have done;
 Full late I have bethought myself, unless God's
 grace I've won.
 I've spoken many idle words since I to speak
 knew how,
 And many deeds I did in youth that I repent
 me now.
 All too often have I sinned in work and eke in
 word;
 All too much, alas, I've spent, too little laid in
 hoard.
 At most of that I liked of yore I now can only
 grieve;
 Who overmuch doth have his will, himself doth
 but deceive.
 I might in truth have better done, had I of joy
 great wealth;
 And now I would, and yet cannot, for age and
 for unhealth.
 Old age on me hath stolen fast, before of it I
 wist;
 Nor can I see before me now for dark smoke and
 for mist.
 Fearful are we to do good, in evil all too bold;
 More in awe of man is man than of the Christ of
 old.
 Who doth not well the while he may, full oft it
 shall him rue,
 When men at last shall surely reap that which
 they ere did strew.

Layamon

HOW LAYAMON WROTE HIS BOOK

(From the *Brut*,¹ c. 1205)

In the land lived a priest, who was Layamon
 callèd,
 He was Leovenath's son; Lord to him be
 gracious,

¹ This selection is taken from the opening of the *Poema Morale*, or Moral Ode; a poem of about 400 lines. It may have been written as early as the reign of Henry I. (1100-1135).

² Counsel, wisdom.

³ The *Brut* is a poem of about 30,000 lines. It is on

He abided at Arnley, at the great Church there
 Upon Severn's side, (it seemed to him good
 there)

Hard by to Radestone, where he read bookès. 5
 It came in his mind, and he made it his purpose,
 To tell of the English, the triumphs of old;
 What names the men had, what lands they were
 come from;

What folk English-land first of all ownèd
 After the deluge that down from the Lord
 came

Which quellèd² all men that quick here it
 founde,

Except Noah and Shem, Japhet and Ham,
 And their four wives who were in the ark with
 them.

So 'gan Layamon wander wide 'mongst the
 people,

And noble books got he for guides in his
 labours.

That English book took he, made by Saint
 Bæda;

Another in Latin, left by Saint Albin,
 And the bless'd Austin,³ who baptism brought
 us;

A third he took likewise, and laid it among
 them,

That a French clerk had made,—Wace was he
 callèd,

This goodly writing he gave to the noble
 Eleanor, of Henry, that high King, his Queen.
 Layamon laid these books down, their leaves he
 turned over,

With love he looked on them, the Lord grant
 him mercy,

Feather⁴ took he with fingers, and fair on the
 book-skin

The sooth words then wrote he, and set them
 together,

And these three writings he wrought into one.

Now Layamon prayeth for the Lord's love
 Almighty,

Each wise man who readeth words in this book
 written,

And heedeth this teaching, that these holy
 wordès

He say all together:

For the soul of his father, who forth him
 broughtè,

For the soul of his mother, who made him a man,
 And for his own soul, so that better befall it.

Amen.

the legendary history of Britain, based largely on the
Brut of the Anglo-Norman poet Wace. *Brut*=Brutus,
 who according to the fabulous accounts of Geoffrey of
 Monmouth and others was the grandson of Æneas, and
 the founder of New Troy or London.

² Killed.

³ Austin, i. e. St. Augustine, the first Archbishop of
 Canterbury.

⁴ Pen.

Orm

ORMULUM¹

(c. 1215-1220)

Now, brother Walter, brother mine
 After the fleshes kind,
 And brother mine in Christendom
 Through baptism and through truth,
 And brother mine eke in God's house,
 Once more, in a third way,
 Since that we two have taken both
 One book of rules to follow.
 Under the canons' rank and life
 So as Saint Austin² set;
 I now have done even as thou bad'st,
 Forwarding to thy will,
 I now have turned into English
 The Gospel's holy lore,
 After that little wit that me
 My Lord and God has lent.
 Thou thoughtest how that it might well
 To mickle profit turn,
 If English folk, for love of Christ,
 It readily would learn
 And follow it, fulfilling it
 With thought, with word, with deed,
 And therefore yearnedst thou that I
 This work for thee should work;
 And I have forwarded it for thee,
 And all through help of Christ. . . .
 And since the holy gospel book
 All this goodness shows us,
 This sevenfold good that Christ to us
 Did grant through His great love,
 For this 'tis meet all Christian folk
 Should follow gospel's lore.
 And therefore have I rendered it
 Into English speech,
 Because I wished most earnestly
 That all good English folk
 With ear should hearken unto it,
 With heart should truly believe,
 With tongue should ever tell of it,
 In deed should follow it,
 To win through Christ in Christendom
 The soul's salvation true.
 And God almighty give us might
 And wish and wit and will
 To follow well this English book
 That is all holy lore,
 So that we may full worthy be
 To know high heaven's bliss.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

I that in English this have set,
 Englishmen to teach,
 At the time when I was christened,
 By name of Orm was called.
 And I, Orm, full inwardly
 With mouth and eke with heart,

Here bid all those good Christian men
 Who either hear or read
 This book, I bid them now that they
 Will pray for me this prayer:
 The brother who this English book
 Both wrote and wrought the first,
 May he as wages for his work
 True bliss of heaven find.

Amen.

Thomas of Hales

A LOVE RUNE¹

(Before 1226)

A maid of Christ entreateth me
 That I for her a love-rune write
 By which most plainly she may see
 The way to choose a faithful knight;
 One that to her shall loyal be
 And guard and keep her by his might.
 Never will I deny her plea,
 To teach her this be my delight.
 Maiden, thou mayest well behold
 How this world's love is but a race
 Beset with perils manifold
 Fickle and ugly, weak and base.
 Those noble knights that once were bold
 As breath of wind pass from their place,
 Under the mold now lie they cold,
 Wither like grass and leave no trace.
 There's none so rich, nor none so free,
 But that he soon shall hence away.
 Nothing may ever his warrant be,
 Gold, nor silver, nor ermine gay.
 Though swift, his end he may not flee,
 Nor shield his life for a single day.
 Thus is this world, as thou may'st see,
 Like to the shadow that glides away.
 This world all passes as the wind,
 When one thing comes, another flies;
 What was before, is now behind;
 What was held dear, we now despise.
 Therefore he does as doth the blind
 That in this world would claim his prize.
 This world decays, as ye may find;
 Truth is put down and wrong doth rise.
 The love that may not here abide,
 Thou dost great wrong to trust to now;
 E'en so it soon shall from thee glide,
 'Tis false, and brittle, and slight, I trow,
 Changing and passing with every tide,
 While it lasts it is sorrow enow;
 At end, man wears not robe so wide
 But he shall fall as leaf from bough.

Paris and Helen, where are they
 That were so bright and fair of face?

¹ A love poem, writing, or counsel.

¹ The book of the monk Orm, an unfinished poem of over 10,000 lines, giving the gospels of the ecclesiastical year as arranged in the Mass-book (Cf. "The Gospel's holy lore," line 14), with comments and appropriate religious instruction.

² Saint Augustine (354-430) one of the greatest of the Early Fathers of the Church

Amadas, Tristram, did they stay,
Or Iseult with her winsome grace?
Could mighty Hector death delay,
Or Cæsar, high in pride of place?
They from this earth have slipped away
As sheaf from field, and left no trace.

They are as though they never were,
Of them are many wonders said,
And it is pity for to hear
How these were slain with tortures dread,
And how alive they suffered here;
Their heat is turned to cold instead,
Thus doth the world but false appear,
The foolish trust it,—lo! 'tis sped.

For though a mighty man he were
As Henry, England's king by birth,
Though he as Absalom were fair,
Whose peer lived not in all the earth,
Yet of his pride he's soon stripped bare,
At last he'll fetch not a herring's worth,
Maid, if thou mak'st true love thy care
I'll show thee a love more true than earth.

Ah! maiden sweet, if thou but knew
All the high virtues of this knight!
He is fair and bright of hue,
Mild, with face of shining light,
Meet to be loved and trusted too,
Gracious, and wise beyond man's sight,
Nor through him wilt thou ever rue,
If thou but trust in his great might.

He is the strongest in the land;
As far as man can tell with mouth,
All men lie beneath his hand,
East, and West, and North, and South;
Henry, King of Engelland,
He holds of him and to him boweth
His messenger, at his command,
His love declares, his truth avow'th.

Speak'st thou of buildings raised of old,
Wrought by the wise king Solomon,
Of jasper, sapphires, and fine gold,
And of many another stone?
His home is fairer by many fold
Than I can tell to any one;
'Tis promised, maid, to thee of old,
If thou wilt take him for thine own.

It stands upon foundations sound,
So built that they shall never fall;
Nor miner sap them underground,
Nor shock e'er shake the eternal wall;
Cure for each wound therein is found,
Bliss, joy and song, fill all that hall.
The joys that do therein abound
Are thine, thou may'st possess them all.

There friend from friend shall never part,
There every man shall have his right;
No hate is there, no angry heart,
Nor any envy, pride or spite;
But all shall with the angels play

In peace and love in heavenly light.
Are they not, maid, in a good way,
Who love and serve our Lord aright?

No man may Him ever see
As He is in all His might,
And without pure bliss may be
When he knows the Lord of light.
With Him all is joy and glee,
He is day without a night.
Will he not most happy be
Who may bide with such a knight?

This writing, maiden, that I send,
Open it, break seal and read;
Wide unroll, its words attend,
Learn without book each part with speed.
Then straight to other maidens wend
And teach it them to meet their need;
Whoso shall learn it to the end
In sooth 'twill stand him in good stead.

And when thou sittest sorrowing,
Draw forth the scroll I send thee here,
And with sweet voice its message sing,
And do its bidding with good cheer.
To thee this does His greeting bring;
Almighty God would have thee near;
He bids thee come to His wedding,
There where he sits in Heaven's high sphere.

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE¹

(c. 1216-1225)

Once within a summer's dale,
In a very secret vale,
Heard I 'gainst each other rail
Hoary Owl and Nightingale.
That strife was stiff, and stark, and strong,
Now 'twas soft, now loud it rung,
And each bird would the other flout,
And all the evil mood let out;
And each said of the other's way
The very worst she knew to say;
Indeed, about each other's song
The strife they waged was very strong.
The Nightingale began the speech
From her corner in a beech:
She sat upon a pleasant bough,
Blossoms about there were enow,
Where in a thick and lonely hedge,
Mingled soft shoots and greenest sedge.
She, gladdened by the bloomy sprays,
Varied her song in many ways.
Rather it seemed the joy I heard
Of harp or pipe than song of bird.
Such strains, methought, must rather float
From harp or pipe than feathered throat.

¹ This poem and the following are examples of a popular poetic mode in the middle ages, i. e. *debates* or *disputes*. In *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the two birds are represented as disputing over their respective modes of life. The poem has a broad human interest, as the two birds express two opposing ideals of life: the nightingale that of the refined, joyous, pleasure-lover; the owl that of the ascetic. The birds submit their case at last to the judgment of Nicholas of Guildford, whom some suppose to be the author of the poem.

Then, from a trunk that stood hard-by,
The Owl in turn made her reply,
O'er it the ivy grew apace;
There made the Owl her dwelling-place.

The Nightingale, who saw her plain,
Surveyed the bird with high disdain,
Filled with contempt she viewed the Owl,
Whom all men loathsome deem and foul.
"Monster," she cried, "take wings and flee,
I am the worse for sight of thee,
Truly, at thy black looks of yore
Full oft my song I've given o'er;
My tongue grows weak, my courage flies
When you appear before mine eyes,
I'm more inclined to spit than sing
At sound of thy harsh sputtering."

The Owl abode till it grew late.
Eve came, she could no longer wait;
Her heart began to swell and strain
Till scarce she could her breath contain.
Half choked with rage, these words she flung:
"What think'st thou now about my song?
Think'st thou in song I have no skill
Merely because I cannot trill?
Often to wrath thou movest me,
And dost abuse me shamefully.
If in my claws I held thee fast,—
And so, mayhap, I shall at last,—
And thou wert down from off thy spray
Then should'st thou sing another way."

Then made the Nightingale reply:
"If I avoid the open sky,
And shield myself in places bare,
Nothing for all thy threats I care;
While in my hedge secure I sit,
I reck not of your threats a whit.
I know you cruel to devour
All helpless things within your power,
Wreaking your wrath in evil way
On smaller birds where'er you may.
Hated of all the feathered rout,
The birds combine to drive you out;
Shrieking and scolding after you,
They hard upon your flight pursue.
The tit-mouse, if she had her will,
Would tease you and would work you ill.
Hateful to look upon thou art
In many ways, and every part;
Thy body's short, thy neck is small,
Thy head is greater far than all;
Thine eyes coal-black are staring wide
As though with woad they had been dyed;
You stare as though you'd like to bite
Each thing your cruel claws could smite;
Just like an awl that has been crooked,
Your bill is stiff and sharp and hooked,
With it you hoot both oft and long,
This passes with you for a song.
You threaten me, longing to clasp
My flesh and crush me in your grasp;
More fit for thee would be a frog,
That sits beneath the mill-wheel's cog,
Or snails, and mice, and creatures foul,—
Such are the sort fit for an Owl.
By day you sit, by night take wing,
Knowing you are an eerie thing;

25 That thou art loathsome and unclean
From thine own nest is plainly seen,
And also by thy foul young brood,
Which thou dost feed on foulest food."

30 [After a prolonged controversy, the Nightingale speaks again:]

"Owl," she said, "why dost thou so? 411
Thou sing'st in winter welawol!
Thou sing'st as doth a hen in snow,
And all she sings is but for woe: 415
Thou sing'st in winter's wrath and gloom,
In summer thou art ever dumb.
It is but for thy foolish spite
That thou with us canst not be bright;
For thee consuming envy burns 420
When to the land our bliss returns.
Thou'rt like some cross-grained, crabbed wight,
Who turns black looks on each delight,
Ready to grudge it, and to lower
If men are happy for an hour;
He wishes rather to espy 425
The tears of grief in each man's eye,
Let the mob fight, he does not care
Though each man pulls the other's hair.
E'en so thou dost upon thy side, 430
For when the snow lies thick and wide,
And every creature has his sorrow,
Thou sing'st from night-fall till the morrow.
But I, all bliss with me doth wake,
Each heart is gladder for my sake, 435
All live in joy when I am here,
All wait for me to reappear.
The blossom 'gins to spring and sprede
Upon the tree and on the mede,
The lily, with her face of snow, 440
Welcometh me, as well you know,
And bids me, with her aspect fair,
To fly to her, and greet her there.
So too, with ruddy face, the rose, 445
That from the thorny briar grows,
Bids me to sing in bush and grove,
A joyous carol for her love."

THE DEBATE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL¹

(13th Century)

As once I lay in winter's night,
Sunk deep in sleep before the day,
Methought I saw a wondrous sight;
Upon a bier a body lay.
It once had been a wilful Knight, 5
Scant service he to God did pay;
Clean lost had he his lifes light,
The ghost was out and must away. 80

When the ghost it needs must go,
It turned aside and near it stood; 10
Beheld the body it came fro
Most sorrowful in frightened mood. 85

¹The poem is a controversial dialogue between the body and the soul, the warring parts of man's nature which St. Paul speaks of as "the flesh" and "the spirit." In Prof. Kittredge's opinion this poem is incomparably the best embodiment of the theme that can be found in any literature.

It said: "Woe! woe! and welawoe!
Woe worth thy flesh, thy foulè blood,
Wretched body, why liest thou so
That wert but now so wild and wode?"

"Thou that once wert wont to ride
High on horse with head un-bowed,
Famed for prowess far and wide,
As a lion fierce and proud,
Where is all thy mighty pride,
And thy voice that rang so loud,
Why dost thou there all naked bide,
Stitched within that wretched shroud?"

"Where is now thy broidered weed,
Thy sumpters,* bearing thy rich bed?
Thy palfreys and thy battle-steed
Which at thy side thy Squire led?
Thy crying hawks of chosen breed,
And the hounds that thou hast fed?
Methinks, God reck's not of thy need,
For all thy friends are from thee fled."

"Where are thy castles and thy towers,
Thy chambers and thy stately halls,
Painted with many-coloured flowers,
And thy richè robes all?
Thy downy quilts and covertures,
Thy sendals² and thy purple palls?
Wretch! full dark is now thy bower,
To-morrow thou therein shalt fall!" . . .

Now when the ghost with gruesome cheer³
Thus had made his mournful moan,
The corpse, stretched stark upon the bier,—
A ghastly thing thus left alone,—
Its head and neck did strait uprear;
As a sick thing it 'gan to groan,
And said: "Where art thou now, my fere,<⁴
My ghost, that quite art from me gone?"

"God shaped thee in His image fair,
And gave to thee both wit and skill;
He trusted me unto thy care
To guide according to thy will.
In witchcrafts foul I had no share,
Nor wist I what was good nor ill,
But like dumb beast thy yoke I bare
And as thou bad'st I must fulfill."

"Placed thy pleasures to fulfill,
Both at even and at morn,
I was in thy keeping still
From the time that thou wast born.
Thou, that knewest good and ill,
Surely should'st have judged beforen
Of my pride, my foolish will;
Now alone thou liest forlorn."

The ghost it said: "Body, be still,
Where learned'st thou this moral air?
Givest thou me harsh words and ill
And liest like swollen wine-skin there?"

Thinkest thou, wretch, though thou shalt
fill
15 With thy foul flesh a noisome lair,
That from the deeds thou didest ill
Thou shalt be freed, nor judgment bear? 80

"Thinkest now thy rest to win
Where thou liest rotting in the clay?
20 Though thou be rotten bone and skin,
And blown with the wind away,
Yet limb and joint thou shalt come in
Again to me on doomsday,
Together we shall pass within
To Court, to take our bitter pay. 25

"You to my sway did God commit,
But when you thought on evil deed, 90
Hard in your teeth you held the bit,
And did all things that I forbode.
30 Sin you obeyed, you drew to it,
To ease, and shame, and lust, and greed;
I fought you hard with strength and wit, 95
But aye you followed your own rede. . . .

"I bade you mind your spirit's need; 105
But matins, mass, and evensong
You put aside for other deed,
And called them vain, with foolish tongue.
To wood and field you chose to speed,
Or run to Court to do men wrong; 110
Except for pride or greater meed
Small good you did your whole life long." . . . 112

The Body, answering, said its say: 137
"O Soul! thou hast done wrong in this,
All the blame on me to lay,
Now thou hast lost the highest bliss. 140
Where did I go, by wood or way,
Where sat, or stood, or did amiss,
But 'neath thine eye I went each day;
Well knowest thou the truth of this. . . . 144

"I should have been but as the sheep, 161
Or like the dumb and herded kine,
That eat, and drink, and sprawl, and sleep,
And passed my pain—like slaughtered swine;
Gold had I never cared to keep, 165
Nor known that water was not wine,
Nor been thrust down to hell's black deep,
But for thee,—Soul,—the fault was thine." 65

The ghost replied: "There is no doubt
Thy part was always me to bear: 170
Needs must this be, I was without
Or hand or foot wert thou not there:
Save as thou carriedst me about
I could do naught, nor least act share;
I must before thee bend devout, 175
To do aught else I did not dare. 75

"Of one woman born and bred,
Body, thou and I were twain;
Together fostered fair and fed
Till thou couldst walk and speak thee plain; 180

* Passionate.

² Sendal was a rich silk material.

³ Companion.

⁴ Pack-horses.

⁵ Expression.

Thee gently, moved by love, I led,
Nor dared I ever give thee pain.
To lose thee was my sorest dread,
Knowing I'd get no more again.

"I saw you fair in flesh and blood, 185
And all my love to you I gave;
That you should thrive methought was good,
Soft ease and rest I let you have;
This wrought in you rebellious mood,
You rushed to sin as impulse drave; 190
To fight against you did no good
You bore me with you as your slave. . . 192

"Well warned wert thou of this before, 201
And told we both should judgment have;
All this you scorned as foolish lore,
Yet watched thy kin go down to grave.
Thou didst all that the world thee bade, 205
Each thing thy eager flesh might crave,
And I allowed it (I was mad!),
Thou wert the master, I the slave."

[The Body speaks]

"Thinkest thou, Ghost, thou gainest aught 210
To quit thee from thy blame withal,
By saying that thou, so nobly wrought,
Wast forced to serve me as my thrall?
Nothing I did and nothing sought,
Ne'er plundered, stole, ne'er sinned at all,
But first in thee arose the thought. 215
Abide it who abide it shall!

"How wist I what was wrong or right,
What to take, what cast away,
Save as thou brought'st it to my sight, 219
Thou o'er whom wisdom should bear sway?
Thus, trained by you in base delight,
Companion of your pleasures gay,
Then did I ill with all my might,
Once more to have my wicked way.

"But haddest thou,—Christ grant 'twere 225
true,—
Given me hunger, thirst, and cold,
And taught me good that no good knew,
When I in evil was so bold,
Then, what I learned in youth from you,
I had held fast when I was old; 230
You let me North and South roam through,
And take my pleasures uncontrolled." . . . 232

Then wept the ghost most bitterly, 249
"Body, alas, alas!" (it said).
"That e'er of old I loved thee!
Lost was the love I on thee stayed;
Falsely you feigned a love for me,
And me a house of glass you made;
I gave you pleasures trustfully, 255
You, traitor, still my trust betrayed. . . .

"No longer, Body, may I dwell, 352
No longer stand to speak with thee;
Now I hear the hell-hounds yell,
And fiends more than man may see; 355

They come to fetch me down to hell,
No whither may I from them flee;
And thou shalt come with flesh and fell
At doomsday to dwell with me."

Almost before the words were said, 360
That told it wist where it must go,
Burst in at once in sudden raid
A thousand devils and yet mo.
And when they once had on him laid
Their savage claws, they tare him so 365
He was in torment, sore afraid,
Tossed, tugged and touselled to and fro.

For they were shaggy, shock-haired, tailed,
With bulgy bumps upon the back, 369
Their claws were sharp, they were long-nailed,
No limb there was but showed some lack.
The ghost was right and left assailed
By many a devil foul and black;
Crying for mercy naught availed
When God his vengeance due must take. . . . 375

Instead of colt for him to ride, 399
Straightway a cursed devil came,
That grisly grinned and yawned wide
Out from his throat flared tongues of flame.
The saddle on his back and side
Was stuck with pikes to pierce and maim,
'Twas as a heckle to bestride, 405
And all a-glow with scorching flame.

Upon that saddle was he slung,
As though to ride in tournament;
A hundred devils on him hung,
Hither and thither him they sent; 410
He with hot spears was pierced and stung,
And sore with hooks of iron rent;
At every stroke the sparkles sprung
As they from blazing brand were sent.

When he the ride had ridden at last, 415
Fast to that fearful saddle bound,
As hunted fox he down was cast,
The worrying hell-hounds close him round,
They rend him, trembling and aghast,
And harry him towards hell's dark bound; 420
A man might trace the way they passed
By blood-stains on the trampled ground.

They bid him then his horn to blow,
To urge on Bauston and Bevis,
His hounds, well wont his call to know, 425
For they would shortly sound the *pris*.^a
A hundred devils, in a row,
Drag him with ropes toward the abyss,
The loathly flames are seen below,
The mouth of hell it was, I wis. 430

When once that dread abode is won,
The fiends set up so loud a yell

^a *Heckle*. An instrument consisting of a board in which are inserted sharp spikes used for dressing flax or hemp, by splitting and straightening the fibres. See Burns' *Address to the Toothache*.

^b The note of the horn blown at the taking of the deer; used in hunting. French *prendre*.

That earth it opens up anon;
 Smother and smoke rise from that cell,
 Both of foul pitch and of brimstone, 435
 Men five miles off can smell that smell;
 Woe grips and holds that wretched one
 Who scents from far that scent of hell.

The foul fiends, with eager grin,
 Seize on the soul, and, whirling it, 440
 With might and main they hurl it in,
 Down, down, into the devil's pit;
 Then, they themselves plunge straight therein,
 To darkness with no sunshine lit,
 Earth closes on that house of sin, 445
 The dungeon-doors shut fast on it.

When they had gone, that loathsome brood,
 To hell's black pit, ere it was day,
 On every hair the sweat-drops stood
 For fright and fear as there I lay: 450
 To Jesus Christ, in chastened mood,
 Yearning I cried,—and dreaded aye
 That those fierce fiends so foul and lewd,
 Would come to carry me away.

Then thanked I Him who passed death's gate,
 Who unto man such mercy bore, 455
 My shield 'gainst many an evil fate,
 And felt my sins as ne'er before.
 All ye who sin, I charge you straight
 To shrive you and repent you sore; 460
 For sin was never sinned so great
 That Christ's wide mercy was not more.

Robert of Gloucester

IN PRAISE OF ENGLAND

(From *Riming Chronicle*,¹ c. 1300)

England is a right good land, I ween of all the
 best.
 Set it is at the world's end, afar within the
 west,
 And all about it goes the sea, it standeth as an
 isle.
 Its foes it thus needs fear the less, except it be
 through guile
 On part of folk of its own land, as hath been
 seen erstwhile. 5
 From North to South it stretches out in length
 eight hundred mile,
 Two hundred miles from East to West in
 breadth the land extends;—
 In the mid-land, that is to say, and not as at
 one end.
 Plenty one may in Engeland of all good thinges
 see;
 If only folk will spoil them not, or other worse
 years be. 10
 For Engeland is full enough of fruit and eke of
 trees.²

¹ The *Riming Chronicle* is a metrical history of England from the earliest and mythical period to the latter part of the 13th century. Robert, who was presumably a monk in the Abbey of Gloucester, probably wrote only the latter part of the poem. The entire work is more than 12,000 lines in length.

² Trees.

Of woodes and of parkes most joyful to be seen;
 Of fowles and of beastes, both wild and tame
 also;
 Of salt fish and of fresh fish, of rivers fair
 thereto;
 Of wells both sweet and cold enough, of pasture
 and of mead; 15
 Of ore of silver and of gold, of tin and eke of
 lead;
 Of steel, of iron, and of brass, of coin in great
 plenty;
 Of wheat and eke of wool, so good none better
 may there be.
 Waters it hath enough also; before all others
 three,
 As arms are these out of the land, and reaching
 to the sea. 20
 By them the ships may come from sea and out
 their way may trace,
 And bring inland enough of goods, to well nigh
 every place.
 Severn, and Thames, and Humber, so these
 three rivers stand;
 And in the midst, as hath been said, there lyeth
 the pure land.

NORMAN AND ENGLISH

(From the same)

Thus came, lo Engeland into Normandy's
 hand,
 And the Normans could speak then naught but
 their own speech,
 And spoke French as at home, and their
 children did teach,
 So high men of this land, that of Norman blood
 come,
 Keep them all to that speech that they had at
 their home. 5
 If a man know not French, small store men by
 him set,
 But low men hold to English and to their own
 speech yet.
 I ween that there beeth in the world countries
 none
 That hold not to their own speech but England
 alone.
 And well do I wot to know both well it is, 10
 For the more a man knows the more worth he
 is.

Robert Manning, of Brunne

IN PRAISE OF WOMAN

(From *Handlyng Synne*,¹ c. 1303)

Nothing is to man so dear
 As woman's love in good manere.

¹ A poem of over 12,000 lines, treating of the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Sacraments and other religious themes. The author enlivens his doctrinal instructions with appropriate stories, for he says he has made his poem for those who love to hear stories over their ale, and who are prone to fall into sin.

A good womán is manés bliss,
 When her love right and steadfast is. . .
 No solace is there 'neath the sky,
 Of all that man may name or try,
 That man to joy so greatly moves
 As a good woman that truly loves.
 Nor dearer is none in all God's herd
 Than a chaste woman with lovely word.

CURSOR MUNDI¹

(c. 1320-1325)

THE PROLOGUE

Man yearneth rimes for to hear,
 And romances of strange mattère,
 Of Alisaundere² the conquerour,
 Of Julius Caesar the emperour,
 Of Greece and Troy the strangé strife
 Where many thousand lost their life; .
 Of Brut, that hero bold of hand,
 First conquerour of Engéland;
 Of King Arthour that was so rike³
 Whom no one in his time was like;
 Of wonders that his knights befell
 Adventures many as I've heard tell,
 As Gawain, Kay, and others stable,
 For they were men of the Round Table;
 How Charles and Roland waged their fight, 15
 With Sarcens they no troth would plight;
 Of Tristrem and his dear Ysote
 How he for her became a sote;⁴
 Of Joneck and of Ysambrase,
 Of Ydoine and of Amadase,
 Stories alsó of sundry things,
 Of princes, prelates, and of kings,
 Many songs of storied rime,
 English, Frankish, and Latine.
 To read and hear each one is prest
 Of whatsoe'er he likes the best;
 The wise man will of wisdom hear,
 The fool to folly draws him near;
 The wrong to hear of right is loath,
 And pride with buxomness⁵ is wroth. . . . 30

But by the fruit the wise may see
 Of what vertu is every tree.
 All sorts of fruit that man shall find
 Must draw from out the root their kind;
 From goodly pear-trees come good pears,
 Worse tree, the worse the fruit it bears.
 That I should speak from this same tree
 Betokens, man, both me and thee;
 This fruit betokens all our deeds,
 Both good and ill who rightly reads.
 Our dedés in our hearts take root,
 Whether they be for bale or boot;
 For by the thing man draweth untó 45
 For good or ill men shall him know. . . .

¹ The poem is named from the fact that in its stories it "courses" pretty much over the world, as is indicated in the Prologue. It is about 30,000 lines, and it was written in English "for the love of English folk."

² This list includes some of the most important groups or cycles of romance. Those on Alexander, on Brut or Brutus, the supposed founder of Britain, on Arthur and his knights, on Charlemagne, and on Roland.

³ Mighty.⁴ Madman.⁵ Humility.

All this world, ere I have done, 121
 With Christ's help shall I over-run,
 And tell some stories principal,
 For no man may relate them all.
 But since no work may long endure 125
 That stands not on foundation sure,
 This same work, therefore, shall I found
 Upon a wondrous, steadfast, ground;
 That is the Holy Trinity
 That all has wrought with His beauty. 130
 Unto Him first I turn my face,
 And then His handywork I'll trace:
 Of the angels first that fell,
 And next I will of Adam tell,
 Of his offspring and of Noé, 135
 And somewhat of his sonnés three;
 Of Abraham and of Isáac,
 That holy were withouten make;⁶
 After shall I tell to you
 Of Jacob and of Esau too; 140
 Then should there be thereafter told
 How that Joséph was bought and sold;
 How Moses 'midst the Jews arose,
 That Goddés folk to lead them chose;
 How God the law to him did give 145
 By which the Jewish folk should live.
 Of Saul the king, and David too
 How he Goliath fought and slew;
 And next of Solomon the Wise,
 How craftily he did justice; 150
 How Christ came down through prophecy,
 And how He came His folk to buy.

[The author next goes on to enumerate various other matters of which he proposes to treat, such as the birth of Christ, the destruction of the innocents, the flight into Egypt, and so on through the gospel story. After this outline of the general plan and scope of his work he concludes his prologue as follows:—]

These are the subjects put in place 221
 I think within this book to trace;
 Speaking but shortly of each deed,
 For there are many tales to speed.
 Useful, methinks, it were to man 225
 To know himself how he began;
 How he at first was born and bred,
 How o'er the earth his offspring spread;
 Both of the first and of the last,
 And in what course this world is past. 230
 Those things that Holy Church doth state
 In this same book I now translate.
 In English tongue 'tis all made clear
 For love of all the English here;
 English folk of Engéland, 235
 For the commons to understand.
 French rimes are there in this land
 To be found on every hand;
 French is wrought for Frankish man,
 What is for him that no French can? 240
 The nation of England old
 The Englishmen in common hold;
 The speech that man with most may speed

⁶ Without an equal.

Must be the speech that men most need.
Seldom was by any chance
Praised the English tongue in France;
Do we the same to their language
Methinks we do them no outrage.
For unlearned Englishman I spell,
That understandeth what I tell,
And specially I those address
That all their lives in idleness
On trifles waste and beggars' lies,
To them I say: "Take care, be wise,
And well unto my words attend,
And all your way with might amend."
Ill have they who in spending spend,
And find no fruit thereof at end. . . .

They either say "a, a," or "e, e,"
And thus here we find the starting
Of our weeping and life's smarting,
Unto this have sorrows brought us,
Therefore Innocent has taught us:
*Omnes nascimur eulantes, ut nature nostre
miseriam exprimamus.*
He says: "We all are born complaining,
We cry, and wail—man's sorrow feigning,
To show the misery, how great
The wretchedness of man's estate."
Thus when the time came of our birth,
All made sorrow and no mirth;
Naked we hither came, and bare,
And just so shall we hither fare.

Now from this prologue we will blinne,⁷
And in Christ's name our book begin:
Cursor o' World men ought it call,
For almost it o'er runs it all.
Take we our beginning than⁸
From Him who all the world began.

THE CELESTIAL COUNTRY

(From the same)

All joys are there in that countrie,
There life from death forever free;
There youth is, ever without eld,
All wealth is there forever held:
There is aye rest without travail;
There are all goods that never fail;
There peace forever, without strife:
There every kind of joyous life;
There is, free from all darkness, light;
There is aye day and never night;
There aye is summer bright to see;
And never more winter in that countrie;
There are true friendships and riches,
More nobleness than man may guess;
There is more worship and honour
Than ever had king or emperour;
There is all might and power secure;
And there an endless home made sure;
There too are all delights and ease,
And sure tranquility and peace;
There peaceful joy forever is,
And pleasure there and lasting bliss. . . .

Richard Rolle of Hampole

died 1349

THE INFANT

(From *The Pricke of Conscience*,¹ c. 1340)

[When man] was born to this world's light,
He had not either strength or might,
Either to walk or yet to stand,
Nor to creep with foot and hand.
Then has the man less might than beast;
When he is born, he seems the least;
For a beast, when it is born, may go
And run soon after to and fro;
But a man has no might thereto,
When he is born, such things to do;
For then he may not stand nor creep,
But only sprawl and cry and weep.
For a child is scarcely born before
It has begun to cry and roar;
And by that cry men tell truly
Whether it man or woman be.
When it is born it cries such way:
For if it be man it says "a, a,"
So that the letter is the same
As the first in Father Adam's name.
And if the child a woman be,
When it is born it says "e, e,"
E is the foremost letter in
Eve's name, who brought us death and sin.
Hence a clerk made in this manere,
This line in metre written here:
Dicentes E vel A quotquot nascuntur ab Eva,
"All those," he says, "that come of Eve,
Means all men that below here live,
When they are born, what-so they be,

There always blissful certainty,
And certain dwelling ever free;
There is all mirth, each pastime dear;
There laughter is, and lovely cheer;
There's melody and angel's song,
And love and praise from that bright throng:
There is all friendship that may be;
And perfect love and charity;
There is accord, and its due mede
Is given aye to each good deed;
There's lowly awe and reverence,
And meekness and obedience;
There are all virtues and no sin,
All dainties and delights therein,
All wisdom's there from folly free,
And honour without villany. . . .

There is brightness and beautie
In everything that men shall see;
There joys are free and general,
But the most sovereign joy of all
Is the blest sight of God's bright face,
Beyond all joys and all solace.

⁷ Cease.

⁸ Then.

¹ A Poem of about 10,000 lines is addressed to the unlearned "that can ne Latyne understand," and is intended by its dreadful pictures of death and judgment, to prick the reader's conscience, so that he may "work good works and flee folly."

Lawrence Minot

c. 1300-1352

THE BATTLE OF HALIDON HILL¹

Listen, Lordings, if you will
Hear of the battle of Halidon Hill.

True King that sitteth on thy throne,
Unto thee I tell my tale,
And unto thee I bid a boon,
For thou art balm of all my bale.
As thou hast made the earth and moon,
And beasts and fowles great and smale,
Unto me send thy succour soon
Direct my deedes in this dale.

In this dale I droup² and dare
For evil deedes that cost me dear,
For England had my heart great care,
When Edward went at first to were.³
The men of France were bold to fare
Against him with the shield and spere;
They turned again with sides sair
And all their pomp not worth a pere.⁴

A pear is more of price sometide⁵
Than all the boast of Normandie.
They sent their ships on ilka side
With flesh and wine and wheat and rye;
With heart and hand, 'tis not denied,
For to help Scotland gan they hie,
They fled and durst no deed abide
And all their boast not worth a flye.

For all their boast they durst not fight,
For dint of death they had such dout,⁶
Of Scotland had they never sight
Although they were of wordes stout.
They would have magnified their might
And troubled were they there about.
Now God help Edward in his right,—
Amen—and all his ready rout.

His ready rout may Jesu speed.
And save them both by night and day;
That Lord of Heaven may Edward lead,
And him maintain as well He may.
The Scotchmen now all wide will sprede⁷
For they have failed of their prey,
Now are they daunted all for drede
That were before so stout and gay.

Gay they were and well they thought
On Earl Moray⁸ and others stout;

They said it should full dear be bought,
The land whence they were driven out.
Philip Valois wordes wrought,
And said he should their foeman stay;
But all these words they went for naught,
Words must be meet or weak are they.

More menaces they boasting cry,
In spite of might they have their meed;
And many a night awake they lie
To harm all England by their deed;
But low is now that pride so high
Of those that were so stout on steed;
And some of them all naked lie
Not far from Berwick upon Tweed.

A little from that selfsame town,
Halidon Hill that is the name,
There was cracked awny a crown
Of the wild Scot and eke of tame.
Then was their banner borne all down,
To make such boasts they were to blame;
But nathéless aye are they boune⁹
To hurt Engländer with sorrow and shame.

Shame they have as I here say;
At Dundee now is done their dance,
And wend they must another way
Even through Flanders into France.
On Philip Valois¹⁰ fast cry they,
There for to dwell and him advance.
And nothing list they now to play
Since then befell this sorry chance.

This sorry chance hath them o'erthrown,
For they were false and wondrous fell;
For curséd caitiffs are they known
And full of treason, sooth to tell.
Sir John Comyn¹¹ had they struck down,
In holy kirk they did him quell;¹²
So many a Scottish bride makes moan
With dolour dight¹³ there must they dwell.

There dwelled our king, the sooth to sayn,
With his menié¹⁴ a little while;
He gave good comfort on that plain
To all his men about a mile.
Although his men were mickle of main,¹⁵
Ever they doubted them of guile;
They Scottish gauds¹⁶ might nowise gain
For all they stumbled at that stile.

They came not from that strife alive
That were before so proud in prese,¹⁷
Jésu, for thy woundés five,
In England help us to have peace.

¹ This poem is one of the famous war-songs which celebrate events in the reign of Edward III. between 1333-1352. The battle of Halidon Hill was fought in 1333. The King, who was besieging Berwick, completely routed a Scotch force under Sir Archibald Douglas, which had come to relieve the town. Berwick passed into the hands of the English, and has remained so till today.

² Pine.

³ War.

⁴ Pear.

⁵ Sometimes.

⁶ Fear.

⁷ Disperse.

⁸ John Randolph, 3rd Earl of Moray, d. 1346, was one of the strongest supporters of the young king of Scotland, David II.

⁹ Ready.

¹⁰ Philip VI. King of France, 1328-1350, who in the interests of France, became the ally of Scotland against their common enemy England.

¹¹ Comyn, surnamed The Red, one of the rivals of Bruce to the Throne of Scotland after Edward Balliol's renunciation. He was murdered on the altar steps of the Franciscan church at Dumfries by Bruce and his followers, in 1306.

¹² Kill.

¹³ Company.

¹⁴ Trappings, booty.

¹⁵ Grief-stricken.

¹⁶ Great of might.

¹⁷ The post of danger.

PRAYER FOR KING EDWARD

(From *How Edward the King came to Brabant*)

God that shaped both sea and sand,
 Save Edward, King of Engeland,
 Both body, soul, and life,
 And grant him joy withouten strife;
 For many men 'gainst him are wroth
 In France and in Flanders both,
 For he defendeth fast his right
 And thereto Jésu grant him might,
 That he may do so night and day
 That it may be for Goddés pay.¹

SIR ORPHEO¹

(14th Century)

We read full oft and find y-writ
 As clerkés wise make us to wit,
 Those lays that have for men's harping
 Been made of many a noble thing:
 Some are of weal and some of Woe,
 Some of joy and mirth alsó,
 Some of jest and ribaldry,
 And some there are of faerie;
 Of traitors some, and some of guile,
 Or some mishap that chanced erstwhile:
 Of all the things that men may see
 Most fit to praise forsooth they be.
 In Brittany these lays were wrought,
 There first were made, and thence were brought
 Of áventures that fell in days
 Whereof the Britons made their lays;
 So when of old they chanced to hear
 Of áventures in days that were,
 They took their harps with glee and game²
 And made a lay and did it name.
 Of áventures that did befall
 I can tell some but nowise all.
 Harken, lordlings, that be true,
 And I will tell of Sir Orpheu.

Orpheo was a riché King,
 And in his time a great lordíng;
 A full fair man both large and tall,
 And courteous and brave withal.
 His father was come of King Plútó,
 And his mother came of Queen Júnó,
 Who in old times as gods were holden
 For deeds they did and words they tolden.
 Orpheo most of anything,
 Loved the music of harping;
 Certain was every good harpóur
 From him to have most high honóur.
 Right well himself he loved to harp,
 And gave thereto his wittés sharp;
 He learned so that there was none,
 Who could harp better 'neath the sun.

¹ Satisfaction.

² The romance of Sir Orpheo belongs to that group of poems known as "Breton Songs." That is to say, it is one of a number of short rhymed narrative poems which are chiefly of Celtic origin. The Classical story of Orpheus is transformed into a medieval fairy story, and the gloomy land of Pluto becomes a beautiful land of faerie.

³ Mirth.

Man in this world was never born,
 Who, if he Orpheo sat befor,
 And once might of his harping hear,
 But he should thinké that he were
 In one of the joys of Paradis,
 Such music in his harping is.
 Orpheo lived in Crasséns,
 A city noble in defence,
 He hath a queen full fair of pris,³
 That calléd is Dame Erodys,
 The fairest woman for the nonés⁴
 That might be made of flesh and bonés,
 Full of all love and of goodnéss,
 No man may tell of her fairnéss.
 It befel in time of May,—
 When is merry and pleasing the summer's day,
 Away have gone the winter's showers,
 And every field is full of flowers,
 Of blossoms springing on the bough,
 O'er all the land 'tis merry enow,—
 That this same Queen, Dame Erodys,
 Took with her maidens two of pris,
 And walkéd in the undertide⁵
 To play within her orchard-side,
 To see the flowers spread and spring,
 And see and hear the sweet birds sing.
 Then down they seated them all three,
 Fairly beneath an ympé tree,⁶
 And full soon that fairest queen,
 Fell fast asleep upon the green,
 The maidens durst not her awake,
 But round her they 'gan merry make,
 And let her sleep till afternoon
 When the undertide was gone;
 And as soon as she gan wake
 She cried, and loathsome 'gan her make,
 Her hands and eke her feet she tore,
 And scratched her till she bled full sore;
 Her clothing rich she all to-rent,
 All wild out of her wittés went.
 The maidens two that sat beside,
 They durst no longer there abide,
 But straightway sought the castle hall
 And told both knights and squires all,
 How that their Queen away would go.
 The knights went also, and ladies too,
 And demoiselles fifty and many mo,⁷
 To fetch her as they fain would do.
 Into the orchard ran they out
 And took her in their armés stout,
 And brought her to her bed at last
 And therein held her down full fast;
 But still she cried in angry mood,
 And rent herself as she were wode.⁸
 When heard the King this dread tidíng,
 He was never so woe for any thing.
 The King came with his knightés keen⁹
 Into the chamber to his Queen,
 And for her had he great pítie.
 "Sweet heart," he said, "how may this be,
 That thou who ever wert so still,
 Shouldst now cry out so loud and shrill?
 Thy body that was white befor,
 Now with thy nails is rent and torn.

³ Price. ⁴ Nonces. ⁵ Morning. ⁶ Grafted tree.
⁷ More. ⁸ Mad. ⁹ Bold.

Alas! thy cheeks which were so red
 Are now all wan and grey as lead,
 And thy dainty fingers fair,
 Pallid now and bloody are.
 Alas! thy lovely eyen too
 Look on me as on a foe.
 Lady dear, I crave mercie,
 Let be all this rueful cry,
 And tell to me what thing, and how,
 If any thing,—may help thee now.”
 Still grows the lady at the last,
 While she began to weep full fast,
 Saying, while yet the tears would flow,
 “Alas! my lord, Sir Orpheo,
 Never since we two plighted troth
 Was either with the other wroth,
 Yet ever hast thou loved me,
 With all mine heart so have I thee;
 And now we twain shall part in two,
 Do thy best, yet I must go.”
 “Alas!” he said, “my life is bare,
 Unto whom goest thou and where?
 Where thou comest thou shalt with me,
 Whither thou goest I will with thee.”
 “Sir,” said she, “it may not be thus,
 I’ll tell thee how it is with us.
 As I lay this undertide
 Asleep upon the orchard-side,
 Two gallant knights came to me there,
 Arrayed in richest garments fair,
 And bade me come without letting,
 To speak unto their lord the king.
 Right boldly then I answered there—
 ‘Nor will I come, nor do I dare.’
 At the word they did depart,
 Then came their King so blithe of heart,
 With a thousand knights and mo
 And fifty fair ladies also,
 A-riding all on snow-white steeds,
 And snow-white also were their weeds,¹⁰
 Never, in faith, since I was born
 Knights so fair came me before.
 The King a crown had on his head,
 ‘Twas not of silver, nor gold so red,
 All it was of precious stone,
 As bright as sun forsooth it shone.
 He stayed for naught but straight me sought,
 And willy, nilly, me he caught,
 And me he made with him to ride
 On a white palfrey by his side,
 And brought me in to his palye,¹¹
 Right well bedight it was I wis.
 He showed me castles, halls and towers,
 Rivers, meadows, fields and flowers,
 And his forests every one;
 And after, back he brought me home,
 Back into our own orchard,
 And said to me this afterward:
 ‘Look tomorrow that thou be
 Here beneath this ympe tree;
 And if thou makest any let,
 Where’er thou be thou shalt be fet,¹²
 And to tear thy limbes all,
 Shall help thee naught whate’er befall,
 And although thou be all torn

105 Yet away shalt thou be borne.”
 When the King he heard this case,
 “Out!” he said, “alace! alace!¹³
 I had rather lose my life
 Than to lose the Queen my wife!”
 110 Counsel he asked of many man
 But of them all none help him can.
 The hour came, the morrow’s sun,
 The King hath put his armour on,
 Two hundred knights he takes with him,
 115 Fully armed, stout and grim:
 Out then with the Queen went he
 Into the orchard ‘neath the tree;
 Then did they watch on every side,
 And planned that there they would abide,
 120 Resolved to suffer death and woe,
 E’er that the Queen should from them go.
 But shortly then did it befall,
 As the Queen sat among them all,
 The fairy took that lady fair
 125 And she was gone—no man wist where.
 Crying and weeping there was also,
 The King gan to his chamber go,
 He fell adown upon the stone,
 And made great dole and mickle moan,
 130 Well nigh he had himself yschent!¹⁴
 He saw there was no amendment.
 He sent for carl and for baroun,
 And other lords of great renown,
 And, when they all together were,
 135 “Lordes,” he said, “assembled here,
 I set mine steward of mine hall
 To keep my landes over all.
 Now my Queen is left forlorn,
 The best ladie that e’er was born;
 140 No more will I woman see,
 In wilderness now will I be,
 And there abide in woodlands hoar
 And in the wilds forevermore.
 Then when ye know I have left all,
 145 Ye straight a parliament shall call,
 And ye shall chose you a new King,
 And do your best in everything.”
 Great sorrow then was in the hall,
 Weeping and crying ’mongst them all,
 And there might neither old nor young
 150 For weeping speak a word with tongue.
 They kneeled all a-down i-ferre,¹⁵
 And begged him if his will it were,
 That he would never from them go,
 “Away!” he said, “I will not so.”
 155 Then all his kindred he forsook
 And unto him a slaveyn¹⁶ took,
 He would have no other hood;
 Hose, nor shoe, nor other good;
 160 Only his harp he took, and straight
 He journeyed barefoot through the gate.
 No man there must with him go,
 Alas! there weeping was and woe.
 He that was King and bare the crown,
 165 Went out so poorly from the town,
 Into the wild he takes his road,
 Both through the heath and through the wood.
 Nothing he hath to give him ease.

¹⁰ Garments.¹¹ Palace.¹² Fetched.¹³ Alas!¹⁴ Together.¹⁵ Disgraced.¹⁶ Hair-shirt.

But ever lives in great malaise.¹⁷
 In the rough wood he nights must pass, 235
 And cover him with herb and grass;
 He that had a great plente,
 Meat, and drink, and dignitie,
 Now must dig and grub full sair,
 Ere of roots he gets his fare;
 In summer on the haws he lives,
 That midst her leaves the hawthorne gives;
 In winter, by the root and rind,
 For other thing he may not find.
 He was all shrunken, shriveled, pale, 245
 With beating rain, and cutting hail;
 No man could tell the travail sore
 He had endured ten years or more.
 He that had castles, halls and towers,
 Forests, rivers, fields, and flowers, 250
 Nothing that likes him¹⁸ now had he,
 But savage beasts that from him flee.
 His matted beard has shaggy grown,
 Below his girdle has it gone.
 He taketh harp and maketh glee, 255
 And lies all night beneath a tree.
 When bright and clear there dawns the day,
 He takes his harp and makes no stay,
 Amidst the wood he sits him down
 And tunes his harp with a merry soun, 260
 And harps all after his own will;
 Through all the wood it ringeth shrill.
 The savage beasts that there are found,
 For joy about him gather round,
 And all the little birds that were,
 For joy they come about him there
 To listen to that harping fine,
 So mickle joy there was therein.
 His harping when he laid aside,
 Nor bird, nor beast would then abide, 270
 But all together they are flown,
 And leave him there to sit alone.
 Often saw he him beside,
 In the heat of summer-tide,
 The Fairy King with all his rout,
 Come a-hunting all about.
 With shout and merry din they go
 And noise of hound and horn also;
 And yet forsooth, no beast they slay,
 Nor knows he where they take their way. 280
 And other whiles he may espye,
 A mighty hunt go passing by,
 Full two hundred knights of pride
 Armed through the forest ride.
 Somewhile he saw other thing,
 Knights and ladies come riding
 With raiment bright and courtly grace,
 Moving all with easy pace;
 Tabors and pipes with them there be,
 And every kind of minstrelay. 290
 And ladies too there come riding,
 Jolie¹⁹ they were in everything,
 Gentle and gay they were I wis,
 Nor no man there among them is.
 Hawk on hand did each one bear,
 And hawking went by the rivère.
 Of game they found the favorite haunt,
 Pheasant, hern, and cormorant.

The birds from out the river flew,
 And every hawk his quarry slew. 300
 That Orpheo saw in merry mood,
 As underneath the bough he stood;
 "Parfay," he said, "there is good game,
 Thither will I, in Goddès name."
 Such sport was he wont to see, 305
 So up he rose and there came he
 One lady there he came untó,
 He searched her face and form also,
 Right well he knew it was, I wis,
 His own ladde, Dame Erodys. 310
 He saw her plain and she him eke,
 Yet ne'er a word did either speak.
 For him she did so poor espy
 That sometime was so rich and high,
 The tears ran down her face, I wis,
 And looking on her so did his, 315
 And then away they made her ride,
 For there no longer she might bide.
 "Alas!" he said, "and woe is me!
 Why will not death come suddenly!
 Wretch that I am! O, that I might
 Die now, when I have seen this sight!
 Alas! too long lasteth my life,
 Since I may speak not with my wife,
 Nor she with me a word may speak! 325
 Alas! why will my heart not break!
 Parfay!" he said, "whate'er betide,
 I will see where those ladies ride,
 And in that way I too will go—
 I care not for my life a sloe." 330
 His sclavyne put he on his back
 And took his harp right as he spak,
 And swiftly after them is gone,
 Over stock and over stone.
 In at the rock the ladies ride, 335
 He went straight after, he would not bide.
 When he was into the rock y-go²⁰
 Full three mile and some deal mo,²¹
 He came unto a fair countray,
 It was as bright as any day. 340
 Neither hill nor dale was seen,
 All was lawn full fair and green,
 Midst it a castle met his eye,
 Noble and rich, and wondrous high,
 Over all the topmost wall 345
 Shone as doth the clear crystal,
 And the towers that were there
 Were gaily set with pearles fair;
 The farthest, rising from the ditch,
 Was all of gold and silver rich; 350
 The front, that stood amidst them brade,²²
 Was all of divers metals made;
 Within, a wondrous dwelling wide,
 With gold and gems all glorified,
 The pillars fair thereon, were dight 355
 With precious stones and sapphires bright.
 So fair the palace shone by night
 That all the town was full of light,
 Those riché stones so fairly shone
 They were as bright as any sun, 360
 No man might tell, nor think in thought,
 The riches that therein were wrought.
 The ladies at the castle light,

¹⁷ Discomfort.¹⁸ Pleases him.¹⁹ Pretty.²⁰ Gone.²¹ More.²² Broad.

He followed swiftly as he might;
 Orpheo knocked at the gate,
 Ready the porter was thereat,
 And asked him "what wilt thou so?"
 "Parfay! I am a minstrallo,
 I bring thee solace with my glee,
 That thou the merrier may be."
 He then undid the castle gate,
 And let him in the palace straight.
 About looked Orpheo over all,
 He saw folk sit beneath the wall;
 And some that had been brought thereto,
 They seemed dead yet were not so,
 And there among them lay his wife,
 That he loved as his own life;
 She lay beneath an ympe tree,
 By her look he wist 'twas she.
 Then forth he went into the hall,
 There was great joy amongst them all.
 The riché King was seated there,
 And Orpheo gave him greeting fair;
 Beside him sate a Queené bright,
 Hardly of her he had a sight.
 When he had looked on all this thing,
 He kneeled down before the King,
 And asked him if his will it were
 That he his minstrelsy would hear.
 Then said the King: "And what art thou,
 Who come into my presence now?
 Myself nor none that is with me,
 Have ever yet sent after thee.
 Since I this kingdom first began
 I have not found so brave a man
 Who hither dared to come or wend,
 Save that I after him should send."
 "Sir," he said, "I trow full weel,
 I hold it sooth, sir, every deal,
 It is the custom of us all
 To come to every lordés hall,
 And though we may not welcome be,
 Proffer we must our game or glee."
 Before the King he sat him down,
 And took his harp of merry soun,
 And straightway as full well he can,
 Many blithe notes he then began.
 The King looked up and sat full still,
 To hear his harping he had good will.
 When he had ceased from his harping,
 Then said to him that riché King:
 "Minstrel, me liketh well thy glee;
 Whatever thing thou ask of me,
 Freely now I will thee pay,
 Therefore, ask now, and assay."
 "Lord," he said, "I beg of thee,
 If that it shall your pleasure be,
 Give me that lady bright of ble,"
 That lies beneath yon ympe tree."
 "Nay," he said, "that may I ne'er,
 For ye would be a sorry pair;
 Thou art all shaggy, rough, and black,
 And she is made withouten lack.
 A foulé thing it were to see,
 To put her in thy companie."
 "Lord," he said, "thou riché King,
 It were yet a fouler thing,

²³ Hue.

To hear a lying word from thee,
 As though thou promised nought to me,
 Saying thou'd give me what I would!
 A Kinges word must needs hold good."
 "Thou sayest sooth," the King said than,
 "Forsooth thou art a true man.
 I will well that it be so,
 Take her by the hand, and go.
 I will that thou of her be blithe."
 And him he thanked many a sythe.²⁴
 He took her by the hand anon,
 With right good will they out are gone,
 And fast they hied from that paláce,
 And went their way through Goddés grace;
 Into the wilds they both are gone,
 O'er holt and heath they journey on.
 And so they take their way full fast,
 And to Crasséns they come at last,
 That sometime was her own cite,
 But no man wist that it was he.
 With beggar poor of humblest life
 A space he tarried with his wife.
 He asked tidings of the land,
 And who the kingdom had in hand.
 The humble beggar in his cote,
 Answering, told him every grote;
 How that the Queen was fetched away
 To the land of faerie on a day,
 And how the King did after go,
 But to what place no man can know.
 The Steward, he says, the land doth hold;
 So, many tidings he them told.
 The morrow at the nooné tide
 Sir Orpheo bade his Queen there bide,
 He took his harp and right anon
 Into the town he straight is gone.
 And when he came to the cite,
 Many a man him came to see,
 Men and wives and maidens fair,
 Gathered fast to see him there;
 And marvelled much as him they view,
 How thick the moss upon him grew;
 "His beard is grown right to his knee,
 His body is withered as a tree."
 Then his own Steward did he meet,
 Passing in state adown the street,
 And Orpheo fell upon his knee
 And said: "Lord help, for charíté,
 A minstrel I of Heathénesse,
 Lord help me now in this distress."
 The Steward said: "With me come home,
 And of my goods thou shalt have some,
 For Orpheo's sake once Lord to me,
 All minéstralles shall welcome be."
 Anon they went into the hall,
 The Steward and the lordés all.
 The Steward washed, and went to meat,
 And all the lordés down were set,
 Then was there music in the hall,
 But Orpheo sat against the wall.
 When all are still, the music done,
 He took his harp of sounding tone,
 And fast on it he played the glee;
 The Steward looked, and 'gan to see,
 For well he knew that harp belive;²⁵

²⁴ Many times.

²⁵ Quickly.

"Minstrel," he said, "as thou mayst thrive,
How gottest thou that harp, and where? 495
Now for thine honor tell me fair."
"Lord, in an uncouth² land," he said,
"I found it in a forest glade;
I saw a man grown thin and pale,
It lay beside him in a dale, libtool.com.ca 500
Now it must be ten winters gone."
The Steward cried, and made great moan,
"It was my Lord, Sir Orpheo,
Ah! that he e'er did from us go."
The King beheld the Steward than, 505
And wist he was a right true man;
To him he said without lying,
"Sir, I am Orpheo, the King.
Here to the outskirts of the town,
I've brought my gentle lady down." 510
The lords all start that sit around,
Then wist they that the King was found.
With music and processioun,
They fetched the Queen into the town.
A good life lived they afterward, 515
And after them reigned the Steward.
Thus came they out of all their care,
God give us grace as well to fare!
And all that list to this talking
In heaven's bliss be their dwelling! 520
Amen, amen, for charitable,
Lord grant us that it so may be.

EARLY SONGS

CUCKOO SONG

(c. 1250)

Summer is icumen¹ in,
Sing loud Cuckoo!
Groweth seed, and bloweth mead
And springeth the woodé noo²
Sing Cuckoo! 5

Ewe bleateth after lamb,
Lows for her calfé coo;
Bullock sterteth,³ buck verteth,⁴
Merry sing Cuckoo!

Cuckoo, Cuckoo, well sing'st thou Cuckoo: 10
So cease thou never noo.
Sing Cuckoo, noo, sing Cuckoo!

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?¹

(c. 1280)

Where are they that lived before,
Hounds they led and hawks they bore
And had both field and chase?
Ladies rich in bowers fair,
Nets of gold bind up the hair, 5
Rosy-bright of face.

² Unknown.
¹ Has come in. ³ Now.
² Starts, springs. ⁴ Harbors in the green.
¹ Where are those who lived before us?

They ate and drank and made them glad,
Their life was all with pleasure led,
Men kneeled them befor,
They bore themselves full proud and high,
And, in the twinkling of an eye, 11
Their souls were all forlorn.

Where is that laughing and that song,
The pride with which they passed along,
The hawk, and hound, and bower? 15
All that joy is gone away,
That weal is come to welaway,
To many a bitter hour.

They took their heaven while they were here,
And now in hell they lie in fere;² 20
The fire it burneth ever,
Long is ay, and long is o,
Long is wy, and long is wo,
From thence come they never.

Endure here, then, if thou agree, 25
A little pain, I pray of thee;
Withdraw from pleasure oft.
Though thy pain be sore indeed,
And thou thinkest on thy meed, 30
It shall to thee seem soft.

If that fiend, that foulest thing,
Through wicked spell, through false luring,
Here and there hath thee down cast,
Up and be a champion!
Stand, and fall no more adoun 35
For a little blast!

Take thou the rood-tree³ for thy staff;
Think thou on Him, in thy behalf
Who gave up life so lief!
For thee He gave it; for His sake 40
Against His foe that staff now take,
And 'venge Him of that thief!

Of faith in Christ take thou the shield,
The while thou art within the field,
And e'er make strong thy hand! 45
Keep off the foe at thy staff's length,
And humble low that traitor's strength,
And win the blessed land!

Therein is day without a night,
Without an end are strength and might, 50
Chastised is every foe;
With God himself eternal life,
And peace and rest without all strife,
And weal without a woe.

Queen of heaven, mother, maïd, 55
Thou may'st and canst to us be aid
And shield. From wrong us fend;
Help us from sin and shame to flee,
That we thy Son at last may see,
In joy without an end! 60

Amen!

¹ Together.² Cross.

SPRING SONG

(c. 1300)

Spring is come to town with love
 With blossom and with bird in grove,
 That all this bliss now bringeth.
 There are daisies in the dales;
 Notes full sweet of nightingales, 5
 Each bird song singeth.
 The throstlecock out-sings them all;
 Away is fled the Winter's thrall,
 When woodrow¹ springeth.
 Then chanting birds in wondrous throng 10
 Thrill out their joy the glades among
 Till all the woodland ringeth.
 The crimson rose is seen,
 New leaves of tender green
 With good-will grow,
 The moon shines white and clear, 15
 Fennel and thyme are here,
 Fair lilies blow.
 Their mates the wild drakes find,
 Each creature seeks his kind.
 As stream that trickles slow,
 We plain when life is drear,
 For cruel love the tear
 Unchecked must flow.

The moon sends forth her light,
 The goodly sun shines bright,
 And birds sing well.
 Dews drench the soft young grass,
 And whispering lovers pass,
 Their tale to tell;
 Snakes woo beneath the clod,
 Women grow wondrous proud 20
 On field and fell.
 If one shall say me no
 Spring joy I will forgo
 And banished dwell.

ALYSOUN

(c. 1300)

In days of March and Averil ¹
 When the spray begins to spring,
 Each little bird hath her own will
 In her own speech to sing.
 And I—I live in love longing
 For one most fair of everything.
 To me she bliss may bring:
 To serve her is my boon.
 A happy lot to me is sent,
 I know from heaven 'tis to me lent,
 From women all my love is bent
 And fixed on Alysoun.

In hue her hair is fair to see,
 Her brows are brown, her eyes are black,
 With loving laugh she looked at me!—
 Her waist is small, of slender make,
 Unless as hers she will me take
 To be her mate, my life I'll break,
 My life itself I will forsake

¹ A spring flower; the woodruff.² April.

And fey ² I'll fall adoun. 20
 A happy lot to me is sent, etc.

Nights I toss and watch and wake,
 Until my visage waxeth wan;
 Lady, all is for thy sake
 Longing comes to me alone. 25
 On earth there's none so learned grown
 That he her virtues can make known.
 Her neck is whiter than the swan,
 Or fairest maid in town.
 A happy lot to me is sent, etc. 30

With love I'm worn and watchings late,
 Weary as water in a weir,
 Lest any rob me of my mate.
 I have heard it said of yore, 35
 Better to bear awhile a sore
 Than mourn forevermore.
 Fairest earth e'er bore,
 Harken to my rune:
 A happy lot to me is sent,
 I know from heaven 'tis to me lent, 40
 From women all my love is bent
 And fixed on Alysoun. 20

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

(c. 1300)

I know a maid in bower bright,
 That full seemly is to sight,
 Maid of majesty and might,
 Of loyal heart and hand. 30
 'Midst many a nobler one
 A maid of blood and bone,
 I know not ever none
 So fair in all the land.
 Blow, Northern Wind, 35
 Send thou me my sweeting 10
 Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

With her long and lovely tresses,
 Forehead and face fair for carresses,
 Blest be the joy my lady blesses,
 That bird so bright in bour,¹ 15
 With lovesome eyes so large and good
 With blissful brows beneath her hood,
 He that once hung upon the Rood
 Her life holds in honour. 5
 Blow, Northern Wind, 20
 Send thou me my sweeting
 Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

Her face is full of light,
 As a lantern in the night
 She sheds a radiance bright, 25
 So fair is she and fine.
 Her neck is slender to enfold,
 Her loving arms bring joy untold,
 Her little hands are soft to hold,
 Would God that she were mine. 30
 Blow, Northern Wind,
 Send thou me my sweeting
 Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

² Distracted, mad.¹ Bower.

She is coral of goodnéssé,
 Ruby she of rightfulnessé,
 She is crystal of cleannessé,
 Beauty's banner she.
 She is lily of largessé,
 Periwinkle of promessé,
 She the sunflower of sweetnessé,
 Lady of loyalty. 40

Blow, Northern Wind,
 Send thou me my sweeting
 Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

For her love I mourn and moan, 45
 For her love I grieve and groan,
 For her love my good is gone
 And I wax all wan.
 For her love in sleep I sigh,
 For her love I wakeful lie, 50
 For her love I droop and cry,
 More than any man.

Blow, Northern Wind,
 Send thou me my sweeting 54
 Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

(Early 14th Century)

When the nightingálé sings, the woodés waxen
 greené,
 Leaf and grass and blossom springs, in Averil I
 weené,
 And love is to my hearté gone, with a spear so
 keené,
 Night and day my blood it drinks, mine
 heartés death to teené.¹

I have loved all this year, that I can love no
 moré, 5
 I have sighed many sighs, Lady, for thine oré,²
 Ne'er my love comes near to thee, and that me
 grieveth soré.
 Sweetest Lady think on me, I loved thee of yoré.

Sweetest Lady, speak I pray, one word of love
 to me,
 While in this wide world I stay, I'll seek for
 none but thee, 10
 Your kind love might give me bliss, from pain
 might set me free,
 A sweet kiss of thy dear mouth, might my
 surgeon be.

Sweetest Lady, here I pray, one boon of love
 bestowé,
 If you love me, as men say, as I, dearest,
 knowé,
 If you will it, look on me, just a look will
 showé, 15
 So much have I thought of thee, I all ghastly
 growé

Between Lincóln and Lindéseý, North-Hamp-
 toun and Lóndouné,
 I wot not of so fair a may,³ by tower, dale, or
 touné,

¹ Trouble.

² Grace.

³ Maid.

Dearest one, I humbly pray, love me a little
 sooné.

I now will plain my song, 20
 To her to whom it doth belong.

JOAN

There's a maid in a bower, as beryl most bright,
 As sapphire in silver set seemly in sight,
 As jasper the gracious that gleameth with light,
 As garnet in gold, and as ruby most right;
 As onyx she is held up at a height; 5
 As diamond the clear when in day she is dight;
 She is coral, well kennéd of Kaiser and Knight,
 As emerald at morning this maid beareth might,
 The power of the pearl hath she in her grace
 For carbuncle I choose her, by form and by
 face. 10

Her bloom is as red as the rose on the tree,
 With the white of the lily most lovesome is she:
 Than periwinkle more pleasing, or primrose of
 price,

Alexanders, or parsley, or fragrant anice.
 Quaint as a columbine, graceful and gay, 15
 Clad in rich furs and in garment of grey;
 Her face is a flower, she's fairest in blue,
 As celandine or sage,—you yourself know it's
 true.

Who looks on her beauty to bliss he is
 brought,
 He follows the sun, to tell all words are
 naught. 20

She is popinjay abaiting my torment and bale,
 True dove in a tower, I tell thee my tale;
 She is throstle so gentle that singeth in hall,
 She is the wild laverock and the witwall;
 She is falcon in forest, dearest in dale: 25
 With every man gladdest in song and in tale;
 She is wisest of all from Wye to Wyrhale;¹
 The nightingale's note tells her name to the
 vale;

In his note is her name, nameth it none?
 Whoso reads it aright,—let him whisper to
 Joan. 30

SONG OF THE SCOTTISH MAIDENS AFTER THE BATTLE OF BANNOCK- BURN (1314)¹

Maidens of Engélande sore may ye mourn
 For the loss of your true-loves at Bannockés
 burn!

*With heve-a-lowe!*²

What? Weened the King of Engélande
 To have gotten Scotland? 5

*With rumbylowe!*²

¹ The Wirral, the land between the rivers Dee and Mersey, in Cheshire.

² This ballad is found in an old Chronicle, *The Brut of Engelande*, (c. 1350) where we are told that "the maidens made a songe therefore in that cuntre of Kyngge Edwardes of Engelande and in this manner thei songe." Then follows the song.

³ These phrases "probably indicate the occurrence of a dance movement emphasized by special gestures, or the beating of musical instruments."

LULLABY

(Early 14th Century)

Lullay, lullay, little child!
 Why weepest thou so sore?
 Needes must thou weep,
 Thou wert doomed of yore
 Ever to live in sorrow,
 Ever to sigh and strive,
 As thy fathers did ere this
 Whilst they were alive.
 Lullay, lullay, little child!
 Child lullay, lullow!
 To this world unknown
 Sadly come art thou.

Beasts and birds and cattle,
 The fishes in the flood,
 And each thing that liveth
 Made of bone and blood,
 When into the world they come
 They do themselves some good,
 All but that poor imp
 That is of Adam's blood.
 With care art thou beset;
 Thou knowest naught of this world's wild
 That is before thee set.

Child, if it betideth
 That Time shall prosper thee,
 Think how thou wert fostered
 On thy mother's knee;
 Ever mind thee in thine heart
 Of those things three,—
 Whence thou camest, where thou art,
 And what shall come of thee.
 Lullay, lullay, little child!
 Child lullay, lullay!
 With sorrow thou camest to this world,
 With sorrow shalt wend away.

O! trust not to this world,
 It is thy fell foe.
 The rich it maketh poor,
 The poor man sick also.
 It turneth woe to weal,
 And also weal to woe.
 Trust not man this changing world
 While it turneth so.
 Lullay, lullay, little child!
 The foot is on the wheel,
 How 'twill turn thou knowest not,
 Whether to woe or weal.

Child, thou art a pilgrim
 In wickedness yborn;
 Thou wanderest in this false world,
 Look thou well beforen.
 Death shall come with sudden blast
 Out of the darkness hoar,
 Adam's children down to cast,
 Adam he slew before.

Lullay, lullay, little child!
 Adam did woes oppress
 In the land of Paradise,
 Through Satan's wickedness.

Child, thou'rt not a pilgrim, 60
 But a helpless guest.
 Thy day already told,
 Thy lot already cast.
 Whether thou shalt wend
 North, or East, or West, 65
 Death shall thee betide,
 With bitter bale in breast.
 Lullay, lullay, little child!
 Child lullay, lullow!
 To this unknown world 70
 Sadly come art thou.

AVE MARIA

Ave maris stella,¹
 The star upon the sea,
Dei mater alma,²
 Blessed mayest thou bel 5
Atque semper virgo,³
 Pray thy son for me,
Felix celi porta,⁴
 That I may come to thee.
 Gabriel, that archangel, 10
 He was messenger;
 So fair he hailed our Lady,
 With an *Ave* so clear.
 Hail be thou, Mary,
 Be thou, Mary, 15
 Full of God's grace,
 And queen of all mercy!
 All that are to greet⁵
 Without deadly sin,
 Forty dayes of pardoún
 God granteth them. 20

A DESCRIPTION OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

(From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, translated by J. A. GILES)

If any would know what manner of man
 King William was, the glory that he obtained,
 and of how many lands he was lord; then will
 we describe him as we have known him, we,
 40 who have looked upon him, and who once lived
 in his court.¹ This King William, of whom we
 are speaking, was a very wise and a great man,
 and more honored and more powerful than any
 45 of his predecessors. He was mild to those good
 10 men who loved God, but severe beyond measure
 towards those who withstood his will. He
 founded a noble monastery on the spot where
 50 God permitted him to conquer England, and he
 established monks in it, and he made it very
 15 rich. In his days the great monastery at

¹ Hail star of the sea.² Dear Mother of God.³ Yet ever a virgin.⁴ Blessed gate of heaven.⁵ To supplicate, to greet Mary with an *Ave*.¹ The portion of the *Chronicle* given here is included in the entry for 1087: the year of the death of William the Conqueror. The passage is presumably the work of a contemporary who writes (as he declares) from personal knowledge.

Canterbury was built, and many others also throughout England. Moreover, this land was filled with monks who lived after the rule of St. Benedict; and such was the state of religion in his days that all that would might observe that which was prescribed by their respective orders.

King William was held in much reverence. He wore his crown three times every year when he was in England: at Easter he wore it at Winchester, at Pentecost at Westminster, and at Christmas at Gloucester. And at these times all the men of England were with him, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and earls, thanes, and knights. So also, was he a very stern and a wrathful man, so that none durst do anything against his will, and he kept in prison those earls who acted against his pleasure.

He removed bishops from their sees, and abbots from their offices, and he imprisoned thanes, and at length he spared not his own brother Odo. This Odo was a very powerful bishop in Normandy; his see was that of Bayeux, and he was foremost to serve the king. He had an earldom in England, and when William was in Normandy he was the first man in this country, and him did he cast into prison.

Amongst other things the good order that William established is not to be forgotten; it was such that any man, who was himself aught, might travel over the kingdom with a bosomful of gold, unmolested; and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him. He reigned over England, and, being sharp-sighted to his own interest, he surveyed the kingdom so thoroughly that there was not a single hide of land throughout the whole, of which he knew not the possessor, and how much it was worth, and this he afterwards entered in his register. The land of the Welsh was under his sway, and he built castles therein; moreover he had full dominion over the Isle of Man; Scotland also was subject to him, from his great strength; the land of Normandy was his inheritance, and he possessed the earldom of Maine; and had he lived two years longer he would have subdued Ireland by his prowess, and that without a battle.

Truly there was much trouble in these times, and very great distress; he caused castles to be built, and oppressed the poor. The king was also of great sternness, and he took from his subjects many marks of gold and many hundred pounds of silver, and this either with or without right, and with little need. He was

given to avarice and greedily loved gain. He made large forests for the deer and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade killing the deer, so also the boars; and he loved the tall stags as if he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares, that they should go free. The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked naught of them; they must will all that the king willed, if they would live, or would keep their lands, or would hold their possessions or would be maintained in their rights. . . .

He left three sons: Robert, the eldest, was duke of Normandy after him; the second, named William, wore the crown of England after his father's death; and his third son was Henry,⁴ to whom he bequeathed immense treasures.

William of Malmsbury

c. 1095-c. 1142

MALMSBURY'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

(From *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, c. 1120, translated by J. A. GILES)

A long period has elapsed since, as well through the care of my parents as my own industry, I became familiar with books. This pleasure possessed me from my childhood: this source of delight has grown with my years. Indeed I was so instructed by my father, that had I turned aside to other pursuits, I should have considered it as jeopardy to my soul and discredit to my character. Wherefore mindful of the adage "covet what is necessary," I constrained my early age to desire eagerly that which it was disgraceful not to possess. I gave, indeed, my attention to various branches of literature, but in different degrees. Logic, for instance, which gives arms to eloquence, I contented myself with barely hearing. Medicine, which ministers to the health of the body, I studied with somewhat more attention. But now, having scrupulously examined the several branches of Ethics, I bow to its majesty, because it spontaneously unveils itself to those who study it, and directs their minds to moral practice; History more especially; which, by an agreeable recapitulation of past events, excites its readers, by example, to frame their lives to the pursuit of good, or to aversion from evil. When, therefore, at my own expense, I had procured some historians of foreign nations, I proceeded during my domestic

⁴ Afterward, Henry I, King of England, 1100-1135.

¹ The *hide*, or family portion, was the old unit of land, and contained from 100 to 120 acres.

² i. e., the famous Doomsday Book.

leisure, to inquire if anything concerning our own country could be found worthy of handing down to posterity. Hence it arose, that, not content with the writings of ancient times, I began, myself, to compose; not indeed to display my learning, which is comparatively nothing, but to bring to light events lying concealed in a confused mass of antiquity. In consequence rejecting vague opinions, I have studiously sought for chronicles far and near, though I confess I have scarcely profited anything by this industry. For perusing them all, I still remained poor in information; though I ceased not my researches as long as I could find any thing to read. However, what I have clearly ascertained concerning the four kingdoms, I have inserted in my first book, in which I hope truth will find no cause to blush, though perhaps a degree of doubt may sometimes arise. I shall now trace the monarchy of the West Saxon kingdom, through the line of successive princes, down to the coming of the Normans: which if any person will condescend to regard with complacency, let him in brotherly love observe the following rule: "If before he knew only these things, let him not be disgusted because I have inserted them; if he shall know more, let him not be angry that I have not spoken of them;" but rather let him communicate his knowledge to me, while I yet live, that at least, those events may appear in the margin of my history, which do not occur in the text.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS AND THE EFFECT OF THE CONQUEST

(From the same)

The courageous leaders mutually prepared for battle, each according to his national custom. The English, as we have heard, passed the night without sleep, in drinking, and singing, and, in the morning, proceeded without delay toward the enemy; all were on foot, armed with battle axes, and covering themselves in front by the junction of their shields, they formed an impenetrable body, which would have secured their safety that day, had not the Normans, by a feigned flight, induced them to open their ranks, which till that time, according to their custom, were closely compacted. The king himself on foot, stood, with his brother, near the standard; in order that, while all shared equal danger, none might think of retreating. This standard William sent, after the victory, to the Pope; it was sumptuously embroidered, with gold and precious stones, in the form of a man fighting.

On the other side, the Normans passed the whole night in confessing their sins, and received the sacrament in the morning: their infantry, with bows and arrows, formed the vanguard, while their cavalry, divided into wings, were thrown back. The earl, with serene countenance, declaring aloud, that God would favour his, as being the righteous side, called for his arms; and presently, when, through the hurry of his attendants, he had put on his hauberk the hind part before, he corrected the mistake with a laugh; saying, "My dukedom shall be turned into a kingdom." Then beginning the song of Roland, that the warlike example of that man might stimulate the soldiers, and calling on God for assistance, the battle commenced on both sides. They fought with ardour, neither giving ground, for great part of the day. Finding this, William gave a signal to his party, that, by a feigned flight, they should retreat. Through this device, the close body of English, opening for the purpose of cutting down the straggling enemy, brought upon itself swift destruction; for the Normans, facing about, attacked them thus disordered, and compelled them to fly. In this manner, deceived by a stratagem, they met an honourable death in avenging their country; nor indeed were they at all wanting to their own revenge, as, by frequently making a stand, they slaughtered their pursuers in heaps: for, getting possession of an eminence, they drove down the Normans, when roused with indignation and anxiously striving to gain the higher ground, into the valley beneath, where, easily hurling their javelins and rolling down stones on them as they stood below, they destroyed them to a man. Besides, by a short passage, with which they were acquainted, avoiding a deep ditch, they trod under foot such a multitude of their enemies in that place, that they made the hollow level with the plain, by the heaps of carcases. This vicissitude of first one party conquering, and then the other, prevailed as long as the life of Harold continued; but when he fell, from having his brain pierced with an arrow, the flight of the English ceased not until night. The valour of both leaders was here eminently conspicuous.

Harold, not merely content with the duty of a general in exhorting others, diligently entered into every soldier-like office; often would he strike the enemy so that none could approach him with impunity; for immediately the same blow levelled both horse and rider. Wherefore, as I have related, receiving the fatal arrow from a distance, he yielded to death. One of the soldiers with a sword gashed his thigh, as he lay prostrate; for which shameful and cowardly

action, he was branded with ignominy by William, and dismissed from the service.

William too was equally ready to encourage by his voice and by his presence; to be the first to rush forward; to attack the thickest of the foe. Thus everywhere raging, everywhere furious, he lost three choice horses, which were that day pierced under him. The dauntless spirit and vigour of the intrepid general, however, still persisted, though often called back by the kind remonstrance of his body-guard; he still persisted, I say, till approaching night crowned him with complete victory, and no doubt, the hand of God so protected him, that the enemy should draw no blood from his person, though they aimed so many javelins at him.

This was a fatal day to England, a melancholy havoc of our dear country, through its change of masters. For it had long since adopted the manners of the Angles, which had been very various according to the times: for in the first years of their arrival, they were barbarians in their look and manners, warlike in their usages, heathens in their rites; but, after embracing the faith of Christ, by degrees, and in process of time, from the peace they enjoyed, regarding arms only in a secondary light, they gave their whole attention to religion. I say nothing of the poor, the meanness of whose fortune often restrains them from overstepping the bounds of justice; I omit men of ecclesiastical rank, whom sometimes respect for their profession, and sometimes the fear of shame, suffer not to deviate from the truth: I speak of princes, who from the greatness of their power might have full liberty to indulge in pleasure; some of whom, in their own country, and others at Rome, changing their habit, obtained a heavenly kingdom, and a saintly intercourse. Many during their whole lives in outward appearance only embraced the present world, in order that they might exhaust their treasures on the poor, or divide them amongst monasteries. What shall I say of the multitudes of bishops, hermits, and abbots? Does not the whole island blaze with such numerous relics of its natives that you can scarcely pass a village of any consequence but you hear the name of some new saint, besides the numbers of whom all notices have perished through the want of records? Nevertheless, in process of time, the desire after literature and religion had decayed, for several years before the arrival of the Normans. The clergy, contented with a very slight degree of learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar, was an object of wonder and astonishment. The

monks mocked the rule of their order by fine vestments, and the use of every kind of food. The nobility, given up to luxury and wantonness, went not to church in the morning after the manner of Christians, but merely, in a careless manner, heard matins and masses from a hurrying priest in their chambers, amid the blandishments of their wives. The commonalty, left unprotected, became a prey to the most powerful, who amassed fortunes, by either seizing on their property, or by selling their persons into foreign countries; although it be an innate quality of this people, to be more inclined to revelling, than to the accumulation of wealth. . . .

Drinking in parties was a universal practise, in which occupation they passed entire nights as well as days. They consumed their whole substance in mean and despicable houses; unlike the Normans and French, who, in noble and splendid mansions, lived with frugality. The vices attendant on drunkenness, which enervate the human mind, followed; hence it arose that engaging William, more with rashness and precipitate fury than military skill, they doomed themselves, and their country to slavery, by one, and that an easy, victory. "For nothing is less effective than rashness; and what begins with violence, quickly ceases, or is repelled." In fine, the English at that time, wore short garments reaching to the mid-knee; they had their hair cropped; their beards shaven; their arms laden with golden bracelets; their skin adorned with punctured designs. They were accustomed to eat till they became surfeited, and to drink till they were sick. These latter qualities they imparted to their conquerors; as to the rest, they adopted their manners. I would not, however, have these bad propensities universally ascribed to the English. I know that many of the clergy, at that day, trod the path of sanctity, by a blameless life; I know that many of the laity, of all ranks and conditions, in this nation, were well-pleasing to God. Be injustice far from this account; the accusation does not involve the whole indiscriminately. "But, as in peace, the mercy of God often cherishes the bad and the good together; so, equally, does His severity, sometimes, include them both in captivity."

Moreover, the Normans, that I may speak of them also, were at that time, and are even now, proudly apparelled, delicate in their food, but not excessive. They are a race inured to war, and can hardly live without it; fierce in rushing against the enemy; and where strength fails of success, ready to use stratagem, or to corrupt by bribery. As I have related, they live in large

edifices with economy; envy their equals; wish to excell their superiors; and plunder their subjects, though they defend them from others: they are faithful to their lords, though a slight offense renders them perfidious. They weigh treachery by its chance of success, and change their sentiments with money. They are, however, the kindest of nations, and they esteem strangers worthy of equal honour with themselves. They also intermarry with their vassals. They revived, by their arrival, the observances of religion, which were everywhere grown lifeless in England. You might see churches rise in every village, and monasteries in the towns and cities, built after a style unknown before; you might behold the country flourishing with renovated rights; so that each wealthy man accounted that day lost to him, which he had neglected to signalize by some munificent action. But having enlarged sufficiently on these points, let us pursue the transactions of William.

When his victory was complete he caused his dead to be interred with great pomp; granting the enemy the liberty of doing the like, if they thought proper. He sent the body of Harold to his mother, who begged it, unransomed; though she proffered large sums by her messengers. She buried it, when thus obtained, at Waltham; a church which he had built at his own expense, in honour of the Holy Cross, and had endowed for canons. William then, by degrees proceeding, as became a conqueror, with his army, not after an hostile, but a royal manner, journeyed towards London, the principal city of the kingdom; and shortly after, all the citizens came out to meet him with gratulations.

Thomas of Ely

d. c. 1107

CANUTE AND THE MONKS OF ELY

(From *Historia Eliensis*, 12th century, translated by P. V. D. SHELLEY)

On a certain occasion, king Canute, accompanied by his queen Emma, and by magnates of the realm, was proceeding to Ely by boat, intending there to celebrate, according to custom, the purification of Saint Mary; for, since the beginning of their order, the abbots of Ely have held the ceremony in the presence of the king's court. As they were approaching the bank, the king, rising in the midst of his men, signalled to the boatmen to pull more swiftly to the little gate, and commanded them to pass through it slowly. Thereupon, lifting

his eyes toward the church, which stood out distinctly on the summit of a rock, he heard upon all sides a sound of great sweetness; and listening intently, the better to hear the melody in all its fulness, he began to sigh. He perceived that it was the monks singing in the dining-hall, and chanting the hours. Thereupon, he requested certain ones in the boats to come round to him and to sing with him. Then the king himself, expressing with his own mouth the gladness of his heart, composed a song in English in these words:

Sweetly sang the monks in Ely
When Canute the king rowed by!
"Row, Knights, near the land
And hear the monks' sweet song."

which, even to-day, are sung publicly in chorus and are remembered in proverbs. The king beginning thus, did not cease to sing piously and sweetly in chorus with the venerable college, until he came to land, and, being worthily received by the brothers in procession, as their custom is with the most distinguished person, was led into the church. Presently, by his privilege and authority he confirmed in perpetuity the rights and benefits granted to the church by his predecessors, the kings of the English; and before the high altar, where rests the sacred body of the virgin and spouse of Christ, Aetheldreda, he declared, in the presence of the church and of the world, that the rights and privileges of the place should be free in perpetuity.

Geoffrey of Monmouth

d. 1154?

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

(From *Historia Regum Britanniae*, 1147, translated by J. A. GILES)

Whilst occupied on many and various studies I happened to light upon the History of the Kings of Britain, and wondered that in the account which Gildas and Bede, in their elegant treatises, have given of them, I found nothing said of those kings who lived here before the Incarnation of Christ, nor of Arthur, and many others who succeeded after the Incarnation; though their actions both deserved immortal fame, and were also celebrated by many people in a pleasant manner and by heart, as if they had been written. Whilst I was intent upon these and such like thoughts, Walter,¹ arch-

¹ Thought to be Walter Mapes, the poet and author of several ludicrous and satirical compositions. (Giles.)

deacon of Oxford, a man of great eloquence, and learned in foreign histories, offered me a very ancient book in the British tongue, which, in a continued regular story and elegant style, related the actions of them all, from Brutus¹ the first king of the Britons, down to Cadwallader² the son of Cadwallo. At his request, therefore, though I had not made fine language my study, by collecting florid expressions from other authors, yet contented with my own homely style, I undertook the translation of that book into Latin. For if I had swelled the pages with rhetorical flourishes, I must have tired my readers by employing their attention more upon my words than upon the history. To you, therefore, Robert earl of Gloucester,⁴ this work humbly sues for the favour of being so corrected by your advice, that it may not be thought to be the poor offspring of Geoffrey of Monmouth, but when polished by your refined wit and judgment, the production of him who had Henry the glorious king of England for his father, and whom we see an accomplished scholar and philosopher, as well as a brave soldier and expert commander; so that Britain with joy acknowledges, that in you she possesses another Henry.

THE STORY OF KING LEIR

(From the same)

After this unhappy fate of Bladud, Leir, his son was advanced to the throne, and nobly governed his country sixty years. He built upon the river Sore a city called in the British tongue, Kaerleir, in the Saxon, Leircestre.¹ He was without male issue, but had three daughters, whose names were Gonorilla, Regau, and Cordeilla, of whom he was dotingly fond, but especially of his youngest, Cordeilla. When he began to grow old, he had thoughts of dividing his kingdom among them, and of bestowing them on such husbands as were fit to be advanced to the government with them. But to make trial who was worthy to have the best part of his kingdom, he went to each of them to ask which of them loved him most. The question being proposed, Gonorilla, the eldest, made answer, "That she called heaven to witness, she loved him more than her own soul." The father replied, "Since you have preferred my declining age before your own life, I will marry you, my dearest daughter, to whom-

¹ The reputed founder of Britain according to the old legends, was supposed to have been the descendant of Æneas.

² A British king, died about 664.

³ The bastard son of Henry I, who was famous as a patron of learning and as a leader in the civil wars following the death of his father.

⁴ Leicester.

soever you shall make choice of, and give with you the third part of my kingdom." Then Regau, the second daughter, willing, after the example of her sister, to prevail upon her father's good nature, answered with an oath, "That she could not otherwise express her thoughts, but that she loved him above all creatures." The credulous father upon this made her the same promise that he did to her eldest sister, that is, the choice of a husband, with the third part of his kingdom. But Cordeilla, the youngest, understanding how easily he was satisfied with the flattering expressions of her sisters, was desirous to make trial of his affection after a different manner. "My father," said she, "is there any daughter that can love her father more than duty requires? In my opinion, who ever pretends to it, must disguise her real sentiments under the veil of flattery. I have always loved you as a father, nor do I yet depart from my purposed duty; and if you insist to have something more extorted from me, hear now the greatness of my affection, which I always bear you, and take this for a short answer to all your questions; look how much you have, so much is your value, and so much do I love you." The father, supposing that she spoke this out of the abundance of her heart, was highly provoked, and immediately replied, "Since you have so far despised my old age as not to think me worthy the love that your sisters express for me, you shall have from me the like regard, and shall be excluded from any share with your sisters in my kingdom. Notwithstanding, I do not say but that since you are my daughter, I will marry you to some foreigner, if fortune offers you any such husband; but will never, I do assure you, make it my business to procure so honourable a match for you as for your sisters; because, though I have hitherto loved you more than them, you have in requital thought me less worthy of your affection than they." And, without further delay, after consultation with his nobility, he bestowed his two other daughters upon the dukes of Cornwall and Albania, with half the island at present, but after his death, the inheritance of the whole monarchy of Britain.

It happened after this, that Aganippus, king of the Franks, having heard of the fame of Cordeilla's beauty, forthwith sent his ambassadors to the king to demand her in marriage. The father, retaining yet his anger towards her, made answer, "That he was very willing to bestow his daughter, but without either money or territories; because he had already given away his kingdom with all his

treasure to his eldest daughters, Gonorilla and Regau." When this was told Aganippus, he, being very much in love with the lady, sent again to king Leir, to tell him, "That he had money and territories enough, as he possessed the third part of Gaul, and desired no more than his daughter only, that he might have heirs by her." At last the match was concluded; Cordeilla was sent to Gaul, and married to Aganippus.

A long time after this, when Leir came to be infirm through old age, the two dukes, on whom he had bestowed Britain with his two daughters, fostered an insurrection against him, and deprived him of his kingdom, and of all regal authority, which he had hitherto exercised with great power and glory. At length, by mutual agreement, Maglaunus, duke of Albania, one of his sons-in-law, was to allow him maintenance at his own house, together with sixty soldiers, who were to be kept for state. After two years' stay with his son-in-law, his daughter Gonorilla, grudging the number of his men, who began to upbraid the ministers of the court with their scanty allowance; and, having spoken to her husband about it, she gave orders that the numbers of her father's followers should be reduced to thirty, and the rest discharged. The father, resenting this treatment, left Maglaunus, and went to Henuinus, duke of Cornwall, to whom he had married his daughter Regau. Here he met with an honourable reception, but before the year was at an end, a quarrel happened between the two families, which raised Regau's indignation; so that he commanded her father to discharge all his attendants but five, and to be contented with their service. This second affliction was insupportable to him, and made him return again to his former daughter, with hopes that the misery of his condition might move in her some sentiments of filial piety, and that he, with his family, might find a subsistence with her. But she, not forgetting her resentment, swore by the gods he should not stay with her, unless he would dismiss his retinue, and be contented with the attendance of one man; and with bitter reproaches she told him how ill his desire of vain-glorious pomp suited his age and poverty. When he found that she was by no means to be prevailed upon, he was at last forced to comply, and, dismissing the rest, to take up with one man only. But by this time he began to reflect more sensibly with himself upon the grandeur from which he had fallen, and the miserable state to which he was now reduced, and to enter upon thoughts of going beyond sea to his youngest daughter. Yet he doubted whether he should be able to

move her commiseration, because (as related above) he had treated her so unworthily. However, disdaining to bear any longer such base usage, he took ship for Gaul. In his passage he observed that he had only the third place given him among the princes that were with him in the ship, at which, with deep sighs and tears, he burst forth into the following complaint:—

10 "O irreversible decrees of the Fates, that never swerve from your stated course! why did you ever advance me to an unstable felicity, since the punishment of lost happiness is greater than the sense of present misery? The remembrance of the time when vast numbers of men obsequiously attended me in the taking the cities and wasting the enemy's countries, more deeply pierces my heart than the view of my present calamity, which has exposed me to the derision of those who were formerly prostrate at my feet. Oh! the enmity of fortune! Shall I ever again see the day when I may be able to reward those according to their deserts who have forsaken me in my distress? How true was thy answer, Cordeilla, when I asked thee concerning thy love to me, "As much as you have, so much is your value, and so much do I love you." While I had anything to give they valued me, being friends, not to me, but to my gifts; they loved me then, but they loved my gifts much more: when my gifts ceased, my friends vanished. But with what face shall I presume to see you, my dearest daughter, since in my anger I married you upon worse terms than your sisters, who, after all the mighty favours they have received from me, suffer me to be in banishment and poverty?"

As he was lamenting his condition in these and the like expressions, he arrived at Karitia,² where his daughter was, and waited before the city while he sent a messenger to inform her of the misery he was fallen into, and to desire her relief for a father who suffered both hunger and nakedness. Cordeilla was startled at the news, and wept bitterly, and with tears asked how many men her father had with him. The messenger answered, he had none but one man, who had been his armour-bearer, and was staying with him without the town. Then she took what money she thought might be sufficient, and gave it to the messenger, with orders to carry her father to another city, and there give out that he was sick, and to provide for him bathing, clothes, and all other nourishment. She likewise gave orders that he should take into his service forty men, well clothed and accoutred, and when all things were thus

² Calais.

prepared he should notify his arrival to king Aganippus and his daughter. The messenger quickly returning, carried Leir to another city, and there kept him concealed, till he had done everything that Cordeilla had commanded.

As soon as he was provided with his royal apparel, ornaments, and retinue, he sent word to Aganippus and his daughter, that he was driven out of his kingdom of Britain by his sons-in-law, and was come to them to procure their assistance for recovering his dominions. Upon which they, attended with their chief ministers of state and the nobility of the kingdom, went out to meet him, and received him honourably, and gave into his management the whole power of Gaul, till such time as he should be restored to his former dignity.

In the meantime Aganippus sent officers all over Gaul to raise an army, to restore his father-in-law to his kingdom of Britain. Which done, Leir returned to Britain with his son and daughter and the forces which they had raised, where he fought with his sons-in-law and routed them. Having thus reduced the whole kingdom to his power, he died the third year after. Aganippus also died; and Cordeilla obtained the government of the kingdom, buried her father in a certain vault, which she ordered to be made for him under the river Sore, in Leicester, and which had been built originally under the ground to the honour of the god Janus. And here all the workmen of the city, upon the anniversary solemnity of that festival, used to begin their yearly labours.

From ANCREN RIWLE¹

c. 1210-1225

(Modernized by REV. JAMES MORTON)

OF SPEECH

Speaking and tasting are both in the mouth, as sight is in the eyes; but we shall let tasting alone until we speak of your food, and treat, at present, of speaking, and thereafter of hearing, of both in common, in some measure, as they go together.

First of all, when you have to go to your parlour window, learn from your maid who it is that is come; for it may be some one whom you ought to shun; and, when you must needs go forth, make the sign of the cross carefully on your mouth, ears, and eyes, and on your breast also, and go forth in the fear of God to a priest. Say first, "Confiteor," and then "Benedicite," which he ought to say; hear his words and sit

quite still, that, when he parteth from you, he may not know either good or evil of you, nor know anything either to praise or to blame in you. Some one is so learned and of such wise speech, that she would have him to know it, who sits and talks to him and gives him word for word, and becomes a preceptor who should be an anchoress, and teaches him who is come to teach her; and would, by her own account, soon be celebrated and known among the wise. Known she is well; for, from the very circumstance that she thinketh herself to be reputed wise, he understands that she is a fool; for she hunteth after praise and catches reproach. For, at last, when he is gone away he will say, "This anchoress is a great talker." Eve, in Paradise, held a long conversation with the serpent, and told him all the lesson that God had taught her and Adam concerning the apple; and thus the fiend, by her talk, understood at once, her weakness, and found out the way to ruin her. Our lady, Saint Mary, acted in a quite different manner. She told the angel no tale, but asked him briefly that which she wanted to know. Do you, my dear sisters, imitate our lady, and not the cackling Eve. Wherefore, let an anchoress, whatsoever she be, keep silence as much as ever she can and may. Let her not have the hen's nature. When the hen has laid, she must needs cackle. And what does she get by it? Straightway comes the chough and robs her of her eggs and devours all that of which she should have brought forth live birds. And just so the wicked chough, the devil, beareth away from the cackling anchoress, and swalloweth up, all the good they have brought forth, and which ought, as birds, to bear them up toward heaven, if it had not been cackled. The poor pedler makes more noise to cry his soap than a rich mercer all his valuable wares. Of a spiritual man in whom you place confidence, as you may do, it is good that you ask counsel, and that he teach you a safe remedy against temptations; and in confession shew him, if he will hear you, your greatest and vilest sins, that he may pity you, and out of compassion cry internally to Christ to have mercy upon you, and have you often in his mind and in his prayers. "Sed multi veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces."² "But be aware and on your guard," saith our Lord, "for many come to you clothed in lambs' fleece and are raging wolves." Believe secular men little, religious still less. Desire not too much their acquaintance. Eve spoke with the serpent without fear. Our lady was afraid of speaking with Gabriel.

¹ The Rule of the Anchoresses, (or nuns). It has been claimed that the *Ancren Riwle* was the work of Richard Poore, Bishop of Chichester, Salisbury, and Durham.

² St. Matt. vii. 15.

WATCHFULNESS AND DILIGENCE

Eight things especially admonish and invite us to be watchful and diligent in some good work—the shortness of this life—the difficulty of our way—the small amount of our merits—the great number of our sins—the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the time—the severe doom of the day of judgment, which is also so strict. Our Lord saith in the gospel: “De omni verbo otioso,”³ etc. Item “Capillus de capite vestro non peribit;”⁴ that is, no thought shall be unpunished. These are God’s words: that every idle word shall be there brought forth, and idle thoughts that were not previously amended. Consider now what cometh of depraved affections and sinful works. Again, the seventh thing which warns us to be vigilant is the pains of hell, in which consider three things—the innumerable torments which no tongue may tell—the eternity of each, which lasteth without end—and their vast bitterness. The eighth thing is the greatness of the reward in the blessedness of heaven, world without end. Whoso watcheth well here a little while—whoso hath these eight things in her heart, will shake off her sleep of vicious sloth in the still night, when nothing is to be seen to hinder prayer. The heart is often at such a season so sincere; for there is then no witness of any good that we do but God only, and his angel, who is busily employed in inciting us to good. For then, nothing is lost, as there often is in the day.

Hear now, my dear sisters, how evil it is to be vain and boast of good deeds, and how good it is to conceal our good works, and to fly by night, like the night fowl, and to gather in the darkness, that is, privately and secretly, food for the soul.

JOY IN SUFFERING

Go ye now, then, along the hard and toilsome way toward the great feast of heaven, where your glad friend expecteth your coming, more joyfully than foolish worldly men go by the green way toward the gallows-tree, and to the death of hell. It is better to go toward heaven sick, than in health toward hell, and to mirth with want, than to woe with abundance. Not however, but that wretched worldly men buy hell dearer than ye do heaven. Solomon saith, “The way of sinners is planted over with stones;”⁵ that is, with severe afflictions. Of one thing be ye well assured—that a harsh word that ye bear with patience, or a single day’s weariness, or a sickness of an hour—if

any one were to offer to buy one of these from you at the day of Judgment; that is, if one were to offer to buy from you the reward that ariseth from it, ye would not sell it for all the gold in the world. For this shall be your song before the Lord: “Laetati sumus pro diebus quibus nos humiliasti—annis quibus vidimus mala;”⁶ that is, We are glad now, O Lord, for the days in which thou didst humble us with the wrongs we suffered from other men; and, we are glad now, O Lord, for the years in which we were sick and saw pain and sorrow. Every worldly affliction is God’s ambassador. Men will receive honourably the messenger of a man of rank, and make him gladly welcome; and so much the more if he is intimately acquainted with the King of Heaven. (And who was more intimate with the heavenly King) while He dwelt here, than was this ambassador?—that is, worldly suffering, which never left him until his life’s end. This messenger that I am speaking of to you—what doth he say to you? He comforteth you in this manner. As God loved me, saith he, he sent me to his dear friend. My coming, and my abiding, though it may seem bitter, is yet salutary. Must not that thing be dreadful, the shadow of which you could not look upon for dread? And if the very shadow were so sharp and so hot, that ye might not feel it without pain, what would you say of the very awful thing itself, from which it comes? Know ye this for certain, that all the misery of this world is only as a shadow in comparison with the misery of hell. I am the shadow, saith this messenger, that is, this world’s suffering: ye must needs receive me, or that dreadful misery of which I am the shadow. Whoso receiveth me gladly, and maketh me cheerfully welcome, my Lord sends her word that she is freed from the thing of which I am the shadow. Lo! thus speaketh God’s messenger; and therefore saith St. James, “Omne gaudium existimate fratres, cum in temptationes varias incideritis.”⁷ Count it all joy to fall into divers of these temptations that are called outward; and St. Paul saith, “Omnis disciplina in presenti videtur esse non gaudii, sed mœroris; postmodum vero,” etc.⁸ All those temptations where-with we are now beaten, seem sorrow and not joy; but they turn afterwards to prosperity and eternal blessedness.

TEMPTATIONS

Holy meditations are comprehended in a verse that was long since taught you, my dear sisters:

³ St. Matt. xii. 36.

⁴ Acts xxvii. 34.

⁵ Ps. xc. 15.

⁶ Heb. xxii. 11.

⁷ St. James i. 2.

⁸ Eccles. xxi. 10.

Mors tua, mors Domini, nota culpae, gaudia
coeli,
Judicii terror, figantur mente fideli.

That is,

Think oft, with sorrow of thy sins.
Think also of the pains of hell, and of the joys of
heaven.

Think also of thine own death, and of the cross
of Christ.

Have oft in thy mind the fearful doom of the
judgment day.

And think how false this world is, and what are
its rewards.

Think also what thou owest God for his good-
ness.

It would require a long while to explain fully
every one of these words. But, if I hasten
quickly onward, tarry ye the longer. I say
one word in regard to your sins: that when
ye think of the pains of hell and the joys of
heaven, ye must understand that God designed
to exhibit them, in some manner, to men in
this world, by worldly pains and worldly joys;
and he showed them as it were a shadow—
for the likeness to them is no greater. Ye are
above the sea of this world, upon the bridge
of heaven. See that ye be not like the horse
that is shy, and blencheth at a shadow upon
the high bridge, and falleth down into the
water from the high bridge. They are, indeed,
too shy who flee through fear of a picture that
seemeth to them ghastly and terrible to behold.
All pain and pleasure in this world is only like
a shadow—it is all only as a picture.

THE LADDER OF PAIN

"Vilitas et asperitas," contempt and ill
usage; these two things, ignominy and pain, as
St. Bernard saith, are the two arms of the
ladder which reach up to heaven, and between
those arms are fixed the staves (or steps) of
all the virtues by which men climb up to the
blessedness of heaven. And because David
had the two arms of this ladder, though he
was king, he climbed upward, and said boldly
to our Lord, "Vide humilitatem meam et la-
borem meum, et dimitte universa delicta mea."
"Behold," said he, "and see my humility and
my labour, and forgive me all my sins." Mark
well these two words which David joineth
together—labour and humility: labour, in
pain and grief, in anxiety and sorrow; humility,
against the unjust ignominy which a man
endures who is despised. "Behold in me both
of these," saith David the beloved of God,
"I have these two arms of the ladder." "Di-
mitte universa delicta mea:" Leave behind

me, saith he, and cast away from me all my
offences, that I may be lightened of their
weight, and may mount up lightly to heaven
by the arms of this ladder.

5

Matthew Paris

d. 1259

AN IRRUPTION OF THE TARTARS

(From *Historia Anglorum*, translated by
J. A. GILES)

In this year,¹ that human joys might not
long continue, and that the delights of this
world might not last long unmixed with
lamentation, an immense horde of that detest-
able race of Satan, the Tartars, burst forth
from their mountain-bound regions, and mak-
ing their way through rocks apparently im-
penetrable, rushed forth, like demons loosed
from Tartarus (so that they are well called
Tartars, as it were inhabitants of Tartarus);
and overrunning the country, covering the face
of the earth like locusts, they ravaged the
eastern countries with lamentable destruction,
spreading fire and slaughter wherever they
went. Roving through the Saracen territories
they razed cities to the ground, burnt woods,
pulled down castles, tore up the vine-trees,
destroyed gardens, and massacred the citizens
and husbandmen; if by chance they did spare
any who begged their lives, they compelled
them, as slaves of the lowest condition, to
fight in front of them against their own kindred.
And if they only pretended to fight, or perhaps
warned their countrymen to fly, the Tartars
following in their rear, slew them; and if they
fought bravely and conquered, they gained no
thanks by way of recompense, and thus these
savages ill-treated their captives as though they
were horses. The men are inhuman and of the
nature of beasts, rather to be called monsters
than men, thirsting after and drinking blood,
and tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and
human beings; they clothe themselves in the
skins of bulls, and are armed with iron lances;
they are short in stature and thickset, compact
in their bodies, and of great strength; invincible
in battle, indefatigable in labour; they wear no
armour on the back part of their bodies, but
are protected by it in front; they drink the
blood which flows from their flocks, and con-
sider it a delicacy; they have large and powerful
horses, which eat leaves and even the trees
themselves, and which, owing to the shortness
of their legs, they mount by three steps instead
of stirrups. They have no human laws, know
no mercy, and are more cruel than lions or

¹ Ps. xxv. 18.

¹ i. e., 1243.

bears; they have boats made of the hides of oxen, ten or twelve having one amongst them; they are skilful in sailing or swimming, hence they cross the largest and most rapid rivers without any delay or trouble; and when they have no blood, they greedily drink disturbed and even muddy water. They have swords and daggers with one edge, they are excellent archers, and they spare neither sex, age, or rank; they know no other country's language except that of their own, and of this all other nations are ignorant. For never till this time has there been any mode of access to them, nor have they themselves come forth, so as to allow any knowledge of their customs or persons to be gained through common intercourse with other men; they take their herds with them, as also their wives, who are brought up to war, the same as the men; and they came with the force of lightning into the territories of the Christians, laying waste the country, committing great slaughter, and striking inexpressible terror and alarm into every one.

The founders of their tribes are called gods, and they celebrate their solemnities at certain seasons; they have many especial celebrations, but only four regular ones. They think that everything was made for them alone, and they think that there is no cruelty in practising every kind of severity on those who rebel against them. They have hard and robust breasts, lean and pale faces, stiff, high shoulders, and short distorted noses; their chins are sharp and prominent, the upper jaw low and deep, the teeth long and few, their eyebrows stretch from the hair to the nose, their eyes are black and restless, their countenances long and grim, their extremities bony and nervous, their legs thick but short below the knee. In stature they are equal to us, for what they lose below the knee is made up for in the greater length of their upper parts. Their native country is that great waste, formerly a desert, lying beyond the Chaldees, from which they expelled the lions, bears, and other beasts, with their bows and other warlike weapons. Out of the tanned hides of these animals, they made for themselves armour of a light description, but impenetrable.

OF AN UNUSUAL SWELLING AND COM-MOTION OF THE SEA

A. D. 1250

(From the same)

About the same time, namely on the first day of the month of October, the moon being

in its first quarter, there appeared a new moon swollen and red in appearance, as a sign of coming tempests; according to the experimental writings of the philosopher and poet:

5 Promittit de more rubens nova Cynthia ventos,
Caumate vel Borea valido nisi præpediatur:
Turgida dat nimboe, seu pallida clara serenum.

(When Cynthia yet is new, and ruddy tints
O'erspread her face, it threatens gusts of wind,
Unless excess of heat or cold prevent.

Her face, if swollen, portendeth storms; but,
pale
And bright, she clears the face of heaven.)

15 The sky then, in the first week of the increase of the moon, was covered with a thick mist, and began to be much disturbed by the violence of the winds, which tore away the branches and the leaves which were then dying away on the trees, and carried them to a great distance through the air. What was more destructive, the disturbed sea transgressed its usual bounds, the tide flowing twice without any ebb, and emitted such a frightful roaring sound, that, even in parts remote from it, it created amazement in those who heard it; even old men, and indeed none of modern times, remembered ever to have seen the like before. In the darkness of the night too the sea appeared to burn like a fire, and the billows seemed to crowd together, as though fighting with one another, in such fury, that the skill of sailors could not save their sinking ships, and large and firmly-built vessels were sunk and lost. Not to mention other cases, at the port of Hertbourne alone three noble ships were swallowed up by the raging billows, besides small ones and others of moderate size. At Winchelsea, a port on the eastern coast, besides the salt-houses, and the abodes of fishermen, the bridges, and mills which were destroyed, more than three hundred houses in that village, with some churches, were thrown down by the impetuous rise of the sea. Holland in England,¹ and Holland on the continent also, as well as Flanders and other level countries adjoining the sea, sustained irreparable damage. The rivers falling into the sea were forced back and swelled to such a degree that they overflowed meadows, destroyed mills, bridges, and the houses adjacent to them, and, invading the fields, carried away the corn which had not been stored away in the barns; that the anger of God plainly appeared to mortals in the sea as well as on land, and the punishment of sinners appeared imminent, according to the prophecy of Habakkuk: "Art thou angered in the rivers, oh Lord, or is thy indignation in the sea?"

¹ i. e. the fen-land in south-eastern Lincolnshire.

III. CHAUCER TO WYATT AND SURREY

c. 1350—c. 1557

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

John Barbour¹

c. 1316–1396

FREEDOM

(From *The Bruce*,² c. 1375)

Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom makes man to have liking;³ 225
Freedom all solace to man giveth,
He liveth at ease that freely liveth.
A noble heart may have no ease, 229
May have naught else that may him please,
If freedom fail'th; for free liking
Is yearned for o'er all other thing.
Nay, he that aye has lived free
May not know well the propertie,
The anger, nay, the wretched doom 235
That coupled is to foul thralldome,
But if he had assayed it
Then all perforce he should it wit;⁴
And should think freedom more to prize
Than all the gold in world that is. 240
Thus contrar thinges evermore
Disclosers of the other are.

THE PEARL¹

(c. 1370)

I

Pearl, princes prize, and men essay
To safely close in gold most clear!
Of Orient pearls, I surely say,
Never was found its precious peer;
So round, so radiant in array, 5
So small, so smooth its surface fair.
Whenever I judged of jewels gay
I set it singly in singlere.²
Alas! I lost it in an arbère:³
Through grass to ground it from me got. 10
I droop, death-stricken by love-daungère,⁴
For my own pearl without a spot.

II

Since in that spot it from me sprung,
Oft have I waited, wishing that weal⁵
That once was wont dispel my wrong, 15
Lift up my lot, my spirit heal.

¹ John Barbour, a Scottish contemporary of Chaucer, was Archdeacon of Aberdeen.

² *The Bruce*, a poem in twenty books, celebrates the deliverance of Scotland from her foreign oppressor, under the leadership of her national hero Robert Bruce.

³ His wish.

⁴ Know.

⁵ *The Pearl* was written by an unknown poet in the West of England. A number of stanzas, dealing chiefly with matters of religious doctrine, have been omitted.

¹ Apart.

² Arbor.

³ Bondage.

⁴ Bliss.

But now, struck through with sorrows strong,
Its loss my burning breast must feel.
Yet heard I ne'er so sweet a song
As the still hour let to me steal. 20
Strange thoughts their shapes but half
reveal,
As I muse on its colour, all clad in clay.
O mould! thou marrest a wondrous jewel,
My precious pearl that hath slipped away.

III

Lo! there sweet spices needs must spread 25
Where so much wealth to earth has run;
Flowers golden, blue, and red,
Shine full sheen against the sun.
Never may fruit and flower fade
Where my pearl sank down in the earth-mould
dun; 30
For each grass must grow from seed-grain dead,
No wheat were else for harvest won;
From good each good is aye begun;
So precious a seed must perish not;
Spices must spring from this chosen one, 35
From this precious pearl without a spot.

IV

To this spot that I in speech expoun⁶
I entered, in that arbour green,
In August, in a high sesoun,
When corn is cut with sickle keen. 40
On a mound where once my pearl rolled down
Fell shadows of flowers shining and sheen,—
Gillyfleur, ginger, and gromyloun,⁷
And peonies powdered all between.
If it were seemly but to be seen, 45
Still sweeter the scent it gave, I wot,
Where dwells that blessed one I ween,
My precious pearl without a spot.

V

Prone in that place, wild hands I pressed,
Clutched as with freezing cold, I fought; 50
Grief grew to tumult in my breast,
Reason nor calm, nor comfort brought.
I plained my pearl that earth possessed,
And vainly strove with struggling thought.
Though Christ's compassion offered rest, 55
My wretched will against it wrought.
I fell upon the flowery ground,
Sweet odours o'er my senses streamed,
Till, sunk in depths of sleep profound,
About my spotless pearl I dreamed. 60

VI

From thence my soul sprang far in space,
My body on ground abode in sweven.⁸
My ghost is gone by Goddès grace,
Through ways unknown and wondrous driven.

⁶ Declare.

⁷ Gromwell, a small plant.

⁸ Sleep.

I wist not in this world the place, 65
 But I felt me rapt past great rocks riven:
 Towards a forest I turned my face
 Where splendid cliffs soared high to heaven;
 Their light no man may well believe,
 For a glistering glory from them gleamed;
 The loom no silks has ever given 71
 With colours so clear as from them
 streamed.

VII

Adorned was each hilly side
 With crystal cliffs of clearest kind.
 The forests fair about them bide 75
 With tree-bolls blue as blue of Ind;
 Their leaves, like silver's burnished pride,
 A-flutter in the fragrant wind
 With glinting gleams show glorified,
 In shimmering splendors half-defined. 80
 The gravel, that each foot may grind,
 Was precious pearl of Orient,
 Sunlight itself seemed dull and blind
 Beside that land of wonderment.

VIII

The splendor of those hill-sides rare 85
 Made my glad heart its grief forget;
 The fruits so fresh of fragrance were
 I was fed-full with odours sweet.
 Birds flitted through that forest fair
 Of flaming hues, both small and grete; 90
 No citole's⁹ string nor gitternere¹⁰
 Their mirthful music might repeat.
 For, when these birds their winges beat,
 Then sing they all with sweet concent.
 No man knows rapture so complete 95
 As sight and sound together lent.

IX

The woods are rich in radiant guise,
 Where'er by Fortune led, I fare,
 And shining glories glad mine eyes,
 That no man may with tongue declare. 100
 I wander on in happy wise,
 For steepest cliff seems harmless there.
 The farther I fared the fairer 'gan rise
 Meads bright with bloom, and spice, and pear,
 Green-bordered brooks, and river fair, 105
 Its banks as thread of finest gold.
 Win I at last to a water rare;—
 Dear Lord! 'twas lovely to behold.

X

The margent of that wondrous deep
 Was shining bank of beryl bright. 110
 Sweetly the sliding waters sweep,
 With a murmurous music they take their flight.
 The bottom, gleaming stones doth keep,
 That glow through the lucent depths like light,
 Or shining stars, which, while men sleep, 115
 Wink in the welkin on Winter's night.

⁹ *Citole*, a small dulcimer; a stringed instrument, resembling a zither.

¹⁰ *Gitternere*, a player on the gittern, or cithern (zither).

Each shining stone that shimmered to
 sight
 Was sapphire, or some jewel rare,
 They lit the deep with living might,
 So clear that lovely land and fair. 120

XI

The rich array of down and dales,
 Of wood and water and wide plains,
 Bred in me bliss, abated bales,
 Released my stress, destroyed my pains.
 Along the stream that strongly hales¹¹ 125
 All rapt I roved, brimfull my brains.
 The farther I followed those wat'ry vales
 The greater the joy at my glad heart strains.
 Though Fortune's gifts no force constrains,
 Lend she solace or sorrows sore, 130
 The wight who once her favour gains
 Strives ever to win more and more.

XII

Far more of bliss glowed in such guise
 Than I could tell if time I had;
 For mortal heart may not suffice 135
 For tenth part of that rapture glad.
 I thought in truth that Paradise
 Lay just beyond those bright banks brade.¹²
 The waters, methought, as bounds arise
 Twixt garden and garden, between them made.
 Beyond the brook, by slope and shade, 141
 Stands the Holy City, beyond the shore.
 But the water was deep, I durst not wade,
 And ever my longing grew more and more.

XIII

Mair and mair, and yet much mair 145
 I longed beyond that stream to stand;
 For if 'twas fair where I did fare
 Far fairer gleamed that farther land.
 Stumbling I strove, looked here and there
 To find a ford, on every hand; 150
 But of greater perils I grew aware
 The longer I searched that shining strand.
 And yet, it seemed I must burst the band,
 So strong was the call of that distant shore.
 When lo! the sight mine eyes next scan-
 ned 155
 Stirred my strained spirit more and more.

XIV

A marvel 'gan my ghost confound;
 I saw, beyond that merry mere,
 A cliff, from whose clear depths profound
 Streamed lights that lit the golden air. 160
 Beneath, a child sate on the ground,
 A maid of mien full debonair;
 White, shining garments girt her round;—
 I knew,—I had seen her other-where.
 As gold in threads that men may shear, 165
 So sheen she shone upon that shore.
 The longer I looked upon her there
 The surer I knew her, more and more.

¹¹ *Flows*.

¹² *Broad*.

XV

And as I fed on her fair face,
 And searched her child-like figure o'er, 170
 Pure gladness did my soul embrace,
 That I had lacked so long before.
 To call her would I fain find grace,
 But stunned I stood, bewildered sore;
 I saw her in so strange a place, 175
 That dazed the sight no meaning bore.
 She lifts her brow, well-known of yore,
 Her face as smooth as ivory;
 My wild dismay grows more and more,
 My soul is stung with what I see. 180

XVI

Stronger than longing, fear arose;
 I stood quite still and durst not call;
 Wide-eyed I wait, my lips I close,
 As mute as hooded hawk in hall.
 That sight so strange, so spectral rose, 185
 I feared the end that might befall;
 The dread lest she escape me grows,
 Or vanish ere I could forestall.
 Then she, whose shining lightened all,
 So soft, so smooth, so pure, so slight, 190
 Rose up robed in array royal,
 A pearl, in precious pearls dight.

XVII

Pearls that would grace a kingly power,
 A man might there by grace have seen,
 When fresh and fair as lily-flower, 195
 Adown the shore she stepped, I ween.
 Her linen robe, a royal dower,
 Flowed free; its lustrous borders been
 Purpled with pearls: before that hour
 Such sight mine eyes had never seen. 200
 Her flowing sleeve-laps showed full sheen
 With pearls, in double border dight:
 Her kirtle, where it showed between,
 With precious pearls gleamed pure and
 bright. . . . 204

XX

All rich in pearls that rare one bright 229
 Drew near the shore beyond the flood;
 From here to Greece no gladder wight
 Than I, when by the brink she stood.
 Nearer than niece or aunt, of right
 I found in her my joy and good.
 Then low she bowed her figure slight, 235
 Cast by her crown in happy mood,
 And as I looked, I understood,
 And heard her greet me full of grace.
 Dear Lord! who me with life endued
 'Twas worth it all to see her face. 240

XXI

"O Pearl," I cried, "in pearls dight,
 Art thou that pearl that I have plained?¹³
 Much missed by me alone, at night?
 What longing have I long sustained

Since into grass you slipped from sight. 245
 Pensive, oppressed, I pine sore pained,
 While you, at rest in realm of light,
 In Paradise a home have gained.
 What Weird has thither my gem con-
 strained,
 And brought me this grief and great daun-
 gère! 250
 Since we in twain were torn and twained,
 I have been a joyless jewelér."

XXII

That jewel there, with jewels graced,
 Lifted her face with eyes of grey,
 Her crown of orient pearl replaced, 255
 And grave and slow did sweetly say:—
 "Sir, you mistake and speak in haste
 To say your pearl is all away;
 In coffer is it safely placed,
 Shut safe within this garden gay, 260
 To dwell forever there, and play
 Where sin and sorrow come never near,
 This spot were thy treasure house, parfay,
 If thou wert a gentle jewelér.

XXIII

"But jewelér gentle, if thou dost give 265
 Thy joy for a gem thou doomed'st dear,
 In sooth thou dost but thyself deceive,
 Vexed in vain with a foolish fear.
 For you lost but a rose, you may well believe,
 That must flower and fade with the fading year,
 Yet so wondrous a dust did that rose receive 271
 That it proved a pearl in this shining sphere.
 Though thou called'st thy Weird a thief,
 'tis clear
 From nought it has gained the great treas-
 ure;
 To blame the hand that has helped thee
 here
 Shows thee a thankless jewelér." 276

[After the Dreamer has been urged to be
 patient, he sees the Maiden in Heaven and is
 filled with a great longing to join her.]

XCVII

Drawn by delight of eye and ear, 1153
 My yearning mood to madness grows;
 I would be with my dear one there, 1155
 Though swift the severing current flows.
 Nothing will harm me if on I fare,
 Or lame me, methought, by baffling blows;
 If I only the plunge in the stream can dare
 I will swim the space though the waves oppose,
 Or die in the deed. Yet a thought arose 1161
 Ere I plunged perverse in that water chill,
 That stilled my impatience and brought re-
 pose
 For I knew it was not my Prince's will.

XCVIII

It pleased Him not that I should break 1165
 Through those marvellous marches unafraid,

¹³ Bewailed.

As rash and rude my course I take
 My daring onset is sudden stayed:
 For as to the brink my way I make
 With a start I find my vision fade, 1170
 And lo! in that arbour fair I wake,
 My head on that selfsame hillock laid
 On that spot where my pearl into earth
 once strayed, www.libtool.com.cn
 Awe-stricken, silent, I sate alone,
 Then sighing deep to myself I said: 1175
 "May the Prince's will in all be done."

THE SEASONS

(From *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*,¹
 c. 1370)

For the Yule-tide had yielded, and the year
 after, 500
 And each several season ensued after other.
 Thus after Christmas came crabbed Lent-time,
 That affords fish for flesh, and food the most
 simple.
 But then the world's weather with winter is
 warring; 504
 Winter withdraws himself, white clouds uplift;
 Soft descendeth the rain in showers full warm,
 They fall on fair fields and the flowers are show-
 ing,
 Both the ground and the grove now with green
 are arrayed,
 Birds bestir them to build, and bravely are sing-
 ing
 For solace of summer ensuing thereafter 510
 On bank,
 And blossoms bud and blow
 On hedge-rows rich and rank,
 And noble notes enow
 Are heard in woodlands dank. 515

Then comes the season of summer, bathed in
 soft breezes,
 Breezes that breathe themselves into seedling
 and herbage,
 Blithesome, in truth, is the blossom that bloom-
 eth therefrom,
 When the drenching dews drip down from the
 leaves, 519
 Biding the blissful beams of the bright sunnè.
 Next harvest hies him, and hardens the grain,
 He warns it ere winter to wax full ripe;
 The dust of the drought he driveth aloft,
 From the face of the fields it flies full high; 524
 Wild winds of the welkin war with the sunnè,
 The leaves of the woodland lie low on the
 ground,
 And all grey is the grass that all green was so
 lately. 528
 Then all ripens and rotteth that rose up in
 flower,
 And thus yieldeth the year to yesterdays many:
 To know winter is nearing, now need we to tell us

¹ *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, one of the many romances dealing with King Arthur and his Knights, is a poem of over 2,500 lines. In it, as in other early Arthurian Stories, Sir Gawayne is a noble and knightly figure, very different from the despicable Sir Gawayne of Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, or Tennyson's *Idylls*.

No sage.
 When Michaelmas's moon
 Was come with winter's gage,
 Then thought Gawayne full soon
 Of his dread pilgrimage. 535

SIR GAWAYNE'S JOURNEY

(From the same)

Now wends he his way through the wild tracts
 of Logres,¹
 Sir Gawayne on God's hest, and no game he
 thought it.
 Oft alone he alights, and lies down at night-fall
 Where he found not before him fare to his liking.
 O'er field and in forest, no friend but his horse,
 No comrade but God for counsel had he, 696
 Till at length he draws near to the land of
 North Wales.
 All Anglesey's isles on the left hand he leaves,
 And fares o'er the fording hard by the foreland,
 Over at Holy-head, till he had journeyed 700
 To Wirral's² wilderness, where few are dwelling
 Who God or man with good hearts regard.
 Fain would he find from men that he met with
 News of a Knight in that neighborhood dwelling
 Who garbed him in green, or of a green chapel.
 All denied him with "nay," saying not in a
 lifetime 706
 Wist they ever a wight that was of such hues
 Of green.
 The Knight rode ways most strange,
 The rocky banks between, 710
 And oft his cheer³ doth change,
 Ere he that church hath seen.

Many cliffs he climbed over in countries far
 distant;
 As out-cast, cut off from companions, he rides.
 At each way through the water where he crossed
 over, 715
 He a foe found before him,—but phantom it
 was,—
 So foul and so fell that to fight it behoved him.
 So many a marvel in these mountains he
 findeth,
 'Twere tedious to tell the tenth of those wonders.
 Now with serpents he struggles, and strives
 with wolves also, 720
 Satyrs sometimes assail him, strange shapes
 from the rocks,
 Both with bulls and with bears, and with boars
 otherwhiles,
 Or with monsters that meet him, huge men of
 the fells.
 He was fearless, unfalt'ring and faithful to God,
 Or he doubtless had died, for death threatened
 him oft. 725

¹ *Logres*, here=England. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Brutus divided Britain among his three sons. The portion (afterwards England) which fell to the eldest son Loegrine, was "called afterwards from his name Loegria (or Logres)." *History of Britain*, Bk. II, ch. 1.

² *Wirral* (Wirhæl) old English name of the land between the Dee and the Mersey.

³ Expression.

But war he could wage, yet the winter was worse,
 When the cold chilling waters, from storm-clouds down pouring,
 Would freeze ere they fell on the fallow beneath.
 Near slain with the sleet, he slept in his armour,
 More nights than enough on the naked rocks,
 While clattering o'er the cliff the cold brook comes down, 731
 And high o'er his head hard icicles hang.
 Thus in perils and pains and plights the most hard,
 Till Christmas eve cometh, he keepeth alone
 His quest. 735
 Humbly the Knight, that tide,
 Besought of Mary Blest,
 That she his way would guide
 Unto some place of rest.

At morn by a mountain he merrily rideth, 740
 Through a woodland full wild that was wondrous and deep,
 High hills on each hand, with a holt stretching under
 Of hoar oaks full huge, a hundred together;
 And tangled thickets of thorn and of hazel,
 With shaggy robes of rough ragged mosses; 745
 Many birds sit unblithely on the bare twigs,
 And piteously pipe for pain of the cold.
 The rider on Gringolet rideth beneath them
 Through mire and marshes, a man all alone, 749
 Perturbed in his toil lest to him 'twere forbidden
 To share in His service, who, on that same night,
 Was born of a maid, all our sorrows to cure.
 Therefore sighing he said: "I beseech Thee, O Lord,
 And Mary, mildest mother so dear,
 Some shelter to show me, some spot to hear mass 755
 And thy matins at morn, this meekly I beg,
 And thus promptly I pray, my *Pater*, and *Ave*,
 And *Credo*."
 So as he rode he prayed,
 And mourned for his misdeed, 760
 The holy sign he made,
 And said: "Christ's Cross me speed."

John Gower

c. 1325-1408

THE PRAISE OF PEACE¹

Unto the Worthy and Noble Kinge Henry the Fourth
 (c. 1399)

O noble worthy king, Henry the ferthé,
 In whom the gladdé fortune is befallé
 The people to govérne here upon erthé,
 God hath thee chose, in comfort of us allé;

¹ *The Praise of Peace* (or *De Pacis Commendatione*, as Gower entitled it) was a poem of welcome to Henry IV., on his accession to the throne in 1399. Gower had been distressed and disappointed by the misgovernment of Richard II.; in this poem he greets the new King, as one who, he trusts, will bring in a better time.

The worship of this land, which was doun fallé, 5
 Now stant upright, through grace of thy goodness,
 Which every man is holdé for to blessé.

The highé God, of his justyce aloné,
 The right which longeth to thy regalyé
 Declared hath to stande in thy personé; 10
 And more than God may no man justifyé.
 Thy title is knowé upon thyn auncestryé;
 The londes folk hath eek thy right affermed;
 So stant thy regne, of God and man confirmed.

There is no man may say in other wisé 15
 That God him-self ne hath the right declared;
 Whereof the land is boun to thy srvysé,
 Which for default of help hath longé caréd.
 But now there is no mannés hearté sparéd
 To love and serve, and worké thy pleasauncé;
 And all this is through Goddés purveyancé. 21

In allé thing which is of God begonné
 There followeth grace, if it be well govérnéd;
 Thus tellen they which oldé bokés conné,
 Whereof, my lord, I wot well thou art lernéd. 25
 Ask of thy God; so shalt thou not be wernéd
 Of no request (the) which is reasonable;
 For God unto the good is favorable. . . .

Peace is the chief of all the worldés welthé,
 And to the heaven it leadeth eek the way; 30
 Peace is of soul and life the mannés helthé
 Of pestilence, and doth the war away.
 My liegé lord, tak heed of what I say,
 If werré may be left, tak peace on hondé,
 Which may not be withouté Goddés sondé. 35

With peace stands every créature in resté,
 Withouté peace there may no life be glad;
 Above all other good, peace is the besté;
 Peace hath him-self, whan war is all bestad;²
 The peace is safe, the war is ever adrad. 40
 Peace is of allé charitié the keye,
 Which hath the life and soulé for to weigh.

My liegé lord, if that thee list to seché
 The sooth ensamples, what the war hath wrought,
 Thou shalt well hear, of wisé mennés speché, 45
 That deadly werré tourneth in-to nought.
 For if these oldé bokés be well sought,
 There might thou see what thing the war hath do
 Both of conquést and conqueror alsó.

For vain honóur, or for the worldés good, 50
 They that whilom the strongé werrés made,
 Where be they now? Bethink well, in thy mood,
 The day is goon, the night is dark and fade;
 Her cruelté, which made them thanné glade,
 They sorrow now, and yet have naught the more; 55
 The blood is shed, which no man may restore.

² *Beset*.

The war is mother of the wronges allé;
 It sleeth the priest in holy church at massé,
 Forlyth the mayde, and doth her flour to fallé.
 The war maketh the greté citee lassé,¹ 60
 And doth the law his reulés overpassé.
 There is nothing, whereof mischief may growé
 Which is not causéd of the war, I trowé.

The war bringeth in poverté at his heelés,
 Whereof the common people is sore grievéd; 65
 The war hath set his cart on thilke wheelés
 Where that fortuné may not be believéd.
 For when men wené best to have achevéd,
 Full oft it is all newé to beginné; 69
 The war hath nothing siker,⁴ though he winné.

Therefore, my worthy prince, in Christés halvé,⁵ *
 As for a part whose faith thou hast to guide,
 Lay to this oldé sore a newé salvé,
 And do the war away, what-so betidé.
 Purchasé peace, and set it by thy syde, 75
 And suffre not thy people be devouréd;
 So shall thy name ever after stand honouréd! . . .

My worthy liegé lord, Henry by namé,
 Which Engélonde hast to govérn and righté, 80
 Men oughten well thy pity to proclamé,
 Which openly, in all the worldés sighté,
 Is shewéd, with the help of God Almightyé,
 To yeve us peace, which long hath be debated,
 Whereof thy prys⁶ shal never be abated.

My lord, in whom hath ever yet be foundé 85
 Pity, withouthé spot of violencé,
 Keep thilke peace alwáy, withinné boundé,
 Which God hath planted in thy consciencé.
 So shall the cronique of thy paciencé
 Among the saints be taken in-to mémorie 90
 To the loenge⁷ of perdurable glorie.

And to thine earthly prys, so as I can,
 Which every man is holdé to commendé,
 I Gower, which am all thy liegé man,
 This lettre unto thine excellence I sendé, 95
 As I, which ever unto my lyvés endé
 Will prayé for the stat of thy personé,
 In worship of thy sceptre and of thy throné.

Not only to my king of peace I writé,
 But to these othré princes Christen allé, 100
 That each of them his owné heart endité
 And cease the war, or more mescheéf fallé.
 Set eek the rightful pope upon his stallé;
 Keep charité, and draw pité to hondé, 104
 Maintainé law; and so the peace shall stondé.

William Langland

c. 1332-1400

PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN

PROLOGUE

In the season of summer, when soft was the
 sunné,
 I clad myself coarsely in a cloak as a shepherd;
 In habit as an hermit unholy of workés,
 Went I wide in this world wonders to hearé.

¹ Less. ⁴ Sure. ⁵ Behalf. ⁶ Glory. ⁷ Praise.

And on a May morning on Malverné hillés, 5
 A marvel amazed me, of magic methought.
 I was weary, for-wandered, and went me to
 resté

Under a broad bank, by a burn-sidé;
 And as I lay and leanéd, and looked in the
 waters, 9

I slumbered in a sleeping, it sounded so merry.
 Then did I dream there a dream full of wonder;
 In the wilds I was wandering, wist I not whéré;
 As I looked to the Eastward a-loft to the sunné,
 I saw set on a summit a seemly tower;
 A deep dale beneath and a dungeon thereinné,
 With deep ditches and dark, and dreadful to
 sight. 16

A fair field full of folk found I there between
 them,
 With all manner of men the mean and the riché,
 Working and wandering as the world asketh.

Some put them to ploughing, playing full
 seldom, 20
 In setting and sowing swinking¹ full hard,
 And winning what wasters with gluttony des-
 troy.

And some put to pride, appareled them there-
 after,
 In fancies of fashion finely arrayéd.

To prayers and to penance put themselves
 many, 25

All for love of our Lord living full strict,
 In the hope for to have heavenly blissé;
 As anchorets and hermits that hold in their
 cellés,

In the world never wishing to wander about,
 Or with bounteous abundance their bodies to
 please. 30

And some chose to chaffer, their chances to
 better,
 For it seems to our sight that such men are
 most thriving.

And some to make merry, as minstrels are able,
 And get gold with their glees, guiltless I deem
 them.

But jesters and jugglers, Judas's children, 35
 Found out false fantasies and feigned them-
 selves foolish,

Yet have wit at their will, to work were they
 willing.

That Paul preacheth² of them prove now I dare
 not;

Qui loquitur turpiloquium is Lucifer's slave.

There bidders and beggars right busily wan-
 dered, 40

Their bags and their bellies with bread fully
 crammed;

They feigned want of food, and fought o'er the
 ale-cups,

In gluttony, God wot, go they to beddè,
 And rise up with ribaldry, these Robert's men.³

So sleeping and sloth pursue them forever. 45
 Pilgrims and palmers plighted them together

¹ Toiling.

² I might prove that St. Paul's words "if a man does
 not work neither shall he eat," apply to these children of
 Judas, but I dare not, because he who speaks evil (*Qui*
turpiloquium loquitur) is Lucifer's servant.

³ Vagabonds.

To seek for Saint James⁴ and the saintes at Rome,
Went forth in their way with many wise stories,
And had leave for to lie, all their life after.

I saw some that said they had sought out the saintes;
With tongues tempered to lie in each tale that they toldé,
More than to say sooth it seemed by their speech.

Hermits in an heap, with hookéd stavés
To Walsingham⁵ wended,—their wenches came after.

Great lubbers and lazy that loth were to swinké,
Clothed them in copes to be counted as "brethren,"

In habit of hermit their ease for to have.

I found there the friars of all the four orders.

They preached to the people to profit themselves,

Glossing the Gospel as was their good pleasure.
For, coveting copes, they construed as they would.

For many of these masters may dress as it likes them,

For their money and merchandise marchen together,

For since Charity hath been chapman and chief to shrive lordés,

Many felices⁶ have fallen in a few yearés. . . . 65

If Holy Church and they hold not better together,

The most mischief on mold⁷ is mounting full fast.

There preachéd a Pardoner, a priest as he wéré,

And brought forth a Bull with the Bishopés sealés,

And said that himself might assoilen⁸ them allé

Of falseness in fasting, and vows they had broken. . . . 71

The unlettered believed him and liked well his wordés,

Coming up to him kneeling and kissing his Bullés,

Then he banged them with his brevet and bearé⁹ their eyen,⁹ 74

Thus they give up their gold these gluttons to help. . . . 76

Were the Bishop but blessed and worth both his earés, 78

He would send not his seal for deceiving the people.

But 'tis not at the Bishop that the boy preaches,

For Pardoner and priest part between them the silver,

And the poor of the parish may have what is left.

Parsons and parish-priests plained to the Bishop,

As their parishes were poor since the pestilence time, 84

To have licence and leave at London to dwellé,
And they sing thus for simony,—for silver is sweet.

Bishops and bachelors both masters and doctors,

That hold cures¹⁰ under Christ and have crown-ing¹¹ in token

And sign that they should their parishioners shrive,

And preach and to pray for them, and the poor feedé, 90

Are living in London, in Lent-time and other.

Some are serving the King, and his silver are taking,

In Exchequer and Chancery, claiming his debtés

Due from wards in the wardmote,¹² both waifs and estrays,

And some serve as servants the lords and the ladies, 95

And instead of stewards they sit and condemn. Their mass and their matins and most of the hours

Are done undevoutly; dread is at the last That Christ in His Council should curse very many. . . . 99

There hovered an hundred in hoodés of silké, Sergeants it seemed that served at the barré,

Pleading for pennies and poundés the laws, 212

And naught for love of our Lord unloose their lips onés.¹³

Better measure the mist on Malverné's hillés, Than get a mum from these mouthés till money be showed. . . . 215

Baron and burgesses and bond-men also, I saw there assembled, as ye shall hear after.

Bakers and brewers, and butchers a-many, And weavers of woolens, and weavers of linen,

Tailors and tanners, and toilers of earth. . . . 220

Masons and miners, and many a craft. Of all living labourers leaped, some of each kind,

As ditchers and delvers that do their deeds ill, And drag out the long day with "Dieu vous sauve, Dame,"¹⁴ 224

Cooks and their knavés cried "hoté pies, hoté! Good gris¹⁵ and geese,—go now to dine,—go!"

And unto them Taverners toldé the samé, "White wine of Oseye,¹⁶ and red wine of Gascoigne 228

Of the Rhine and of Rochelle the roast to defy!"

And this I saw sleeping and seven times moré.

¹⁰ Parishes.

¹¹ Tonsured crowns.

¹² Each ward of London had its *ward-mote*, or ward meeting of its citizens.

¹³ Once.

¹⁴ "God save you, lady," apparently the refrain of

a. i. old song.

¹⁵ Pigs.

¹⁶ Alsace.

⁴ The shrine of St. James the Great, at Santiago (i. e. St. James) de Compostella, a town in Spain, was sought for, by many pilgrims.

⁵ A town in Northern Suffolk, a famous resort for pilgrims.

⁶ Marvels.

⁷ Earth.

⁸ Pardon.

⁹ Blinded their eyes, i. e. Cheated them.

Geoffrey Chaucer

c. 1340-1400

From THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN¹

c. 1385

THE PROLOGUE

A thousande tymes I have herd men telle,
That there is joy in hevене, and peyne in helle,
And I accordé wel that it is so;
But, nathéles, yet wot I wel also,
That ther is noon dwellyng in this countree, 5
That eythir bath in hevене or in helle y-be,
Ne may of hit noon other weyës witen,
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde it writen;
For by assay ther may no man it preve.

But God forbedé but men shuldé leve² 10
Wel moré thing than men han scen with eye!
Men shal not wenen everything a lye
But-if hymselfe it seeth, or ellés dooth;
For, God wot, thing is never the lassé sooth,
Thogh every wight ne may it not y-see. 15

Bernarde,³ the monke, ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than moté we to bokés that we fynde,—
Thurgh which that oldé thingés ben in mynde,
And to the doctrine of these oldé wyse,
Yevé credéce, in every skylful wise, 20
That tellen of these olde apprevéd stories,
Of holynesse, of regnés, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sondry thynges
Of whiche I may not maken rehersynges.
And if that oldé bokés were away, 25
Y-lorné⁴ were of rémembraunce the key.
Wel ought us, thanne, honouren and beleve
These bokés, ther we han noon other preve.

And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
On bokés for to rede I me delyte, 30
And to hem yive I feyth and ful credéce,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that ther is gamé⁵ noon
That from my bokés maketh me to goon,
But it be seldom on the holyday, 35
Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I here the foulés synge,
And that the flourés gynnen for to sprynge,—
Farewel my boke, and my devocion!

Now have I thanne suche a condicion, 40
Thát of alle the flourés in the mede,
Than love I most thise flourés white and rede,
Suche as men callen daysyes in our toun.
To hem have I so grete affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May, 45
That in my bed ther daweth me no day,
That I nam up and walkyng in the mede,
To seen this floure agein the sonnè sprede,

Whan it uprysith erly by the morwe;
That blisful sighté softneth al my sorwe, 50
So glad am I, whan that I have preséce
Of it, to doon it allé reverence,
As shee that is of allé flourés flour,
Fulfilled of al vertu and honour,
And evere iliké⁷ faire, and fresshe of hewe.
And I love it, and evere yliké newe, 55
And ever shal, til that myn herté dye;
Al swere I nat, of this I wol nat lye;
Ther loved no wight hotter in his lyve.

And whan that it is eve, I renné blyve,⁸ 60
As sone as evere the sonnè gynneth weste,
To seen this flour, how it wol go to reste,
For fere of nyght, so hateth she derknesse!
Hir chere⁹ is pleynly sprad in the brightnesse
Of the sonnè, for ther it wol unclose. 65
Allas, that I ne had Englyssh, ryme or prose
Súffisant this flour to preysse aright!
But helpeth ye that han konnyng¹⁰ and myght,
Ye lovers, that kan make¹¹ of sentément;
In this case oghté ye be diligent 70

To forthren me somewhat in my labóur,
Whether ye ben with the Leef or with the Flour;
For wel I wot, that ye han her-biforne¹²
Of makynge ropen,¹³ and lad away the corne;
And I come after, glenyng here and there, 75
And am ful glad if I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han left.
And thogh it happen me rehercen eft!¹⁴
That ye han in your fresshé songés sayode,
Forbereth me, and beth not evele apayedé,¹⁵
Syn that ye see I do it in the honóur 81
Of love, and eke in service of the flour
Whom that I serve as I have witte or myght.
She is the clerenesse and the verray lyght,
That in this derké worlde me wynt¹⁶ and ledyth,
The herte in-with my sorwful brest yow
dredith,¹⁷

And loveth so sore, that ye ben verrayly 87
The maistresse of my witte, and nothing I.
My worde, my werk, is knyht so in youre bond
That as an harpe obeith to the hond, 90
That maketh it souné after his fyngerynge,
Ryght so mowe ye oute of myn herté bringe
Swich vois, ryght as yow lyst, to laughe or
pleyne;

Be ye my gide, and lady sovereyne.
As to my ertely god, to yowe I calle, 95
Bothe in this werke, and in my sorwés alle.

But wherfore that I spake to yive credéce
To oldé stories, and doon hem reverence,
And that men mosten moré thyng beleve
Then they may seen at eye or ellés preve, 100
That shal I seyn, whanne that I see my tyme—
I may nat al attonés¹⁸ speke in ryme.
My besy¹⁹ gost, that thursteth alwey newe,
To seen this flour so yong, so fresshe of hewe,
Constreynéd me with so gledy²⁰ desire, 105
That in myn herte I feelé yet the fire,
That madé me to ryse or it wer day,
And this was now the firsté morwe of May,

¹ This poem (like its greater successor, *The Canterbury Tales*), consists of a number of separate stories, introduced by a Prologue. In the *Legend*, however, all the stories are of women who have been victims or martyrs to love. Chaucer apparently intended to tell the legends of nineteen good women, but the poem is unfinished.

² Believe

³ Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153). Even St. Bernard, holy and wise as he was, did not see everything. The passage is founded on a Latin proverb "*Bernardus monachus non videt omnia*."

⁴ Lost.

⁵ Amusement.

⁶ Birds.

⁷ Alike.

⁸ Quickly.

⁹ Face.

¹⁰ Skill.

¹¹ Write or compose.

¹² Before this.

¹³ Reaped poetry, i. e. cut the crop of poetry.

¹⁴ Again.

¹⁵ Ill pleased.

¹⁶ Turns.

¹⁷ Reverses.

¹⁸ At once.

¹⁹ Anxious.

²⁰ Glowing.

With dredful²¹ hert, and glad devocion
 For to ben at the resurreccion 110
 Of this flour, whan that it shulde uncloze
 Agayne the sonne, that roos as rede as rose,
 That in the brest was of the beste,²² that day,
 That Agenorés doghtre²³ ladde away.
 And doun on knes anon-ryght I me sette, 115
 And as I koude, this freshe flour I grette,
 Knelnyng alwey, til it unclosed was,
 Upon the smale, softé, swoté²⁴ gras,
 That was with flourés swote enbrouded²⁵ al, 119
 Of swich swetnesse, and swich odour over-al,
 That for to speke of gomme,²⁶ or herbe, or tree,
 Comparisoun may noon y-makèd be;
 For it surmounteth pleylnly alle odoures,
 And of riché beauté alle flourés.
 Forgeten had the erthe his pore estate 125
 Of wyntir, that him naked made and mate,²⁷
 And with his swerd of colde so soré greved;
 Now hath the atemprésonne²⁸ al that releved
 That naked was, and clad it new agayne.
 The smale foulés, of the sésoun fayne,²⁹ 130
 That of the panter³⁰ and the nette ben scaped.
 Upon the foweler, that hem made a-whaped³¹
 In wynter, and destroyed hadde hire broode,
 In his dispite hem thoughte it did hem goode
 To synge of hym, and in hir songe dispise 135
 The foule cherle, that, for his covetyse,
 Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.

This was hir songe, "The foweler we deffye,
 And al his crafte," And sommé songen clere
 Layés of love, that joye it was to here, 140
 In worshippyng and in preysing of hir make;³²
 And, for the newé blisful somers sake,
 Upon the braunchés ful of blosmés softé,
 In hire delyt, they turned hem ful ofte,
 And songen, "Blesséd be Seynt Valentynel 145
 For on his day I chees you to be myne,
 Withouten répentyn myne herté swetel!"
 And therewithal hire bekés gonnen meete. . .

And tho³³ that haddé don unkyndenesse,—
 As doth the tydif,³⁴ for newfangelnesse,—
 Besoghté mercy of hir trespassyngé, 155
 And humblély songen hir répentynge,
 And sworn on the blosmés to be trewe,
 So that hire makés wolde upon hem rewe,³⁵
 And at the lasté maden hir acorde.
 Al founde they Daunger³⁶ for a tyme a lord, 160
 Yet Pitee, thurgh his strongé gentil myght,
 Foryaf, and madé Mercy passen Ryght,
 Thurgh Innocence, and ruled Curtesye.
 But I ne clepe it innocence folye,
 Ne fals pitee, for vertue is the mene;³⁷ 165
 As Ethike seith, in swich maner I mene.
 And thus thise fowelés, voide of al malice,
 Acordéden to love, and laften vce
 Of hate, and songen alle of oon acorde, 169
 'Welcome, Somer, oure governour and lorde.'

And Zepherus and Flora gentilly
 Yaf to the flourés, softé and tenderly.

²¹ Reverent. ²² Beast i. e. Taurus.
²³ Europa. ²⁴ Sweet.
²⁵ Embroidered. ²⁶ Gum. ²⁷ Weak.
²⁸ Mild temperature. ²⁹ Glad. ³⁰ Snare.
³¹ Frightened. ³² Mate. ³³ Those.
³⁴ Titmouse. ³⁵ Take pity on them.
³⁶ Love's dominion. ³⁷ Average.

His swooté³⁸ breth, and made hem for to sprede,
 As god and goddesse of the floury mede. 174
 In whiche me thought I myghté, day by day,
 Dwellen alwey, the joly month of May,
 Withouten slepe, withouten mete or drynke.
 Adoun ful softely I gan to synke,
 And lenynge on myn elbowe and my syde,
 The longé day, I shoop³⁹ me for to abide, 180
 For nothing ellis, and I shal nat lye,
 But for to loke upon the dayésie,
 That men by resoun wel it callé may
 The dayésie, or elles the yé of day,
 The emperice, and flouré of flourés alle. 185
 I pray to God that fairé mote she falle,⁴⁰
 And alle that loven flourés, for hire sake!
 But, natheles, ne wene nat that I make⁴¹
 In preysing of the Flour agayn the Leef, 189
 No more than of the corne agayn the sheef;
 For as to me nys lever noon, ne lother,
 I nam witholden yit with never nother.
 Ne I not⁴² who serveth Leef, ne who the Flour.
 Wel browken⁴³ they hir service or labour!
 For this thing is al of another tonne,⁴⁴ 195
 Of oldé storye, er swiche thinge was begonne.

Whan that the sonne out of the southe gan
 weste,
 And that this flour gan close, and goon to reste,
 For derknesse of the nyght, the which she
 dredde, 199

Home to myn house full swiftly I me spedde
 To goon to reste, and erly for to ryse,
 To seen this flour to-sprede, as I deyve.
 And in a litel herber⁴⁵ that I have,
 That benchéd was on turvé fresch y-grave,
 I had men sholdé me my couché make; 205
 For deyntee⁴⁶ of the newé someres sake,
 I had hem strawen flourés on my bed.

Whan I was leyde, and hadde myn eyen hed,⁴⁷
 I fel on slepe, in-with an houre or two.
 Me mette⁴⁸ how I lay in the medewé tho, 210
 To seen this flour that I love so and drede,⁴⁹
 And from a-fer come walkyng in the mede
 The god of Love, and in his hand a quene,
 And she was clad in real⁵⁰ habite grene;
 A fret⁵¹ of gold she haddé next her heer. 215
 And upon that a whité crowne she beer,
 With flourouns⁵² smale, and I shal nat lye,
 For al the worlde ryght as a dayesye
 Y-córouned is with whité levés lyte, 219
 So were the flourouns of hire córoune white;
 For of o⁵³ perlé, fyne, orientál,
 Hire whité córoune was i-makèd al,
 For which the whité córoune above the grene
 Máde hire lyke a daysie for to sene,
 Considered eke hir fret of golde above. 225
 Y-clothéd was this mighty god of Love
 In silke enbrouded, ful of grené greves,⁵⁴
 In-with a fret of redé rosé levés,
 The freshest syn the worlde was first bygonnc.

³⁸ Sweet. ³⁹ Planned. ⁴⁰ Good may befall.
⁴¹ Make poetry. ⁴² Ne wot, not know.
⁴³ May they enjoy. ⁴⁴ Cask.
⁴⁵ Arbor, or resting place, a plot covered with grass
 or herbage.
⁴⁶ For the sake of enjoying. ⁴⁷ Hidden.
⁴⁸ Dreamt. ⁴⁹ Revere. ⁵⁰ Royal. ⁵¹ Ornament.
⁵² Small flowers. ⁵³ One. ⁵⁴ Groves.

His gilté here was corowned with a sonne 230
 In stede of golde, for hevynesse and wyghte;
 Therwith me thoght his face shon so brighte
 That wel unnethes⁵⁵ myght I him beholde;
 And in his hande me thoght I saugh him holde
 Two fry darts as the gledes⁵⁶ rede, 235
 And aungelyke his wynges saugh I sprede.
 And, al be that men seyn that bynd is he,
 Algate⁵⁷ me thoghte that he myghte se;
 For sternely on me he gan byholde,
 So that his loking doth myn herté colde. 240
 And by the hande he helde this noble quene,
 Crowned with white, and clothed al in grene,
 So womanly, so bénigne, and so meke,
 That in this world, thogh that men woldé seke,
 Half hire beuté shuldé men nat fynde 245
 In creature that forméd is by Kynde.⁵⁸

And therefore may I seyn, as thynketh me,
 This song in preysyng of this lady fre.
 Hyde Absalon, thy gilté tresses clere;
 Ester, ley thou thy mekenesse al adoun; 250
 Hyde, Jonathas, al thy frendly manére;
 Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
 Make of youre wifhode no comparysoun;
 Hyde ye youre beautés, Ysoude and Eleyne;
 My lady comith, that al this may disteyne.⁵⁹

Thy fairé body lat it nat appere, 256
 Lavyne; and thou Lucesse of Romé toun
 And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
 And Cloepatre, with all thy passyoun, 259
 Hyde ye your trouthe of love, and your renoun,
 And thou, Tesbé, that hast of love suche payne;
 My lady comith, that al this may disteyne.

Hero, Dido, Laudómia, alle yfere,⁶⁰
 And Phillis, hangingy for thy Demophon,
 And Canacé, cspied by thy chéré, 265
 Ysiphilié, betrayséd with Jason,
 Maketh of your trouthe neythir boost ne soun,
 Nor Ypermystre, or Adriane, ye tweyne;
 My lady cometh, that al thys may dysteyne.

This balade may ful wel y-songen be, 270
 As I have seyde erst, by my lady free;
 For certeynly al this mowe nat suffice
 To apperen wyth my lady in no wyse.
 For as the sonnè wole the fire disteyne,
 So passeth al my lady sovereyne, 275
 That is so good, so faire, so debonayre,
 I prey to God that ever falle hire faire.
 For naddé⁶¹ comfort ben of hire preséncé,
 I hadde ben dede, withouten any defence,
 For drede of Loves wordés, and his chere, 280
 As, when tyme is, hereafter ye shal here.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

(Begun 1386-1387)

THE PROLOGUE

Whan that Aprillé with hise shourés soote¹
 The droghte of March hath percéd to the roote,
 And bathéd every veyne in swich licour²

¹ Scarcely. ² Gledes, brands. ³ All the same.

⁴ Nature. ⁵ Stain, dim. ⁶ Together.

⁷ i. e. had no.

⁸ Sweet.

⁹ Moisture.

Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
 Whan Zephirus³ eek with his sweté breeth 5
 Inspired hath in every holt⁴ and heeth
 The tendré croppés⁵ and the yongé sonne
 Hath in the Ram⁶ his halfé cours y-ronné,
 And smalé fowelés maken melodyé,
 That slepen al the nyght with open eye 10
 (So priketh hem Nature in hir corages),⁷
 Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
 And palmeres for to seken straunge strondés,
 To ferné halwés,⁸ kowthe⁹ in sondry londés;
 And specially, from every shirés ende 15
 Of Engélond, to Caunterbury they wende,
 The hooly blissful¹⁰ martir for to seke,
 That hem hath holpen whan that they were
 seeké.¹¹

Bifl that in that seson on a day,
 In Southwerk at the Tabard¹² as I lay, 20
 Rody to wenden on my pilgrimage
 To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,¹³
 At nyght were come into that hostelrye
 Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,
 Of sondry folk, by aventure¹⁴ y-falle¹⁵
 In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
 That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
 And wel we weren esed¹⁶ atté beste.
 And shortly, whan the sonnè was to reste, 30
 So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
 That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
 And madé forward¹⁷ erly for to ryse,
 To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But nathéless, whil I have tyme and space,
 Er that I ferther in this talé pacé, 36
 Me thynketh it accordaunt to resoun
 To tellé yow al the condicoun
 Of ech of hem, so as it seméd me,
 And whiche they werén, and of what degree,
 And eek in what array that they were inne;
 And at a Knyght than wol I first begynne. 42

A KNYGHT ther was and that a worthy man,
 That fro the tymé that he first bigan
 To riden out, he lovéd chivalrie, 45
 Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
 Ful worthy was he in his lordés werre,
 And thereto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
 As wel in cristendom as in hethénesse,
 And ever honoured for his worthynesse. 50
 At Alissaundre¹⁷ he was whan it was wonne;
 Ful ofté tyme he hadde the bord bigonne¹⁸
 Aboven allé nacions in Puce.¹⁹

² The west wind, noted for its mild and life-giving influence. Cf. Eng. *Zephyr*.

³ Wood.

⁴ Sprouts.

⁵ Aries, the first of the signs of the zodiac. The young sun (i. e. the sun just beginning its annual course), passed through the Ram from March 12th to April 11th. Hence, during April, half the sun's course was "in the Ram." To say that this half course was completed, is equivalent to saying that the time was after April 11th.

⁷ Hearts.

⁸ Distant Saints.

⁹ Known.

¹⁰ Thomas à Becket.

¹¹ Sick.

¹² A famous Inn in Southwark, across the Thames from London.

¹³ Heart.

¹⁴ By chance.

¹⁵ Entertained.

¹⁶ Agreement.

¹⁷ Alexandria in Egypt.

¹⁸ i. e. "he had been placed at the head of the dais, or table (bord) of state."

¹⁹ Prussia.

In Lettow hadde he reysed¹ and in Ruce,²
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.⁵⁵
In Germaide³ at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,⁴ and riden in Belmarÿe.⁵
At Lyees⁶ was he, and at Satalye,⁷
Whan they were wonne; and in the Gretē See
At many a noble army⁸ hadde he been,⁹
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feithes at Tramyssene⁹
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.

This ilk worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye¹⁰ 65
Again another hethen in Turkye;
And evermoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys.
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileynyce¹¹ ne sayde, 70
In al his lyfe, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were goode, but he ne was nat gay;
Of fustian he wered a gypón¹² 75
Al bismotered¹³ with his bargeon¹⁴
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong Squier,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,¹⁵ 80
With lokkes crulle¹⁶ as they were leyed in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse,
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,¹⁷
And wonderly delyvere¹⁸ and greet of strengthe;
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie,¹⁹ 85
In Flaundres, in Artoys and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded²⁰ was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of freshe floures whyte and reede; 90
Syngynge he was, or flootyng, at al the day;
He was as freshe as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and
wyde;

Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koude songes make and wel endite, 95
Juste and eek daunce and weel purtreye²² and
write.

So hoot he lovede that by nyghtertale²³
He sleep namoure than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely and servysable,
And carl bifore his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN hadde he and servantz namo²⁴
At that tyme, for hym listē ridē soo;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
A sheef of pocock²⁵ arwes, bright and kene,

Under his belt he bar ful thrifly
Wel koude he dreese his takel yemanly;
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe—
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not-heed²⁶ hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of woodcraft wel koude²⁷ he al the usage. 110
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,²⁸
And by his syde a sword and a bokeler.
And on that oother syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophere²⁹ on his brest of silver sheene;
An horn he bar, the bawdryk³⁰ was of grene. 115
A forster was he, soothly as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smylng was ful symple and coy;
Hire grettest ooth was but by seintē Loy,³¹ 120
And she was cleped³² madame Eglyntyne.
Ful weel she soong the servise dvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
And Frenssh she spake ful faire and fetisly³³
After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,³⁴ 125
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with alle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir saucē depe.
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe, 130
That no drope ne fille³⁵ upon hir breeste;
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste.³⁶
Hire over-lippē wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.³⁷ 135
And sikerly³⁸ she was of greet desport,
And ful plessant and amaybe of port,
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
Of Court,³⁹ and been estatlich⁴⁰ of manere, 140
And to ben holden digne of reverence.

But for to speken of hire consience,⁴¹
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde 145
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel breed;⁴²
But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerdē smerte;⁴³
And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150

Ful semely hir wympul⁴⁴ pynched was;
Hire nose tretys,⁴⁵ hir eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal and there-to softe and reed,
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spannē brood I trowe, 155
For, hardily,⁴⁶ she was not undergrowe.

¹ Travelled. ² Russia. ³ Grenada.
⁴ The Knight had been in Grenada at the siege of Algezir (or Algeiras).

⁵ A Moorish Kingdom in Africa.
⁶ A town in Armenia. ⁷ A town in Asiatic Turkey.
⁸ Sea-expedition.
⁹ A Moorish Kingdom in Africa.

¹⁰ Anatolia, in Asia Minor. Nearly all the places here mentioned had been held by the heathen, Moors, Turks, and Lithuanians. The Knight has been the champion of Christian Europe in distant parts of the world.

¹¹ Rule or abusive language. ¹² Doublet.
¹³ Soiled, stained. ¹⁴ Hauberk, coat of mail.
¹⁵ Candidate for Knighthood. ¹⁶ Curled.
¹⁷ Average size. ¹⁸ Quick. ¹⁹ Campaigns.
²⁰ Embroidered. ²¹ Fluting. ²² Draw or paint.
²³ Night-time. ²⁴ No more. ²⁵ Peacock.

²⁶ Cropped head. ²⁷ Knew. ²⁸ Arm guard.
²⁹ A brother with a figure of St. Christopher.
³⁰ Shroud belt.
³¹ St. Eloy, or Eligius, patron saint of goldsmiths and farriers.

³² Called, named. ³³ Skilfully, readily.
³⁴ After the style (scole) of those in or about Stratford-at-Bow; i. e. the Prioress spoke the provincial, or Anglo-Norman, and not the Parisian French. The priory over which she presided is supposed to have been near Stratford-at-Bow, then a village only a few miles from London.
³⁵ Fell. ³⁶ Pleasure. ³⁷ Reached. ³⁸ Surely.

³⁹ Cheere of Court, imitate courtly behaviour.
⁴⁰ Stately, dignified. ⁴¹ Sympathy.
⁴² Fine white bread.
⁴³ Smote it sharply with a stick (yerdē).
⁴⁴ Neck cloth. ⁴⁵ Shapely. ⁴⁶ Surely

Ful fetys¹ was hir cloke, as I was war;
 Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
 A peire of bedes,² gauded al with grene,
 And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,³ 161
 And after *Amor vincit omnia*.⁴ *For christians* 221

Another Nonné with hire hadde she
 That was hir Chapeleyn, and Preestes thre.

A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistris, 166

An outridere, that lovèd venerie;⁵
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.

Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
 And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere

Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere, 170

And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle,
 Ther as this lord was keepere of the celle,

The reule of saint Maure⁶ or of saint Benêt,
 By-cause that it was olde and som-del streit,⁷

This ilke Monk leet oldè thynges pace,⁸ 175

And heeld after the newè world a space.
 He yaf nat of that text⁹ a pulled hen¹⁰

That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
 Ne that a Monk whan he is rechelees¹¹

Is likned til a fish that is waterlees: 180

This is to seyn, a Monk out of his cloystre.
 But thilke¹² text heeld he nat worth an oystre;

And I seyde his opinoun was good.
 What sholde he studie and make hymselfen

wood,¹³

Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure, 185

Or swynken¹⁴ with his handes and laboure,
 As Austyn¹⁵ bit¹⁶? How shal the world be

served?

Lat Austyn have his swynk¹⁷ to him reserved.
 Therefore he was a prikasour¹⁸ aright;

Grehoundes he hadde; as swift as fowel in flight:
 Of prikyng and of hunting for the hare 191

Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleeves y-purified¹⁹ at the hond

With grys,²⁰ and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And for to festne his hood under his chyn 195

He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pyn,
 A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.

His heed was balled that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face as he hadde been enoynt.

He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt; 200

Hise eyen stepe²¹ and rollynge in his heed,
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;²²

His bootès souple, his hors in greet estaat

Now certainly he was a fair prelaat.
 He was nat pale, as a forpynd²³ goost: 205

A fat swan loved he best of any roost;
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A Frere ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
 A lymytour,²⁴ a ful solempne²⁵ man;

In allè the ordres four²⁶ is noon that kan 210

So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage;
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage

Of yongè wommen at his owenè cost:
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post. 215

Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
 With frankelays²⁷ over al in his contree;

And eek with worthy wommen of the toun,
 For he hadde power of confessioun,

As seyde hym-self, moore than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licenciât.²⁸ 220

Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And pleasaunt was his absolucioun.

He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;

For unto a poure ordre for to yive 225

Is signè that a man is wel y-shryve;
 For, if he yaf, he dorstè make avaunt²⁹

He wistè that a man was repentaunt:
 For many a man so harde is of his herte 230

He may nat wepe al thogh hym soore smerte,
 Therefore in stede of wepyng and cryères

Men moote yeve silver to the poure freres.
 His tyet³⁰ was ay farsed full³¹ of knyves

And pynnes for to yeven yongè wyves;
 And certainly he hadde a murey note; 235

Wel koude he syng and playen on a rote;³²
 Of yeddyinges³³ he baar outrely the pris;

His nekkè whit was as the flour-de-lys,
 Ther-to³⁴ he strong was as a champioun.

He knew the tavernes well in al the toun 240

And everich hostiler and tappestere³⁵
 Bet than a lazare³⁶ or a beggèstere;³⁷

For unto swich a worthy man as he
 Accorded nat, as by his facultee,

To have with sikè lazars aqweyntaunce; 245

It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
 For to deelen with no swiche poraille;³⁸

But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
 And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,

Curteis he was and lowely of servyse, 250

Ther nas no man nowher so vertuou!
 He was the bestè beggere in his hous,

For thogh a wydwe haddè noght a sho,³⁹
 So plesant was his *In principio*,⁴⁰

¹ Neat.

² A string of beads. Here the beads were coral, gauded with green, i. e., the larger beads or *gaudies*, were of green.

³ "A" probably stood for Amor, or Charity, crowned as the greatest of Christian virtues.

⁴ i. e. as we should say, one well fitted to succeed.

⁵ Hunting.

⁶ St. Maur, or Maurus, a follower and successor of St. Benedict who was founder of the Benedictine Order.

His rules of monastic discipline (*reule of Saint Benêt*), came to be widely followed throughout Europe.

⁷ Somewhat strict.

⁸ Not necessarily a text from the Bible. Supposed here to refer to the belief or legend that Nimrod, the mighty hunter, was a bad man.

⁹ Plucked hen.

¹⁰ That same. ¹¹ Mad. ¹² Cloisterless.

¹³ St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and author of the *Confessions*.

¹⁴ Bid.

¹⁵ Trimmed. ¹⁶ Work. ¹⁷ Hard rider.

¹⁸ Grey fur. ¹⁹ Protruding.

²⁰ Glowed like a fire under a cauldron.

²¹ Tormented.

²² A friar allowed to beg within a certain district, or limit.

²³ Solemn.

²⁴ The Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite, and Augustin, or Austin Friars.

²⁵ A franklin was a free landed proprietor who held directly from the crown.

²⁶ He had been licensed by the Pope to perform certain religious offices.

²⁷ Boast.

²⁸ Tippet, hood or cowl, which seems to have been used as a pocket.

²⁹ Stuffed. ³⁰ Small harp. ³¹ Songs.

³² Wholly or entirely. ³³ Barmaid. ³⁴ Leper.

³⁵ Beggar. ³⁶ Poor people. ³⁷ Shoe.

³⁸ The opening words of the Gospel of St. John, *In principio erat verbum*, were used as a salutation by the friars as they entered a house on their rounds of mercy.

Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente: 255
 His purchase¹ was wel better than his rente.
 And rage² he koude, as it were right a whelp.
 In love-dayes³ ther koude he muchel helpe.
 For ther he was not lyk a cloysterer
 With a thredbare cope, as is a poure scolér, 260
 But he was lyk a maister, or a pope;
 Of double worstede was his semycope,⁴
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipped for his wantownesse,⁵
 To make his English sweet upon his tonge,
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde
 songe, 266
 His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght
 As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
 This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
 In mottéle, and hye on horse he sat; 271
 Upon his heed a Flaunderysh bevere hat;
 His bootés clasped faire and fetisly;
 His resons he spake ful solemnly,
 Sowynge alway thencres of his wynnynk, 275
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing⁶
 Bitwix Middelburgh⁷ and Orwelle.⁸
 Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes⁹ selle.
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,¹⁰
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280
 So estatly was he of his governaunce
 With his bargaynes and with his chevys-
 saunce,¹¹
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
 But sooth to seyn I noot¹² how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also 285
 That unto logyk hadde long y-go. ^{logye}
 As leen¹³ was his hors as is a rake.
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
 But looked holwe, and ther-to sobrelly;
 Ful thredbare was his overeste courtpey;¹¹ 290
 For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
 Ne was so worldly for to have office;
 For hym was leve¹⁴ have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bookés clad in blak or reed
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie, 295
 Than robes riche, or fithele,¹⁵ or gay sautrie;¹⁶
 But al be¹⁴ that he was a philosopre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he myghte of his freendés hente¹⁶
 On bookés and his lernynge he it spenté, 300
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf hym wher-with to scoleye.¹⁸
 Of studie took he moost cure¹⁷ and moost
 heed,
 Noght o¹⁸ word spak he moore than was neede,

¹ His purchase (or gain from begging) was larger than his rente (or income).

² Rump, play.

³ Days set apart for the settlement of disputes by arbitration or amicable agreement.

⁴ Short cloak.

⁵ At any cost.

⁶ A port on the island of Walcheren in the Netherlands.

⁷ Orwell (now Harwich), a port on the English coast nearly opposite Middelburgh.

⁸ A French coin, so called because they had a shield stamped on one side.

⁹ Loans.

¹⁰ Know not.

¹¹ Short over-coat.

¹² Fiddle.

¹³ Harp.

¹⁴ Although.

¹⁵ Get.

¹⁶ To study.

¹⁷ Care.

¹⁸ One.

And that was seyed in forme and reverence, 305
 And short and quyk and ful of ky¹⁹ sentence.¹⁹
 Sowynge²⁰ in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAW²¹, war and wys,²¹
 That often hadde been at the Parvys,²² 310
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence;
 He semed swich, his wordés weren so wise.
 Justice he was full often in Assise,²³
 By patente and by pleyn commissioun. 315
 For his science and for his heigh renoun,
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon;
 So greet a purchasour²⁴ was nowher noon.
 Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
 His purchasyng myghte nat been infect. 320
 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termés hadde he caas and doomes²⁵ alle
 That from the tyme of kyng William were falle;
 Ther-to he coude endite and make a thyng. 325
 Ther koude no wight pynchen²⁶ at his writyng;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.²⁷
 He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote,
 Girt with a ceint of silk with barrés²⁸ smale;
 Of his array telle I no longer tale. 330

A FRANKLEYN²⁹ was in his compaignye.
 Whit was his berd as is a dayseye,
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe³⁰ a sope in wyn;
 To lyven in delit was evere his wone,³¹ 335
 For he was Epicurus owene sone,
 That heeld opinioun that pleyn³² delit
 Was verrailly felicitie parfit.
 An householdere, and that a greet, was he;
 Seint Julian³³ was he in his contree; 340
 His breed, his ale, was always after oon;
 A better envyned³⁴ man was nowher noon.
 Withouthé baké mete was never his hous,
 Of fish and flessch, and that so plenteuous
 It snwed in his hous of mete and drynke. 345
 Of allé deyntees that men koudé thynke

¹⁹ Meaning.

²⁰ Tending to.

²¹ Wary and prudent.

²² Here, the porch, or portico in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where the lawyers were accustomed to meet for consultation.

²³ A Session (or sitting) of the Circuit Court. About forty years before Chaucer wrote his *Prologue*, in order to provide for the administration of justice in remote places, a law was passed, providing that an assize might be held, by a Judge of King's Bench, or of the Common Pleas, or by a King's Sergeant sworn. Chaucer's sergeant held this high office "by patent and by pleyn (or full) Commission."

²⁴ A money-maker, or perhaps a buyer of land. The Sergeant is so skilled in the law of real estate, that he is able, by a legal process, to effect the conveyance of land held under restrictions which would ordinarily interfere with its sale or transfer. Hence, all land was in fee simple to him i. e. as though free from such restrictions.

²⁵ Cases and judgments.

²⁶ Find fault.

²⁷ Knew he fully by heart.

²⁸ Ornaments on a girdle.

²⁹ A free landed proprietor who held directly from the Crown.

³⁰ Morning.

³¹ Custom.

³² Full.

³³ St. Julian Hospitator, patron saint of hospitality.

³⁴ Stored with wine.

After the sondry sesons of the year,
 So chaunged he his mēte and his sopér,
 Ful many a fat partīeh hadde he in muwe.¹
 And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.²
 Wo was his cook but if his saucé were 371
 Poynaunt and sharpe, and redy al his geere.³
 His table dormant⁴ in his halle alway.
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire; 355
 Ful oftē tyme he was knyght of the shire.⁴
 An anlaas,⁵ and a gipser⁶ al of silk,
 Heeng at his girdel, whit as morné milk;
 A shirreve⁷ hadde he been, and a countour.⁸
 Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.⁹ 360

An HABERDASHERE, and a CARPENTER,
 A WEBBE,¹⁰ a DYERE, and a TAPYCE,¹¹
 And they were clothed alle in o¹² lyveree
 Of a solémpne and greet fraternitee;¹³
 Ful fresch and newé hir geere apiked was.¹⁴ 365
 Hir knyves wéré chaped noght with bras,¹⁵
 But al with silver, wrought ful clene and weel,
 Hire girdles and hir pouches everydele.¹⁶
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
 To sitten in a yeldehalle,¹⁷ on a deys.¹⁸
 Everich¹⁹ for the wisdom that he kan²⁰
 Was shaply for to been²¹ an alderman.
 For catel hadde they ynogh and rente,²²
 And eek hir wyvès wolde it wel assente;
 And ellés certeyn wér they to blame. 375
 It is ful fair to been y-cleped²³ MARENGE;
 And goon to vigiliés al bifore,²⁴
 And have a mantel roialliche y-bore.²⁵

A Cook they haddé with hem for the nones,
 To boille the chiknès with the marybones,²⁶
 And poudré-marchant tart and galyngale;²⁷
 Wel koude he knowe a draughte of London ale;
 He koude rooste and sethe and brylle and frye,
 Máken mortreux²⁸ and wel bake a pye.
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385
 That on his shyne a morfai²⁹ haddé he.
 For blak-manger, that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, wonyng³⁰ fer by weste;
 For aught I woot he was of Dertémouthé.
 He rood upon a rouncy³¹ as he kouthe, 390
 In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
 A daggere hangyng on a laas³² hadde he
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
 The hooté somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;
 And certeinly he was a good felawe. 395
 Ful many a draughte of wine hadde he y-drawe
 Fro Burdeuxward whil that the Chapman³³
 sleepe.

Of nycc conscience took he no keepe.³⁴

¹ Coop. ² Fish pond. ³ Fixed.
⁴ Representative of his shire, or county in Parliament.
⁵ Dagger. ⁶ Pouch. ⁷ Sheriff.
⁸ Auditor. ⁹ Land-holder. ¹⁰ Weaver.
¹¹ Dealer in carpets and tapistry. ¹² One.
¹³ A guild. ¹⁴ Trimmed. ¹⁵ Wholly.
¹⁶ Guildhall. ¹⁷ Dais. ¹⁸ Each.
¹⁹ He knew. ²⁰ Fit to be. ²¹ Income.
²² Be called. ²³ In front of all.
²⁴ Royally carried—by a servant.
²⁵ Marrow-bones. ²⁶ A tart and a sweet spice.
²⁷ Mix in a mortar. ²⁸ An open sore. ²⁹ Dwelling.
³⁰ A nag. ³¹ Cord. ³² Merchant. ³³ Heed.

If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water³⁴ he sent hem hoom to every lond.
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes, 401
 His stremés and his daungers hym bisides,
 His herberwe and his moone, his lode-menage,³⁵
 Ther nas noon swich from Hullé to Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake: 405
 With many a tempest hadde his berd ben shake;
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they werc,
 From Gootland³⁶ to the Cape of Fynystere,
 And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudélayne. 410

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK;
 In all this world ne was ther noon hym lik
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye; 415
 For he was grounded in astronomye, *astrology*
 He kepte³⁷ his pacient a ful greet deel
 In houres,³⁸ by his magyk natureel.
 Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent³⁹
 Of his ymages for his pacient.
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye, 420
 And where they engendred and of what humour;
 He was a verray parfit praktisour.
 The cause y-knowe and of his harm the roote,
 Anon he yaf the siké man his boote.⁴⁰
 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries 425
 To send him droggs and his letuaries,⁴¹
 For ech of hem made oother for to wynne,
 Hir friendshiphe nas nat newé to bigynne.
 Wel knew he the oldé Esculapius⁴²
 And Deyscorides, and eke Rufus, 430
 Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galyen,
 Serapion, Rasis and Avycen,
 Averrois, Damascien and Constantyn,
 Bernard and Gatésden and Gilbertyn.
 Of his diété mesurable was he. 435
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissyng and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.
 In sangwyn and in pers⁴³ he clad was al,
 Lyned with taffat⁴⁴ and with sendal. 440
 And yet he was but esy of dispence,⁴⁵
 He kepté that he wan in pestilence.⁴⁶
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,
 Therfore he lovéde gold in special.

A GOOD WIF was ther of bisidé Bathe, 445
 But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.⁴⁷
 Of clooth-makyng she haddé swich an haunt⁴⁸
 She passéd hem of Yprès and of Gaunt.
 In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon

³⁴ i. e. he pitched them over-board.
³⁵ Pilotage. ³⁶ Jutland.
³⁷ Watched. ³⁸ Astrological hours.
³⁹ He knew well how to make a fortunate horoscope
 (fortunen the ascendent) of his patient by making images
 or characters stamped in metals, or wax, at a time when
 the stars were favorable.
⁴⁰ Remedy. ⁴¹ Syrup and powders.
⁴² Aesculapius was the reputed founder of the art of
 medicine, the following names are those of famous phys-
 icians and medical writers of the Middle Ages.
⁴³ Red and blue. ⁴⁴ Silk.
⁴⁵ Moderate in spending.
⁴⁶ The plague known as the "Black Death," which
 devastated England in Chaucer's century.
⁴⁷ A pity. ⁴⁸ Skill.

That to the offrynge¹ bifore hire sholde goon;
 And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she, 451
 That she was out of allé charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs² ful fyné weren of ground,³
 I dorsté swere they weyeden ten pound,⁴
 That on a Sunday weren upon hir heed. 455
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste and
 newe;
 Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve, 459
 Housbondes at chirché dore⁵ she haddé fyve,
 Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
 But ther-of nedeth nat to speke as nowthe,⁶
 And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
 She haddé passed many a straunge strem;
 At Rome she haddé been, and at Boloigne, 465
 In Galice at Saint Jame, and at Coloigne,
 She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
 Gat-tothed⁷ was she, soothly for to seye.
 Upon an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wympléd⁸ wel, and on hir heed an hat 470
 As brood as is a bokeler or targe;
 A foot mantel aboute her hipés large,
 And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe. ^{teche}
 In felawship wel koude she laughe and carpe;⁹
 Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce, 475
 For she koude of that art the oldé daunce.⁸

A Goodman was ther of religioun,
 And was a POURE PERSON OF A TOWN;
 But riche he was of hooly thought and werk;
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
 That Cristés Gospel trewely wolde preche
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benygne he was and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-prevéd¹⁰ ofté sithes¹¹ 485
 Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
 But rather wolde he yeven out of doubte,
 Unto his pouré parisshe aboute,
 Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce:
 He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer asonder,
 But he ne lasté nat for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf
 That firste he wroghte and afterward he
 taughte.
 Out of the gospel he tho¹² wordes caughte,
 And this figure he added eek therto,
 That if gold rusté what shal iren doo? 500
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewéd¹³ man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest také keepe,

A shiten shepherde and a clené sheepe.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive 505
 By his clenesse how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
 He setté nat his benefice to hyre
 And leet his sheepe encombred¹⁴ in the myre,
 And ran to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
 To seken hyn a chaunterie¹⁵ for soules; 510
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,¹⁴
 But dwelte at hoom and kepté wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie,—
 He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie
 And though he hooly were and vertuous, 515
 He was to synful man nat despitous,¹⁵
 Ne of his speché daungerous ne digne,¹⁶
 But in his techyng déscreet and benygne,
 To drawn folk to hevene by fairnesse,
 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse; 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
 Hym wolde he snybben¹⁶ sharply for the
 nonys.
 A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys;
 He waited after no pompe and reverence, 525
 Ne marked him a spiced¹⁷ conscience,
 But Cristés lóre, and his Apostles twelve,
 He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his
 brother, 529
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,¹⁸
 A trewé swynkere¹⁹ and a good was he,
 Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best, with all his hoolé herte,
 At allé tymés, thogh him gamed or smerte,²⁰ 534
 And thanne his neighebores right as hymselfe.
 He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,
 For Cristés sake, for every pouré wight,
 Withouten hire if it lay in his myght.
 His tithes paydé he ful faire and wel, 539
 Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.²¹
 In a tabárd²² he rood upon a mere.
 Ther was also a REVE²³ and a MILLER.
 A SOMNOUR²⁴ and a PARDONER²⁵ also,
 A MAUNCIPLE²⁶ and myself,—ther were 544
 namo.
 The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones,
 Ful byg was he of brawn and eek of bones;
 That provéd wel, for over-al ther, he cam,
 At wrastlyng he wolde have awey the ram.²⁷
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikké
 knarre,²⁸

¹³ Either an endowment for the payment of a priest to sing or say mass for the dead; or else the church or chapel in which such masses were celebrated. After the plague, many parish priests deserted their parishes and went to London to make money by officiating in the chantries.

¹⁴ Supported. ¹⁵ Scornful. ¹⁶ Reprove.
¹⁷ Here supposed to mean "scrupulous," "overfastidious" or over-particular about non-essentials.

¹⁸ Cart-load. ¹⁹ Laborer.
²⁰ In joy or pain. ²¹ Labor and property.

²² Short coat.
²³ A steward, or bailiff (as sheriff or shire-reve). Here the Reve of a manor.

²⁴ An officer who summoned delinquents before the ecclesiastical courts.

²⁵ One empowered to sell indulgences, or pardons.
²⁶ A caterer for a college or for one of the Inns of Court.

²⁷ The usual prize at wrestling matches.
²⁸ Knot.

¹ When the congregation came forward to the altar (either to kiss the relics on what was known as Relic Sunday, or to give alms), the Wife of Bath claimed a foremost place in the line of worshippers.

² Head-dresses.
³ The couples were married in the Church porch, after which the priest celebrated mass at the altar.

⁴ Now. ⁵ Teeth set wide apart.

⁶ Having a wimple, or head-covering.
⁷ Chatter. ⁸ The old game. ⁹ Proved.
¹⁰ Times. ¹¹ Those. ¹² Unlearned.

Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,¹
 Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
 His berd, as any sowe or fox, was reed, 552
 And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cope² right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and thereon stood a toft of herys, 555
 Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
 His noséthirls blake were and wyde;
 A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde;
 His mouth as wyde was a greet forneys,
 He was a jangler and a goliardeys,³ 560
 And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
 Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries,⁴
 And yet he hadde a thombe of golde,⁵ pardee,
 A whit cote and a blew hood wered he. 564
 A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
 And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
 Of which achatours⁶ myghte take exemple
 For to be wise in byyng of vitaille; 569
 For, whether that he payde or took by taille,⁷
 Algate⁸ he wayted⁹ so in his achaaat¹⁰
 That he was ay biforn¹¹ and in good staat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
 That swich a lewed¹² mannys wil shal pace
 The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men? 575
 Of maistrés hadde he mo than thries ten,
 That weren of lawe expert and curious,
 Of wiche ther weren a duszeyn in that hous
 Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engelond, 580
 To maken hym lyvé by his propre good¹³
 In honour detteles,¹⁴ but he were wood,¹⁵
 Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any caas that myghte falle or happe; 585
 And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.¹⁶

The Revé was a sclendré colerik man
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;
 His heer was by his erys round y-shorn,
 His top was dokéd lyk a preest biforn, 590
 Ful longé were his legges and ful lene,
 Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
 Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,¹⁷
 Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
 Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn,
 The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn. 596
 His lordés sheepe, his neet,¹⁸ his dayerye,
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor,¹⁹ and his pultrye,
 Was hoolly in this revés governyng,
 And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng 600

¹ Heave off its hinges.

² Loud and ribald jester.

³ Tip.

⁴ Millers were allowed as *toll* a certain proportion of the grain in payment for the grinding. This miller *tolléd thrice*, i. e. took three times the legal quantity of grain.

⁵ An allusion to the proverb "An honest miller has a thumb of gold." The line may be ironical,—he stole corn, he tolléd thrice, and yet was honest enough for a miller. The proverb itself is ambiguous, and the passage obscure.

⁶ Buyers.

⁷ Tally, i. e. charged the goods.

⁸ Always.

⁹ Watched.

¹⁰ Buying.

¹¹ Before.

¹² Ignorant.

¹³ On his own means.

¹⁴ Without debts.

¹⁵ Mad.

¹⁶ Outwitted them all.

¹⁷ Cattle.

¹⁸ Farm stock.

Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
 Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.
 There nas baillif, ne hierde,¹⁹ nor oother hyne,²⁰

That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;²¹
 They were adrad of hym as of the deeth. 605
 His wonyng²² was ful faire upon an heeth,
 With grene trees y-shadwed was his place.
 He koudé bettre than his lord purchase.
 Ful riche he was a-stored²³ pryvely,
 His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly 610
 To yeve and lene²⁴ hym of his owene good
 And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.

In youthe he lernéd hadde a good myster,²⁵
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This Revé sat upon a ful good stot,²⁶ 615
 That was al pomely²⁷ grey, and highte Scot;
 A long surcote of pers²⁸ upon he hade,
 And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
 Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
 Biside a toun men clepen Baldéselle. 620
 Tukked he was as is a frere, aboute
 And ever he rood the hyndreste²⁹ of oure route.

A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnés face, 624
 For sawcéfleem³⁰ he was, with eyen narwe.
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,
 With scaled³¹ browes blake and piled³² berd,—
 Of his visagé children were aferd. . . .
 Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge,³³ ne brymstoon,
 Boras,³⁴ ceruce, ne oille of Tartre noon, 630
 Ne oymément that woldé clense and byte,
 That hym myghte helpen of the whelkés³⁵
 white

Nor of the knobbés sittynge on his chekes. . . .
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eke lekes,³⁶ 634
 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.³⁷

And whan that he wel drunken hadde the wyn,

Than wolde he speké no word but Latyn.
 A fewé termes³⁸ hadde he, two or thre,
 That he had lernéd out of som decree,— 640
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day,
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
 Kan clepen WATTE³⁹ as wel as kan the pope.
 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,⁴⁰
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie; 645
 Ay *Questio quid juris* wolde he crie.
 He was a gentil harlot⁴¹ and a kynde;
 A bettre felawe sholdé men noght fynde. . . .
 A gerland⁴² hadde he set upon his heed, 666

¹⁹ Herdsman.

²¹ Trickery and deceit.

²² Stocked. ²⁴ Give and lend.

²³ Cob. ²⁷ Dappled.

²⁴ Hindermost. ³⁰ Pimpled.

²⁵ Patchy. ³³ White lead.

²⁶ Blotches.

²⁷ Legal phrases.

²⁸ Test, examine.

²⁹ Crazy.

³⁰ On the ale stake, a pole projecting horizontally from the front of the tavern, hung an ivy-bush: the usual sign of an inn. A *Gerland*, made of three hoops and decorated with ribbons was often hung from the ale stake, in addition to the bush.

³¹ Hind, servant.

³² Dwelling.

³³ Craft.

³⁴ Blue.

³⁵ Scabby.

³⁶ Borax.

³⁷ Crazy.

³⁸ Can call Wat, or Walter.

³⁹ Fellow, knave.

As greet as it were for an alé stake;
A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake.¹

With hym ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncivale,² his freend and his compeer, 670
That streight was comen from the court of
Romé. www.libtool.com.cn

Ful loude he soong *Com hider, love to me!*
This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,³
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax 675
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;⁴
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde.
But thynne it lay by colpons⁵ oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon, 680
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newé jet,⁶
Discheveleyn, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare,
A vernycle⁷ hadde he sowed upon his cappe; 685
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe
Bret-ful⁸ of pardon, comen from Rome al
hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot; . . .
But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware 692
Ne was ther swich another pardoner,
For in his male⁹ he hadde a pilwe-beer,¹⁰
Which that, he seyde, was oure lady veyl; 695
He seyde he hadde a gobet¹¹ of the seyl
That Seinté Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.¹²
He hadde a croys of latoun,¹³ ful of stones,
And in a glas he haddé pigges bones. 700
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A pouré person dwellynge upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthés tweye;
And thus with feynéd flaterye and japes¹⁴ 705
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But, trewely to tellen atté laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste;
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an Offertorie; 710
For wel he wisté whan that song was songe,
He mosté preche, and wel affile his tonge
To wynné silver, as he ful wel koude;
Therefore he song the murierly¹⁵ and loude.

Now have I toold you shortly, in a clause, 715
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the
cause

Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, fasté by the Belle.¹⁶
But now is tymé to yow for to telle 720
How that we baren us that ilké nyght,

¹ A loaf of bread.

² Probably the hospital of the Blessed Mary of Rouncivale, on the outskirts of Chaucer's London.

³ Strong bass.

⁴ Shreds.

⁵ Hank of flax.

⁶ Fashion.

⁷ A small copy of the picture of the face of Christ, the original of which, on a cloth or handkerchief, was preserved for centuries at St. Peter's in Rome.

⁸ Brimful.

⁹ Wallet.

¹⁰ Pillow-case.

¹¹ Shred.

¹² Caught.

¹³ Pinchbeck, a cheap imitation of gold.

¹⁴ Tricks.

¹⁵ The more merrily.

¹⁶ Presumably the name of an Inn.

Whan we were in that hostellerie alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

But first, I pray yow of youre curteisye, 725
That ye narette it nat my vileynye,¹⁷
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere
To tellé yow hir wordés and hir cheere,¹⁸
Ne thogh I speke hir wordés proprely;¹⁹
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as ever he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche²⁰ or large;
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe, 735
Or feyné thyng, or fyndé wordés newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot no vileynye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
'The wordés moote be cosyn to the dede.'

Also I prey yow to foryeve it me
Al have I nat set folk in hir degre 744
Heere in this tale, as that they sholdé stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chiere made oure hoost us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon,
And served us with vitaille at the beste:
Strong was the wyn and wel to drynke us 750
leste.²¹

A semely man OUR HOOSTÉ was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle.
A largé man he was, with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe;²² 754
Boold of his speche, and wys and well y-taught,
And of manhod hye lakkedé right naught.
Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of myrthe amongés othere thynges,
Whan that we haddé maad our rekenynges; 760
And seyde thus: "Now, lordynges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome, hertely;
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so myrie a compaignye
At onés in this herberwe²³ as is now; 765
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal costé noght.

"Ye goon to Canterbury—God yow speede,
The blisful martir quité yow youre meede!²⁴ 770
And, wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen²⁵ and to pleye;
For trewely confort ne myrthe is noon
To ridé by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therefore wol I maken yow disport, 775
As I seyde ersté, and doon yow som confort.
And if you liketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my juggement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwé, whan ye riden by the weye, 780
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be myrie, amyteth of myn heed!

¹⁷ Impute it not to my coarseness.

¹⁸ Behavior.

¹⁹ Literally, exactly.

²⁰ Freely.

²¹ Pleased.

²² Cheapside in London.

²³ Inn.

²⁴ Pay.

²⁵ Prepare to tell stories.

Hoold up youre hond, withouten moore speche."
 Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche; 784
 Us thoghte it was noght worth to make it
 wys,¹

And graunted hym withouten moore avys,²
 And bad him seye his verdit, as hym leste.
 "Lordynges," quod he, "I now herkneþ for
 the beste;

But taak it nought, I prey yow, in deedeyn; 789
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
 That ech of yow, to shorté with your weye,
 In this viage shal tellé talés tweye,—
 To Caunterburyward, I mean it so,
 And homward he shal tellen othere two,—
 Of aventúres that whilom han bifalle. 795
 And which of yow that bereþ hym beste of alle,
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
 Talés of best senténcé and most solaas,³
 Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
 Heere in this placé, sittynge by this post, 800
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
 And, for to maké yow the moore murry,
 I wol myselven gladly with yow ryde
 Right at myn owené cost, and be youre gyde;
 And whoso wole my juggémént withseye 805
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And if ye vouché-sauf that it be so
 Tel me anon, withouten wordés mo,
 And I wol erly shapé me therefore."

This thyng was graunted, and oure othés
 swore 810

With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
 That he would vouché-sauf for to do so,
 And that he woldé been oure governour,
 And of our talés juge and réportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn pris, 815
 And we wol reuled been at his devys
 In heigh and lough; and thus, by oon assent,
 We been accorded to his juggémént.
 And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
 We dronken, and to resté wente echon, 820
 Withouten any lenger tarynge.
 Amowé, whan that day gan for to sprynge,
 Up roos oure Hoost and was oure aller cok,⁴
 And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok, 824
 And forth we riden, a little moore than paas,⁵
 Unto the warteryng of Seint Thomas;⁶
 And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste
 And seyde, "Lordynges, herkneþ, if yow leste:
 Ye woot youre forward? and I it yow recorde:
 If even-song and morwé-song accorde, 830
 Lat se now who shal telle the firsté tale.
 As ever mote I drynké wyn or ale,
 Whoso be rebel to my juggémént
 Shal paye for all that by the wey is spent! 834
 Now draweth cut,⁸ or that we ferrer twynne.⁹
 He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.

¹ "To make it a matter of wisdom or deliberation."

² Advice.

³ Wisdom.

⁴ Cock for us all.

⁵ A foot-pace.

⁶ St. Thomas a-Watering; a brook where horses were watered, which crossed the road taken by the pilgrims to St. Thomas' shrine, i. e. to Canterbury.

⁷ Know your promise.

⁸ i. e. draw lots; pieces of straw, paper, etc. of unequal lengths, and used for the drawing of lots, were called *cuts*.

⁹ Depart.

"Sire Knyght," quod he, "my mayster and my
 lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
 Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady Prioress, 839
 And ye sire Clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse,
 Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man."

Anon to drawn every wight bigan,
 And, shortly for to tellen as it was,
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,¹⁰
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght, 845
 Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght:
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,¹¹
 By forward¹² and by composicioun,
 As he han herd; what nedeth wordés mo? 849
 And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,
 He seyde, "Syn I shal bigynne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddés name! 854
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneþ what I seye."
 And with that word we ryden forth oure weye;
 And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manére.

THE PARDONER'S TALE

... Thise riotourés thre, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er primé¹³ rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke;
 And as they sat they herde a bellé clynke
 Bifore a cors, was carried to his grave. 665
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave:¹⁴
 "Go bet," quod he, "and axé redily¹⁵
 What coks is this that passeth heer forby,
 And looké that thou reporte his namé weel."
 "Sire," quod this boy, "it nedeth never a deel,
 It was me toold er ye cam heere two houres; 671
 He was, *pardee*, an old felawe of youres,
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-nyght,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
 Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth, 675
 That in this contree al the peplé sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
 And wente his wey withouten wordés mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence,¹⁶
 And maister, er ye come in his presence, 680
 Me thynketh that it weré necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie;
 Beth redy for to meete hym evermoore;
 Thus taughte me my dame; I sey na-moore."
 "By Seinte Marie!" seyde this taverne, 685
 "The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this
 yeer,

Henne¹⁷ over a mile, withinne a greet village,
 Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne,¹⁸
 and page;

I trowe his habitacoun be there;
 To been avyséd¹⁹ greet wysdom it were, 690

¹⁰ Chance, destiny or luck.

¹¹ Right.

¹² Agreement.

¹³ In general the interval between 6 and 9 A. M. More specifically, one of the seven stated times or hours of devotion. From the ringing of the bell, it refers here to the canonical hour for service.

¹⁴ Boy.

¹⁵ Quickly.

¹⁶ Probably the plague of 1349-9, the earliest of the four great plagues in the 14th century.

¹⁷ Henne.

¹⁸ Hind.

¹⁹ Forewarned.

Er that he hide a man a dishonour."

"Ye, Goddés armés!" quod this riotour,
 "Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?
 I shal hym seke by weye and eek by strete;
 I make a vow to Goddés digné bones 696
 Herkneþ, felawés, we thre been al ones,
 Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,
 And ech of us bi comen othere's brother,
 And we wol sleen this falsé traytour, Deeth;
 He shal be slayn, he that so manye sleeth, 700
 By Goddés dignitee, er it be nyght!"
 Togidres han thise thre hir trouthes¹ plight
 To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
 As though he were his owene y-boré brother;
 And up they stirte,² al dronken, in this rage;
 And forth they goon towardes that village 708
 Of which the taverner hadde spoke bifore;
 And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn,
 And Cristés blessed body they to-rente,³
 Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym
 hente.⁴ 710

Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,
 Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,
 An oold man and a pouré with hem mette;
 This oldé man ful mekely hem grette
 And seyde thus: "Now, lordés, God yow see!"⁵ 716

The proudeste of thise riotours three
 Answerde agayn, "What, carl with sory grace,
 Why artow⁷ al for-wrapped, save thy face?
 Why lyvéstow so longe in so greet age?"

This oldé man gan looke in his visage, 720
 And seyde thus: "For I ne kan nat fynde
 A man, though that I walkéd into Ynde,
 Neither in citee, ne in no village,
 That woldé chaunge his youthé for myn age;
 And therefore moot I han myn agé stille, 725
 As longé tyme as it is Goddés wille.
 Ne Deeth, alas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
 Thus walke I, lyk a restéless kaityf,
 And on the ground which is my moodrés⁸
 gate,

I knokké with my staf, erly and late, 730
 And seyde, "Leeve mooder,⁹ leet me in!
 Lo, how I vanyashe, flesch and blood and skyn;
 Allas! whan shul my bonés been al reste?
 Móoder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste
 That in my chambré longé tyme hath be, 735
 Ye, for an heyré-clowt¹⁰ to wrappé me!"
 But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
 For which ful pale and welked¹¹ is my face.

"But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
 To speken to an old man vileynye, 740
 But he trespasse in word, or elles in dede.
 In Hooly Writ ye may your self wel rede,
 Agayns an oold man, hoor upon his heed,
 Ye sholde arise; wherfore I yeve yow reed,¹²
 Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now, 745
 Namooré than ye wolde men did to yow
 In agé, if that ye so longe abyde.
 And God be with yow, where ye go or ryde;
 I mooté go thider as I have to go."

¹ Worthy.

² Troth.

³ Started.

⁴ Tore in pieces, i. e. by their oaths.

⁵ Seize.

⁶ Keep you in His sight; watch over you.

⁷ Art thou.

⁸ Mother's.

⁹ Dear Mother.

¹⁰ Hair shirt.

¹¹ Withered.

¹² Advice.

"Nay, oldé cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so!"
 Seydè this oother hasardour¹³ anon; 751

"Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
 Thou spak right now of thilké traytour, Deeth,
 That in this contree alle oure freendés sleeth;
 Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye, 755
 Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abyde,¹⁴
 By God and by the hooly sacrament!
 For soothly, thou art oon of his assent
 To sleen us yongé folk, thou falsé theef!" 759

"Now, sires," quod he, "if that ye so be leef
 To fyndé Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
 For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
 Under a tree, and there he wole abyde;
 Noght for youre boost he wole him no thyng
 hyde.

Se ye that ook? Right there ye shal hym
 fynde. 765

God savé yow that boghte agayn mankynde,
 And yow amende!" thus seyde this oldé man;
 And everich of thise riotours ran

Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde,
 Of floryns fyne, of gold y-coynéd rounde, 770
 Wel ny a seven busschels, as hem thoughte.
 No longer thanné after Deeth they soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
 That don they set hem by this precious hoord.
 The worsté of hem he spak the firsté word. 776

"Bretheren," quod he, "taak kepé what I
 seye;

My wit is greet, though that I bourde¹⁵ and
 pleye.

This tresor hath Fortúne unto us yeven
 In myrthe and jolitee oure lyf to lyven, 780
 And lightly as it comth so wol we spende.
 Ey, Goddés precious dignitee! who wende¹⁶
 To-day, that we sholde hav so faire a grace?
 But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or ellés unto youres, 785
 (For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures),
 Thanne weré we in heigh felicitée.

But trewely, by day it may nat bee;
 Men woldé seyn that we were thevés stronge,
 And for oure owené tresor doon us honge. 790
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nyghte
 As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.

Wherfore, I rede that cut¹⁷ among us all
 Be drawe, and let se wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herté blithe 795
 Shal renné to the towne, and that ful swythe,¹⁸
 And bryngé us breed and wyn ful prively,
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly

This tresor wel; and if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is nyght we wol this tresor carie, 800
 By oon assent, where as us thynketh best."
 That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest¹⁹
 And bad hem drawe and looke where it wol
 falle;

And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon; 805
 And al so sooné as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother:

¹³ Gambler.

¹⁴ Jest.

¹⁵ Lot.

¹⁶ Quickly.

¹⁷ Pay for.

¹⁸ Weemed, know.

¹⁹ Fist.

"Thow knowest wel thou art my sworné brother
 Thy profit wol I tellé thee anon;
 Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon, 810
 And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us thre;
 But natheless, if I kan shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendés torn to thee?" 815

That oother answerde, "I noot how that may be;

He woot how that the gold is with us tweye;
 What shal we doon, what shal we to hym seye?"

"Shal it be conseil?" seyde the firste shrewe,¹

"And I shal tellen thee in wordés fewe 820
 What we shal doon, and bryngen it wel aboute."

"I graunte," quod that oother, "out of doute,
 That by my trouthe I shal thee nat biweye."

"Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we be tweye,

And two of us shul stronger be than oon. 825
 Looke whan that he is set, and right anon

Arys, as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
 And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye,

Whil that thou strogest with hym as in game,
 And with thy daggere looke thou do the same;

And thanne shal al this gold departed be, 831
 My deeré freend, bitwixen me and thee.

Thanne may we bothe oure lustés all fulfille,
 And pleye at dees² right at oure owene wille."

And thus acorded been thise shrewés tweye, 835
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongeste, which that wente unto the toun,

Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte;

"O Lord," quod he, "if so were that I myghte 840
 Have al this tresor to myself alone,

There is no man that lyveth under the trone³
 Of God, that sholdé lyve so murye as I!"

And atté laste the feend, oure enemy,
 Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson

beye,⁴ 845

With which he myghté sleen his felawes tweye;
 For-why the feend foonde hym in swich lyvyng,

That he hadde levé hym to sorwé brynge,
 For this was outrelý⁵ his fulle entente

To sleen hem bothe and never to repente. 850
 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,

Into the toun, unto a pothecarie,
 And preyde hym that he hym woldé selle

Som poyssoun, that he myghte his rattés
 quelle.⁶

And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,⁷ 855
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,

And fayn he woldé wreke hym,⁸ if he myghte
 On vermyn, that destroyed hym by nyghte.

The pothecarie answerde, "And thou shalt have

A thyng that, al so God my soulé save, 860
 In al this world ther nis no créature,

That eten or dronken hath of this confiture,
 Noght but the montance⁹ of a corn of whete,

That he ne shal his lif anon forlete;¹⁰

Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lassé while 865
 Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile;
 This poyssoun is so strong and violent."

This curséd man hath in his hond y-hent
 This poyssoun in a box, and sith he ran

Into the nexté strete unto a man, 870
 And borwéd hym largé botellés thre,

And in the two his poyson pouréd he;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his owené drynke;

For al the nyght he shoope¹¹ hym for to swynke

In carynge of the gold out of that place. 875
 And whan this riotour with sory grace

Hadde filled with wyn his greté botels thre,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.

What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?
 For right as they hadde cast his deeth bifore,

Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon, 881
 And whan that this was doon thus spak that

oon;

"Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us merie,

And afterward we wol his body berie;" 885
 And with that word it happéd hym, *par cas*,

To take the botel ther the poyssoun was,
 And drank and yaf his felawe drynke also,

For which anon they storven bothé two.
 But certés, I suppose that Avycen¹²

Wroot never in no Canon,¹³ ne in no fen¹⁴ 890
 Mo wonder signés of empoisonyng

Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir endyng.
 Thus ended been thise homycides two,

And eek the false empoysonere also.
 O curséd synne of allé cursednesse! 895

O traytorous homycide! O wikkednesse!
 O glotonye, luxúrie, and hasardrye!¹⁴

Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye,
 And othés grete, of usage and of pride!

Allas! mankyndé, how may it bitide 900
 That to thy Creatour which that thee wroughte,

And with his precious herté-blood thee boghte,
 Thou art so fals and so unkynde, alas!

Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,

And ware yow fro the synne of avarice. 905
 Myn hooly pardoun may you alle warice.¹⁵

THE COMPLEYNT OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE

c. 1399

To you, my purse, and to noon other wyght
 Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!

I am so sory now that ye been light;
 For, certés, but ye make me hevye chere, 5

Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere,
 Forwiche unto your mercy thus I crye,—

Beth hevye ageyn, or allés mot I dye!

¹¹ Planned.
¹² i. e., *Avicenna* (980–1037), a celebrated Arabian physician.

¹³ A section in *The Canon*. *Avicenna's* work on medicine, is called (from an Arabic word) a *fen*. No more wonderful signs of poisoning are described in the *Canon of Medicine*, or in any *fen*, or part of that book;—not even the *fen* which specifically treats of poisons.

¹⁴ Gambling. ¹⁵ Heal.

¹ Rascal. ² Dice. ³ Throne. ⁴ Buy.
⁵ Utterly. ⁶ Kill. ⁷ Hedge.
⁸ Avenge himself. ⁹ Amount. ¹⁰ Give up.

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be nyght,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonn^e bright 10
That of yelownesse hadd^e never pere.
Ye be my lyf! ye be myn hert^es stere!¹
Quene of comfort and of good companye!
Beth hevy ageyn, or ell^es mot I dye! .com.cn

Now, purse, that be to me my lyves light 15
And Sav^eour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toun help me thorough your myght,
Syn that ye wole not been my tresor^ere;
For I am shave² as nye as is a frere.
But yet I pray unto your curtesye, 20
Beth hevy ageyn, or ell^es mot I dye!

THE BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL OR TRUTH

(After 1386)

Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with sothefast-
nesse 20
Suffice unto thy thyng though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate and clymbygng tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wel^e blent¹ overal;
Savour² no more than thee bihov^e shal; 5
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede,³ 25
And trouthe shal deliver^e, it is no drede.

Tempest thee⁴ nocht al croke^d to redresse
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Greet rest^e stant in litel besynesse; 10
An eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;⁵
Stryve nocht, as doth the croke⁶ with the wal.
Daunt^e thy-self, that dauntest other^es dede.
And trouthe shal deliver^e, it is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse.⁸ 15
The wrestling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis no boom, her nis but wilderness.
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste,⁹ out of thy
stal,
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and let thy gost thee lede, 20
And trouthe shal deliver^e, it is no drede.

THE VOYAGES AND TRAVELS OF SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE¹

THE PROLOGUE

Forasmuch as the land beyond the sea, that
is to say, the Holy Land, which men call the
land of promise or of behest, passing all other 50
lands, is the most worthy land, most excellent,

¹ Rudder. ² Close.
³ Makes blind. ⁴ Taste. ⁵ Advise.
⁶ Distress thyself. ⁷ Awl. ⁸ Earthen pot.
⁹ Subdue. ¹⁰ Submission. ¹¹ Beast.

¹ This famous travel book and collection of marvels 55
was long supposed to be the composition of one, Sir
John Mandeville, who had actually travelled in the
countries he mentions. It is now known to be a transla-
tion of a French original, supposedly by Jean de Bur-
gogne (d. 1372), which in turn was a compilation from
various classical and medieval writers.

and lady and sovereign of all other lands, and is
blessed and hallowed with the precious body
and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; in the
which land it pleased him to take flesh and
5 blood of the Virgin Mary, to environ² that
holy land with his blessed feet; and there he
would of his blessedness shadow him in the said
blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, and become
man, and work many miracles, and preach and
10 teach the faith and the law of Christian men
unto his children; and there it pleased him to
suffer many reprovings and scornings for us;
and he that was king of heaven, of air, of earth,
of sea, and of all things that are contained in
15 them, would only be called king of that land,
when he said, "Rex sum Judeorum," that is to
say, I am king of the Jews; and that land he
chose before all other lands, as the best and most
worthy land, and the most virtuous land of all
20 the world; for it is the heart and the middle of
all the world; by witness of the philosopher,
who saith thus, "Virtus rerum in medio con-
sistit;" that is to say, "The virtue of things is
in the middle;" and in that land he would lead
25 his life, and suffer passion and death from the
Jews for us, to redeem and deliver us from the
pains of hell, and from death without end,
which was ordained for us for the sin of our
first father Adam, and for our own sins
30 also:— . . .

Wherefore every good Christian man, that is
of power, and hath whereof, should labour with
all his strength to conquer our right heritage,
and drive out all the unbelieving men. For
35 we are called Christian men, after Christ our
father. And if we be right children of Christ,
we ought to claim the heritage that our father
left us, and take it out of heathen men's
hands.

40 And forasmuch as it is long time passed that
there was no general passage or voyage over
the sea, and many men desiring to hear speak
of the Holy Land, and have thereof great solace
and comfort, I, John Maundeville, knight,
45 albeit I be not worthy, who was born in Eng-
land, in the town of Saint Albans, passed the
sea in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1322, on
the day of St. Michael; and hitherto have been
a long time over the sea, and have seen and
gone through many divers lands, and many
provinces, and kingdoms, and isles, and have
passed through Tartary, Persia, Ermony
(Armenia) the Little and the Great; through
Lybia, Chaldea, and a great part of Ethiopia;
through Amazonia, India the Less and the
Greater, a great part; and throughout many
other isles that are about India; where dwell
many divers folks, and of divers manners and

² Go about in.

laws, and of divers shapes of men. Of which lands and isles I shall speak more plainly hereafter. And I shall devise you some part of things that are there, when time shall be as it may best come to my mind; and especially for them that will and are in purpose to visit the holy city of Jerusalem, and the holy places that are thereabout. And I shall tell the way that they shall hold thither; for I have oftentimes passed and ridden the way, with good company of many lords: God be thanked!

And ye shall understand that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it again out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it; and that lords and knights and other noble and worthy men that know Latin but little, and have been beyond the sea, may know and understand, if I err from defect of memory, and may redress it and amend it. For things passed out of long time from a man's mind or from his sight turn soon into forgetting; because a man's mind may not be comprehended or withheld, on account of the frailty of mankind.

WONDERS OF THE ISLES ABOUT JAVA

From that isle, in going by sea towards the south, is another great isle, called Dondun, in which are people of wicked kinds, so that the father eats the son, the son the father, the husband the wife, and the wife the husband.

The king of this isle is a great and powerful lord, and has under him fifty-four great isles, which give tribute to him; and in every one of these isles is a king crowned, all obedient to that king. In one of these isles are people of great stature, like giants, hideous to look upon; and they have but one eye, which is in the middle of the forehead; and they eat nothing but raw flesh and fish. And in another isle towards the south dwell people of foul stature and cursed nature, who have no heads, but their eyes are in their shoulders.

In another isle are people who have the face all flat, without nose and without mouth. In another isle are people that have the lip above the mouth so great, that when they sleep in the sun they cover all the face with that lip. And in another isle there are dwarfs, which have no mouth, but instead of their mouth they have a little round hole; and when they shall eat or drink, they take it through a pipe, or a pen, or such a thing, and suck it in. And in another isle are people that have ears so long that they hang down to their knees. And in another isle are people that have horses' feet. In an-

other isle are people that go upon their hands and feet like beasts, and are all skinned and feathered, and would leap as lightly into trees, and from tree to tree, as squirrels or apes. . . . And in another isle are people that go always upon their knees, and at every step they go it seems that they would fall; and they have eight toes on every foot. Many other divers people of divers natures there are in other isles about, of the which it were too long to tell.

KING ALEXANDER AND THE ISLE OF BRAGMAN

And beyond that isle is another isle, great and rich, where are good and true people, and of good living after their belief, and of good faith, and although they are not christened, yet by natural law they are full of all virtue, and eschew all vices. . . .

And that isle is called the isle of Bragman, and some men call it the Land of Faith; and through it runs a great river called Thebe.

And in general all the men of those isles, and of all the borders thereabout, are truer than in any other country thereabout, and more just than others in all things. . . .

And because they are so true, and so just, and so full of all good conditions, they are never grieved with tempests, nor with thunder and lightning, nor with hail, nor with pestilence, nor with war, nor with famine, nor with any other tribulation, as we are many times amongst us for our sins; wherefore it appears evident that God loveth them for their good deeds. They believe well in God that made all things, and worship Him; and they prize no earthly riches; and they live full orderly, and so soberly in meat and drink, that they live right long. And the most part of them die without sickness, when nature faileth them for old age.

And it befell, in king Alexander's time, that he purposed to conquer that isle; but when they of the country heard it, they sent messengers to him with letters, that said thus:—"What may we be now to that man to whom all the world is insufficient? Thou shalt find nothing in us to cause thee to war against us; for we have no riches, nor do we desire any; and all the goods of our country are in common. Our meat, with which we sustain our bodies, is our riches; and instead of treasure of gold and silver, we make our treasure of acorns and peas, and to love one another. . . .

"Our wives are not arrayed to make any man pleased. When men labour to array the body, to make it seem fairer than God made it, they do great sin; for man should not devise nor ask greater beauty than God hath ordained him to have at his birth. The earth ministereth to us two things: our livelihood, that cometh of the earth that we live by, and our sepulchre after our death. We have been in perpetual peace till now that thou art come to disinherit us; and also we have a king, not to do justice to every man, for he shall find no forfeit among us; but to keep nobleness, and to show that we are obedient, we have a king. For justice has among us no place; for we do to no man otherwise than we desire that men do to us, so that righteousness or vengeance have nought to do among us; so that thou mayest take nothing from us but our good peace, that always hath endured among us." And when king Alexander had read these letters, he thought that he should do great sin to trouble them.

THE HILLS OF GOLD AND THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

Towards the east of Prester John's land ¹ is a good and great isle called Taprobane, and it is very fruitful; and the king thereof is rich, and is under the obeisance of Prester John. And there they always make their king by election. In that isle are two summers and two winters; and men harvest the corn twice a year; and in all seasons of the year the gardens are in flower. . . .

Beside that isle, towards the east, are two other isles, one called Orille, the other Argyte, of which all the land is mines of gold and silver. And those isles are just where the Red Sea separates from the Ocean Sea. . . .

In the isle, also, of this Taprobane are great hills of gold, that ants keep full diligently.

And beyond the land, and isles, and deserts of Prester John's lordship, in going straight towards the east, men find nothing but mountains and great rocks; and there is the dark region, where no man may see, neither by day nor night, as they of the country say. And that desert, and that place of darkness, lasts from this coast unto Terrestrial Paradise, where Adam, our first father, and Eve were put, who dwelt there but a little while; and

that is towards the east, at the beginning of the earth. But this is not that east that we call our east, on this half, where the sun rises to us; for when the sun is east in those parts towards Terrestrial Paradise, it is then midnight in our parts on this half, on account of the roundness of the earth of which I have told you before; for our Lord God made the earth all round, in the middle of the firmament. And there have mountains and hills been, and valleys, which arose only from Noah's flood, that wasted the soft and tender ground, and fell down into valleys; and the hard earth and the rock remain mountains, when the soft and tender earth was worn away by the water, and fell, and became valleys.

Of Paradise I cannot speak properly, for I was not there. It is far beyond; and I repent not going there, but I was not worthy. But as I have heard say of wise men beyond, I shall tell you with good-will. Terrestrial Paradise, as wise men say, is the highest place of the earth; and it is so high that it nearly touches the circle of the moon there, as the moon makes her turn. For it is so high that the flood of Noah might not come to it, that would have covered all the earth of the world all about, and above and beneath, except Paradise. And this Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men know not whereof it is; for the wall is covered all over with moss, as it seems; and it seems not that the wall is natural stone. And that wall stretches from the south to the north; and it has but one entry, which is closed with burning fire, so that no man that is mortal dare enter.

And in the highest place of Paradise, exactly in the middle, is a well that casts out the four streams, which run by divers lands, of which the first is called Pison; or Ganges, that runs throughout India, or Emlak, in which river are many precious stones, and much lignum aloes,² and much sand of gold. And the other river is called Nile, or Gyson, which goes through Ethiopia, and after through Egypt. And the other is called Tigris, which runs by Assyria, and by Armenia the Great. And the other is called Euphrates, which runs through Media, Armenia, and Persia. And men there beyond say that all the sweet waters of the world, above and beneath, take their beginning from the well of Paradise; and out of that well all waters come and go. The first river is called Pison, that is, in our language, Assembly; for many other rivers meet there, and go into that river. And some call it Ganges, from an Indian king, called Gangeres because

¹ Prester John was a supposed Christian king of a great land in Asia, the extent and location of which were very vague.

² Aloes-wood, a soft, aromatic wood, often burnt for a perfume.

it ran through his land. And its water is in some places clear, and in some places troubled; in some places hot, and in some places cold. The second river is called Nile, or Gyson, for it is always troubled; and Gyson, in the language of Ethiopia, is to say Trouble, and in the language of Egypt also. The third river, called Tigris, is as much as to say, Fast Running; for it runs faster than any of the others. The fourth river is called Euphrates, that is to say, Well Bearing; for there grow upon that river corn, fruit, and other goods, in great plenty.

And you shall understand that no man that is mortal may approach to that Paradise; for 15 by land no man may go for wild beasts, that are in the deserts, and for the high mountains, and great huge rocks, that no man may pass by for the dark places that are there; and by the rivers may no man go, for the water runs 20 so roughly and so sharply, because it comes down so outrageously from the high places above, that it runs in so great waves that no ship may row or sail against it; and the water roars so, and makes so huge a noise, and so 25 great a tempest, that no man may hear another in the ship, though he cried with all the might he could. Many great lords have essayed with great will, many times, to pass by those rivers towards Paradise, with full great 30 companies; but they might not speed in their voyage; and many died for weariness of rowing against the strong waves; and many of them became blind, and many deaf, for the noise of the water; and some perished and were lost in 35 the waves; so that no mortal man may approach to that place without special grace of God; so that of that place I can tell you no more.

John Wyclif

c. 1324-1384

A SHORT RULE OF LIFE

A SHORT RULE OF LIFE FOR EACH MAN IN GENERAL, AND FOR PRIESTS AND LORDS AND LABOURERS IN SPECIAL, HOW EACH MAN SHALL BE SAVED IN HIS DEGREE, IF HE WILL HIMSELF. 50 First, when thou risest or fully wakest, think on the goodness of God; for his own goodness and none other need he made all things of naught, both angels and men, and all other creatures good in their kind. The second time 55 think on the great passion and wilful death that Christ suffered for mankind. . . And think the third time, how God hath saved thee from death and other mischiefs, and suffered

many thousands to be lost that night, some in water, some in fire, some by sudden death, and some to be damned without end. And for these goodnesses and mercies thank thy 5 God with all thine heart, and pray him to give thee grace to spend, in that day and evermore, all the mights of thy soul, as mind, reason, wit, and will, and all the mights of thy body, as strength, beauty, and thy five wits, 10 in his service and worship; and in no thing forfeit again his commandments, but (be) ready to perform works of mercy, and to give good example of holy life, both in word and in deed, to all men about thee.

Look afterwards that thou be well occupied, and in no time idle for temptation. Take meat and drink in measure, not too costly nor too licorouse,¹ and be not too curious² thereabout, but such as God sendeth, with truth take it, 15 in such measure that thou be fresher in mind and wits to serve God, and algates³ thank him for his gift. Over this, look thou do right and equity to all men, both to sovereigns,⁴ peers,⁵ subjects, or servants; and stir all men to love truth and mercy, and over these charity; and 25 suffer no man be at dissension, but accord them⁶ if thou mayest in any good manner. Also most of all things dread God and his wrath, and most of all things love God and his law and his worship; and ask not principally worldly meed,⁷ but in all thine heart desire the bliss of heaven, through the mercy of 30 God and thine own goodness of life. . . . And in the end of the day think where thou hast offended God, and how much and how often, and therefore have entire sorrow, and amend it while thou may. . . . If thou be a priest, and especially a curate, live thou holly, passing others in holy prayer and holy desire and 40 thinking, in holy speaking, counselling, and true teaching, and ever that God's hests⁸ and his gospel be in thy mouth, and ever despise sin, to draw men therefrom. And that thy deeds be so rightful, that no man shall blame 45 them with reason, but thine open deeds be a true book to all sogettis⁹ and lewd men,¹⁰ to serve God and do his hests thereby. For ensample of good, and open and lasting, stirreth rude men more than true preaching by the naked word. And waste not thy goods in great feasts of rich men, but live a mean¹¹ life of poor men's alms and goods, both in meat and drink and clothes; and the remnant give truly to poor men that have naught of their

¹ Dainty, tempting to the appetite.

² Always, in all circumstances.

³ Equals.

⁴ Reward.

⁵ Subject, i. e. lowly.

⁶ Moderate.

⁷ Fastidious.

⁸ Superiors.

⁹ Reconcile them.

¹⁰ Commands.

¹¹ Unlearned.

own, and may not labour for feebleness or sickness, and then thou shalt be a true priest both to God and man.

If thou be a lord, look thou live a rightful life in thine own person, both anent God and man, keeping the hests of God, doing the works of mercy, ruling well thy five wits, and doing reason and equity and good conscience to all men. The second time, govern well thy wife, thy children, and thy homely meyne¹² in 10 God's law, and suffer no sin among them, neither in word nor in deed, upon thy might, that they may be ensamples of holiness and righteousness to all others. . . . The third time, govern well thy tenants, and maintain 15 them in right and reason, and be merciful to them in their rents, and worldly merciments,¹³ and suffer not thy officers to do them wrong nor extortions, and chastise in good manner them that rebel against God's hests and virtuous living, more than for rebellion against thine own cause or person. . . . If thou be a labourer, live in meekness, and truly and wilfully¹⁴ do thy labour; that if thy lord or thy master be an heathen man, that by thy 25 meekness and wilful and true service, he have not to gruche¹⁵ against thee, nor slander thy God nor Christendom.¹⁶ And serve not to Christian lords with gruching,¹⁷ nor only in their presence, but truly and wilfully in their 30 absence, not only for worldly dread nor worldly reward, but for dread of God and good conscience, and for reward in heaven. For that God that putteth thee in such service wots¹⁸ what state is best for thee, and will reward 35 thee more than all earthly lords may, if thou doest it truly and wilfully for his ordinance. And in all things beware of gruchyng¹⁷ against God and his visitation, in great labour and long, and great sickness, and other adversities; and beware of wrath, of cursing and warying,¹⁹ or banning, of man or of beast. And ever keep patience, and meekness, and charity, both to God and man. And thus each man in these three estates oweth²⁰ to live, to save 45 himself and help others; and thus should good life, rest, peace, and charity be among Christian men, and they be saved, and heathen men soon converted, and God magnified greatly in all nations and sects, that now despise him 50 and his law, for the wicked living of false Christian men.

¹² Home-retinue, household.

¹³ Fines, amercements.

¹⁴ Willingly.

¹⁵ Complain.

¹⁶ Christianity.

¹⁷ Complaining, grudging.

¹⁸ Knows.

¹⁹ Cursing, condemning.

²⁰ Ought.

FIFTEENTH AND EARLY SIX-TEENTH CENTURIES

ENGLISH FOLLOWERS OF CHAUCER

From A PRAISE OF WOMEN

For this ye knowe well, though I would lie,
In women is all truth and steadfastness; 135
For in good faith I never of them sye!¹
But much worship, bounty, and gentleness,
Right comyng, fair, and full of mekeness,
Good and glad, and lowly, I you ensure,
Is this goodly angelic creature. 140

And if it hap a man be in disease,²
She doth her business and her full fain
With all her might, him to comfort and please
If fro his disease she might him restrain;
In word nor deed, I wis, she will not feign, 145
But with all her might she doth her business
To bringe him out of his heaviness.

Lo, what gentleness these women have,
If we could know it for our rudeness!
How busy they be us to keep and save, 150
Both in health, and also in sickness!
And always right sorry for our distress,
In every manner; thus they shewe ruth,
That in them is all goodness and truth.

And since in them are gentleness and trouth, 155
Worship, bounty, and kindness evermore,
Let ne'er this gentylness through your slouth
In her kind truth be aught forlore.³
That in woman is, and hath been full yore;
For in reverence of the heaven's Queen, 160
We ought to worship all women that been.

For of all creatures that e'er were born,
This wot ye well, a woman was the beste:
By her recovered was the bliss that we had 165
lorne,⁴

And through the woman shall we come to
reste, 165
And be y-saved, if that our selfe lest;⁵
Wherefore, me thinketh, if that we had grace,
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I read that, to our lives ende,
Fro this time forth, the while that we have
space, 170
That we have trespassed, pursue to amend,
Praying our Lady, well of alle grace,
To bringe us unto that blissful place,
Where she and all good women shall be infere⁶
In heaven above, among the angels clear. 175

MERCILES BEAUTE

Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my herté kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
My hertés wounde, whyl that hit is grene,
Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene.

¹ Saw. ² Discomfort. ³ At all lost or diminished.
⁴ Lost. ⁵ Pleases. ⁶ Together.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That he ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene. 10
Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my herté
kene.

Sir Thomas Clanvowe

Fl. c. 1400

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

(c. 1405)

The god of love, a! *benedicite!*
How mighty and how great a lord is he!
For he can make of lowé heartés hye,
And of hye low, and líké for to dye,
And hardé heartés he can maken free. 5
And he can make, within a little stoundé¹
Of seké² folk full wholé, fresh and soundé,
And of the wholé, he can maké seke;
And he can binden and unbinden eke
What he will have bounden or unboundé. 10
To tell his might my wit may not suffysé;
For he may do all that he will devysé
For he can make of wisé folk full nice,
And eke in lyther³ folk destroyen vice;
And proudé heartés he can make agrysé.⁴ 15
Shortly, all that e'er he wills he may;
Ageinés⁵ him there dare no wight say nay.
For he can glad and grievé whom him liketh;
And whom he will, he laugheth or he syketh;⁶
And most his might he showeth ever in May. 20
For every trewé gentle hearté free
That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
Ageinés May now shall have some stirring,
Either to joy, or allés to mourning,
In no sesoun so great, as thinketh me. 25
For when they mowé⁷ hear the briddés sing,
And see the flowers and the leavés spring,
That bringeth into heartés rémembráunce
A kind of easé, mingled with greváunce,
And lusty thoughtés fullé of longing. . . . 30

John Lydgate

c. 1370–c. 1451

IN PRAISE OF CHAUCER

(From the *Prologue to The Story of Thebes*.
c. 1420)

. . . Him that was, if I shall not feign,
Flower of Poets, throughout of all Britáin, 40
Which soothly had moost of excellencé
In Rhetoryké and in eloquencé.
Read his making,¹ who list the trúthé findé,
Which never shall appallen² in my mindé,
But always fresh ben in my memorié; 45

¹ Time. ² Sick. ³ Evil. ⁴ Afraid.

⁵ Against. ⁶ Makes laugh or sigh. ⁷ May.

¹ Works, or poetry. ² Grow pale, i. e. fade.

To whom be yeve³ praise, honour, and glorié.
Of well saying firsté in our language;
Chief Register in this our pilgrimage,
All that he told, forgetting naught at all,
Not feigned tales, nor thing historical, 50
With many proverbs, diverse and uncouth,⁴
By the rehearsing of his sugared mouth.
Of eaché thingé keeping in substánce
The sentence whole withouté variánce,
Voiding the chaff, soothly for to sain,⁵ 55
Illumining the trúé pickéd grain,
By crafty writing of his sawés⁶ sweet.

THE TESTAMENT OF JOHN LYDGATE

(From *Testamentum Johannis Lydgate*)

Midst of a cloister, painted on a wall, 743
I saw a crucifix with wounds not small,
With this word VIDE, writtén there beside,—
“Behold my meekness, Child, and learn thy
pride.”
The which word when I came to understand,
In my last age taking the sentence,
Thinking thereon, my pen I took in hand,
And straightway wrote with humble rever- 750
ence,
On this word *vide* with much diligence,
In memory of Christés passioun
This little song, this compilatioun. . . . 753

“Turn home again, thy sin do thou forsake, 867
Behold and see if aught be left behind;
To mercy I am ready thee to take, 869
Give me thy heart and be no more unkind;
Thy love and mine, together do them bind,
And let them never part in any wise;
When thou wast lost, thy soul again to find,
My blood I gave for thee in sacrifice. . . . 874
Tarry no longer towards thine heritage: 890
Haste on thy way and be of right good cheer;
Go each day onward on thy pilgrimage,
Think how short time thou shalt abide here!
Thy place is built above the starrés clear,
No earthly palace wrought in stately wise. 895
Come on, my friend, my brother most entere,¹
For thee I shed my blood in sacrifice.”

Thomas Hoccleve or Occleve

c. 1370–c. 1450

THOMAS HOCCLEVE'S COMPLAINT

THE PROLOGUE

After that Harvest gathered had his sheavés,
And that the brown sesoun of Michaelmessé¹
Was come, and gan the trees rob of their leavés
That green had been and in lusty freshnessé,
² Given. ⁴ Unfamiliar. ⁵ Say. ⁶ Sayings.
¹ Entire, complete.
¹ The feast of St. Michael and All Angels, or Michael
mas, which falls on Sept. 29th.

And them into colour of yellownesse 5
Had died, and down were throwen under foot,
That changé sank into mine heartes root.

For freshly brought it to my remembrance,
That stablesness in this world there is none;
There is no thing but change and variance; 10
How rich a man may be or well begun,
Endure it shall not, he shall it foregone.
Death under footé shall him thrust a-down:
For that is every wight's conclusioun.

Which for to waive is in no mannés might, 15
How rich he be, strong, lusty, fresh, and gay.
And at November's end, upon a night,
Sighing most sore, as in my bed I lay,
For this and other thoughts, which many a
day
Before I had, sleep came none in mine eye, 20
So vexed me the thoughtful malady. . . .

The grief about my heart so sorely swal
And bolned ever to and fro so sore, 30
That nedes out I must then with it all:
I thought I could not keep it close no more,
Nor let it in me, being old and hoar:
And for to prove I came of a womán,
I burst out on the morrow, and thus began. 35

Here endeth my prologue, and followeth my
Complaint.

THE COMPLAINT

Almighty God, as liketh His goodnéss,
Visiteth folk all-day as men may see,
With loss of goods and bodily sicknéss,
And among other He forgot not me;
Witness thereof the mad infirmitie³ 40
Which that I had, as many a man well
knew,
And which out of myself me cast and
threw. . . .

As said is in the Psalter,³ might I say, 78
All they that saw me fled away from me;
Forgot I was, all out of mind away, 80
Like as the dead, from heartés charitie;
To a lost vessel likened might I be;
For many a wight abouté me dwelling, 83
Heard I me blame and put in dispraising. . . .

Some time I thought as lite⁴ as any man, 106
For to have fallen in that wilderness,
But God, when that Him list, may, will, and
can,
Our health withdraw and send a wight sick-
nessé,
Though man be well this day, no sykernessé⁵
To him is promised that it shall endure; 111
God now can hurt and now can heal and
cure. . . .

Through God's just doom and through His
judgement, 393
And for my besté now I take and deem,
Gave that good Lord to me my punishment; 395
In wealthe I took of Him no heed or yeme,⁶
Him for to please and Him honour and
queme,⁷
And me He gave a bone⁸ on which to gnaw,
Me to correct and of Him to have awe.

He gave me wit, and wit He took away 400
When that He saw that I it sore misspent,
And gave again, when it was His to pay
And granted me my guiltés to repent,
And then henceforth to set all mine intent
Unto His Deity to do pleaseance, 405
And to amend my sinful governaunce.

Laud and honour and thanks unto Thee be,
Lord God that salve art to all my heaviness!
Thanks for my wealth and mine adversitie,
Thanks for mine age and for my sicknéss, 411
And thanks be to Thine infinite goodnéss
For all Thy gifts and benefices all,
And to Thy mercy and Thy grace I call.

A LAMENT FOR CHAUCER

(From *The Regimen of Princes*,¹ c. 1412)

But welaway! so is my hearté woe 1958
That the honour of English tongue is deed,²
Of whom I used to have counsel and rede.³

O master dear, and father reverent!
My master Chaucer, flower of eloquence,
Mirror of fructuous entendement,⁴
O, universal father in sciéce!
Alas! that thou thine excellent prudéce 1965
On thy bed mortal mightest not bequeathé!
What ailéd death? alas! why would he slay
thee?

O death! thou didest not harm singular⁵
In slaying him, but all this land it smarteth;
But ne'ertheless, thou hast not any power 1970
His name to slay; his high virtúe upstarteth
Unslain by thee, which aye us lively heart-
eth⁶
With bookés of his ornate inditing,
That are to all this land illumining. . . . 1974

Simple my spirit, scarce my letterure⁷ 2073
Unto your excellécy for to write
Mine inward love, and yet, in aventure 2075
I put myself, although I can but lyte.⁸
My dearé master—(God his soul requite!)
And father, Chaucer, fain would have me
taught;
But I was dull, and little learned or naught.

³ Care.

⁷ Appease.
⁸ Possibly an allusion to the proverb: "He that gives thee a bone would not have thee die."

¹ A long didactic poem dedicated to Prince Henry, the future Henry V. The Prologue contains many autobiographical confessions, as well as the familiar passage on Chaucer, given above.

² Instruction.

³ A single injury.

⁴ Learning.

⁵ Understanding.

⁶ Hearteneth i. e. cheers.

⁷ Know but little.

³ Hoccleve was ill and insane about 1416-1421.

⁴ Psalm, cxxi. 11, 12. Cf. also Psalm, lxxviii.

⁵ Little.

⁶ Security.

Alas! my worthy master honourable, 2080
 This land's very treasure and riches,
 Death, by thy death, hath harm irreparable
 Done unto us; his vengeable duresse⁹
 Despoiled hath this land of the sweetnéssé
 Of rhetoric; for unto Tullius 2085
 Was never man so like amongst us.

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Who was there nearer in philosophie
 To Aristotle, in our tongue, but thou?
 The foot-steps of Virgil in poesie
 Thou followedst sure, this men know well
 enow.¹⁰ 2090
 That cumber-world,¹¹ that thee, my master
 slow!¹²
 I would were slain! death went too hastily
 To run on thee, and rive thy life of thee.

Death hath but small consideracioun
 Unto the virtuouss, I have espied, 2095
 No more, as showeth the probacioun,¹³
 Than to a vicious master-scoundrel tried;¹⁴
 Among a crowd, is every man maistrised;¹⁵
 By him, as well the rich man as the poor;
 Learned or unlearned, alike they stand—no
 more. 2100

He might have held his vengeance yet awhile,
 Till that some man might equal to thee be.
 Nay, let that be! he knew well that this isle
 Might never bring forth man like unto
 thee,
 And his officé needés do must he; 2105
 God bade him so, I trust as for the best;
 O master, master, God thy soulé rest! . . . 2107

The firsté finder¹⁶ of our fair langage, 4978
 Hath writ of death as many another one,
 So highly well that it is my dotage!¹⁷ 4980
 To speak, I cannot reach what they have
 done.
 Alas! my father from the world is gone—
 My worthy master Chaucer, him I mean—
 Be thou advôcate for him, heaven's queen!

As thou well knowest, O blessed virgine, 4985
 With loving heart, and high devocioun
 In thine honour he wrought full many a line;
 Grant now thy help and thy promocioun!
 To God thy Son, make thou a moccioun,¹⁸
 How he thy servant was, maiden Marie, 4990
 And let his love flower and fructifie.

Although his life be quenched, the resemb-
 lance
 Of him hath in me só fresh liveliness
 That, to put other men in remembraunce

⁹ Revengeful compulsion.

¹⁰ Enough.

¹¹ Death, the encumberer, burden, or hindrance of the world.

¹² Slew.

¹³ Proof, as experience shows.

¹⁴ Proved.

¹⁵ Mastered.

¹⁶ Probably the first discoverer of the full resources of our language, not the first poet, as the expression is sometimes explained. Chaucer trusted to his native tongue, while Gower, for instance, wrote in English, Latin and French.

¹⁷ Foolishness.

¹⁸ Motion.

Of his persón, I have here his likenéss¹⁹ 4995
 Essayed, to this end in truthfulness,
 That they who have of him least thought and
 mind,
 By this portrayal may again him find.

SCOTTISH POETS AFTER CHAUCER

King James the First of Scotland 1394-1437

A BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL

Since through virtúe increases dignity,
 And virtue, flower and root, is of noblay,¹
 Of any weal or what estate thou be,
 His steps ensue and dread thou no affray;
 Exile all vice, and follow truth alway; 5
 Luvé most thy God, who first thy luvé began,
 And for each inch He will thee quit a span.

Be not o'er proud in thy prosperity,
 For as it comes, so will it pass away;
 Thy time to count is short, thou may'st well
 see, 10
 For of green grass soon cometh withered hay.
 Labour in truth while there is light of day.
 Trust most in God, for He best guide thee can,
 And for an inch He will thee quit a span.

Since word is thrall, and only thought is free, 15
 Tame thou thy tongue, that power has and
 may,
 Shut thou thine eyes on worldly vanity;
 Refrain thy lust and hearken what I say;
 Seize lest thou slide, and creep forth on the
 way;
 Keep thy behest unto thy God and man, 20
 And for each inch He will thee quit a span.

Robert Henryson

c. 1425-c. 1500

THE TALE OF THE PADDOCK AND THE MOUSE

Upon a time, as Æsop could report,
 A little Mouse came to a river side;
 She micht not wade, her shankés were sa short;
 She could not swim, she had na horse to ride;
 Of very force hehoved her to bide, 5
 And to and fra beside the river deep,
 Crying she ran, with mony a piteous peep.

"Help ower, help ower!" this silly Mouse gan
 cry,
 "For Goddés luvé, some body o'er this
 brim!"¹

With that a Paddock² in the water by, 10
 Put up her heid, and on the bank gan clym;³
 Whilk by nature could duck, and gaily swim.

¹⁹ The portrait of Chaucer, which Hoccleve employed someone to paint on the margin of his manuscript (Harl. Ms. 4688) opposite to this stanza.

¹ Nobility.

² Flood.

³ Toad.

⁴ Chmb.

With voice full rauk,⁴ she said in this manér:
 "Gude morn, Sir Mouse, what is your errand
 here?"

"See'st thou," quoth she, "of corn yon jolie
 flat⁵ 15

Of ripened oats, of barley, pease, and wheat;
 I am hungrie, and fain would be thereat,
 But I am stoppit by this water great;
 And on this side I get na thing to eat
 But hardest nuts, whilk with my teeth I bore. 20
 Were I beyond, my feast were far the more.

"I haf na boat, here is na marinére;
 And though there were, I haf no freight to
 pay."

Quoth she: "Sister, let be your heavy cheer;
 Do my counsél, and I shall find the way 25
 Withouten horse, brig,⁶ boat, or yet gallay,
 To bring you o'er safely—be not afear'd—
 Nor even wet the tip of your long beard."

"I haf great wonder," quoth the silly Mouse,
 "How thou can'st float without feathér or
 fin!

This river is sa deep and dangerous, 31
 Methinks that thou would drownéd be
 therein.

Tell me, therefore, what facultie or gin,⁷
 Thou hast to bring thee o'er this water?"
 Than⁸

Thus to declare, the Paddock soon began: 35

"With my twa feet," quoth she, "webbed and
 braid,⁹

Instead of oars, I row the stream full still;
 And though the flood be perilous to wade,
 Baith to and fra I row at my ain will.

I may not drown,—for why?—my open gill 40
 Devoidis¹⁰ aye the water I resai¹¹.
 Therefore to drown, forsooth, na dreid I haif." 45

The Mouse looked hard upon her fronsit¹² face,
 Her wrinkled cheekes, and her lippes wide;
 Her hanging browes, and her voice sa hace; 45
 Her sprawling leggès, and her harsky¹³ hide.

She ran aback, and to the Paddock cried:
 "If I have ony skill in phisnomie,¹⁴
 Thou hast some part of falsehood and envie.

"For wise men say the inclinacioun 50
 Of mannès thought proceedeth commonlie
 After the corporal complexioun

To guid or ill, as nature will applie;
 A twisted face, a twisted phisnomie.
 The suld provérb is witness of this lorum:¹⁷ 55
Distortum vultum, sequitur distortio morum."

"Na," quoth the Toad, "that proverb is not
 true;
 For fairest things are oftentimes found
 faikyn.¹⁸

⁴ Hoarse, raucous.

⁵ Bridge.

⁶ Then.

⁷ Receive.

⁸ Hoarse.

⁹ Lore, learning.

¹⁰ What power or what contrivance.

¹¹ Broad.

¹² Have.

¹³ Harsh.

¹⁴ Pretty plain.

¹⁵ Empties.

¹⁶ Rough.

¹⁷ Physiognomy.

¹⁸ Deceitful.

The blue-berriés, though they be sad of hue,
 Are gathered when the primrose is forsaken.
 The face may fail to be the heart's true takin,¹⁹
 Therefore I find this Scripture all in place: 62
 Thou should not judge a man after his face.

"Though I unwholesome be to luik upon,
 I have na cause why I should blamed be; 65
 Were I as fair as jolie Absalom,
 I am na causer of that great beautie.
 This difference in form and qualitie
 Almighty God hath caused Dame Nature
 To print, and set in every creature. 70

"Of some the face may be full flourishing;
 Of silken tongue and cheer richt amorous;
 With mind inconstant, false, and varying,
 With tricky ways, and full of sly deceit."
 "Leave preaching," quoth the Mouse, who
 longed to eat,
 "And by what craft, now mak me understand,
 You mean to bear me unto yonder land!" 77

"Thou know'st," quoth she, "a body that has
 need,
 To help himself should mony methods cast;²⁰
 Therefore go tak a double twisted threid,²¹ 80
 And bind thy leg to mine with knottès fast;
 I shall thee learn to swim, be not aghast."
 "Is that thy counsél?" quoth the silly Mous,
 To prove that play 't were over perilous!

"Should I be bound and fast where I am free, 85
 In hope of help? Nay, then beshrew us baith
 For I might lose baith life and libertie!
 If it were so, who might amend my skaith? 22
 But wilt thou swear to me the murther-aith,²³
 To bring me ower, renouncing fraud or ill, 90
 And safe from hurt?" "In faith," quoth she,
 "I will."

Then up she gazed, and to the heavens gan cry:
 "O Jupiter! of Nature, god and king,
 I mak an aith truly to thee, that I
 This little Mouse shall o'er this water bring."
 This aith was made. The Mouse not pé-
 ceiving
 The false device of this foul trickster Taid,²⁴ 97
 Tuik threid, and bound her leg, as she her bade.

Then foot for foot they leapt baith in the brim;
 But in their minds they were quite different:
 The Mouse thought of na thing but for to swim,
 The Paddock for to drown²⁵ set her intent.
 When they had gained mid-stream, as on
 they went, 103
 With all her force the Paddock presséd down,
 And thought the Mouse without mercie to
 drown. 105

¹⁹ Token.

²⁰ Thread.

²¹ Apparently an oath by which a person solemnly

binds himself not to murder or injure another, or de-
 ceive him to his hurt.

²² Toad.

²³ Contrive.

²⁴ Hurt.

²⁵ Drown her.

Perceiving this, the Mouse on her gan cry:

"Traitor to God, and man-sworn unto me,
Thou swore the murther-aith right now, that I
Sans force or harm should ferried be and
free!"

And when she saw there was but do or dee,¹¹⁰
With all her might she forced her to swim
And struggled on the Paddock's back to clim.²⁸

The dread of death then made her strength in-
crease;

Forced her to save herself with might and
main.

The Mouse upwârd, the Paddock down gan
preis;²⁷

Now to, now fra, now duck, now up again.¹¹⁸

This silly Mouse thus plunged in great pain,
So fought as lang as breath was in her breist,
Till at the last she cryed for a priest.

As thus she sighed, a Gled²⁹ perched on a
bough,¹²⁰

And to this wretched battle tuik guid heid,²⁹
And with a whisk, ere either one knew how,
He clutched his claw between them in the
threid;

Then to the land he bore them with guid
speed,

Glad of his prize, which shrieked for fear of
skaith,¹²⁵

Then loosed he them, and ruthless slew them
baith. . . .

CONTENT

(From *The Tale of the Upland Mouse and the
Burgess Mouse*)

Blessed be simple life, withouten dreid;

Blessed be sober feast in quietie;

Who has enough, of no more has he need,
Though it be little into quantitie.²¹⁵

Great abundance, and blind prosperitie,
Offtimes mak an ill conclusion;

The sweetest life, therefore, in this countrie,
Is to live safe, with small possession.

William Dunbar

1460-c. 1525

NO TREASURE WITHOUT GLADNESS

Be merry, man! and tak not sair¹ in mind
The wavering of this wretched world of
sorrow!

To God be humble and to thy friend be kind,
And with thy neighbours gladly lend and
borrow:

His chance to-nicht, it may be thine to-
morrow;⁵

Be blithe in heart for ony adventúre;
For oft with wise men, 't has been said
aforrow.²

Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

¹ Climb. ² Press. ³ Hawk. ⁴ Heed.

⁵ Sore.

⁶ Afore, before.

Mak thee gude cheer of it that God thee sends,
For warldes wrack³ but welfare nocht availis.
No gude is thine, save only that thou spends;¹¹
Remanent all thou brookis but with bales.
Seek to soláce when sadness thee assails;
In dolour long thy life may not endure,
Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails; ¹⁵
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Follow on pity, flee trouble and debate,
With famous folk aye hold thy company;
Be charitable and humble in thine estate,
For wardly honour lastes but a cry;⁴ ²⁰
For trouble in earth tak no melancholy;
Be rich in patience, if thou in goods be poor;
Who livés merry he livés mightily;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Thou seest these wretches set with sorrow and
care ²⁵
To gather goods in all their livés space;
And, when their bags are full, their selves are
bare,
And of their riches but the keeping hes;⁵
While others come to spend it, that have
grace,
Whilk of thy winnings no labour had nor cure;⁶
Tak thou example, and spend with merriness;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre. ³²

Though all the wealth⁷ that e'er had living wight
Were only thine, no more thy part does fall
But meat, drink, clothes, and of the rest a sight
Yet, to the Judge, thou shalt give 'compt of
all. ³⁶
Ane reckoning richt comes of ane ragment⁸
small,
Be just and joyous, and do to nane injúre,
And truth shall mak thee strong, as ony wall;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre. ⁴⁰

THE DANCE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Of Februar the fifteenth night,
Full lang before the dayes licht,
I lay in-till a trance;
And then I saw baith Heaven and Hell;
Methocht, amang the fiendes fell, ⁵
Mahoun¹ gan cry ane dance
Of sinners that were never shriven,
Against the feast of Fastern's even,²
To mak their observance.

³ The sense is, For (i. e. because) the world's trash,
refuse (wrack), without ("but") spiritual well-being
(welfare) availis nothing.

⁴ Short time.

⁵ Have. ⁶ Care.

⁷ The passage is thus paraphrased by Hailes:—

"What riches give us, let us then explore;

Meat, drink, and clothes; what else? a sight of more."

⁸ Scroll.

¹ Mahomet, here the devil. In the Middle Ages, Ma-
homet and other false prophets were confused or identi-
fied with Satan.

² Fastens or fastings even, Shrove Tuesday, the even-
ing preceding the fast of Lent. It was a season of riotous
festivity.

- He bad mak ready masquers' guise, 10 Except a minstrel that slew a man,
To cut up capers in the skies, So to his heritage he wan,
As varlets do in France.³ . . . 12 And entered by brief of richt.¹⁷
- "Let see," quoth he, "now who begins," 19 Then cried Mahoun for a Hielan' Padyane:¹⁸
With that the foul Seven Deadly Sins Synne ran a fiend to fetch Makfadyane,¹⁹ 110
Began to leap at anis.⁴ For northwast in a nook:
And first of all in dance was Pride, When he the coronach had done shout,
With hair thrown back, and bonnet on side, Erse²⁰ men so gathered him about,
Like to mak vastie wanis;⁵ In hell great room they took.
- And round about him, as a wheel, 25 Thae termagents, with tag and tatter, 115
Hangs all in rumples to the heel Ful loud in Erse began to chatter,
His cassock for the nanis;⁶ And roup²¹ like raven and rook.
Many a proud trompou⁷ with him tripped; The Devil sae deaved was with their yell,
Through scalding fire aye as they skipped That in the deepest pot of hell
They girmed with hideous granis.⁸ 30 He smorit²² them with smoke! 120

Then Ire came in with sturt⁹ and strife:
His hand was aye upon his knife,
He brandished like a bear:
Boasters, braggers, and bargainérs,
After him passéd in in pairs,
All clad in garb of weir;¹⁰
In jacks, and mail, and bonnets of steel,
They were in armour to the heel,
Full froward was their air;
Some upon other with brands beft,¹¹
Some jaggit others to the heft,
With knives that sharp could shear.

Next in the dance followed Envy,
Filled full with feud and felony,
Hid malice and despite;
For privy hatred that traitor trembled;
Him followed many a rogue dissembled
With feigned wordés white:
And flatterers untó men's faces;
And backbiters in secret places
To lie that had delight;
And whisperers of false lesings,¹²
Alace! that courts of noble kings
Of them can never be quyte.¹³

Next him in dance came Covetice,
Root of all ill, and ground of vice,
That never could be content:
Catiffs, wretches, and usurers,
Misers, hoarders, gatherers,
All with that warlook went:
Out of their throats they shot on other
Hot, molten gold, me thocht, a futher¹⁴
As fire-flaught¹⁵ maist fervent;
Aye, as they emptied them of shot,
Fiends filled them new up to the throat,
With gold of all kind prent.¹⁶ . . .

Nae minstrels played to them nae doubt, 103
For gleemen there were holden out,
By day and eke by nicht; 105

³ When Dunbar wrote, French fashions were in vogue at the Scottish Court.

⁴ At once.

⁵ For the nonce.

⁶ Disturbance.

⁷ Lies.

⁸ Lightning.

⁹ Cheat.

¹⁰ War.

¹¹ Quit.

¹² Empty dwellings.

¹³ Groans.

¹⁴ Beat.

¹⁵ Load.

¹⁶ Of every impress.

THE LAMENT FOR THE MAKERS¹

WHEN HE WAS SICK

- 35 I that in health was and gladnéss,
Am troubled now with great sicknéss,
And feeble with infirmity;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.
- 40 Our pleasunce here is all vain glory, 5
This false world is but transitory,
The flesh is bruckle,² the Fiend is slee;³
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

- The state of man does change and vary,
Now sound, now sick, now blithe, now sary,⁴ 10
Now dancing merry, now like to dew;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

- No state on earth stands fast, I find;
As osiers light wave in the wind,
So waveth this world's vanity; 15
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

- Down unto death go all estates,
Prelates, and kings, and potentates,
Baith rich and poor of all degree; 20
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

- Death strikes the knichts up on the field,
Full armoured, under helm and shield,
Victor in every fight is he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

- 60 That strong, unmerciful tyránd⁵ 25
Taks, on the mother's breast sowkand,⁶
The babe full of benignity;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

¹ *Breve of Recto*, a writ which in feudal Scotland established a right to succession.

² In Dunbar's time and for long after, the Highlanders were regarded with a feeling of mingled dread and contempt by the more settled and prosperous people of the South. Cf. the attitude of Baillie Nichol Jarvie in Scott's *Rob Roy*.

³ An opponent of Wallace, the Scotch patriot. After swearing allegiance to Edward I., Makfadyane fled to a cave, where he was surprised and killed. Hence the assertion that he was fetched from a "nook" in the "northwest."

⁴ Scotch, Gaels.

⁵ Poets.

⁶ Sorry.

⁷ Croak.

⁸ Brittle.

⁹ Tyrant.

¹⁰ Smothered.

¹¹ Sly.

¹² Sucking.

He taks the champion in the stour,⁷
 The captain closed in the tour, 30
 The lady in bour ful of beutie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He spares no lord for his puissance,
 No clerk for his intelligence;
 His awful stroke may no man flee;⁸ 35
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Masters of magic and astrology,
 Of rhetoric, logic or theology,
 Are helped by no conclusions slee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 40

In medecine the best practicians,
 Of leeches, surgeons, and physicians,
 Themselves from death may not supplie;⁹
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

I see that Makers, among the lave,⁹ 45
 Play here their pageants, then go to grave;
 Death does not spare their facultie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He came most piteously to devour
 The noble Chaucer,¹⁰ of Makers' flower, 50
 The Monk of Bury, and Gower, all three;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The gude Sir Hugh of Eglington,
 And eke Heriot, and Wyntown,
 He hath ta'en out of this cuntree;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 55

He hath restrained (that scorpion dark)
 Maister James Afflek and John Clerk
 Frae ballad-making and tragedy;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 60

Holland and Barbour he has bereft;
 Alas, he has not with us left
 Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lea!
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Clerk of Tranent eke he has ta'en, 65
 That made th' adventures of Gawain,
 Sir Gilbert Hay ended has he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has blind Harry and Sandy Traill
 Slain with his shot of mortal hail, 70
 Which Patrick Johnston nicht not flee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has reft¹¹ Merseir his endite,⁸
 That did of luv so lively write,
 So short, so quick, of sentence hie;¹² 75
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has ta'en Roull of Aberdeen,
 And gentle Roull of Corstorphine;
 Two better fellows did not man see;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 80

In Dumferline he has down roun¹⁴
 Gude Maister Robert Henrysoun;
 Sir John the Ross embraced has he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

And he has now ta'en, last of a', 85
 Gude gentle Stobo and Quintin Schaw,
 For whom all mortals feel pitie!
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Gude Maister Walter Kennedy
 At point of death lies verilly,
 Great ruth it is that this should be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 90

Since he has all my brethren ta'en,
 He will not let me live alane;
 Perforce I must his next prey be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 95

Since then for death remeid¹⁵ is none,
 Best is that we for death dispoine,¹⁶
 After our death that live may we;
Timor Mortis conturbat me. 100

Gawain Douglas

c. 1474-1522

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER SUN

(From the *Prologue* to the *Æneid*,¹ Bk. XII)

Welcome, the lord of licht, and lamp of day,
 Welcome, fost'rer of tender herbés green,
 Welcome, quick'ner of blooming blossoms
 sheen,

Welcome, support of every root and vein,
 Welcome, comfort of all-kind fruit and grain, 5
 Welcome, the birdés bield² upon the brere,³
 Welcome, maistér and ruler of the year,
 Welcome, welfare⁴ of farmers at the ploughs,
 Welcome, repairer of woods, trees, and boughs,
 Welcome, depainter of the blooming meads, 10
 Welcome, the life of everything that spredes,
 Welcome, the strength of all-kind bestial,
 Welcome be thy bricht beamés gladding all,
 Welcome, celestial mirror and aspy,⁵
 Arresting all that practise sluggardy. 15

⁷ Storm, stir or tumult of battle.

⁸ Defend.

⁹ Among the rest.

¹⁰ Among the twenty-four poets celebrated by Dunbar, Chaucer alone remains a living power in literature. Barbour, Gower, Lydgate and Henryson hold a secure and honorable place; while a few others, as Blind Harry and Walter Kennedy, although less known, are still nominally remembered. Some of the remainder are more or less securely established on the right side of oblivion, while others, in Sir T. Browne's phrase, "Subsist under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories."

¹¹ Snatched.

¹² Manuscript.

¹³ High.

¹⁴ Has run down.

¹⁵ Remedy.

¹⁶ Prepare.

¹ The translation of the *Æneid* is generally acknowledged to be Douglas's most important work. It is noteworthy as the earliest attempt to reproduce a great classical poem in English verse. The prologues prefaced to the various books, contain some vivid and forcible descriptions of Nature, and are intrinsically the most interesting parts of the work.

² Nest.

³ Briar.

⁴ i. e. the one who gives success to the farmer's labors, the source of his welfare.

⁵ Sentinel.

Sir David Lyndsay

1490-1555

AN APOLOGY FOR WRITING IN THE
VULGAR AND MATERNAL LAN-
GUAGE www.libtool.com.cn(From *The Monarchy*,¹ 1553)

Gentle redar, have at me na despite,
Thinking that I presumptuously pretend,
In vulgar² tongue sa high mattere to write: 540
But, where I miss, I pray thee to amend,
By the unlearned I would the cause were kend,
Of our maist miserable travail and torment,
And how in earth na place is permanent.

Howbeit that divers devoted cunning clerks,³
In Latin tongue have written sundry books: 546
Our unlearned know little of their werks;
Mair than they do the raving of the rooks:
Wherefore to colliers, carters, and to cooks,
To Jock and Tom, my rime shall be directet,
By cunning men howbeit it will be lacket.⁴ 551

Though every common may not be a clerk,
And have no lore except their tongue maternal,
Why should of God the marvellous heavenly
werk

Be hid from them, I think it not fraternal: 555
The Father of heaven, who was and is eternal,
To Moses gave the law on Mount Sináy
Neither in Greek nor Latin, as I hear say.

He writ the law in tables hard of stone,
In their ain vulgar language of Hebréw; 560
That all the bairns of Israel, every one,
Micht know the law, and so the same ensue.
But had he writ in Latin or in Grew,⁵
It had to them been but a savourless jest,
Ye may well wist God wrought all for the best.

Aristotell, nor Plato, I hear sane,⁶ 566
Writ not their high philosophie natúral,
In Danish, Dutch, nor tongue Italián,
But in the maist ornate⁷ tongue máternal,
Whose fame and name do ring perpetual; 570
Famous Virgill, the prince of poetrie,
Nor Cicero, the flower of oratrie,

Writ not in Caldie language, nor in Grew;
Nor yet writ in the language Saracene;
Nor in the natural⁸ language of Hebréw; 575
But in the Roman tongue, as may be seen,
Whilk was their proper language, as I ween,
When Romans ranked dominators, indeed,
The ornate Latin was their proper leid.⁹ . . . 579

¹ *The Monarchy, or Ane Dialog betwix Experience and
ane Courtiour*, Lyndsay's last poem, is a lengthy survey
of the history of the world, with a prophecy of the mil-
lennium, when all things shall be made new.

² *Lat. vulgaris*, popular.

³ Learned writers.

⁴ Greek.

⁵ *Lat. ornatus*, means here proper or fitting.

⁶ Original.

⁷ Dispraised.

⁸ Said.

⁹ Language.

The prophet David, King of Israel, 664
Compiled the pleasant psalms of the Psaltair
In his ain proper tongue, as I hear tell,
And Solomon, who was his son and heir,
Did mak his buke intill the tongue vulgair,
Why should not their saying be to us shown 669
In our language, I would the cause were known.

Let doctors write their curious questióuns,
And arguments, sown full of sophistrie;
Their logic, and their high opinióuns,
And their dark judgments of astronomie,
Their medicine, and their philosophie; 675
Let poets show their glorious ingyne,¹⁰
As ever they please, in Greek,¹¹ or in Latine:

But let us have the bookés necessare
To commonweal and our salvatióun,
Justly translated in our tongue vulgaire: 680
And so I mak the supplicatioun,
O gentle redar, have na indignatioun,
Thinking I meddle with so high mattair:
Now to my purpose forward will I fare.

James Wedderburn

c. 1500-1564-5

LEAVE ME NOT

(Psalm XXVII, 9)

Ah! my Lord, leave me not,
Leave me not, leave me not,
Ah! my Lord, leave me not,
Thus mine alone:
With ane burden on my back
I may not bear, I am so weak,
Lord, this burden from me tak,
Or else I am gone.

With sins I am laden sair,¹
Leave me not, leave me not, 10
With sins I am laden sair,
Leave me not alone:
I pray thee, Lord, therefore,
Keep not my sins in store;
Loose me, or I am forlore,² 15
And hear thou my moan.

With Thy hands Thou hast me wrought,
Leave me not, leave me not,
With Thy hands Thou hast me wrought,
Leave me not alone: 20
I was sold and Thou me bought,
With Thy blood Thou hast me coft;³
Now am I hither sought
To Thee, Lord, alone.

I cry and call to Thee, 25
To leave me not, to leave me not,
I cry and call to Thee,
To leave me not alone:

¹⁰ Genius.

¹¹ Sore.

¹ Lost.

² Purchased.

All they that laden be,
Thou bidst them come to Thee,
Then shall they saved be,
Through Thy mercy alone.

Thou savest all the penitent,
And leav'st them not, and leav'st them not.
Thou savest all the penitent,
And leav'st them not alone.
All that will their sins repent,
None of them shall be shent,⁴
Suppose Thy bow be ready bent,
Of them Thou killest none.

Faith, hope, and charity,
Leave me not, leave me not,
Faith, hope, and charity,
Leave me not alone.
I pray Thee, Lord, grant me,
These godly giftes thee,
Then shall I saved be,
Doubt have I none.

To the Father be all glorie,⁵
That leaves us not, that leaves us not,
To the Father be all glorie,
That leaves us not alone.
Son and Holy Ghost e'rmore,
As it is and was before;
Through Christ our Saviour
We are safe every one.

BALLADS OF UNCERTAIN DATE

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE

When shaws¹ be sheen, and shraddes² full fair,
And leaves both large and long,
It is merry, walking in the fair forest,
To hear the small birds' song.

The witwall³ sang, and would not cease,
Sitting upon the spray,
So loud, he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he lay.

"Now by my fay," said jolly Robin,
"A sweven⁴ I had this night,
I dreamt me of two wight yeomen,
That fast with me gan fight.

"Me thought they did me beat and bind,
And took my bow me fro;
If I be Robin alive in this land,
I'll be wrocken⁵ on both them two."

"Sweavens are swift, master," quoth John,
"As the wind that blows o'er a hill:
For if it be never so loud this night,
Tomorrow it may be still."

30 "Busk ye, bowne ye,⁶ my merry men all,
For John shall go with me;
For I'll go seek yond wight yeomen
In greenwood where they be."

25 They cast on their gown of green,
A shoothing gone are they,
Until they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest be;
There were they ware of a wight yeoman,
His body leaned to a tree. 30

40 A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Had been many a man's bane,
And he was clad in his capull-hide,⁷
Top, and tail, and mane.

35 "Stand you still, master," quoth Little John, 35
"Under this trusty tree,
And I will go to yonder wight yeoman,
To know his meaning truly."

40 "Ah, John, by me thou sett'st no store,
And that's a farley⁸ thing; 40
How oft send I my men before,
And tarry myself behind?

"It is no cunning a knave to ken,
An⁹ a man but hear him speak;
An it were not for bursting of my bow,
John, I would thy head break." 45

But often words they breeden bale,¹⁰
That parted Robin and John;
John is gone to Barnesdale,
The gates¹¹ he knows each one. 50

And when he came to Barnesdale,
Great heaviness there he had;
He found two of his fellows
Were slain both in a slade,¹²

55 And Scarlett afoot a-flying was, 55
Over stocks and stone,
For the sheriff with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.

60 "Yet one shot I'll shoot," says Little John, 60
"With Christ his might and main;
I'll make yond fellow that flies so fast
To be both glad and fain."

John bent up a good yew bow,
And fettle¹³ him to shoot;
The bow was made of a tender bough, 65
And fell down to his foot.

"Woe worth thee, wicked wood," said Little
John,
"That ere thou grew on a tree!
For this day thou art my bale,
My boot¹⁴ when thou should be!" 70

⁴ Shamed.

¹ Groves.

² The great spotted woodpecker.

³ Dream.

⁵ Glory.

⁶ Coppices.

⁷ Avenged.

⁸ Prepare, make ready.

⁹ Horse's hide.

¹⁰ Breed evil.

¹¹ Prepared.

¹² Strange.

¹³ Patha.

¹⁴ Remedy.

¹⁵ If.

¹⁶ Valley.

This shot it was but loosely shot,
The arrow flew in vain,
And it met one of the sheriff's men;
Good William of Trent was slain.

It had been better for William of Trent 75
To hang upon a gallow
Than for to lie in the greenwood,
There slain with an arrow.

And it is said, when men be met, 80
Six can do more than three:
And they have ta'en Little John,
And bound him fast to a tree.

"Thou shalt be drawn¹⁶ by dale and down,"
quoth the sheriff,
"And hanged high on a hill:"
"But thou may fail," quoth Little John, 85
"If it be Christ's own will."

Let us leave talking of Little John,
For he is bound fast to a tree,
And talk of Guy and Robin Hood
In the greenwood where they be. 90

How these two yeomen together they met,
Under the leaves of lime,
To see what merchandise they made
Even at that same time.

"Good morrow, good fellow," quoth Sir Guy; 95
"Good morrow, good fellow," quoth he;
"Methinks by this bow thou bear'st in thy hand
A good archer thou seems to be."

"I am wilful of my way," quoth Sir Guy,
"And of my morning tide:"¹⁸ 100
"I'll lead thee through the wood," quoth Robin,
"Good fellow, I'll be thy guide."

"I seek an outlaw," quoth Sir Guy,
"Men call him Robin Hood;
I had rather meet with him upon a day 105
Than forty pound of gold."

"If you two met, it would be seen whether were
better
Afore ye did part away;
Let us some other pastime find,
Good fellow, I thee pray. 110

"Let us some other masteries¹⁶ make,
And we will walk in the woods even;
We may chance meet with Robin Hood
At some unset steven."¹⁷

They cut them down the summer shroggs¹⁸ 115
Which grew both under a brere,¹⁹
And set them three score rods in twain,
To shoot the pricks²⁰ full neare.

"Lead on, good fellow," said Sir Guy,
"Lead on, I do bid thee:" 120
"Nay, by my faith," quoth Robin Hood,
"The leader thou shalt be."

The first good shot that Robin led,
Did not shoot an inch the prick fro;
Guy was an archer good enough, 125
But he could ne'er shoot'so.

The second shot Sir Guy shot,
He shot within the garland;²¹
But Robin Hood shot it better than he,
For he clove the good prick-wand. 130

"God's blessing on thy heart!" says Guy,
"Good fellow, thy shooting is good;
For an thy heart be as good as thy hands,
Thou were better than Robin Hood.

"Tell me thy name, good fellow," quoth Guy,
"Under the leaves of lyne:" 136
"Nay, by my faith," quoth good Robin,
"Till thou have told me thine."

"I dwell by dale and down," quoth Guy,
"And I have done many a curst turn;
And he that calls me by my right name,
Calls me Guy of good Gisborne." 140

"My dwelling is in the wood," says Robin;
"By thee I set right nought;
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
A fellow thou hast long sought." 145

He that had neither been of kith nor kin
Might have seen a full fair sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both brown and bright. 150

To have seen how these yeomen together
fought
Two hours of a summer's day;
It was neither Guy nor Robin Hood
That fettle²²d them to fly away.

Robin was reckless of a root, 155
And stumbled at that tide,²³
And Guy was quick and nimble withal,
And hit him o'er the left side.

"Ah, dear Lady!" said Robin Hood,
"Thou art both mother and may!"²⁴ 160
I think it was never man's destiny
To die before his day."

Robin thought on Our Lady dear,
And soon leapt up again,
And thus he came with an awkward²⁵ stroke; 165
Good Sir Guy he has slain.

He took Sir Guy's head by the hair,
And stuck it on his bow's end:
"Thou hast been traitor all thy life,
Which thing must have an end." 170

¹⁶ Time. ¹⁷ Trials of skill. ¹⁸ Unappointed time.
¹⁹ Stunted shrubs. ²⁰ Briar.
²¹ A wand or white mark used as the bull's eye of the target.

²² The ring around the centre of the target.
²³ Made ready. ²⁴ Time.
²⁵ Maid, virgin. ²⁶ Unexpected.

Robin pulled forth an Irish knife,
And nicked Sir Guy in the face,
That he was never of a woman born
Could tell who Sir Guy was.

Says, "Lie there, lie there, good Sir Guy, 175
And with me be not wroth;
If thou have had the worse strokes at my hand,
Thou shalt have the better cloth."

Robin did off his gown of green,
Sir Guy he did it throw; 180
And he put on that capull-hide
That clad him top to toe.

"The bow, the arrows, and little horn,
And with me now I'll bear;
For now I will go to Barnesdale, 185
To see how my men do fare."

Robin set Guy's horn to his mouth,
A loud blast in it he did blow;
That beheard the sheriff of Nottingham,
As he leand under a lowe. 190

"Hearken! hearken!" said the sherff,
"I heard no tidings but good;
For yonder I hear Sir Guy's horn blow,
For he hath slain Robin Hood.

"For yonder I hear Sir Guy's horn blow, 195
It blows so well in tide,"
For yonder comes that wighty yeoman,
Clad in his capull-hide.

"Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,
Ask of me what thou wilt have;" 200
"I'll none of thy gold," says Robin Hood,
"Nor I'll none of it have.

"But now I have slain the master," he said,
"Let me go strike the knave;
This is all the reward I ask, 205
Nor no other will have."

"Thou art a madman," said the sherff,
"Thou should'st have had a knight's fee;
Seeing thy asking hath been so bad,
Well granted it shall be." 210

But Little John heard his master speak,
Well he knew that was his steven;²⁰
"Now shall I be loosed," quoth Little John,
"With Christ's might in heaven."

But Robin he hied him towards Little John, 215
He thought he would loose him belive;²¹
The sherff and all his company
Fast after him did drive.

"Stand aback! stand aback!" said Robin; 220
"Why draw you me so near?
It was never the use in our country
One's shrift another should hear."

²⁰ Hillock.
²¹ Voice.

²² Time.
²³ Quickly.

But Robin pulled forth an Irish knife,
And loosed John hand and foot,
And gave him Sir Guy's bow in his hand, 225
And bade it be his boot.²⁰

But John took Guy's bow in his hand
(His arrows were rusty by the root);
The sherff saw Little John draw a bow
And fettle²¹ him to shoot. 230

Towards his house in Nottingham
He fled full fast away,
And so did all his company,
Not one behind did stay.

But he could neither so fast go, 235
Nor away so fast rue,
But Little John, with an arrow broad,
Did cleave his heart in twinn.²²

THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT

The Percy out of Northumberland,
And a vow to God made he
That he would hunt in the mountains
Of Cheviot within days three, 5
In the maugre of doughty Douglas,
And all that ever with him be.

The fattest harts in all Cheviot
He said he would kill, and carry them away:
"By my faith," said the doughty Douglas again, 10
"I will let²³ that hunting if I may."

Then the Percy out of Bamboro came,
With him a mighty meyne,²⁴
With fifteen hundred archers bold of blood and
bone;
They were chosen out of shires three.

This began on a Monday at morn, 15
In Cheviot the hills so hie;²⁵
The child may rue that is unborn,
It was the more pitie.

The drivers through the woodes went,
For to rouse the deer; 20
Bowmen bickered²⁶ upon the bent²⁷
With their broad arrows clear.

Then the wild²⁸ through the woodes went,
On every side sheer;²⁹
Greyhounds³⁰ through the groves glent,
For to kill their deer. 25

This began in Cheviot the hills aboun,
Early on a Monnyn-day;³¹
By that it drew to the hour of noon,
A hundred fat harts dead there lay. 30

They blew a mort³² upon the bent,
They assembled on sides sheer;
To the quarry then the Percy went,
To see the brittling³³ of the deer.

²⁰ Remedy.

²¹ Prepare.

²² Twain.

¹ Stop.

² Company.

³ High.

⁴ Skirmished.

⁵ Open fields.

⁶ Wild creatures.

⁷ Straight, swift.

⁸ Monday.

⁹ Blast of the horn indicating the taking of the deer.

¹⁰ Quartering, or cutting up.

- He said, "It was the Douglas' promise
This day to meet me here;
But I wist he would fail, verament;"¹¹
A great oath the Percy swear.¹²
- At the last a squire of Northumberland
Looked at his hand full nie;¹³ *1001.com.cn*
He was ware of the doughty Douglas coming,
With him a mighty meyné.¹⁴
- Both with spear, bill, and brand,
It was a mighty sight to see;
Hardier men, both of heart nor hand,
Were not in Christiantie.
- They were twenty hundred spearmen good,
Withouté any fail;
They were born along by the water of Tweed,
In the bounds of Tivdale.
- "Leave off the brittling of the deer," he said,
"And to your bows look you take good heed;
For never since ye were of your mothers born
Had ye never so mickle need."
- The doughty Douglas on a steed,
He rode all his men befor;
His armor glittered as did a glede;¹⁵
A bolder bairn was never born.
- "Tell me whose men ye are," he says,
"Or whose men that ye be:
Who gave you leave to hunt in this Cheviot
chase,¹⁶
In the spite of mine and of me."
- The first man that ever him an answer made,
It was the good lord Percy:
"We will not tell thee whose men we are," he
says,¹⁷
"Nor whose men that we be;
But we will hunt here in this chase,
In the spite of thine and of thee."
- "The fattest hartes in all Cheviot
We have killed, and cast to carry them
away:"¹⁸
"By my troth," said the doughty Douglas again,
"Therefore the one of us shall die this day."
- Then said the doughty Douglas
Unto the lord Percy:
"To kill all these guiltless men,
Alas, it were great pitie!
- "But, Percy, thou art a lord of land,
I am an earl called within my country;
Let all our men upon a party¹⁷ stand,
And do¹⁸ the battle of thee and of me."
- "Now Christ's curse on his crown," said the
lord Percy,
"Whosoever thereto says nay;
By my troth, doughty Douglas," he says,
"Thou shalt never see that day."
- "Neither in England, Scotland, nor France,
Nor for no man of a woman born,
But, an¹⁹ fortune be my chance,
I dare meet him, one man for one."
- Then bespake a squire of Northumberland,
Richard Wytharynton was his name:
"It shall never be told in South England," he
says,
"To King Harry the Fourth for shame."
- "I wot you be great lordes two,
I am a poor squire of land:
I will never see my captain fight on a field,
And stand myself and look on,
But while I may my weapon wield,
I will not fail both heart and hand."
- That day, that day, that dreadful day!
The first fit²⁰ here I fynde;²¹
An you will hear any more of the hunting of the
Cheviot,
Yet is there more behind.
- The English men had their bows i-bent,
Their hearts were good enough;
The first of arrows that they shot off,
Seven score spearmen they slough.²²
- Yet bideth the earl Douglas upon the bent,
A captain good enough,
And that was seené verament,
For he wrought them both woe and wough.²³
- The Douglas parted his host in three,
Like a chief chieftan of pride;
With sure spears of mighty tree,
They came in on every side:
- Though our English archery
Gave many a wound full wide;
Many a doughty they gared to dee,²⁴
Which gained them no pride.
- The English men let their bowes be,
And pulled out brands that were bright;
It was a heavy sight to see
Bright swords on basnets²⁵ light.
- Through riché mail and manople,²⁶
Many stern²⁷ they struck down straight;
Many a freke²⁸ that was full free,
There under foot did light.
- At last the Douglas and the Percy met,
Like to captains of might and of main;
They swapped²⁹ together till they both sweat,
With swords that were of fine Millan.³⁰
- These worthy frekes for to fight,
Thereto they were full fain,
Till the blood out of their basnets sprent,³¹
As ever did hail or rain.

¹¹ Truly. ¹² Swore. ¹³ Observed near at hand.¹⁴ Company. ¹⁵ Flame, live coal.¹⁶ Hunting park. ¹⁷ To one side. ¹⁸ Let us do.¹⁹ If. ²⁰ Division of a ballad. ²¹ End.²² Wrong. ²³ Made to die. ²⁴ Helmeta.²⁵ Boki ones. ²⁶ Man.²⁷ Milan steel.²⁸ Slew.²⁹ Gauntlet.³⁰ Struck.³¹ Spouted.

- "Yield thee, Percy," said the Douglás, 135
 "And i'faith I shall thee bring
 Where thou shalt have an earl's wagés
 Of Jamie our Scottish king.
- "Thou shalt have thy ransom free,
 I hight³² thee here this thing; 140
 For the manfullest man yet art thou
 That ever I conquered in field fighting."
- "Nay," said the lord Percý,
 "I told it thee beforen,
 That I would never yielded be 145
 To no man of a woman born."
- With that there came an arrow hastily,
 Forth of a mighty one;
 It hath stricken the earl Douglás 150
 In at the breast-bone.
- Thorough liver and lunges both
 The sharp arrow is gone,
 That never after in all his life-days
 He spake more wordes but one:
 That was, "Fight ye, my merry men, whiles ye
 may,
 For my life-days be gone." 156
- The Percy leand on his brand,
 And saw the Douglas dee;³³
 He took the dead man by the hand,
 And said, "Woe is me for thee! 160
- "To have saved thy life, I would have parted
 with
 My landes for years three,
 For a better man, of heart nor of hand,
 Was not in all the north countrié."
- Of all that saw a Scottish knight, 165
 Was called Sir Hugh the Montgomery;
 He saw the Douglas to the death was dight,³⁴
 He spended³⁵ a spear of trusty tree.
- He rode upon a corsiare³⁶
 Through a hundred archery: 170
 He never stinted,³⁷ nor never stopped,
 Till he came to the good lord Percý.
- He set upon the lord Percý
 A dint that was full sore;
 With a sure spear of a mighty tree 175
 Clean through the body he the Percy ber,³⁸
- On the other side that a man might see
 A large cloth-yard and mare:
 Two better captains were not in Christiatié 180
 Than that day slain were there.
- An archer of Northumberland
 Saw slain was the lord Percý;
 He bare a bended bow in his hand,
 Was made of trusty tree.
- An arrow, that a cloth-yard was long, 185
 To the hard steel hauled he;
 A dint that was both sad and sore
 He set on Sir Hugh the Montgomery.
- The dint it was both sad and sore,
 That he on Montgomery set; 190
 The swan-feathers that his arrow bore
 With his heart-blood they were wet.
- There was never a man one foot would flee,
 But still in stour³⁹ did stand,
 Hewing on each other, while they mighté
 dree,⁴⁰ 195
 With many a baleful brand.
- This battle began in Cheviot
 An hour before the noon,
 And when even-song bell was rung,
 The battle was not half doon. 200
- They took . . .⁴¹ on either hand
 By the light of the moon;
 Many had no strength for to stand,
 In Cheviot the hills about.⁴²
- Of fifteen hundred archers of England 205
 Went away but seventy and three;
 Of twenty hundred spearmen of Scotland,
 But even five and fifty.
- But all were slain Cheviot within;
 They had no strength to stand on hie;⁴³ 210
 The child may rue that is unborn,
 It was the more pittie.
- There was slain, with the lord Percy,
 Sir John of Agerstone,
 Sir Roger, the hinde⁴⁴ Hartly, 215
 Sir William, the bold Hearone.
- Sir Jorg, the worthy Lumley,
 A knight of great renown,
 Sir Ralph, the riché Rugby,
 With dints were beaten down. 220
- For Wetharryngton my heart was woe,
 That ever he slain should be;
 For when both his legs were hewn in two,
 Yet he kneeled and fought on his knee.
- There was slain, with the doughty Douglas, 225
 Sir Hugh the Montgomery,
 Sir Davy Lambwell, that worthy was,
 His sister's son was he.
- Sir Charles of Murray in that place,
 That never a foot would flee; 230
 Sir Hugh Maxwell, a lord he was,
 With the Douglas did he dee.
- So on the morrow they made them biers
 Of birch and hazel so gray;
 Many widows, with weeping tears, 235
 Came to fetch their mates away.

³² Promise. ³³ Die. ³⁴ Prepared. ³⁵ Placed in rest.
³⁶ Swift horse. ³⁷ Stopped. ³⁸ Bore, thrust.

³⁹ Stress of battle.

⁴⁰ Omission in the Ma.

⁴¹ Stand upright.

⁴² Endure.

⁴³ Above.

⁴⁴ Gentle.

Tivdale may carp of care,
Northumberland may make great moan,
For two such captains as slain were there,
On the border-side shall never be none. 240

Word is comen to Edinboro,
To Jamie the Scottish king,
That doughty Douglas, lieutenant of the
Marches,⁴
He lay slain Cheviot within.

His handes did he weal⁴ and wring, 245
He said, "Alas, and woe is me!
Such another captain Scotland within,"
He said, "i'faith should never be."

Word is comen to lovely London,
To the fourth Harry our King, 250
That lord Percy, lieutenant of the Marches,
He lay slain Cheviot within.

"God have mercy on his soul," said King Harry,
"Good Lord, if thy will it be!
I have a hundred captains in England," he
said, 255
"As good as ever was he:
But, Percy, an I brook⁴ my life,
Thy death well quit shall be."

As our noble king made his avow,
Like a noble prince of renown, 260
For the death of the lord Percy
He did⁴ the battle of Hombill-down;

Where six and thirty Scottish knights
On a day were beaten down:
Glendale glittered on their armor bright, 265
Over castle, tower, and town.

This was the hunting of the Cheviot,
That there began this spurn;⁴
Old men that know the ground well enough
Call it the battle of Otterburn. 270

At Otterburn began this spurn
Upon a Monnyn-day;
There was the doughty Douglas slain,
The Percy never went away.

There was never a time on the Marches' side
Since the Douglas and the Percy met, 276
But it is marvel an the red blood ran not,
As the rain does in the stret.⁴⁰

Jesu Christ our balés bet,⁴¹
And to the bliss us bring! 280
This was the hunting of the Cheviot:
God send us all good ending!

SIR PATRICK SPENS

The king sits in Dumferling town,
Drinking the blude-red wine:
"O whare will I get guid sailor,
To sail this ship of mine?"

⁴ Borders. ⁴⁰ Clench. ⁴¹ Keep. ⁴² Fought.
⁴³ Trouble. ⁴⁴ Street. ⁴⁵ Better our illa.

Up and spak an eldern knight, 5
Sat at the king's right knee:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That sails upon the sea."

The king has written a braid¹ letter, 10
And signed it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh laughed he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read, 15
The tear blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send me out this time o' the year,
To sail upon the sea! 20

"Mak haste, mak haste, my merry men all,
Our guid ship sails the morn:"
"O say na sae, my master dear,
For I fear a deadlie storm.

"Late late yestreen I saw the new moon, 25
Wi the auld moon in her arm,
And I fear, I fear, my dear master,
That we will come to harm."

O our Scots nobles were right loth,
To wet their cork-heeled shoon;
But lang or a' the play were played, 30
Their hats they swam aboon.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
Wi their fans into their hand,
Or ere they see Sir Patrick Spens 35
Come sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi their gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for their ain dear lords,
For they'll see them na mair. 40

Half o'er, half o'er to Aberdour,
Its fifty fathom deep,
And there lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

THE TWA CORBIES¹

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane:²
The tane unto the tither did say,
"Whar sall we gang and dine the day?"

"In behint yon auld fail³ dyke, 5
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame, 10
His lady's ta'en anither mate,
Sae we may mak' our dinner sweet.

¹ Open, patent.

² Ravens.

³ Moan.

⁴ Turf, sod.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,⁴
And I'll pike out his bonny blue e'en;
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek⁵ our nest when it grows bare.

"Mony's the one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken whar he is gane;
O'er his white banes when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

There were twa sisters sat in a bow'r;
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
A knight cam' there, a noble wooer,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He courted the eldest wi' glove and ring,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
But he lo'ed the youngest aboon a' thing,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The eldest she was vexed sair,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And sair envied her sister fair,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Upon a morning fair and clear,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
She cried upon her sister dear,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, tak' my hand,"
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"And let's go down to the river-strand,"
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

She's ta'en her by the lily hand,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And down they went to the river-strand
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The youngest stood upon a stane,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
The eldest cam' and pushed her in,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, reach your hand!"
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"And ye sall be heir o' half my land"—
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, reach me but your glove!"
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"And sweet Willam sall be your love"—
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
Till she cam' to the mouth o' yon mill-dam,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

⁴ Neck-bone.

⁵ Thatch.

Out then cam' the miller's son
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And saw the fair maid soummin' in,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O father, father, draw your dam!"
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"There's either a mermaid or a swan,"
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The miller quickly drew the dam,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And there he found a drown'd woman,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Round about her middle sma'
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
There went a gouden girdle bra'
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

All amang her yellow hair
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
A string o' pearls was twisted rare,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

On her fingers lily-white,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
The jewel-rings were shining bright,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And by there cam' a harper fine,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
Harped to nobles when they dine,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And when he looked that lady on,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
He sigh'd and made a heavy moan,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He went into her father's hall,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And played his harp before them all,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And sune the harp sang loud and clear,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"Fareweel, my father and mither dear!"
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And neist when the harp began to sing,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"Twas "Fareweel, sweetheart!" said the string,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And then as plain as plain could be,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
"There sits my sister wha drownèd me!"
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie."

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

(From Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, 1827. Date of ballad uncertain)

Hie upon Hielands,
And low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
Rade out on a day.
Saddled and bridled 5
And gallant rade he;
Hame cam his gude horse,
But never cam he!
Out cam his auld mither
Greeting fu' sair, 10
And out cam his bonnie bride
Rivin' her hair.
Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom' hame cam the saddle 15
But never cam he!
"My meadow lies green,
And my corn is unshorn;
My barn is to big,
And my babie's unborn." 20
Saddled and bridled
And booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
But never cam he.

Interl. rhyme.
THE NUT-BROWN MAID
(c. 1500)

HE. Be it right or wrong, these men among
On women do complain;
Affirming this, how that it is
A labour spent in vain
To love them wele; for never a dele 5
They love a man again:
For let a man do what he can
Their favour to attain,
Yet if a new to them pursue,
Their first true lover than 10
Laboureth for naught; for from her
thought
He is a banished man.
SHE. I say not nay, but that all day
It is both written and said
That woman's faith is, as who saith, 15
All utterly decayed:
But nevertheless, right good witness
In this case might be laid
That they love true and continde:
Record the Nut-brown Maid, 20
Which, when her love came her to prove,
To her to make his moan,
Would not depart; for in her heart
She loved but him alone.
HE. Then between us let us discuss 25
What was all the manere
Between them two: we will also
Tell all the pain in fere¹

¹ Empty.¹ In company together.

That she was in. Now I begin,
So that ye me answer: 30
Wherefore all ye that present be,
I pray you give an ear.
I am the Knight. I come by night,
As secret as I can,
Saying, Alas! thus standeth the case, 35
I am a banished man.

SHE. And I your will for to fulfil
In this will not refuse;
Trusting to show, in wordes few,
That men have an ill use— 40
To their own shame—women to blame,
And causeless them accuse.
Therefore to you I answer now,
All women to excuse—
Mine own heart dear, with you what
cheer? 45
I pray you, tell anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. It standeth so: a deed is do
Whereof great harm shall grow: 50
My destiny is for to die
A shameful death, I trow;
Or else to flee. The t' one must be.
None other way I know
But to withdraw as an outlaw, 55
And take me to my bow.
Wherefore adieu, mine own heart true!
None other rede² I can.³
For I must to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man. 60

SHE. O Lord, what is this worldis bliss,
That changeth as the moon!
My summer's day in lusty May
Is darked before the noon.
I hear you say, farewell: Nay, nay, 65
We depart not so soon.
Why say ye so? Whither will ye go?
Alas! what have ye done?
All my welfare to sorrow and care
Should change, if ye were gone: 70
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. I can believe it shall you grieve,
And somewhat you distrain;
But afterward, your paines hard 75
Within a day or twain
Shall soon aslake; and ye shall take
Comfort to you again.
Why should ye ought? for, to make
thought,
Your labour were in vain. 80
And thus I do; and pray you to,
As heartily as I can:
For I must to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Now, sith that ye have showed to me 85
The secret of your mind,

² Counsel.³ Know.

- I shall be plain to you again,
Like as ye shall me find.
Sith it is so that ye will go,
I will not live behind. 90
Shall never be said the Nut-brown Maid
Was to her love unkind.
Make you ready, for so am I,
Although it were anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind 95
I love but you alone.
- HE. Yet I you rede to make good heed
What men will think and say:
Of young, of old, it shall be told
That ye be gone away 100
Your wanton will for to fulfil,
In green-wood you to play;
And that ye might for your delight
No longer make delay.
Rather than ye should thus for me 105
Be called an ill woman
Yet would I to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.
- SHE. Though it be sung of old and young
That I should be to blame, 110
Theirs be the charge that speak so large
In hurting of my name:
For I will prove that faithful love
It is devoid of shame:
In your distress and heaviness 115
To part with you the same;
And sure all tho' that do not so
True lovers are they none:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone. 120
- HE. I counsel you, Remember how
It is no maiden's law
Nothing to doubt, but to run out
To wood with an outlaw.
For ye must there in your hand bear 125
A bow ready to draw;
And as a thief thus must you live
Ever in dread and awe;
Whereby to you great harm might grow:
Yet had I liefer than 130
That I had to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.
- SHE. I think not nay but as ye say;
It is no maiden's lore;
But love may make me for your sake, 135
As I have said before,
To come on foot, to hunt and shoot,
To get us meat and store;
For so that I your company
May have, I ask no more. 140
From which to part it maketh my heart
As cold as any stone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.
- HE. For an outlaw this is the law, 145
That men him take and bind:
Without pitie, hanged to be,
And waver with the wind.
- If I had need (as God forbede!)
What socours could ye find? 150
Forsooth I trow, you and your bow
For fear would draw behind.
And no mervail; for little avail
Were in your counsel than:
Wherefore I'll to the green-wood go, 155
Alone, a banished man.
- SHE. Right well know ye that women be
But feeble for to fight;
No womanhede it is, indeed,
To be bold as a knight; 160
Yet in such fear if that ye were
With enemies day and night,
I would withstand, with bow in hand,
To grieve them as I might,
And you to save; as women have 165
From death men many one:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.
- HE. Yet take good hede; for ever I drede
That ye could not sustain 170
The thorny ways, the deep valléys,
The snow, the frost, the rain,
The cold, the heat; for dry or wete,
We must lodge on the plain;
And, us above, no other roof 175
But a brake bush or twain:
Which soon should grieve you, I believe;
And ye would gladly than
That I had to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man. 180
- SHE. Sith I have here been partynere
With you of joy and bliss,
I must also part of your woe
Endure, as reason is:
Yet I am sure of one pleasúre, 185
And shortly it is this—
That where ye be, me seemeth, pardé,
I could not fare amiss.
Without more speech I you beseech
That we were shortly gone; 190
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.
- HE. If ye go thyder,* ye must consider,
When ye have lust to dine,
There shall no meat be for to gete, 195
Neither beer, ale, nor wine,
No sheetes clean, to lie between,
Made of thread and twine;
None other house, but leaves and boughs
To cover your head and mine. 200
Lo, mine heart sweet, this ill diète
Should make you pale and wan:
Wherefore I'll to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.
- SHE. Among the wild deer such an archére 205
As men say that ye be,
Ne may not fail of such vitayle
Where is so great plenté:

* Thow.

* Thither.

And water clear of the rivere
 Shall be full sweet to me; 210
 With which in hele^a I shall right wele
 Endure, as ye shall see;
 And, or we go, a bed or two
 I can provide anone;
 For, in my mind, of all mankind 215
 I love but you alone.

HE. Lo yet, before, ye must do more,
 If ye will go with me:
 As, cut your hair up by your ear,
 Your kirtle by the knee; 220
 With bow in hand for to withstand
 Your enemies, if need be:
 And this same night, before daylight,
 To woodward will I flee.
 If that ye will all this fulfil, 225
 Do it shortly as ye can:
 Else will I to the green-wood go,
 Alone, a banished man.

SHE. I shall as now do more for you
 Than 'longeth to womanhede; 230
 To short my hair, a bow to bear,
 To shoot in time of need.
 O my sweet mother! before all other
 For you I have most drede!
 But now, adieu! I must ensue 235
 Where fortune doth me lead.
 All this make ye: Now let us flee;
 The day cometh fast upon:
 For, in my mind, of all mankind
 I love but you alone. 240

HE. Nay, nay, not so; ye shall not go,
 And I shall tell you why—
 Your appetite is to be ight
 Of love, I well espy:
 For, right as ye have said to me, 245
 In likewise hardily
 Ye would answer whosoever it were,
 In way of company:
 It is said of old, Soon hot, soon cold;
 And so is a woman: 250
 Wherefore I to the wood will go,
 Alone, a banished man.

SHE. If ye take heed, it is no need
 Such words to say to me; 254
 For oft ye prayed, and long assayed,
 Or I loved you, pardé:
 And though that I of ancestry
 A baron's daughter be,
 Yet have you proved how I you loved,
 A squire of low degree; 260
 And ever shall, whatso befall,
 To die therefore anone;
 For, in my mind, of all mankind
 I love but you alone.

HE. A baron's child to be beguiled,
 It were a curséd deed!
 To be feláw with an outlaw—
 Almightie God forbede!

^a Health.

Yet better were the poor squyere
 Alone to forest yede' 270
 Than ye shall say another day
 That by my curséd rede
 Ye were betrayed. Wherefore, good
 maid,
 The best rede that I can,
 Is, that I to the green-wood go, 275
 Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Whatever befall, I never shall
 Of this thing be upbraid:
 But if ye go, and leave me so,
 Then have ye me betrayed. 280
 Remember you wele, how that ye dele;
 For if ye, as ye said,
 Be so unkind to leave behind
 Your love, the Nut-brown Maid,
 Trust me truly that I shall die 285
 Soon after ye be gone:
 For, in my mind, of all mankind
 I love but you alone.

HE. If that ye went, ye should repent;
 For in the forest now 290
 I have purveyed me of a maid
 Whom I love more than you:
 Another more fair than ever ye were
 I dare it well avow; 294
 And of you both each would be wroth
 With other, as I trow:
 It were mine ease to live in peace;
 So will I, if I can:
 Wherefore I to the wood will go,
 Alone, a banished man. 300

SHE. Though in the wood I understood
 Ye had a paramour,
 All this may nought remove my thought,
 But that I will be your':
 And she shall find me soft and kind 305
 And courteous every hour;
 Glad to fulfil all that she will
 Command me, to my power:
 For had ye, lo, an hundred mo,
 Yet would I be that one: 310
 For, in my mind, of all mankind
 I love but you alone.

HE. Mine own dear love, I see the prove^a
 That ye be kind and true;
 Of maid, of wife, in all my life 315
 The best that ever I knew;
 Be merry and glad; be no more sad;
 The case is changéd new;
 For it were ruth that for your truth
 Ye should have cause to rue. 320
 Be not dismayed, whatsoever I said
 To you when I began:
 I will not to the green-wood go;
 I am no banished man.

SHE. These tidings be more glad to me 325
 Than to be made a queen,
 If I were sure they should endure;
 But it is often seen

^a Went.

^a Proof.

- When men will break promise they
speak
The wordis on the splene. 330
Ye shape some wile me to beguile,
And steal from me, I ween:
Then were the case worse than it was,
And I more woe-begone:
For, in my mind, of all mankind 335
I love but you alone.
- He. Ye shall not need further to drede:
I will not disparage
You (God defend), sith you descend
Of so great a linage. 340
Now understand: to Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage,
I will you bring; and with a ring,
By way of marriage
I will you take, and lady make, 345
As shortly as I can:
Thus have you won an Earls son,
And not a banished man.
- Here may ye see that women be
In love meek, kind, and stable; 350
Let never man reprove them than,
Or call them variable;
But rather pray God that we may
To them be comfortable;
Which sometime proveth such as He 355
loveth,
If they be charitable.
For sith men would that women should
Be meek to them each one;
Much more ought they to God obey,
And serve but Him alone. 360

HELEN OF KIRCONNELL

PART SECOND

(From Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, 1802-3)

- I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell Lee!
- Curst be the heart that thought the thought, 5
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen¹ dropt,
And died to succour me!
- O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' mickle care 11
On fair Kirconnell Lee.
- As I went down the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide, 15
On fair Kirconnell Lee!
- I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me. 20
- O, Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die.
- O that I were where Helen lies! 25
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste, and come to me!"
- O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee, I were blest, 30
Where thou lies low, and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.
- I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying, 35
On fair Kirconnell Lee.
- I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me. 40

POEMS, SONGS AND CAROLS OF
THE EARLY TUDOR PERIODA LYKE-WAKE DIRGE¹

- This ae night, this ae night.
Every night and alle,
Fire, and sleet,² and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.
- When thou from hence away art past, 5
Every night and alle,
To Whinny-muir³ thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.
- If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every night and alle, 10
Sit thee down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy saule.
- If hosen and shoon thou gavest nane,
Every night and alle,
The Whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bane,
And Christ receive thy saule. 16
- From Whinny-muir when thou mayst pass,
Every night and alle,
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule. . . . 20

¹ A *lyke-wake* is the watch or vigil over a corpse. (O. E. *lic*, a dead body). The dirge here given is said to have been sung at funerals in Yorkshire "down to 1624."² Probably a corruption of *salt*, which, through a popular superstition, was often placed on the breast of a corpse.³ The *whin* is a *furze* or *gorse*, the *moor-whin* grows on bleak heaths, and has sharp spines or needles. "Whinny-muir" therefore suggests a great plain full of prickles, and most painful to traverse.

From Brigg o' Dread⁴ when thou mayst pass,
Every night and alle,
 To Purgatory Fire thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every night and alle,
 The fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou gavest nane,
Every night and alle,
 The fire will burn thee to the bare bane,
And Christ receive thy saule.

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and alle,
 Fire, and sleet, and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

CAROL

*Make we merry in hall and bower.
 This time was born our Saviour.*

In this timé God hath sent
 His own Son, to be présent,
 To dwell with us in verament,
God that is our Saviour.

In this time that is befall,
 A child was born in an ox stall,
 And after, He died for us all,
God that is our Saviour.

In this time an angel bright
 Met three shepherds on a night,
 He bade them go full quickly, right
God that is our Saviour.

In this timé now pray we
 To Him that died for us on tree,
 Upon us all to have pitee,
God that is our Saviour.

THE JOLLY SHEPHERD

*Can I not sing but hoy,
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?*

The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
 He had on him his tabard¹ and hat,
 His tar-box, his pipe, and his flagat;²
 His name was called jolly, jolly Wat;
 For he was a good herdés boy,
 Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he made so much joy,
 Can I not sing but hoy
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

⁴ Bridge of Dread, a bar, or bridge of red-hot iron over which, according to the Mahometan belief, the dead must pass to judgment. The feet of the true believer will be protected by his good works, when he comes to cross this bridge, but the wicked, without this protection, must fall into a bottomless abyss below.

¹ Rough cloak.

² Bottle.

The shepherd upon a hill was laid,
 Unto his girdle his dog was tayed;³
 He had not slept but a little brayd,⁴
 But "Gloria in excelsis" was to him said. 15
 Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he made so much joy.
 Can I not sing but hoy,
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

The shepherd on a hill he stode,
 Round about him his sheep they yode;⁵
 He put his hand under his hode,⁶
 He saw a star as red as blode:
 Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he made so much joy,
 Can I not sing but hoy,
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

"Now farewell Mall, and also Will,
 For my love go ye all still
 Unto I come again you till, 30
 And evermore, Will, ring thy bell."
 Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he made so much joy,
 Can I not sing but hoy,
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

"Now must I go where Christ was born; 36
 Farewell, I come again at morn.
 Dog, keep my sheep well fro the corn,
 And warn well, Warrock, when I blow my
 horn."

Ut hoy! 40
 For in his pipe he made so much joy.
 Can I not sing but hoy,
 When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

THE HUNT IS UP¹

(In the Time of Henry VIII)

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
 And it is well nigh day:
 And Harry our King, is gone hunting,
 To bring his deer to bay.

The east is bright with morning light, 5
 And darkness it is fled,
 And the merry horn wakes up the morn
 To leave his idle bed. . . .

The horses snort to be at the sport,
 The dogs are running free, 10
 The woods rejoice at the merry noise
 Of hey tantara tee ree!

The sun is glad to see us clad
 All in our lusty green,
 And smiles in the sky as he riseth high, 15
 To see and to be seen.

¹ Tied. ² Time. ³ Strayed. ⁴ Hood.

⁵ This opening "The Hunt is Up," appears to have been so common in old songs, that the tune or song played to arouse hunters in the morning was called a *Hunts-up*, and this expression was afterwards extended to include "any song intended to arouse in the morning."

Awake, all men, I say again,
 Be merry as you may,
 For Harry our King is gone hunting,
 To bring his deer to bay. 20

MY HEART IS HIGH ABOVE¹

(16th Century)

My heart is high above, my body is full of bliss,
 For I am set in luvē as well as I would wiss;
 I luvē my lady pure and she luvē me again,
 I am her serviture, she is my soverane;
 She is my very heart, I am her hope and heill, 5
 She is my joy inwārd, I am her luvār leal;
 I am her bond and thrall; she is at my com-
 mand;

I am perpetual her man, both foot and hand;
 The thing that may her please my body shall
 fulfil;

Whatever her disease, it does my body ill. 10
 My bird, my bonny ane, my tender babe
 venust,¹

My luvē, my life alane, my liking and my
 lust! . . .

Luvers in pain, I pray God send you sic remeid
 As I have nicht and day, you to defend from
 deid.

Therefore be ever true unto your ladies free, 15
 And they will on you rue as mine has done on
 me.

DEATH¹

O Death, rock me to sleep,
 Bring me to quiet rest,
 Let pass my weary guiltless ghost
 Out of my careful breast. 5
 Toll on the passing bell;
 Ring out my doleful knell;
 Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
 For I must die,
 There is no remedy.

My pains who can express? 10
 Alas, they are so strong;
 My dolours will not suffer strength
 My life for to prolong.
 Toll on the passing bell;
 Ring out my doleful knell; 15
 Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
 For I must die,
 There is no remedy.

Alone in prison strong 20
 I wail my destiny.
 Woe worth this cruel hap that I
 Must taste this misery.
 Toll on the passing bell;
 Ring out my doleful knell;
 Thy sound my death abroad will tell, 25
 For I must die,
 There is no remedy.

Delightful.

¹ This poem is supposed to date from "about the time of Henry VIII." It has been suggested that "the verses were written either by or in the person of Anne Boleyn"—but this—while possible—is a pure conjecture.

Farewell, my pleasures past,
 Welcome my present pain.
 I feel my torment so increase 30
 That life cannot remain.
 Toll on the passing bell;
 Ring out my doleful knell;
 Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
 For I must die, 35
 There is no remedy.

Cease now the passing bell;
 Ring out my doleful knell,
 For thou my death dost tell;
 Lord pity thou my soul. 40
 Death doth draw nigh.
 Sound dolefully;
 For now I die,
 I die, I die.

William Cornish¹

d. 1524?

GOD'S CARE FOR MAN

Pleasure it is
 To hear, iwis,²
 The birdes sing.
 The deer in the dale,
 The sheep in the vale, 5
 The corn springing;
 God's purveyance
 For sustenance
 It is for man.
 Then we always 10
 To Him give praise,
 And thank Him than,³
 And thank Him than.

John Skelton

c. 1460-1529

A DIRGE FOR PHILIP SPARROW¹

Pla ce bo,
 Who is there, who?
Di le xi,
 Dame Marjery;
Fa re my my, 5
 Wherefore and why, why?

¹ Cornish or Cornyshe, was a Court musician in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. He was connected with the court as early as 1493, and in 1509 he was made Master of the children of the Chapel Royal.

² Certainly, truly.

³ Then.

¹ This is an Elegy addressed to Jane Scroupe, a pupil of the Black nuns at Carrow near Norwich, on the death of her pet sparrow. *Dirge* is a name given to the church service for the repose of the dead, and the poem is not merely an elegy but a lament in which the solemn words of the Church's requiem for the departed are heard at intervals, and the echoes of distant chants mingle with little Jane Scroupe's childlike distress. Thus *Placebo*, l. 1, is the initial word of the opening Antiphon (*Placebo Domino in regione vivorum*). *Dilexi*, l. 3, is the first word of the Psalm which follows the *placebo* (*Dilexi quoniam exaudivit Dominus vocem orationis meae*) and *Ad Dominum*, (l. 66) is the opening of the second antiphon *Ad Dominum, cum tribularer clamavi*.

For the soul of Philip Sparrow
That was late slain at Carow,
Among the nunnés blake,²
For that sweet soul's sake,
And for all sparrows' souls
Set in our bead roules,
Pater noster qui www.libtool.com.cn
With an Ave Maria,
And with the corner of a creed
The more shall be your meed.

When I remember again
How my Philip was slain,
Never half the pain
Was between you twain,
Pyramus and Thisbe,
As then befell to me;
I wept and I wailed,
The tears down hailed,
But nothing it availed
To call Philip again
Whom Gib our cat hath slain.

Gib, I say, our cat,
Worrowed³ her on that
Which I loved best;
It cannot be expressed,
My sorrowful heaviness,
But all without redress;
For within that stound,⁴
Half slumbering in a swounde,⁵
I fell down to the ground.

Scarcely I cast mine eyes
Toward the cloudy skies,
But when I did behold
My Sparrow dead and cold,
No creature but that wold⁶
Have pitied upon me
To behold and see
What heaviness did me pange⁷
Wherewith my hands I wrange,
That my sinews cracked
As though I had been racked,
So pained and so strained,
That no life well remained.

I sighed, and I sobbed,
For that I was robbed
Of my Sparrow's life;
O maiden, widow, and wife,
Of what estate ye be
Of high or low degree,
Great sorrow then ye might see,
And learn to weep at me;
Such pains did me treat⁸
That mine heart did beat,
My visage pale and dead,
Wan, and blue as lead,
The pangs of hateful death
Well-nigh stopped my breath.

Heu, heu, me,

That I am woe for thee!
Ad dominum cum tribulatione clamaui,
Of God nothing else crave I. . .

From COLIN CLOUT¹

And if ye stand in doubt
Who brought this rime about.
My name is Colin Clout.
I purpose to shake out
All my cunning bag,
Like a clerkly hag;
For though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain beaten,
Rusty and moth eaten,
If ye talk well therewith
It hath in it some pith.
For as far as I can see,
It is wrong with each degree;
For the temporality
Accuseth the spirituality;
The spiritual again
Doth grudge and complain
Upon temporal men;
Thus each of other blother,²
The one against the other:
Alas they make me shudder!
For in hugger mugger
The church is put at fault;
The prelates be so haut³
They say, and look so high,
As though they would fly
Above the starry sky.

Laymen say indeed
How they take no heed
Their silly sheep to feed,
But pluck away and pull
The fleeces of their wool;
Unnethe⁴ they leave a lock
Of wool among their flock.
And as for their cunning
A glumming and a mumming,
And make thereof a jape,⁵
They gaspe and they gape
All to have promotion;
There is their whole devotion,
With money, if it will hap⁶
To catch the forked cap,
Forsooth they are too lewd⁷
To say so all be shrewd.

¹ In this poem Skelton voices the popular discontent, blames the clergy for the wrongs which the people suffer, and attacks Cardinal Wolsey. The arraignment is put into the mouth of one *Colin Clout*. Colin suggests a shepherd, or countryman: *Clout* may mean ragged or patched, hence we may assume that Colin Clout (the patched rustic or shepherd) was intended to stand for the humbler, or lower classes.

² Chatter.

³ Proud.

⁴ Scarcely.

⁵ Jest.

⁶ Chance.

⁷ Ignorant.

² Black nuns.

³ Hooked.

⁴ Moment.

⁵ Swoon.

⁶ Would.

⁷ Oppress.

⁸ Damage.

Sir John Fortescue

d. c. 1476

THE ROYAL POWER IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

(From *The Difference Between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, 1450?)

There be two kinds of Kingdoms, of the 10 which that one is a Lordship, called in Latin, *Dominium Regale*, and that other is called, *Dominium Politicum et Regale*. And they differ, in that the first may rule his people by such laws as he maketh himself; and therefore 15 he may set upon them Talys,¹ and other impositions, such as he will himself, without their assent. The second may not rule his people, by other laws than such as they assent unto; and therefore he may set upon them no 20 impositions without their own assent.

[After treating of the origin and nature of royal power, and considering why one King rules as an absolute and another as a limited monarch, 25 the author passes on to consider the effects of absolute monarchy ("The fruits of *Jus Regale*") in France.]

And howso be it, that the French King reigneth upon his people *Dominio Regali*: yet St. Lewis 30 sometime King there, nor any of his progenitors set never Talys or other Impositions, upon the people of that land, without the assent of the three Estates, which when they be assembled are like to the Court of Parlement in England. 35 And this order kept many of his successors until late days, that Englishmen made such a war in France, that the three Estates durst not come together. And then for that cause and for great necessity which the French king had of 40 goods, for the defence of that land, he took upon him to set Talys and other Impositions upon the Commons, without the assent of the three Estates; but yet he would not set any such charges, nor hath set, upon the nobles, 45 for fear of rebellion. And because the Commons, though they have grudged, have not rebelled or be hardy to rebel, the French Kings have yearly since set such charges upon them, and so augmented the same charges, as the 50 same Commons be so impoverished and destroyed, that they may scarcely live. They drink water, they eat apples, with bread right brown made of rye. They eat no flesh; but if² it be seldom, a little lard, or of the entrails, or 55 heads of beasts slain for the nobles and merchants of the land. They wear no woolen, but

if it be a poor coat under their outermost garment, made of great⁴ canvas, and call it a frock. Their hose be of like canvas, and pass not their knee; wherefore they be gartered and 5 their thighs bare. Their wives and children go barefoot; they may in no otherwise live. For some of them, that was wont to pay to his lord for his tenement, which he hireth by the year, a scute,⁵ payeth now to the King, over that 10 scute, five scutes. Through which they be forced by necessity, so to watch, labor, and grub in the ground, for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kind⁶ of them brought to naught. They are gone 15 crooked, and are feeble, not able to fight, nor to defend the realm; nor have they weapons, nor money to buy them weapons withal; but verily they live in the most extreme poverty and misery, and yet they dwell in one of the most fertile realms of the world; wherefore the French King hath not men of his own realm to defend it, except his nobles, which bear no such Impositions; and therefore they are right likely of their bodies, by which cause the said 25 King is compelled to make his armies, and retenue for the defence of the land, of strangers, as Scots, Spaniards, Arragonars, men of Almaine, and of other nations, or else his enemies might over-run him. For he hath no defense of his own, except his castles and fortresses. Lo, this is the fruit of his *Jus Regale*. If the realm of England, which is an isle, and therefore may not lightly get succours from other lands, were ruled under such a law, 35 and under such a Prince, it would be then a prey to all other nations that would conquer, rob, and devour it; which was well proved in the time of the Britons, when the Scots and the Picts so beat and oppressed this land, that the 40 people thereof sought help of the Romans, to whom they had been tributary.

But blessed be God, this land is ruled under a better law, and therefore the people thereof be not in such penury, nor thereby hurt in their persons, but they be wealthy and have all things necessary to the sustenance of nature. Wherefore they be mighty, and able to resist the adversaries of the realm, and to beat other 45 realms, that do or will do them wrong. Lo, this is the fruit of the *Jus Politicum et Regale* under which we live. Somewhat now I have showed you of the fruits of both laws, *Ut ex fructibus eorum cognoscatis eos*.⁷

¹ Coarse, thick.² An old French coin said to have been worth three shillings and sixpence or about eighty cents. See *scute*, and *scudi* in *Cent. Dict.*³ i. e. The class or order of the common people.⁴ That by their fruits ye may know them.¹ Taxes.² Louis IX, 1215-1270.³ Unless.

Sir Thomas Malory

c. 1430-c. 1470

THE DRAWING OF THE SWORD

(From the *Morte d'Arthur*, c. 1470)

So on the morn all the barons with Merlin came before the king; then Merlin said aloud unto king Uther, Sire, shall your son Arthur be king after your days, of this realm with all the appurance? Then Uther Pendragon turned him and said in hearing of them all, I give him God's blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soul, and righteously and worshipfully that he claim the crown upon forfeiture of my blessing, and therewith he yielded up the ghost, and then was he interred as longed¹ to a king. Wherefore the queen, fair Igraine, made great sorrow, and all the barons.

Then stood the realm in great jeopardy long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many weened to have been king. Then Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him for to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen of arms, that they should to London come by Christmas, upon pain of cursing; and for this cause, that Jesus, that was born on that night, that He would of His great mercy show some miracle, as He was come to be king of mankind, for to show some miracle who should be right-wise king of this realm. So the Archbishop, by the advice of Merlin, sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms that they should come by Christmas even unto London. And many of them made them clean of their life, that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God. So in the greatest church of London, whether it were Paul's or not, the French book maketh no mention, all the estates were long ere day in the church for to pray. And when matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard, against the high altar, a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone, and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus:—Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England. Then the people marvelled, and told it to the Archbishop. I command, said the Archbishop, that ye keep you within your church, and pray unto God still; that no man touch the sword till the high mass be all done. So when all masses were done all the lords went

to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some assayed, such as would have been king. But none might stir the sword nor move it. He is not here, said the Archbishop, that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him known. But this is my counsel, said the Archbishop, that we let purvey² ten knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword. So it was ordained, and then there was made a cry, that every man should assay that would, for to win the sword. And upon New Year's Day the barons let make a joust and a tournament, that all knights that would joust or tourney there might play, and all this was ordained for to keep the lords together, and the commons, for the Archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword. So upon New Year's Day, when the service was done, the barons rode unto the field, some to joust and some to tourney, and so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode unto the jousts, and with him rode Sir Kay his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother;³ and Sir Kay was made knight at All Hallowmass afore. So as they rode to the jousts-ward, Sir Kay lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard, and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day. So when he came to the churchyard, Sir Arthur alit and tied his horse to the stile, and so he went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were at jousting; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way until he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword, he wist well it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father Sir Ector, and said: Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone, wherefore I must be king of this land. When Sir Ector beheld the sword, he returned again and came to the church, and there they alit all three, and went into the church. And anon he made Sir Kay swear upon a book how he came to that sword. Sir, said Sir Kay, by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me. How gat ye this sword? said Sir Ector to Arthur. Sir, I will tell you. When I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at

¹ Belonged.² Cause to be provided.³ Foster brother.

home to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain. Found ye any knights about this sword, said Sir Ector. Nay, said Arthur. Now, said Sir Ector to Arthur, I understand ye must be king of this land. Wherefore I, said Arthur, and for what cause? Sir, said Ector, for God will have it so, for there should never man have drawn out this sword, but he shall be rightwise king of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again. That is no mastery, said Arthur, and so he put it in the stone. Wherewith Sir Ector assayed to pull out the sword and failed.

Now assay, said Sir Ector unto Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be. Now shall ye assay, said Sir Ector to Arthur. I will well, said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector knelt down to the earth, and Sir Kay.

ARTHUR'S ENCOUNTER WITH PELLINOIRE

And so Arthur rode a soft pace till it was day, and then was he aware of three churls chasing Merlin, and would have slain him. Then the king rode unto them, and bade them: Flee, churls! then were they afeared when they saw a knight, and fled. O Merlin, said Arthur, here hadst thou been slain for all thy crafts had I not been. Nay, said Merlin, not so, for I could save myself an I would; and thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest to the deathward, an God be not thy friend. So as they went thus talking they came to the fountain, and the rich pavilion there by it. Then King Arthur was ware where sat a knight armed in a chair. Sir knight, said Arthur, for what cause abidest thou here, that there may no knight ride this way but if he joust with thee? said the king. I rede thee leave that custom, said Arthur. This custom, said the knight, have I used and will use maugre who saith nay, and who is grieved with my custom let him amend it that will. I will amend it, said Arthur. I shall defend¹ thee, said the knight. Anon he took his horse and dressed his shield and took a spear, and they met so hard either in other's shields, that all to-shivered² their spears. Therewith anon Arthur pulled out his sword. Nay, not so, said the knight; it is fairer, said the knight, that we twain run more together with sharp spears. I will well, said Arthur, an I had any more

spears. I have enow, said the knight; so there came a squire and brought in good spears, and Arthur chose one and he another; so they spurred their horses and came together with all their mights, that either brake their spears to their hands. Then Arthur set hand on his sword. Nay, said the knight, ye shall do better; ye are a passing good joust as ever I met withal; and once for the love of the high order of knighthood let us joust once again. I assent me, said Arthur. Anon there were brought two great spears, and every knight gat a spear, and therewith they ran together, that Arthur's spear all to-shivered. But the other knight hit him so hard in midst of the shield, that horse and man fell to the earth, and therewith Arthur was eager, and pulled out his sword, and said, I will assay thee, sir knight, on foot, for I have lost the honour on horseback. I will be on horseback, said the knight. Then was Arthur wroth, and dressed his shield toward him with his sword drawn. When the knight saw that, he alit, for him thought no worship to have a knight at such avail,³ he to be on horseback and he on foot; and so he alit and dressed his shield unto Arthur. And there began a strong battle with many great strokes, and so hewed with their swords that the cantels⁴ flew in the fields, and much blood they bled both, that all the place there as they fought was overbled with blood. And thus they fought long and rested them, and then they went to the battle again, and so hurtled together like two rams that either fell to the earth. So at the last they smote together that both their swords met even together. But the sword of the knight smote King Arthur's sword in two pieces, wherefor he was heavy. Then said the knight unto Arthur, Thou art in my danger whether me list to save thee or slay thee, and but thou yield thee as overcome and recreant, thou shalt die. As for death, said King Arthur, welcome be it when it cometh. But to yield me unto thee as recreant I had liefer die than to be so shamed. And therewithal the king leapt unto Pellinore, and took him by the middle and threw him down, and rased off his helm.⁵ When the knight felt that, he was adread, for he was passing big man of might, and anon he brought Arthur under him, and rased off his helm and would have smitten off his head.

Therewithal came Merlin and said, Knight, hold thy hand, for an thou slay that knight thou puttest this realm in the greatest damage that ever was realm; for this knight is a man of more worship than thou wotest of. Why, who is he? said the knight. It is King Arthur.

¹ Prevent.

² Broke to pieces.

³ Advantage.

⁴ Pieces.

⁵ Helmet.

Then would he have slain him⁴ for dread of his wrath, and heaved up his sword, and therewith Merlin cast an enchantment to the knight, that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up King Arthur, and rode forth on the Knight's horse. Alas! said Arthur, what hast thou done, Merlin? hast thou slain this good knight by thy crafts? There liveth not so worshipful a knight as he was; I had liefer than the stint⁷ of my land a year that he were alive. Care ye not, said Merlin, for he is wholler than ye; for he is but asleep, and will awake within three hours. I told you, said Merlin, what a knight he was; here had ye been slain had I not been. Also there liveth not a bigger knight than he is one, and he shall hereafter do you right good service; and his name is Pellinore.

HOW ARTHUR GOT THE SWORD FROM THE LADY OF THE LAKE

Right so the king and he departed, and went unto an hermit that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves; so the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go, and so departed. And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force,¹ said Merlin, hereby is a sword that shall be yours, an I may. So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and broad. And in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite,² that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo! said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damosel going upon the lake. What damosel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the lake, said Merlin; and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth, and richly besene;³ and this damosel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she will give you that sword. Anon withal came the damosel unto Arthur, and saluted him, and he her again. Damosel, said Arthur, what sword is that, that yonder the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword. Sir Arthur, king, said the damosel, that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it you, ye shall have it. By my faith, said Arthur, I will give you what gift ye will ask. Well! said the damosel, go ye into yonder barge, and row yourself to the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time. So Sir Arthur and Merlin alit and tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the

ship, and when they came to the sword that the hand held, Sir Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him, and the arm and the hand went under the water. And so they came unto the land and rode forth, and then Sir Arthur saw a rich pavilion. What signifieth yonder pavilion? That is the knight's pavilion, said Merlin, that ye fought with last, Sir Pellinore; but he is out, he is not there. He hath ado with a knight of yours that hight Egglame, and they have foughten together, but at the last Egglame fled, and else he had been dead, and he hath chased him even to Carleon, and we shall meet with him anon in the highway. That is well said, said Arthur, now have I a sword, now will I wage battle with him, and be avenged on him. Sir, ye shall not so, said Merlin, for the knight is weary of fighting and chasing, so that ye shall have no worship to have ado with him; also he will not be lightly matched of one knight living, and therefore it is my counsel, let him pass, for he shall do you good service in short time, and his sons after his days. Also ye shall see that day in short space, ye shall be right glad to give him your sister to wed. When I see him, I will do as ye advise, said Arthur. Then Sir Arthur looked on the sword, and liked it passing well. Whether liketh you better, said Merlin, the sword or the scabbard? Me liketh better the sword, said Arthur. Ye are more unwise, said Merlin, for the scabbard is worth ten of the swords, for whiles ye have the scabbard upon you, ye shall never lose no blood, be ye never so sore wounded; therefore keep well the scabbard always with you. So they rode unto Carleon, and by the way they met with Sir Pellinore; but Merlin had done such a craft, that Pellinore saw not Arthur, and he passed by without any words. I marvel, said Arthur, that the knight would not speak. Sir, said Merlin, he saw you not, for an he had seen you, ye had not lightly departed. So they came unto Carleon, whereof his knights were passing glad. And when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under such a chieftan, that would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.

SIR LAUNCELOT DEPARTS OUT OF ENGLAND

My fair fellows, said Sir Launcelot, I must depart out of this most noble realm, and now I shall depart it grieveth me sore, for I shall depart with no worship, for a flemyd¹ man

⁴ Himself.

⁷ Income.

¹ It matters not. ² Rich silk. ³ i. e. Beautiful to be seen.

¹ Banished.

departed never out of a realm with no worship; and that is my heaviness, for ever I fear after my days that men shall chronicle upon me that I was flemyd out of this land; and else my fair lords be ye sure, an I had not dread shame, my lady Queen Guenever and I should never have departed. Then spake many noble knights, as Sir Palomides, Sir Safere his brother, and Sir Bellangere le Beuse, and Sir Urre, with Sir Lavaine, with many others, Sir, an ye be so disposed to abide in this land, we will never fail you; and if ye list not to abide in this land there is none of the good knights that here be will fail you, for many causes. One is, All we that be not of your blood shall never be welcome to the court. And sithen² it liked us to take a part with you in your distress and heaviness in this realm, wit you well it shall like us as well to go in other countries with you, and there to take such part as ye do. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, I well understand you and as I can, thank you: and ye shall understand, such livelihood as I am born unto I shall depart with you in this manner of wise, that is for to say; I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you, and I myself will have as little as any of you, for have I sufficient that may long to my person, I will ask none other rich array; and I trust to God to maintain you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any knights. Then spake all the knights at once, He have shame that will leave you; for we all understand, in this realm will be now no quiet, but ever strife and debate; now the fellowship of the Round Table is broken; for by the noble fellowship of the Round Table was King Arthur upborne, and by their noblesse the King and all his realm was in quiet and rest, and a great part they said all was by cause of your noblesse.

KING ARTHUR MAKES MORDRED CHIEF RULER

So leave we Sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble knights with him, and return we again unto King Arthur and to Sir Gawaine, that made a great host ready, to the number of threescore thousand; and all thing was made ready for their shipping to pass over the sea, and so they shipped at Cardiff. And there King Arthur made Sir Mordred chief ruler of all England, and also he put Queen Guenever under his governance; by cause Sir Mordred was King Arthur's son, he gave him the rule of his land and of his wife; and so the king passed the sea and landed upon Sir Launcelot's lands, and there he brent and wasted, through the

vengence of Sir Gawaine, all that they might overrun.

TIDINGS MAKE ARTHUR RETURN TO ENGLAND

Alas, said the King, that ever this unhappy war was begun; for ever Sir Launcelot forbearth me in all places, and in likewise my kin, and that is seen well this day by my nephew Sir Gawaine. Then King Arthur fell sick for sorrow of Sir Gawaine, that he was so sore hurt, and by cause of the war betwixt him and Sir Launcelot. So then they on King Arthur's party¹ kept the siege with little war withoutforth; and they withinforth kept their walls, and defended them when need was. . . .

Thus as this siege endured, and as Sir Gawaine lay sick near a month; and when he was well recovered and ready within three days to do battle again with Sir Launcelot, right so came tidings unto Arthur from England that made King Arthur and all his host to remove.

As Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he did so make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him King; and so was he crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days.

Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had araised the siege for Sir Launcelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred; wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land, and much people drew to him.

For then was the common voice among them that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved² and evil said of. And many there were that King Arthur had made up of naught, and given them lands, might not then say him a good word. Lo ye all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was, for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us now term. And so fared the people at that

² Since.

¹ Side.

² Denounced.

time, they were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur; and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands; and the most party of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new fangle.

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great navy of ships, and galleys, and carracks.¹ And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon his landing, to let² his own father to land upon the land that he was King over. Then there was launching of great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed maugre Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he fled and all his people.

THE DEATH OF ARTHUR

Then was it told the King that Sir Mordred had pyghte³ a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the King rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and much people was slain on both parties; but at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury. . . .

Then the King commanded Sir Lucan the Butler and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, an they might, take a treaty for a month day⁴ with Sir Mordred, and spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best. So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time; and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's days: after, all England, after the days of King Arthur.

Then were they condescended that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and each of them should bring fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he, I am glad that this is done: and so he went into the

field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that an they see any sword drawn, Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him.

In likewise Sir Mordred warned his host that, An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no wise I will not trust for this treatise, for I know well my father will be avenged on me. And so they met as their

appointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly; and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right soon came an adder out of a little heath bush and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they

blew beamous,⁵ trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And King Arthur took his horse and said, Alas this unhappy day, and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in like

wise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, feigning and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever

King Arthur rode throughout the battle⁶ of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble knight should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir,⁶ and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the ground. Then was

Arthur wood⁶ wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more alive but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded.

Jesu mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But would to God that I

wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief. Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor

¹ Large merchant ships. ² Prohibit.

³ Prepared.

⁴ A stipulated or allowed period, of a month's duration.

⁵ A kind of trumpet.

⁶ The line in battle array.

⁶ i. e. compelled him to do his utmost duty.

⁶ Madly angry.

that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spikit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of His great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three alive, and with Sir Mordred is none alive; and if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life,⁷ said the king, now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the King gat his spear in both his hands, and ran towards Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor, now is thy death day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran unto him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin⁸ of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom; and when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur⁹ of King Arthur's spear; and right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftentimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere oftentimes heave him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the sea side. And when the king was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou Sir Lucan, said the King, and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he went he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers¹⁰ and robbers were come into the field, to pill and rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, and many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede,¹¹ said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king.

But I may not stand, mine head works so Ah Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee; alas that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king, the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, . . . and therewith the noble knight's heart brast.¹² And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth. . . . Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I. Alas he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me; now Jesu have mercy upon his soul. Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well that an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself, if I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and wind. That is untruly said of thee, said the king, therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft¹³ he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe¹⁴ and the waves wanne. Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named

⁷ Come death, or come life.

⁸ Thrust.

⁹ "A moveable ring adjusted to the staff of a lance, covered with minute projections to afford a grip to the gauntlet." *Cent. Dict.*

¹⁰ Robbers.

¹¹ Counsel.

¹² Burst.

¹³ Again.

¹⁴ Lap and wane.

a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if¹⁶ thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the¹⁵ hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the King, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his²⁰ back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps³⁰ King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir³⁵ Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well⁴⁰ as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in, for I will into the vale of Avalon to heal me of my grievous wounds: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and⁴⁵ shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts⁵⁰ hoar,¹⁶ of a chapel and an hermitage.

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit grovelling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little tofore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed.¹⁷ Sir, said

Sir Bedivere, what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for? Fair son, said the hermit, I wot not verily, but by my deeming.¹⁸ But this night, at midnight, here came a number of⁵ ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants.¹⁹ Alas, said Sir Bedivere, that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel. Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. For from hence will I never go, said Sir Bedivere, by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur. Ye are welcome to me, said the hermit, for I know you better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke Sir Lucan the Butler was your²⁰ brother. . . .

More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burial; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur: for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written. Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the Holy Cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse:

Hic jacet Arthurus Rex, quondam Rex que futurus.²⁰

SIR LAUNCELOT

And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the choir of Joyous Gard, he alit and put his horse from him, and came into the choir, and there he saw men sing and weep. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother Sir Launcelot dead; and then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him. And when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon. And when he waked it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. Ah, Launcelot, he said, thou wert head of all christian knights. And now I dare say, said Sir Ector, thou Sir Launce-

¹⁶ Judging, i. e. I know not certainly, but I judge so.

¹⁸ Gold coins.

²⁰ Here lies King Arthur, one time King, and King to be.

¹⁷ Unless. ¹⁸ Hoary woods or groves. ¹⁷ Banished.

lot, there thou liest, that thou were never
 matched of earthly knight's hands. And
 thou were the courtest knight that ever bare
 shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy
 lover that ever bestrad horse, and thou were
 the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved
 woman. And thou were the kindest man that
 ever strake with sword. And thou were the
 goodliest person that ever came among the
 press of knights. And thou was the meekest
 man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall
 among ladies. And thou were the sternest
 knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear
 in the breast. Then there was weeping and
 colour out of measure. Thus they kept Sir
 Launcelot's corpse on loft fifteen days, and
 then they buried it with great devotion.

William Caxton

1422-1491

THE NEW INVENTION OF PRINTING

(From *The Recuyell¹ of the Histories of Troye*,
 Epilogue to Book III, 1475?)

Thus end I this book, which I have translated after mine author as nigh as God hath given me cunning,² to whom be given the laud and praising. And for as much as in the writing of the same, my pen is worn, mine hand weary, and not steadfast, mine eyen³ dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready⁴ to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might this said book; therefore I have practised and learned, at my great charge and dispense,⁴ to ordain⁵ this said book in print, after the manner and form as ye may here see; and (it) is not written with pen and ink, as other books be, to the end that every man may have them attones.⁶ For all the books of this story, named the recule of the histories of Troye, thus imprinted as ye here see, were begun in one day, and also finished in one day: which book I have presented to my said redoubted lady as afore is said. And she hath well accepted it and hath largely rewarded me, wherefore I beseech Almighty God, to reward her everlasting bliss after this life, praying her said Grace, and all them that shall read this book, not to disdain the simple and rude

¹ Collection; binding, or bringing together. (Fr. *Recueil*.)

² Knowledge; skill.

³ Eyes.

⁴ Expense.

⁵ Prepare; make ready. ⁶ At the same time; at once.

work, neither to reply against the saying of the matters touched in this book,⁷ though it accord not unto the translation of others which have written it. For divers men have made divers books, which in all points accord not, as Dictes,⁸ Dares,⁹ and Homer. For Dictes and Homer, as Greeks, say and write favourably for the Greeks, and give to them more worship than to the Trojans; and Dares writeth otherwise than they do. And also as for the proper names, it is no wonder that they accord not, for some one name in these days has divers equivocations,¹⁰ after the countries that they dwell in; but all accord in conclusion the general destruction of that noble city of Troy, and the death of so many noble princes, as Kings, Dukes, Earls, Barons, Knights and common people, and the ruin irreparable of that city that never since was reedified,¹¹ which may be ensample to all men during the world how dreadful and jeopardous it is to begin a war, and what harms, losses, and death followeth. Therefore the Apostle¹² saith, "All that is written is written to our doctrine," which doctrine for the common weal I beseech God may be taken in such place and time as shall be most needful in increasing of peace, love, and charity; which grant us He that suffered for the same to be crucified on the rood tree. And say we all Amen, for charity.

KING ARTHUR

(From Caxton's Prologue to his edition of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, 1485)

After that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other historical and worldly acts of great conquerors and princes, and also certain books of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oftentimes, wherefore that I have not done made and imprinted the noble history of the Sangrael, and of the most renowned Christian king, first and chief of the three best Christian and worthy, King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among us English men tofore all other Christian kings. For it is notoriously

⁷ i. e. take exception to the version "touched," or rehearsed, herein.

⁸ A Cretan, said to have taken part in the Trojan War and to have written a history of the contest. A book was put forth in the time of Nero, which purported to be a translation of Dictes' work.

⁹ A priest, mentioned in the *Iliad*. He was believed to have written a work on the fall of Troy. A book pretending to be a translation of Dares' work into Latin, was formerly believed to be genuine.

¹⁰ Meanings.

¹¹ Rebuilt (Lat. *re* and *edificare*).

¹² St. Paul, *Rom.* xv. 4.

known through the universal world that there be nine worthy and the best that ever were; that is to wit three Paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men. As for the Paynims they were tofore the Incarnation of Christ, which were named,—the first, Hector of Troy, of whom the history is come both in ballad and in prose; the second, Alexander the Great; and the third, Julius Caesar, Emperor of Rome, of whom the histories be well-known and had. And as for the three Jews which also were tofore the Incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was Duke Joshua, which brought the children of Israel into the land of beheist; the second, David, King of Jerusalem; and the third Judas Maccabæus: of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And sith the said Incarnation, have been three noble Christian men staled and admitted through the universal world into the number of the nine best and worthy, of whom was first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places both in French and English; and the third and last was Godfrey of Boulogne, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent prince and king of noble memory, King Edward the Fourth. The said noble gentlemen instantly required me to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror, King Arthur, and of his knights, with the history of the Sangrael, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur; affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Boulogne, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his knights. To whom I answered, that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, by cause that some chronicles make of him no mention, nor remember him nothing, nor of his knights. Whereto they answered, and one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a king called Arthur, might well be credited great folly and blindness; for he said that there were many evidences of the contrary; first ye may see his sepulture in the Monastery of Glastonbury. And also in "Polychronicon," in the fifth book, the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book, the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried, and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history

of Boccaccio, in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall. Also Galfridus in his British book recounteth his life; and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights. First in the Abbey of Westminster, at Saint Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written *Patri-cius Arthurus, Britanniae, Galliae, Germaniae, Daciae, Imperator*. Item, in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawain's skull and Craddock's mantle: at Winchester the Round Table: in other places Launcelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but here was a king of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. And also he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts than there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Greek, as in French. And yet of record remain in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot the great stones and marvellous works of iron, lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now living hath seen. Wherefore it is a marvel why he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth to the word of God, which saith that no man is accept for a prophet in his own country. Then all these things aforesaid alleged, I could not well deny but that there was such a noble king named Arthur, and reputed one of the nine worthy, and first and chief of the Christian men; and many noble volumes be made of him and of his noble knights in French, which I have seen and read beyond the sea, which be not had in our maternal tongue, but in Welsh be many and also in French, and some in English, but nowhere nigh all. Wherefore, such as have late been drawn out briefly into English I have, after the simple cunning that God hath sent to me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, emprised to imprint a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English. And I, according to my copy, have done set it in imprint, to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour; and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other

estates, of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renown. And

for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in; but for to give faith and believe that all is true that is contained herein, ye be at your liberty; but all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue; by which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life, to come unto everlasting bliss in heaven, the which He grant us that reigneth in heaven, the Blessed Trinity. Amen.

IV. WYATT AND SURREY TO THE DEATH OF BEN. JONSON

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c. 1525-1637

WYATT AND SURREY AND THE EARLY ELIZABETHANS

c. 1525-1579

Sir Thomas Wyatt

1503-1542

THE LOVER'S LIFE COMPARED TO THE ALPS

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Like unto these unmeasurable mountains ^A
 So is my painful life, the burden of ire; ^B
 For high be they, and high is my desire; ^C
 And I of tears, and they be full of fountains: ^A
 Under craggy rocks they have barren plains; ^B
 Hard thoughts in me my woful mind doth
 tire: ^C
 Small fruit and many leaves their tops do
 attire: ^B
 With small effect great trust in me remains: ^A
 The boisterous winds oft their high boughs do
 blast; ^C
 Hot sighs in me continually be shed: ^B 10
 Wild beasts in them, fierce love in me is fed; ^B
 Unmovable am I, and they steadfast. ^C
 Of singing birds they have the tune and
 note; ^C
 And I always plaints passing through my
 throat. ^C

And have no more pity,
 Of him that loveth thee?
 Alas! thy cruelty!
 And wilt thou leave me thus?
 Say nay! say nay!

20

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

c. 1517-1547

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

The soot¹ season that bud and bloom forth
 brings, ^A
 With green hath clad the hill, and eke the
 vale. ^B
 The nightingale with feathers new she sings; ^A
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale. ^B
 Summer is come, for every spray now springs, ^A
 The hart hath hung his old head on the
 pale; ^B
 The buck in brake his winter coat he slings; ^A
 The fishes fleet with new repaired scale; ^B
 The adder all her slough away she slings; ^A
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale; ^B
 The busy bee her honey now she mings; ^A 11
 Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale. ^B
 And thus I see among these pleasant things ^A
 Each care decays, and yet my sorrow ^A
 springs!

AND WILT THOU LEAVE ME THUS?

And wilt thou leave me thus?
 Say nay! say nay! for shame!
 To save thee from the blame
 Of all my grief and grame.¹
 And wilt thou leave me thus? ⁵
 Say nay! say nay!
 And wilt thou leave me thus?
 That hath lov'd thee so long?
 In wealth and woe among:
 And is thy heart so strong
 As for to leave me thus?
 Say nay! say nay!
 And wilt thou leave me thus?
 That hath given thee my heart
 Never for to depart;
 Neither for pain nor smart: ¹⁰
 And wilt thou leave me thus?
 Say nay! say nay!
 And wilt thou leave me thus?

¹ Sorrow.

THE FRAILTY OF BEAUTY

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Brittle beauty, that Nature made so frail,
 Whereof the gift is small, and short the sea-
 son; ⁵
 Flowering to-day, tomorrow apt to fail;
 Tickle treasure, abhorred of reason:
 Dangerous to deal with, vain, of no avail; ⁵
 Costly in keeping, past not worth two pea-
 son;¹
 10 Slipper² in sliding, as is an eel's tail;
 Hard to obtain, once gotten, not geason:³
 Jewel of jeopardy, that peril doth assail;
 False and untrue, enticed oft to treason; ¹⁰
 Enemy to youth, that most may I bewail;
 15 Ah! bitter sweet, infecting as the poison,
 Thou farest as fruit that with the frost is
 taken;
 To-day ready ripe, tomorrow all to shaken.

¹ Sweet. ² Small. ³ Mingles.

¹ Two peas. ² Slippery. ³ Extraordinary, uncommon.

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A HAPPY LIFE

(From *Totell's Miscellany*, 1557)

Martial, the things that do attain
 The happy life, be these, I find:
 The riches left, not got with pain;
 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind:

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife; 5
 No charge of rule, nor governance;
 Without disease, the healthful life;
 The household of continuance:

The mean diet, no delicate fare;
 True wisdom join'd with simpleness; 10
 The night discharged of all care;
 Where wine the wit may not oppress:

The faithful wife, without debate;
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night.
 Contented with thine own estate; 15
 Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

SELECTIONS FROM TRANSLATION OF
AENEID

(1557)

THE DEATH OF LAOCOÖN

Us caitiffs then a far more dreadful chance
 Befel, that troubled our unarmed breasts.
 While Laocoön, that chosen was by lot
 Neptunus' priest, did sacrifice a bull
 Before the holy altar; suddenly 5
 From Tenedon, behold! in circles great
 By the calm seas came floating adders twain,
 Which plied towards the shore (I loath to tell)
 With reared breast lift up above the seas;
 Whose bloody crests aloft the waves were
 seen; 10
 The hinder part swam hidden in the flood.
 Their grisly backs were linked manifold.
 With sound of broken waves they gat the
 strand,
 With glowing eyen, tainted with blood and fire;
 Whose welt'ring tongues did lick their hissing
 mouths. 15
 We fled away; our face the blood forsook:
 But they with gait direct to Lacon ran.
 And first of all each serpent doth enwrap
 The bodies small of his two tender sons;
 Whose wretched limbs they bit, and fed
 thereon. 20
 Then raught¹ they him, who had his weapon
 caught
 To rescue them; twice winding him about,
 With folded knots and circled tails, his waist:
 Their scaled backs did compass twice his neck,
 With reared heads aloft and stretch'd throats.
 He with his hands strave to unloose the knots, 25
 (Whose sacred fillets all-besprinkled were
 With filth of gory blood, and venom rank)
 And to the stars such dreadful shout he sent,
 Like to the sound the roaring bull forth lows, 30
 Which from the altar wounded doth astart,

¹ Reached.

The swerving axe when he shakes from his neck.
 The serpents twain, with hasted trail they glide
 To Pallas' temple, and her towers of height:
 Under the feet of the which Goddess stern, 35
 Hidden behind her target's boss they crept.

NIGHT

It was then night; the sound and quiet sleep
 Had through the earth the wearied bodies
 caught;
 The woods, the raging seas were fallen to rest;
 When that the stars had half their course de-
 clined,
 The fields whist, beasts, and fowls of divers hue,
 And whatso that in the broad lakes remained, 5
 Or yet among the bushy thicks of brier,
 Laid down to sleep by silence of the night
 'Gan swage their cares, mindless of travails
 past.

George Gascoigne

c. 1536-1577

THE LULLABY OF A LOVER

(From *The Posies*, 1575)

Sing lullaby, as women do,
 Wherewith they bring their babes to rest,
 And lullaby can I sing too,
 As womanly as can the best.
 With lullaby they still the child, 5
 And if I be not much beguiled,
 Full many wanton babes have I,
 Which must be stilled with lullaby.

First lullaby my youthful years,
 It is now time to go to bed, 10
 For crooked age and hoary hairs,
 Have won the haven within my head:
 With lullaby then youth be still,
 With lullaby content thy will,
 Since courage quails and comes behind, 15
 Go sleep, and so beguile thy mind.

Next lullaby my gazing eyes,
 Which wonted were to gaze apace;
 For every glass may now suffice,
 To shew the furrows in my face: 20
 With lullaby then wink awhile,
 With lullaby your looks beguile:
 Let no fair face, nor beauty bright,
 Entice you eft¹ with vain delight.

And lullaby my wanton will, 25
 Let Reason's rule now reign thy thought,
 Since all too late I find by skill,
 How dear I have thy fancies bought.
 With lullaby now take thine ease,
 With lullaby thy doubts appease: 30
 For trust to this, if thou be still,
 My body shall obey thy will. . . .

¹ Afterward.

Thus lullaby my youth, mine eyes,
My will, my ware, and all that was, 35
I can no more delays devise,
But welcome pain, let pleasure pass:
With lullaby now take your leave,
With lullaby your dreams deceive,
And when you rise with waking eye,
Remember then this lullaby. 40

DE PROFUNDIS

(From the same)

From depth of dole wherein my soul doth dwell,
From heavy heart which harbours in my breast,
From troubled spirit which seldom taketh rest,
From hope of heaven, from dread of darksome hell,

O gracious God, to thee I cry and yell. 5
My God, my Lord, my lovely Lord alone,
To thee I call, to thee I make my moan.
And thou (good God) vouchsafe in gree¹ to take,

This woeful plaint
Wherein I faint. 10
Oh hear me then for thy great mercies' sake. . . .

If thou, good Lord, should'st take thy rod in hand,

If thou regard what sins are daily done,
If thou take hold where we our works begun,
If thou decree in judgement for to stand, 15
And be extreme to see our excuses scanned,
If thou take note of everything amiss,
And write in rolls how frail our nature is,
O glorious God, O King, O Prince of power,
What mortal wight 20
May then have light
To feel thy frown, if thou have list to lower?

But thou art good and hast of mercy store,
Thou not delight'st to see a sinner fall,
Thou hearkenst first, before we come to call. 25
Thine ears are set wide open evermore,
Before we knock thou comest to the door.
Thou art more pressed to hear a sinner cry,
Than he is quick to climb to thee on high.
Thy mighty name be praised then alway, 30
Let faith and fear
True witness bear,
How fast they stand which on thy mercy stay. . . .

Before the break or dawning of the day,
Before the light be seen in lofty skies, 35
Before the Sun appear in pleasant wise,
Before the watch (before the watch I say)
Before the ward that waits therefore alway:
My soul, my sense, my secret thought, my sprite,
My will, my wish, my joy, and my delight; 40
Unto the Lord that sits in Heaven on high,
With hasty wing
From me doth fling,
And striveth still unto the Lord to fly. . . .

¹ Good will.

He will redeem our deadly drooping state, 45
He will bring home the sheep that go astray,
He will help them that hope in him alway:
He will appease our discord and debate,
He will soon save though we repent us late.
He will be ours if we continue his, 50
He will bring bale to joy and perfect bliss,
He will redeem the flock of his elect,
From all that is,
Or was amiss,
Since Abraham's heirs did first his laws reject. 55

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset

1536-1608

INDUCTION TO A MIRROUR FOR MAGISTRATES

(1559)

The wrathful winter, 'proching on apace
With blustering blasts had all ybared the treen,¹
And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,
With chilling cold had pierced the tender green;

The mantles rent, wherein unwrapped been 5
The gladsome groves that now lay overthrown,
The tapets² torn, and every bloom down blown.

The soil that erst so seemly was to seen,
Was all despoiled of her beauty's hue;
And sweet fresh flowers (where with the summer's queen 10

Had clad the earth) now Boreas' blasts down blew,
And small fowles flocking, in their song did rue
The winter's wrath, where with each thing defaste³

In woeful wise bewailed the summer past.

Hawthorne had lost his motley livery, 15
The naked twigs were shivering all for cold,
And dropping down the tears abundantly;
Each thing (me thought) with weeping eye me told

The cruel season, bidding me withhold
Myselfe within, for I was gotten out 20
Into the fields, whereas⁴ I walked about.

When, lo, the night with misty mantles spread,
Gan dark the day, and dim the azure skies,
And Venus in her message Hermes sped
To bloody Mars, to will him not to rise, 25
While she herself approached in speedy wise;
And Virgo hiding her disdainful breast,
With Thetis now had lain her down to rest.

Whiles Scorpio dreading Sagittarius' dart,
Whose bow prest⁵ bent in fight, the string had
slipt, 30

¹ Trees.
² Where.

³ Tapestry, foliage.

⁴ Defaced.
⁵ Ready.

Down slid into the ocean flood apart,
The Bear, that in the Irish seas had dipt
His grisly feet, with speed from thence he
whipt;

For Thetis, hasting from the Virgin's bed
Pursued the Bear, that ere she came was fled. 35

And Phaeton now reaching to his race
With glistening beams, gold streaming where
they bent,

Was prest to enter in his resting place.
Erythius that in the cart first went,
Had even now attained his journey's stent.⁴ 40
And fast declining hid away his head,
While Titan couched him in his purple bed.

And pale Cynthéa with her borrowed light,
Beginning to supply her brother's place,
Was past the noonstead six degrees in sight, 45
When sparkling stars amid the heaven's face,
With twinkling light shone on the earth apace,
That while they brought about the night's
chare,⁷

The dark had dimmed the day ere I was ware.

And sorrowing I to see the summer flowers, 50
The lively green, the lusty lees forlorne,
The sturdy trees so shattered with the showers,
The fields so fade that flourished so before;
It taught me well all earthly things be borne
To die the death, for nought long time may last;
The summer's beauty yields to winter's blast. 55

Then looking upward to the heaven's leames,⁸
With night's stars thick powdered everywhere,
Which erst so glistened with the golden streams
That cheerfull Phoebus spread down from his
sphere, 60

Beholding dark oppressing day so near;
The sudden sight reduced⁹ to my mind,
The sundry changes that in earth we find.

That musing on this worldly wealth in thought,
Which comes and goes more faster than we see,
The flickering flame that with the fire is
wrought, 66

My busy mind presented unto me
Such fall of peers as in this realm had be;
That oft I wisht some would their woes de-
seryve,¹⁰

To warn the rest whom fortune left alive. 70

And straight forth stalking with redoubled pace
For that I saw the night drew on so fast,
In black all clad there fell before my face
A piteous wight, whom woe had all forwaste,
Forth from her eyen the crystal tears outbrast,¹¹
And sighing sore, her hands she wrong and
fold, 76

Tare all her hair, that ruth was to behold.

Her body small forewithered and forespent,
As is the stalk that summer's drought oppress,
Her weakk'd¹² face with woeful tears besprent,

⁴ Limit, end.

⁷ Car.

⁸ Gleams, lights.

⁹ Brought back.

¹⁰ Describe.

¹¹ Out-burst.

¹² Withered.

Her colour pale, and (as it seemed her best) 81
In woe and plaint repos'd was her rest.
And as the stone that drops of water wears;
So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.

Her eyes swollen with flowing streams afloat, 85
Wherewith her looks throwen up full piteously,
Her forceless hands together oft she smote,
With doleful shrieks, that echoed in the sky;
Whose plaint such sighs did straight accompany,
That in my doom¹³ was never man did see 90
A wight but half so woebegone as she.

I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
Tween dread and dolour so distraind in heart,
That while my hairs upstart'd with the sight,
The tears out-streamed for sorrow of her
smart: 95

But when I saw no end that could apart
The deadly dole, which she so sore did make,
With doleful voice then thus to her I spake.

"Unwrap thy woes whatever wight thou be,
And stint¹⁴ in time to spill thyself with plaint;
Tell what thou art, and whence, for well I
see 101

Thou canst not dure with sorrow thus attaint."¹⁵
And with that word of sorrow all forfaint,
She look'd up, and, prostrate as she lay,
With piteous sound, lo, thus she gan to say, 105

"Alas, I wretch whom thus thou seest dis-
trained

With wasting woes, that never shall aslake,
Sorrow I am, in endless torments pained
Among the Furies in the infernal lake;
Where Pluto, god of hell, so grisly black 110
Doth hold his throne and Letheus deadly taste
Doth reave remembrance of each thing forepast.

"Whence come I am, the dreary destiny
And luckless lot for to bemoan of those,
Whom Fortune in this maze of misery, 115
Of wretched chance, most woeful mirrours chose
That when thou seest how lightly they did lose
Their pope, their power, and that they thought
most sure,
Thou mayest soon deem no earthly joy may
dure."

Whose rueful voice no sooner had out brayed
Those woeful words, wherewith she sorrowed
so, 121

But out, alas, she shrieked and never stayed,
Fell down, and all to-dashed herself for woe.
The cold pale dread my limbs gan overgo,
And so I sorrowed at her sorrows eft,¹⁶ 125
That, what with grief and fear, my wits were
reft.

I stretched myself, and straight my heart re-
vives,
That dread and dolour erst did so appale;¹⁷
Like him that with the fervent fever strives,

¹³ Judgment.

¹⁴ Again, oft.

¹⁵ Stop.

¹⁶ Appall.

When sickness seeks his castle's health to
scale: 130
With gathered spirits so forced I fear to avail;
And, rearing¹⁷ her with anguish all fordone,
My spirits return'd, and then I thus begonne.

"O Sorrow, alas, sith sorrow is thy name,
And that to thee this dreere¹⁸ doth well pertain,
In vain it were to seek to cease the same: 136
But as a man himself with sorrow slain,
So I, alas, do comfort thee in pain,
That here in sorrow art forsunk so deep,
That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep." 140

I had no sooner spoken of a stike,¹⁹
But that the storm so rumbled in her breast,
As Æolus could never roar the like,
And showers down rained from her eyen so
fast,
That all bedreynt²⁰ the place, till at the last 145
Well eased they the dolour of her mind,
As rage of rain doth swage the stormy wind.

For forth she paced in her fearful tale:
"Come! come!" quoth she, "and see what I
shall shewe,
Come hear the plaining and the bitter bale 150
Of worthy men, by fortune overthrowe.
Come thou and see them ruing all in rowe,
They were but shades that erst in mind thou
rolde.²¹
Come, come, with me, thine eyes shall them
behold."

What could these words but make me more
aghast: 155
To hear her tell whereon I mused while ere:²²
Musing upon her words and what they were,
All suddenly well lessened was my fear:
For to my mind returned how she telde 160
Both what she was, and where her wun²³ she
helde.

Whereby I knew that she a goddess was,
And, therewithall, resorted to my mind
My thought that late presented me the glass
Of brittle state, of cares that here we find, 165
Of thousand woes to silly men assigned:
And how she now bid me come and behold,
To see with eye that erst in thought I rolde.

Flat down I fell, and with all reverence
Adored her, perceiving now that she, 170
A goddess sent by godly providence
In earthly shape thus showed herself to me,
To wail and rue this world's uncertainty:
And while I honoured thus her godhead's might
With plaining voice these words to me she
shright:²⁴ 175

¹⁷ Raising.
¹⁸ Some connect stike with stick (Gr. *stikos*) a verse,
and suppose the speaker to mean that he has barely
completed his speech (which fills a stike, or stanza)
when "the storm" etc. Others connecting stike with the
Scotch *seigh*, take it to mean a sigh, and think that the
reference is to the word sigh in the preceding line.

¹⁹ Bedrenched. ²⁰ Considered. ²¹ Shortly before.
²² Dwelling. ²³ Shricked, cried.

"I shall thee guide first to the grisly lake,
And thence unto the blissful place of rest,
Where thou shalt see and hear the plaint they
make,
That whilom here bare swinge²⁵ among the
best.

This shalt thou see, but great is the unrest 180
That thou must bide, before thou canst attain
Unto the dreadful place where these remain."

And with these words as I upraised stood,
And gan to follow her that straight forth paced,
Ere I was ware, into a desert wood 185
We now were come: where hand in hand em-
braced,
She led the way and through the thicke²⁶ so
traced,
As but I had been guided by her might,
It was no way for any mortal wight.

But lo, while thus amid the desert dark, 190
We passed on with steps and pace unmeet:
A rumbling roar, confused with howl and bark
Of dogs, shook all the ground under our feet,
And struck the din within our ears so deep
As, half distraught, unto the ground I fell, 195
Besought return, and not to visit hell.

But she, forthwith, uplifting me apace,
Removed my dread, and with a steadfast mind
Bade me come on, for here was now the place,
The place where we our travail's end should
find. 200
Wherewith I arose, and to the place assigned
Astoynde²⁷ I stalk, when straight we ap-
proached near
The dreadful place, that you will dread to hear.

An hideous hole all vast, withouten shape,
Of endless depth, o'erwhelmed with ragged
stone, 205
With ugly mouth, and grisly jaws doth gape,
And to our sight confounds itself in one.
Here entered we, and yeding²⁸ forth, anone
An horrible loathly lake we might discern
As black as pitch, that cleped²⁹ is Averne. 210

A deadly gulf where nought but rubbish grows,
With foul black swelth in thickened lumpes³⁰
lies,
Which up in the air such stinking vapours
throws,
That over there may fly no fowl but dies,
Choked with the pestilent savours that arise. 215
Hither we came, whence forth we still did pace,
In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place.

And first within the porch and jaws of hell,
Sat deep *Remorse of Conscience*, all besprent
With tears: and to her self oft would she tell 220
Her wretchedness, and cursing, never stent³¹
To sob and sigh: but ever thus lament,
With thoughtful care, as she that, all in vain,
Would wear and waste continually in pain.

²⁵ Sway. ²⁶ Thicket. ²⁷ Astonished. ²⁸ Going.
²⁹ Called. ³⁰ Swollen masses. ³¹ Cease.

Her eyes unsteadfast, rolling here and there, 225
Whirled on each place, as place that vengeance
brought,

So was her mind continually in fear,
Tossed and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crimes which she had
wrought:

With dreadful cheer, and looks thrown to the
sky, 230
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

Next saw we *Dread*, all trembling how he shook,
With foot uncertain proffered here and there:
Benumbed of speech, and with a ghastly look
Searched every place, all pale and dead for fear,
His cap borne up with starting of his heare,²²
'Stoind²³ and amazed at his own shade for
dread, 237
And fearing greater dangers than was need.

And next, within the entry of this lake,
Sat fell *Revenge*, gnashing her teeth for ire, 240
Devising means how she may vengeance take,
Never in rest till she have her desire:
But frets within so far forth²⁴ with the fire
Of wreaking flames, that now determines she
To die by death, or 'venged by death to be. 245

When fell *Revenge*, with bloody foul pretence
Had shewed herself, as next in order set,
With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,
Till in our eyes another sight we met:
When fro my heart a sigh forthwith I fet,²⁵ 250
Rueing, alas, upon the woful plight
Of *Misery*, that next appeared in sight.

His face was lean, and somedea²⁶ pined away,
And eke his hands consumed to the bone,
But what his body was I cannot say, 255
For on his carcass raiment had he none,
Save cloutes and patches pieced one by one.
With staff in hand, and scrip on shoulders cast,
His chief defence against the winter's blast.

His food, for most, was wild fruits of the tree,
Unless sometimes some crumbs fell to his share,
Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he, 262
As on the which full daint'ly would he fare.
His drink the running stream: his cup the bare
Of his palm closed: his bed the hard cold
ground: 265
To this poor life was *Misery* ybound.

Whose wretched state when we had well beheld,
With tender ruth on him and on his fears,
In thoughtful cares forth then our pace we
held;

And by and by another shape appears, 270
Of greedy *Care*, still brushing up the breres,²⁷
His knuckles knob'd, his flesh deep dented in,
With tawed hands, and hard ytanned skin.

²² Hair. ²³ Astonished. ²⁴ Exceedingly.

²⁵ Fetched. ²⁶ Somewhat.

²⁷ Cutting or trimming the briars. *Care* is always busy
trimming the roughest, most thankless growths; his
tawed (hardened) hands are the horny, battered hands of
the laborer.

The morrow gray no sooner had begun
To spread his light, even peeping in our eyes, 275
When he is up and to his work yrun:
But let the night's black misty mantles rise,
And with the foul dark never so much disguise
The fair bright day, yet ceaseth he no while,
But hath his candles to prolong his toil. 280

By him lay heavy *Sleep*, the cousin of *Death*,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath.
Small keep took he whom Fortune frowned on,
Or whom she lifted up into the throne 285
Of high renown, but as a living death,
So dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's ease, the still night's fere²⁸ was he,
And of our life in earth the better part; 290
Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide,²⁹ and oft that never be.
Without respect, esteeming equally
King *Cæsus*' pomp, and *Irus*' poverty.

And, next in order, sad *Old Age* we found, 295
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him assigned
To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined
His vital thread, and ended with their knife 300
The fleeting course of fast declining life.

There heard we him with broken and hollow
plaint
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
And all for naught his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste; 306
Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek
And to be young again of Jove beseeke.

But, and the cruel fates so fixed be,
That time forpast can not return again, 310
This one request of Jove yet prayed he:
That in such withered plight and wretched pain
As eld (accompanied with his loathsome train)
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might a while yet linger forth his lief,³⁰ 315

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where death, when he the mortal corpse hath
slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it;
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light, but in the ground ylain, 320
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing, how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forpast, as though it wrought him
good 325

To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone,
He would have mused and marvelled much
whereon

This wretched *Age* should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life does but length his pain.

²⁸ Companion.

²⁹ Happen.

³⁰ Life.

Crook backt he was, toothshaken, and blear
 eyed, 330
 Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on
 fower.⁴¹

With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
 His scalp all pilde,⁴² and he with eld forlore:
 His withered fist still knocking at *Death's* door,
 Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his
 breath, 335
 For brief, the shape and messenger of *Death*.

And fast by him pale *Malady* was placed,
 Sore sick in bed, her colour all forgone,
 Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste, 339
 Ne could she brook no meat, but broth alone:
 Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
 Abhorring her, her sickness past recure,⁴³
 Detesting physick, and all physick's cure.

But oh! the doleful sight that then we see;
 We turned our look and on the other side 345
 A grisly shape of *Famine* might we see,
 With greedy looks, and gaping mouth, that
 cried
 And roar'd for meat, as she should there have
 died;
 Her body thin and bare as any bone,
 Whereto was left nought but the case alone. 350

And, that, alas, was gnawen on every where,
 All full of holes, that I ne might refrain
 From tears, to see how she her arms could tear,
 And with her teeth gnash on the bones in
 vain:
 When all for nought she fain would all sustain
 Her starven corpse, that rather seemed a
 shade, 356
 Than any substance of a creature made.

Great was her force, whom stone wall could not
 stay,
 Her tearing nails scratching at all she saw;
 With gaping jaws that by no means ymay 360
 Be satisfied from hunger of her maw,
 But eats herself as she that hath no law:
 Gnawing, alas, her carcass all in vain,
 Where you may count each sinew, bone, and
 vein.

On her while we thus firmly fixed our eyes, 365
 That bled for ruth of such a dreary sight,
 Lo, suddenly, she shrieked in so huge wise
 As made hell gates to shiver with the might.
 Wherewith, a dart we saw, how it did light
 Right on her breast, and therewithal pale *Death*
 Enthrilling⁴⁴ it, to reave⁴⁵ her of her breath. 371

And, by and by, a dumb dead corpse we saw,
 Heavy and cold, the shape of *Death* aright,
 That daunts all earthly creatures to his law;
 Against whose force in vain it is to fight: 375
 Ne peers, ne princes, nor no mortal wight,
 Ne towns, ne realms, cities, ne strongest tower,
 But all perforce must yield unto his power.

⁴¹ Four.

⁴² Transfixing.

⁴³ Bald.

⁴⁴ Recovery.

⁴⁵ Deprive.

His dart anon out of the corpse he took,
 And in his hand (a dreadful sight to see) 380
 With great triumph eftsoons⁴⁶ the same he
 shook,

That most of all my fears affrayed me:
 His body dight with nought but bones, pardé,
 The naked shape of man there saw I plain,
 All save the flesh, the sinew, and the vein. 385

Lastly stood *War* in glittering arms yclad,
 With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly
 hued;
 In his right hand a naked sword he had,
 That to the hilts was all with blood embrued;
 And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued)
 Famine and fire he held, and therewithal 391
 He razed towns, and threw down towers and
 all.

Cities he sacked, and realms (that whilom
 flowered
 In honour, glory, and rule above the best) 394
 He overwhelmed, and all their fame devoured,
 Consumed, destroyed, wasted, and never ceased,
 Till he their wealth, their name, and all op-
 pressed:
 His face forehewed⁴⁷ with wounds, and by his
 side
 There hung his targe with gashes deep and
 wide.

In midst of which, depainted there, we found
 Deadly *Debate*, all full of snaky hair, 401
 That with a bloody fillet was ybound,
 Out breathing nought but discord everywhere:
 And round about were portrayed here and there
 The hugie hosts, Darius and his power, 405
 His kings, princes, his peers, and all his flower;

Whom great Macedo vanquished there in fight,
 With deep slaughter, dispoiling all his pride,
 Pierc'd through his realms, and daunted all his
 might.

Duke Hannibal beheld I there beside, 410
 In Canna's field, victor how he did ride,
 And woeful Romans that in vain withstood,
 And Consul Paulus covered all with blood.

Yet saw I more, the fight at Trasimene,
 And Treby field, and eke when Hannibal 415
 And worthy Scipio last in arms were seen
 Before Carthago gate, to try for all
 The world's empire, to whom it should befall.
 There saw I Pompey and Caesar clad in arms,
 Their hosts allied, and all their civil harms:⁴⁸.

With conquerors' hands forbathed in their own
 blood, 421
 And Caesar weeping over Pompey's head.
 Yet saw I Scilla and Marius where they stood,
 Their great cruelty, and the deep bloodshed
 Of friends: Cyrus I saw and his host dead, 425
 And how the queen with great despight hath
 flung
 His head in blood of them she overcome.

⁴⁶ Straightway. ⁴⁷ Cut in front. ⁴⁸ Broils, evils.

Xerxes, the Persian king, yet saw I there,
 With his huge host that drank the rivers dry,
 Dismounted hills and made the vales uprear,⁴³⁰
 His host and all yet saw I slain, *pardé*.
 Thebes I saw all razed how it did lie
 In heaps of stones, and Tyrus put to spoil,
 With walls and towers flat evened with the soil.

But Troy, alas (me thought) above them all, ⁴³⁵
 It made mine eyes in very tears consume,
 When I beheld the woeful wierd⁴⁰ befall,
 That by the wrathful will of gods was come:
 And Jove's unmoved sentence and foredome⁴⁰
 On Priam king, and on his town so bent, ⁴⁴⁰
 I could not lin,⁴¹ but I must there lament.

And that the more, sith Destiny was so stern
 As, force perforce, there might no force avail
 But she must fall: and, by her fall, we learn
 That cities, towers, wealth, world, and all
 shall quail;⁴² ⁴⁴⁵
 No manhood, might, nor nothing might prevail,
 All were there prest,⁴³ full many a prince and
 peer;
 And many a knight that sold his death full dear.

Not worthy Hector, worthiest of them all,
 Her hope, her joy; his force is now for nought.
 O Troy, Troy, Troy, there is no boot but bale;
 The huffy horse within thy walls is brought: ⁴⁵²
 Thy turrets fall, thy knights that whilom
 fought
 In arms amid the field, are slain in bed;
 Thy gods defiled, and all thy honour dead. ⁴⁵⁵

The flames upspring, and cruelly they creep
 From wall to roof, till all to cinders waste:
 Some fire the houses where the wretches sleep,
 Some rush in here, some run in there as fast;
 In every where or sword or fire they taste. ⁴⁶⁰
 The walls are torn, the towers whirled to the
 ground;
 There is no mischief but may there be found.

Cassandra saw I yet there how they haled
 From Pallas' house with spercle⁴⁴ tress un-
 done.

Her wrists fastbound, and with Greeks' rout
 empaled: ⁴⁶⁵

And Priam eke, in vain how he did run
 To arms, when Pyrrhus with despite hath done
 To cruel death, and bathed him in the baigne⁴⁵
 Of his son's blood, before the altar slain.

But how can I describe the doleful sight, ⁴⁷⁰
 That in the shield so lifelike fair did shine!
 Sith in this world, I think was never wight
 Could have set forth the half, nor half so fine.
 I can no more but tell how there is seen
 Fair Ilium fall in burning red gledes⁴⁶ down, ⁴⁷⁵
 And, from the soil, great Troy, Neptunus'
 town.

Herefrom when scarce I could mine eyes with-
 draw,
 That filled with tears as doth the springing well,
 We passed on so far forth till we saw
 Rude Acheron, a loathsome lake to tell, ⁴⁸⁰
 That boils and bubs up swelth⁴⁷ as black as hell,
 Where grisly Charon at their fixed tide
 Still ferries ghosts unto the farther side.

The aged god no sooner Sorrow spied,
 But hasting straight unto the bank apace, ⁴⁸⁵
 With hollow call unto the rout he cried
 To swerve apart and give the goddess place.
 Straight it was done, when to the shore we pace,
 Where hand in hand as we then linked fast,
 Within the boat we are together plaste.⁴⁸ ⁴⁹⁰

And forth we launch full freighted to the brink,
 When, with the unwonted weight, the rusty
 keel
 Began to crack as if the same should sink.
 We hoist up mast and sail, that in a while
 We fetched the shore, where scarcely we had
 while ⁴⁹⁵
 For to arrive, but that we heard anone
 A three-sound bark confounded all in one.

We had not long forth past, but that we saw
 Black Cerberus, the hideous hound of hell,
 With bristles reared, and with a three-mouthed
 jaw, ⁵⁰⁰
 Foreinunning the air with his horrible yell.
 Out of the deep dark cave where he did dwell,
 The goddess straight he knew, and by and by,
 He peaste⁴⁹ and couched while that we passed
 by.

Thence came we to the horror and the hell, ⁵⁰⁵
 The large great kingdoms and the dreadful
 reign
 Of Pluto in his throne where he did dwell,
 The wide waste places, and the huffy plain:
 The wailings, shrieks, and sundry sorts of pain,
 The sighs, the sobs, the deep and deadly groan.
 Earth, air, and all, resounding plaint and
 moan. ⁵¹¹

Here puled the babes, and here the maids un-
 wed
 With folded hands their sorry chance be-
 wailed;
 Here wept the guiltless slain, and lovers dead,
 That slew themselves when nothing else
 availed; ⁵¹⁵
 A thousand sorts of sorrows here that wailed
 With sighs and tears, sobs, shrieks, and all
 yfere,⁵⁰
 That (oh, alas!) it was a hell to hear.

We stayed us straight, and with a rueful fear
 Beheld this heavy sight, while from mine eyes
 The vaped tears downstilled⁵¹ here and
 there, ⁵²¹

⁴⁰ Fate. ⁴¹ Predestined judgment. ⁴² Cense.
⁴³ Die: pass away. ⁴⁴ At hand. ⁴⁵ Scattered.
⁴⁶ Bath. ⁴⁷ Glowing fragments.

⁴⁸ Casts up lumps of putrid matter. ⁴⁹ Placed.
⁵⁰ Became silent. ⁵¹ Together mixed. ⁵² Distilled.

And Sorrow eke in far more woeful wise,
Took on with plaint, upheaving to the skies
Her wretched hands, that with her cry the rout
Gan all in heaps to swarm us round about. 525

"Lo here," said Sorrow, "princes of renown,
That whilom sat on top of Fortune's wheel;¹
Now laid full low; like wretches whirled down
Even with one frown that stayed but with a
smile: 529

And now behold the thing that thou erewhile
Saw only in thought, and what thou now shalt
hear

Recount the same to Kesar, King, and Peer."

Then first came Henry, Duke of Buckingham,
His cloak of black all pilled² and quite forworn,
Wringing his hands, and Fortune oft doth
blame, 535

Which of a duke hath made him now her scorn,
With ghastly looks, as one in manner lorn,
Oft spread his arms, stretched hands he joins as
fast

With rueful cheer, and vaped eyes upcast.

His cloak he rent, his manly breast he beat, 540
His hair all torn about the place it lay,
My heart so molt³ to see his grief so great
As feelingly, me thought, it dropped away:
His eyes they whirled about withouten stay,
With stormy sighs the place did so complain
As if his heart at each had burst in twain. 548

Thrice he began to tell his doleful tale.
And thrice the sighs did swallow up his voice,
At each of which he shrieked so withal,
As through the heavens rived with the noise;
Till at the last recovering his voice, 551
Supping the tears that all his breast berained,⁴
On cruel Fortune weeping thus he plained.

John Bouchier, Lord Berners¹

1467-1533

SELECTION

From *The Chronicles of Sir John Froissart*,
1360-c. 1390

(Berners's translation, 1524-5)

To the intent that the honourable and noble
adventures of feats of arms, done and achieved
by the wars of France and England, should
notably be enregistered and put in perpetual
memory, whereby the prewe² and hardy may

have ensample to encourage them in their well
doing, I, Sir John Froissart, will treat and
record an history of great louage³ and praise.
But, or⁴ I begin, I require the Saviour of all the
world, who of nothing created all things, that
he will give me such grace and understanding,
that I may continue and persevere in such wise,
that whoso this process readeth or heareth may
take pastance,⁵ pleasure and ensample. It is
10 said of truth that all buildings are masoned and
wrought of divers stones, and all great rivers
are gurged⁶ and assembled of divers surges and
springs of water; in likewise all sciences are
extraught⁷ and compiled of divers clerks; of
15 that one writeth, another peradventure is
ignorant; but by the famous writing of ancient
authors all things ben known in one place or
other. Then to attain to the matter that I have
enterprised, I will begin first by the grace of
20 God and of the blessed Virgin our Lady Saint
Mary, from whom all comfort and consolation
proceedeth, and will take my foundation out of
the true chronicles sometime compiled by the
right reverend, discreet and sage master John
25 le Bel,⁸ sometime canon in Saint Lambert's of
Liege, who with good heart and due diligence
did his true devoir⁹ in writing this noble
chronicle, and did continue it all his life's days,
in following the truth as near as he might, to
30 his great charge and cost in seeking to have the
perfect knowledge thereof. He was also in his
life's days well beloved and of the secret
council with the lord Sir John of Hainault, who
is often remembered, as reason requireth, here-
35 after in this book, for of many fair and noble
adventures he was chief causer, and by whose
means the said Sir John le Bel might well know
and hear of many divers and noble deeds, the
which hereafter shall be declared. Truth it is
40 that I, who have enterprised this book to ordain
for pleasure and pastance, to the which always
I have been inclined, and for that intent I have
followed and frequented the company of divers
noble and great lords, as well in France, Eng-
45 land, and Scotland, as in divers other countries,
and have had knowledge by them, and always
to my power justly have enquired for the
truth of the deeds of war and adventures that
have fallen, and especially sith the great battle
50 of Poitiers,¹⁰ whereas the noble king John of
France was taken prisoner, as before that time
I was but of a young age or understanding.

² Threadbare. ³ Melted. ⁴ Rained down upon.

¹ Chancellor of Exchequer under Henry VIII. He enjoyed the King's favor for an unusually long time. He made his translation of Froissart (a notable work of Early Tudor prose) at the command of the King. Froissart was a contemporary of Chaucer, who enjoyed the patronage of Philippa, queen of Edward III. He wrote his *Chronicles* of the wars of his age in France, England, Scotland and Spain, between 1360 and 1390 in the French tongue.

⁸ Gallant.

³ Glory.

⁴ Ere.

⁵ Pastime.

⁶ Turned into whirlpools.

⁷ Extracted.

⁸ Flourished in the early 14th century. While living with Sir John of Hainault, in France, he compiled two volumes of *Chronicles* on contemporary history.

⁹ Duty, service.

¹⁰ Fought in France, 1356, a famous victory of the English over the French.

Howbeit, I took on me, as soon as I came from school, to write and recite the said book, and bare the same compiled into England, and presented the volume thereof to my lady Philippa of Hainault,¹¹ noble Queen of England, who right amiably received it to my great profit and advancement. And it may be so that the same book is not as yet examined or corrected so justly as such a case requireth; for feats of arms dearly bought and achieved, the honour thereof ought to be given and truly divided to them that by prowess and hard travail have deserved it. Therefore to acquit me in that behalf, and in following the truth as near as I can, I, John Froissart, have entered this history on the foresaid ordinance and true foundation, at the instance and request of a true lord of mine, Robert of Namur, Knight, lord of Beaufort, to whom entirely I owe love and obeisance, and God grant me to do that thing that may be to his pleasure. Amen.

OF THE BATTLE OF CRESSY¹

Between the king of England and the French king

The Englishmen, who were in three battles lying on the ground to rest them, as soon as they saw the Frenchmen approach, they rose upon their feet fair and easily without any haste and arranged their battles.² The first, which was the prince's battle, the archers there stood in the manner of a herse³ and the men of arms in the bottom of the battle. The earl of Northampton and the earl of Arundel with the second battle were on a wing in good order, ready to comfort the prince's battle, if need were.

The lords and knights of France came not to the assembly together in good order, for some came before and some came after in such haste and evil order, that one of them did trouble another. When the French King saw the Englishmen, his blood changed, and said to his marshals: "Make the Genoways⁴ go on before and begin the battle in the name of God and Saint Denis." There were of the Genoways cross-bows about a fifteen-thousand, but they were so weary of going afoot that day a six leagues armed with their cross-bows, that they said to their constables: "We be not well ordered to fight this day, for we be not in the

¹¹ Queen of Edward III, and mother of the Black Prince.

¹ Generally written Crecy. The Battle was fought in 1346.

² Lines in battle array.

³ Probably a wedge-formation of archers shaped like a triangular narrow *herse* (or barrow), back of which and on the flanks of which were the men-of-arms. Cf. Oman in *Social England*, Vol. II, pp. 174-5.

⁴ Genoeses.

case to do any great deed of arms: we have more need of rest." These words came to the earl of Alençon, who said: "A man is well at ease to be charged with such a sort of rascals, to be faint and fail now at most need." Also the same season there fell a great rain and a clipse⁵ with a terrible thunder, and before the rain there came flying over both battles a great number of crows for fear of the tempest coming. Then anon the air began to wax clear, and the sun to shine fair and bright, the which was right in the Frenchmen's eye, and on the Englishmen's backs. When the Genoways were assembled together and began to approach, they made a great leap and cry to abash the Englishmen, but they stood still and stirred not for all that; then the Genoways again the second time made another leap and a fell cry, and stepped forward a little, and the Englishmen removed not one foot: thirdly, again they leapt and cried, and went forth till they came within shot; then they shot fiercely with their cross-bows. Then the English archers stepped forth one pace and let fly their arrows so wholly [together] and so thick, that it seemed snow. When the Genoways felt the arrows piercing through heads, arms and breasts, many of them cast down their cross-bows and did cut their strings and returned discomfited. When the French king saw them fly away, he said: "Slay these rascals, for they shall let⁶ and trouble us without reason." Then ye should have seen the men of arms dash in among them and killed a great number of them: and ever still the Englishmen shot whereas they saw thickest press; the sharp arrows ran into the men of arms and into their horses, and many fell, horse and men, among the Genoways, and when they were down, they could not relieve⁷ again, the press was so thick that one overthrew another. And also among the Englishmen there were certain rascals that went afoot with great knives, and they went in among the men of arms, and slew and murdered many as they lay on the ground, both earls, barons, knights, and squires, whereof the king of England was after displeased, for he had rather they had been taken prisoners.

The valiant king of Bohemia called Charles of Luxembourg, for all that he was nigh blind, when he understood the order of the battle, he said to them about him: "Where is the lord Charles my son?" His men said: "Sir, we cannot tell; we think he be fighting." Then he said: "Sirs, ye are my men, my companions and

⁵ A mistranslation for "une esclastre," or flash of lightning.—Macaulay.

⁶ Hinder.

⁷ Rise. *Relieve* is a mistranslation of "releves," for "so relever."

friends in this journey: I require you bring me so far forward, that I may strike one stroke with my sword." They said they would do his commandment, and to the intent that they should not lose him in the press, they tied all their reins of their bridles each to other and set the king before to accomplish his desire, and so they went on their enemies. The lord Charles of Bohemia his son, who wrote himself king of Almaïne and bare the arms, he came in good order to the battle; but when he saw that the matter went awry on their party, he departed, I cannot tell you which way. The king his father was so far forward that he strake a stroke with his sword, yea and more than four, and fought valiantly and so did his company; and they adventured themselves so forward, that they were there all slain, and the next day they were found in the place about the king, and all their horses tied each to other.

The earl of Alençon came to the battle right ordonately and fought with the Englishmen, and the earl of Flanders also on his part. These two lords with their companies coasted the English archers and came to the prince's battle, and there fought valiantly long. The French king would fain have come thither, when he saw their banners, but there was a great hedge of archers before him. The same day the French king had given a great black courser to Sir John of Hainault, and he made the lord Thierry of Senzeille to ride on him and to bear his banner. The same horse took the bridle in his teeth and brought him through all the curours of the Englishmen, and as he would have returned again, he fell in a great dike and was sore hurt, and had been there dead, an his page had not been, who followed him through all the battles and saw where his master lay in the dike, and had none other let but for his horse, for the Englishmen would not issue of their battle for taking of any prisoner. Then the page alighted and relieved his master: then he went not back again the same way that they came, there was too many in his way.

This battle between Broye and Cressy this Saturday was right cruel and fell, and many a feat of arms done that came not to my knowledge. In the night divers knights and squires lost their masters, and sometime came on the Englishmen, who received them in such wise that they were ever nigh slain; for there was none taken to mercy nor to ransom, for so the Englishmen were determined.

In the morning the day of the battle certain Frenchmen and Almaines perforce opened the

* Marched on the flank of.

* Couriers.

archers of the prince's battle and came and fought with the men of arms hand to hand. Then the second battle of the Englishmen came to succor the prince's battle, the which was time, for they had as then much ado; and they with the prince sent a messenger to the king, who was on a little windmill hill. Then the knight said to the king: "Sir, the earl of Warwick and the earl of Oxford, Sir Raynold Cobham and other, such as be about the prince your son, are fiercely fought withal and are sore handled; wherefore they desire you that you and your battle will come and aid them; for if the Frenchmen increase, as they doubt they will, your son and they shall have much ado." Then the king said: "Is my son dead or hurt or on the earth felled?" "No sir," quoth the knight, "but he is hardly matched; wherefore he hath need of your aid." "Well," said the king, "return to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth, as long as my son is alive: and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs; for if God be pleased, I will this journey be his and the honour thereof, and to them that be about him." Then the knight returned again to them and shewed the king's words, the which greatly encouraged them, and repointed in that they had sent to the king as they did.

Sir Godfrey of Harcourt would gladly that the earl of Harcourt his brother might have been saved; for he heard say by them that saw his banner how that he was there in the field on the French party; but Sir Godfrey could not come to him betimes, for he was slain or he could come at him, and so was also the earl of Aumale his nephew. In another place the earl of Alençon and the earl of Flanders fought valiantly, every lord under his own banner; but finally they could not resist against the puissance of the Englishmen, and so there they were also slain, and divers other knights and squires. Also the earl Louis of Blois, nephew to the French king, and the duke of Lorraine fought under their banners, but at last they were closed in among a company of Englishmen and Welshmen, and there were slain for all their prowess. Also there was slain the earl of Auxerre, the earl of Saint-Pol and many other.

In the evening the French king, who had left about him no more than a three-score persons, one and other, whereof Sir John of Hainault was one, who had remounted once the king, for his horse was slain with an arrow, then he said to the king: "Sir, depart hence, for it is time; lose not yourself fully: if ye have loss at this time, ye shall recover it again an-

¹⁰ Day's work, day's battle.

¹¹ Repented.

other season." And so he took the king's horse by the bridle and led him away in a manner perforce. Then the king rode till he came to the castle of Broye. The gate was closed, because it was by that time dark: then the king called the captain, who came to the walls and said: "Who is that calleth there this time of night?" Then the king said: "Open your gate quickly, for this is the fortune of France." The captain knew then it was the king, and opened the gate and let down the bridge. Then the king entered, and he had with him but five barons, Sir John of Hainault, Sir Charles of Montmorency, the lord of Beaujeu, the lord d'Aubigny and the lord of Montsaunt. The king would not tarry there, but drank and departed thence about midnight, and so rode by such guides as knew the country till he came in the morning to Amiens, and there he rested.

This Saturday the Englishmen never departed from their battles for chasing of any man, but kept still their field, and ever defended themselves against all such as came to assail them. This battle ended about evensong time.

THE SPEECH OF JOHN BALL¹

In the mean season while this treaty was, there fell in England great mischief and rebellion of moving of the common people, by which deed England was at a point to have been lost without recovery. There was never realm nor country in so great adventure as it was in that time, and all because of the ease and riches that the common people were of, which moved them to this rebellion, as sometime they did in France, the which did much hurt, for by such incidents the realm of France hath been greatly grieved.

It was a marvellous thing and of poor foundation that this mischief began in England, and to give ensample to all manner of people I will speak thereof as it was done, as I was informed, and of the incidents thereof. There was an usage in England, and yet is in divers countries, that the noblemen hath great franchise over the commons and keepeth them in servage, that is to say, their tenants ought by custom to labour the lord's lands, to gather and bring home their corns, and some to thresh and to fan, and by servage to make their hay and to hew their wood and bring it home. All these things they ought to do by servage, and there be more of these people in England than in any other realm. Thus the noblemen and prelates are served by them, and specially in the county of Kent, Essex, Sussex

and Bedford. These unhappy people of these said countries began to stir, because they said they were kept in great servage, and in the beginning of the world, they said, there were no bondmen, wherefore they maintained that none ought to be bond, without he did treason to his lord, as Lucifer did to God; but they said they could have no such battle, for they were neither angels nor spirits, but men formed to the similitude of their lords, saying why should they then be kept so under like beasts; the which they said they would no longer suffer, for they would be all one, and if they laboured or did anything for their lords, they would have wages therefor as well as other. And of this imagination was a foolish priest in the country of Kent called John Ball, for the which foolish words he had been three times in the Bishop of Canterbury's prison: for this priest used oftentimes on the Sundays after mass, when the people were going out of the minster, to go into the cloister and preach, and made the people to assemble about him, and would say thus: "Ah, ye good people, the matters goeth not well to pass in England, nor shall not do until everything be common, and that there be no villains nor gentlemen, but that we may be all unied² together, and that the lords be no greater masters than we be. What have we deserved, or why should we be kept thus in servage? We be all come from one father and one mother, Adam and Eve: whereby can they say or shew that they be greater lords than we be, saving by that they cause us to win and labour for that they dispend. They are clothed in velvet and camlet³ furred with grise, and we be vested with poor cloth: they have their wines, spices and good bread, and we have the drawing out of the chaff and drink water: they dwell in fair houses, and we have the pain and travail, rain and wind in the fields; and by that that cometh of our labours they keep and maintain their estates: we be called their bondmen, and without we do readily them service, we be beaten; and we have no sovereign to whom we may complain, nor that will hear us nor do us right. Let us go to the king, he is young, and shew him what servage we be in, and shew him how we will have it otherwise, or else we will provide us of some remedy; and if we go together, all manner of people that be now in any bondage will follow us to the intent to be made free; and when the king seeth us, we shall have some remedy, either by fairness, or otherwise." Thus John Ball said on Sundays, when the people issued out of the churches in

¹ A social reformer known as "the mad Priest of Kent." One of the leaders in the Peasants' Revolt in England in 1381. He was executed at St. Alban's for preaching insurrection.

² United.

³ A costly Eastern fabric, but applied to the imitations of it. Grise was a kind of grey fur.

the villages; wherefore many of the mean people loved him, and such as intended to no goodness said how he said truth; and so they would murmur one with another in the fields and in the ways as they went together, affirming how John Ball said truth.

THE BURIAL OF RICHARD II

It was not long after that true tidings ran through London, how Richard of Bordeaux¹ was dead; but how he died and by what means, I could not tell when I wrote this chronicle. But this King Richard dead was laid in a litter and set in a chare² covered with black baudkin,³ and four horses all black in the chare, and two men in black leading the chare, and four knights all in black following. Thus the chare departed from the Tower of London and was brought along through London fair and softly, till they came into Cheapside, whereas the chief assembly of London was, and there the chare rested the space of two hours. Thither came in and out more than twenty thousand persons men and women, to see him whereas he lay, his head on a black cushion, and his visage⁴ open. Some had on him pity and some none, but said he had long deserved death. Now consider well, ye great lords, kings, dukes, earls, barons and prelates, and all men of great lineage and puissance; see and behold how the fortunes of this world are marvellous and turn diversely. This king Richard reigned king of England twenty two year in great prosperity, holding great estate and seignory. There was never before any king of England that spent so much in his house as he did, by a hundred thousand florins every year; for I, Sir John Froissart, canon and treasurer of Chimay, knew it well, for I was in his court more than a quarter of a year together, and he made me good cheer, because that in my youth I was clerk and servant to the noble king Edward III, his grandfather, and with my lady Philippa of Hainault, queen of England his grandam; and when I departed from him, it was at Windsor, and at my departing the king sent me by a knight of his called Sir John Golofre a goblet of silver and gilt weighing two mark of silver, and within it a hundred nobles, by the which I am as yet the better, and shall be as long as I live; wherefore I am bound to pray to God for his soul, and with much sorrow I write of his death; but because I have continued this history, therefore I write thereof to follow it.

In my time I have seen two things: though

¹ Richard II. (1367–1400) son of the Black Prince, was born at Bordeaux.

² Car, cart.

³ Rich black material.

⁴ Visor.

they differ, yet they be true. I was in the city of Bordeaux and sitting at the table when king Richard was born, the which was on a Tuesday about ten of the clock. The same time there came thence I was, Sir Richard Pontchardon, marshal as then of Aquitaine, and he said to me: "Froissart, write and put in memory that as now my lady princess is brought abed with a fair son on this Twelfth day, that is the 10 day of the three kings, and he is son to a king's son and shall be a king." This gentle knight said truth, for he was king of England twenty-two year; but when this knight said these words, he knew full little what should be his conclusion. And the same time that king Richard was born, his father the prince was in Galice,⁵ the which king Don Peter had given him, and he was there to conquer the realm. Upon these things I have greatly imagined 20 sith,⁶ for the first year that I came into England into the service of queen Philippa, king Edward and the queen and all their children were as then at Berkhamstead, a manor of the prince of Wales beyond London. The king and the queen were come thither to take leave of their son the prince and princess, who were going into Aquitaine, and there I heard an ancient knight devise⁷ among the ladies and said: "There is a book which is called *le Brut*, and it deviseth that the prince of Wales, eldest son to the king, nor the duke of Gloucester, should never be king of England, but the realm and crown should return to the house of Lancaster." There I, John Froissart, author of this chronicle, considering all these things, I say these two knights, Sir Richard Pontchardon and Sir Bartholomew of Burghersh, said both truth; for I saw, and so did all the world, Richard of Bordeaux twenty two year king of England, and after the crown returned to the house of Lancaster, and that was when King Henry was king, the which he had never been if Richard of Bordeaux had dealt amiably with him; for the Londoners made him king because they had pity on him and on his children.

Sir Thomas More

1478–1535

THE PEOPLE ARE URGED TO CHOOSE RICHARD FOR THEIR KING

(From *History of Richard III*, written c. 1513)

When the Duke had said, and looked that 55 the people whom he hoped that the Mayor had framed¹ before, should after this flattering proposition made, have cried *King Richard*,

⁵ Galicia.

⁶ Since.

⁷ Discourse, converse.

¹ Prepared; fitted for the part they were to play.

King Richard, all was still and mute, and not one word answered thereunto. Wherewith the Duke was marvellously abashed, and taking the Mayor nearer to him, with other that were about him privy to that matter, said unto them softly; "What meaneth this, that the people be so still?" "Sir," quoth the Mayor, "perchance² they perceive you not well." "That shall we amend," quoth he, "if that will help." And by and by somewhat louder, he rehearsed them the same matter again in other order and other words, so well and ornately, and natheles so evidently and plain, with voice, gesture, and countenance so comely and convenient, that every man much marvelled that heard him, and thought that they never had in their lives heard so evil a tale so well told. But were it for wonder or fear, (or) that each looked that other should speak first; not one word more was there answered of all the people that stood before, but all were as still as the midnight, not so much as rowning³ among them, by which they might seem to commune what was best to do. When the Mayor saw this, he with other partners of the Council, drew about the Duke, and said that the people had not been accustomed thus to be spoken unto but by the Recorder, which is the mouth of the city, and haply to him they will answer. With that the Recorder, called Thomas Fitz William, a sad man and an honest, which was so new come into that office that he never had spoken to the people before, and loath he was with that matter to begin, notwithstanding being thereunto commanded by the Mayor, made a rehearsal to the commons of that the Duke had twice rehearsed them himself. But the Recorder so tempered his tale, that he showed everything as the Duke's words were, and no part his own. But all this made no change in the people, which, alway after one,⁴ stood as they had been men amazed. Whereupon the Duke rowned⁵ unto the Mayor and said: "This is a marvellous obstinate silence." And therewith he turned unto the people again with these words: "Dear friends, we come to move you to that thing which, peradventure we greatly needed not, but that the lords of this realm and the commons of other parties, might have sufficed, saving such love we bear you, and so much set by you, that we would not gladly do without you, that thing in which to be partners is your weal and honour, which, as to us seemeth, you see not or weigh not. Wherefore, we require you to give us an answer one way or other, whether ye be minded as all

the nobles of the realm be, to have this noble Prince, now Protector, to be your King." At these words the people began to whisper among themselves secretly, that the voice was neither so loud nor distinct, but as it were the sound of a swarm of bees, till at the last at the nether end of the hall, a bushment⁷ of the Duke's servants and one Nashfield, and others longing⁸ to the Protector, with some prentices and lads that thrust into the hall among the press, began suddenly at men's backs to cry out as loud as their throats would give: *King Richard, King Richard*, and threw up their caps in token of joy. And they that stood before, cast back their heads marvelling thereat, but nothing they said. And when the Duke and the mayor saw this manner, they wisely turned it to their purpose. And said it was a goodly cry and a joyful, to hear every man with one voice, and no man saying nay. "Wherefore friends," quoth the Duke, "since we perceive that it is your whole minds to have this nobleman for your King, whereof we shall make his Grace so effectual report, that we doubt not but it shall redound unto your great weal and commonality.⁹ We therefore require you that tomorrow ye go with us, and we with you, unto his noble Grace, to make your humble request unto him in manner before remembered." And therefore with,¹⁰ the lords came down, and the company dissolved and departed, the most part all sad, some with glad semblance that were not very merry, and some of those that came hither with the Duke, not able to dissemble their sorrow, were fain, at his back, to turn their face to the wall, while the dolour of their hearts burst out of their eyes.

UTOPIA AND EUROPE CONTRASTED

(From *Utopia*, 1516, Ralph Robinson's translation, second and revised ed. 1556)

Now¹ I have declared and described unto you, as truly as I could, the form and order of that Commonwealth, which verily in my judgment is not only the best, but also that which alone of good right may claim and take upon it the name of a *common wealth*, or public weal.²

¹ A body of men in hiding, or in ambush.

² Belonging.

³ Advantage.

⁴ Forthwith; thereupon.

⁵ The speaker is a fictitious character, one Raphael Hythloday, whom More introduces in the early part of the narrative as a Portuguese scholar and explorer. Hythloday is supposed to have visited Utopia in the course of his travels, and he is represented as relating his impressions of the strange land to More. The greater part of More's book consists of Hythloday's narrative, and his reflections on the Utopian Commonwealth.

⁶ Weal, primarily wealth, riches, and hence prosperity, success.

⁷ Perhaps; perchance. (Lat. *per casum*.)

⁸ Whispering.

⁹ Discreet, reliable.

¹⁰ All the time in the same manner.

¹¹ Whispered.

For in other places they speak still of the Commonwealth, but every man procureth his own private gain. Here, where nothing is private, the common affairs be earnestly looked upon. And truly on both parts they have good cause so to do as they do. For in other countries who knoweth not that he shall starve for hunger, unless he make some several³ provision for himself, though the Commonwealth flourish never so much in riches? And therefore he is compelled, even of very necessity, to have regard to himself, rather than to the people, that is to say, to others. Contrarywise there, where all things be common to every man, it is not to be doubted that any man shall lack anything necessary for his private uses; so that the common store-houses and barns be sufficiently stored. For there nothing is distributed after a niggish sort,⁴ neither is there any poor man or beggar. And though no man have anything, yet every man is rich. For what can be more rich than to live joyfully and merrily, without all grief and pensiveness: not caring for his own living, nor vexed or troubled with his wife's importunate complaints, nor dreading poverty to his son, nor sorrowing for his daughter's dowry? Yea, they take no care at all for the living and wealth of themselves and all theirs, of their wives, their children, their nephews, their children's children, and all the succession that ever shall follow in their posterity. And yet, besides this, there is no less provision for them that were once labourers, and be now weak and impotent, than for them that do now labour and take pain. Here now would I see if any man dare be so bold as to compare with this equity, the justice of other nations; among whom, I forsake God, if I can find any sign or token of equity and justice. For what justice is this, that a rich goldsmith, or an usurer, or, to be short, any of them which either do nothing at all, or else that which they do is such that it is not very necessary to the commonwealth, should have a pleasant and a wealthy living, either by idleness, or by unnecessary business; when in the meantime poor labourers, carters, iron-smiths, carpenters, and plowmen, by so great and continual toil, as drawing and bearing beasts be scant able to sustain, and again so necessary toil, that without it no commonwealth were able to continue and endure one year, should yet get so hard and poor a living, and live so wretched and miserable a life, that the state and condition of the labouring beasts may seem much better and wealthier? For they be not put to so continual labour, nor their living is not much worse, yea to them

much pleasanter, taking no thought in the mean season for the time to come. But these seely⁵ poor wretches be presently tormented with barren and unfruitful labour. And the remembrance of their poor, indigent, and beggarly old age, killeth them up. For their daily wages is so little, that it will not suffice for the same day, much less it yieldeth any overplus, that may daily be laid up for the relief of old age. Is not this an unjust and unkind public weal, which giveth great fees and rewards to gentlemen, as they call them, and to goldsmiths, and to such other, which be either idle persons, or else only flatterers, and devisers of vain pleasures; and of the contrary part, maketh no gentle⁶ provision for poor plowmen, colliers, labourers, carters, iron-smiths, and carpenters; without whom no Commonwealth can continue? But after it hath abused the labourers of their lusty and flowering age, at the last, when they be oppressed with old age and sickness,—being needy, poor, and indigent of all things,—then forgetting their so many painful watchings, not remembering their so many and so great benefits, recompenseth and acquitteth⁷ them most unkindly with miserable death. And yet, besides this, the rich men, not only by private fraud, but also by common laws, do every day pluck and snatch away from the poor some part of their daily living. So, whereas it seemed before unjust to recompense with unkindness their pains that have been beneficial to the public weal, now they have to this their wrong and unjust dealing (which is yet a much worse point) given the name of justice, yea, and that by force of a law. Therefore, when I consider and weigh in my mind all these Commonwealths, which nowadays anywhere do flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of the Commonwealth. They invent and devise all means and crafts, first how to keep safely, without fear of losing, that they have unjustly gathered together, and next how to hire and abuse the work and labour of the poor for as little money as may be. These devices, when the rich men have decreed (them) to be kept and observed under colour of the commonalty,⁸ that is to say, also of the poor people, then they be made laws. But these most wicked and vicious men, when they have by their unsatiable covetousness divided among themselves all those things, which would have

⁵ Happy; innocent; simple.

⁶ Suitable; adequate. (See *Cent. Dict.* genteel.)

⁷ Repays; requites.

⁸ Under the pretence that they are for the benefit of the common people.

³ Separate, personal.

⁴ Niggardly fashion.

sufficed all men, yet how far be they from the wealth and felicity of the Utopian Commonwealth? Out of the which, in that all the desire of money with the use thereof is utterly secluded and banished, how great a heap of cares is cut away! How great an occasion of wickedness and mischief is plucked up by the roots! For who knoweth not, that fraud, theft, rapine, brawling, quarrelling, brabbling,⁹ strife, chiding, contention, murder, treason, poison-¹⁰ ing, which by daily punishments are rather revenged than refrained, do die when money dieth? And also that fear, grief, care, labours, and watchings do perish even the very same moment that money perisheth? Yea, poverty¹⁵ itself, which only seemed to lack money, if money were gone, it also would decrease and vanish away. And that you may perceive this more plainly, consider with yourselves some barren and unfruitful year, wherein many²⁰ thousands of people have starved for hunger: I dare be bold to say, that in the end of that penury so much corn or grain might have been found in the rich men's barns, if they had been searched, as being divided among them whom²⁵ famine and pestilence then consumed, no man at all should have felt that plague and penury. So easily might men get their living, if that same worthy Princess, Lady Money, did not alone stop up the way between us and our³⁰ living, which, a God's name,¹⁰ was very excellently devised and invented, that by her the way thereto should be opened. I am sure the rich men perceive this, nor they be not too ignorant how much better it were to lack no³⁵ necessary thing, than to abound with overmuch superfluity; to be rid out¹¹ of innumerable cares and troubles, than to be besieged and encumbered with great riches. And I doubt not that either the respect of every man's⁴⁰ private commodity, or else the authority of our Saviour Christ (which for his great wisdom could not but know what were best, and for his inestimable goodness could not but counsel to that which he knew to be best) would have⁴⁵ brought all the world long ago into the laws of this weal public, if it were not that one only beast, the princess and mother of all mischief, Pride, doth withstand and let¹² it. She measureth not wealth and prosperity by her own⁵⁰ commodities, but by the miseries and incommodities of others; she would not by her good will be made a goddess, if there were no wretches left, over whom she might like a scornful lady rule and triumph; over whose⁵⁵ miseries her felicities might shine; whose

poverty she might vex, torment, and increase, by gorgeously setting forth her riches. This hell hound creepeth into men's hearts; and plucketh them back from entering the right path of life, and is so deeply rooted in men's breasts, that she cannot be plucked out.

This form and fashion of a weal public, which I would gladly wish unto all nations, I am glad yet that it hath chanced to the Utopians, which have followed those institutions of life, whereby they have laid such foundations of their Commonwealth, as shall continue and last not only wealthily, but also as far as man's wit may judge and conjecture, shall endure forever. For, seeing the chief causes of ambition and sedition with other vices be plucked up by the roots and abandoned at home, there can be no jeopardy of domestical dissension, which alone hath cast under foot and brought to nought the well-fortified and strongly defended wealth and riches of many cities. But forasmuch as perfect concord remaineth, and wholesome laws be executed at home, the envy of all foreign princes be not able to shake or move the Empire, though they have many times long ago gone about to do it, being evermore driven back.

Thus when Raphael¹³ had made an end of his tale, though many things came to my mind, which in the manners and laws of that people seemed to be instituted and founded of no good reason, not only in the fashion of their chivalry, and in their sacrifices and religions, and in other of their laws, but also, yea, and chiefly, in that which is the principal foundation of all their ordinances, that is to say, in the community of their life and living, without any occupying¹⁴ of money, by the which things only are nobility, magnificence, worship, honour, and majesty, the true ornaments and honours, as the common opinion is, of a Commonwealth, utterly be overthrown and destroyed: yet because I knew he was weary of talking, and was not sure whether he could abide that anything should be said against his mind, especially remembering that he had reprehended this fault in others, which be afraid lest they should seem not to be wise enough unless they could find some fault in other men's inventions; therefore I, praising both their institutions and his communication, took him by the hand, and led him in to supper; saying that we would choose another time to weigh and examine the same matters, and to talk with him more at large therein. Which would God it might once come to pass. In the mean time, as I cannot agree and consent to all things that he said,—being else without doubt a man singularly

⁹ Wrangling.

¹⁰ In God's name. Cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, I, 2, 195.

¹¹ Delivered; rescued. Rid out of = released from.

¹² Prevent; stop. (See *Hamlet*, I, 4, 85.)

¹³ Raphael Hythloday.

¹⁴ Holding; using.

well learned, and also in all worldly matters exactly and profoundly experienced,—so must I needs confess and grant that many things be in the Utopian weal public, which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope after.

Thus endeth the afternoon's talk of Raphael Hythloday concerning the laws and institutions of the Island of Utopia.

William Roper

1496–1578

THE EXECUTION OF SIR THOMAS MORE

(From *Life of Sir Thomas More*, first printed, 1626)

When Sir Thomas More came from Westminster to the Tower-ward¹ again, his daughter, my wife, desirous to see her father, whom she thought she would never see in this world after, and also to have his final blessing, gave attendance about the Tower Wharf, where she knew he should pass by, before he could enter into the Tower. Where tarrying his coming as soon as she saw him, after his blessing upon her knees reverently received, she, hasting towards him, without consideration or care of herself, pressing in amongst the midst of the throng and company of the guard, that with halberds and bills were round about him, hastily ran to him, and there openly in sight of them all embraced him and took him about the neck and kissed him. Who well liking her most natural and dear daughterly affection towards him, gave her his fatherly blessing, and many godly words of comfort besides. From whom after she was departed, she not satisfied with the former sight of her dear father, and like one that had forgotten herself, being all ravished with the entire love of her dear father, having respect neither to herself, nor to the press of people and multitude that were about him, suddenly turned back again, and ran to him as before, took him about the neck, and divers times kissed him most lovingly; and at last with a full heavy heart, was fain to depart from him; the beholding whereof was to many of them that were present thereat so lamentable that it made them for very sorrow thereof to weep and mourn.

So remained Sir Thomas More in the Tower, more than a seven-night after his judgment. From whence the day before he suffered, he sent his shirt of hair, not willing to have it

seen, to my wife, his dearly beloved daughter, and a letter written with a coal, contained in the aforesaid book of his works, plainly expressing the fervent desire he had to suffer on the morrow, in these words: "I cumber you, good Margaret, much, but would be sorry if it should be longer than tomorrow. For tomorrow is St. Thomas' even, and the Utas² of St. Peter, and therefore tomorrow I long to go to God, it were a day very meet and convenient for me. Dear Megg, I never liked your manner better towards me than when you kissed me last. For I like when daughterly love and dear charity hath no leisure to look to worldly courtesy." And so upon the next morrow, being Tuesday, St. Thomas his even, and the Utas of St. Peter, in the year of our Lord 1535, according as he in his letter the day before had wished, early in the morning came to him Sir Thomas Pope, his singular good friend, on message from the King and his Council, that he should before nine of the clock of the same morning suffer death; and that therefore he should forthwith prepare himself thereto. "Master Pope," saith he, "for your good tidings I heartily thank you. I have been always much bounden to the King's Highness for the benefits and honours that he hath still from time to time most bountifull heaped upon me, and yet more bounden am I to His Grace for putting me into this place, where I have had convenient time and space to have remembrance of my end. And so help me God, most of all, Master Pope, am I bounden to his Highness, that it pleaseth him so shortly to rid me out of the miseries of this wretched world, and therefore will I not fail earnestly to pray for his Grace, both here, and also in the world to come." "The King's pleasure is further," quoth Master Pope, "that at your execution you shall not use many words." "Master Pope" quoth he, "you do well to give me warning of his Grace's pleasure, for otherwise, at that time had I purposed somewhat to have spoken; but of no matter wherewith his Grace or any other should have had cause to be offended. Nevertheless, whatsoever I had intended I am ready obediently to conform myself to his Grace's commandment; and I beseech you, good Master Pope, to be a mean to his Highness, that my daughter Margaret may be at my burial." "The King is content already," quoth Master Pope, "that your wife, children, and other friends shall have liberty to be present therat." "O how much beholden then," said Sir Thomas More, "am I unto his Grace, that unto my poor burial vouchsafeth

¹ More had been tried and condemned in Westminster Hall, after which he was taken back to the Tower.

² The eighth day after St. Peter's day, i. e., the 6th of July.

to have so gracious consideration!" Where-
withal Master Pope taking his leave of him,
could not refrain from weeping. Which Sir
Thomas More perceiving, comforted him in
this wise, "Quiet yourself, good Master Pope,
and be not discomfited, for I trust that we
shall once in heaven see each other full merrily,
where we shall be sure to live and love together,
in joyful bliss eternally." Upon whose de-
parture Sir Thomas More, as one that has been 10
invited to some solemn feast, changed himself
into his best apparel. Which Master Lieuten-
ant espying, advised him to put it off, saying,
that he who should have it was but a javill.³
"What, Master Lieutenant?" quoth he, "shall 15
I account him a javill, that shall do me this
day so singular a benefit? Nay, I assure you,
were it cloth of gold, I should think it well
bestowed on him, as St. Cyprian did, who gave
his executioner thirty pieces of gold." And
albeit at length, through Master Lieutenant's
importunate persuasion, he altered his apparel,
yet, after the example of the holy martyr St.
Cyprian, did he, of that little money that was
left him, send an angel⁴ of gold to his execu- 25
tioner. And so was he brought by Master
Lieutenant out of the Tower, and from thence
led towards the place of execution. Where,
going up the scaffold, which was so weak that
it was ready to fall, he said merrily to the 30
Lieutenant, "I pray you, Master Lieutenant,
see me safe up, and for my coming down let
me shift for myself." And then desired he all
the people thereabout to pray for him, and to
bear witness with him, that he should now 35
there suffer death in and for the faith of the
holy Catholic Church. Which done, he kneeled
down, and, after his prayers said, turned to the
executioner with a cheerful countenance, and
said unto him, "Pluck up thy spirits, man, and 40
be not afraid to do thine office: my neck is very
short, take heed, therefore, thou strike not
awry for saving of thine honesty." So passed
Sir Thomas More out of this world to God,
upon the very same day which he most desired. 45
Soon after his death came intelligence thereof
to the Emperor Charles.⁵ Whereupon he
sent for Sir Thomas Eliott, our English am-
bassador, and said to him, "My Lord ambas-
sador, we understand that the King, your 50
master, hath put his faithful servant and grave
wise counsellor, Sir Thomas More, to death."
Whereupon Sir Thomas Eliott answered that
he understood nothing thereof. "Well," said
the Emperor, "it is too true: and this will we 55
say, that had we been master of such a servant,

of whose doings ourselves have had these many
years no small experience, we would rather have
lost the best city of our dominions, than have
lost such a worthy Counsellor." Which matter
was by the same Sir Thomas Eliott to myself,
to my wife, to Mr. Clement and his wife, to
Mr. John Heywood and his wife, and unto
divers others his friends accordingly reported.

Hugh Latimer

c. 1491-1555

THE PLOWERS

(From a Sermon preached at St. Paul's, 18th
January, 1548)

I told you in my first sermon, honourable
audience, that I purposed to declare unto you
two things. The one, what seed should be
sown in God's field, in God's plough land.
And the other, who should be the sowers.
That is to say, what doctrine is to be taught in
Christ's church and congregation, and what
men should be the teachers and preachers of
it. The first part I have told you in the three
sermons past, in which I have assayed to set
forth my plough, to prove what I could do.
And now I shall tell you who be the ploughers:
for God's word is a seed to be sown in God's
field, that is, the faithful congregation, and the
preacher is the sower. And it is in the gospel:
Exivit qui seminat seminare semen suum: "He
that soweth, the husbandman, the ploughman,
went forth to sow his seed." So that a preacher
is resembled to a ploughman, as it is in another
place: *Nemo admota arato manu, et a tergo
respicieus, aptus est regno Dei*. "No man that
putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh
back, is apt for the kingdom of God." That is
to say, let no preacher be negligent in doing his
office. . . . For preaching of the gospel is one
of God's ploughworks, and the preacher is
one of God's ploughmen. Ye may not be
offended with my similitude, in that I compare
preaching to the labour and work of ploughing,
and the preacher to a ploughman. Ye may not
be offended with this my similitude; for I have
been slandered of some persons for such
things. . . . A prelate is that man whatsoever
he be, that hath a flock to be taught of him;
whosoever hath any spiritual charge in the
faithful congregation, and whosoever he be that
hath cure of souls. . . . And how few of them
there be throughout this realm that give meat
to their flock as they should do, the visitors can
best tell. Too few, too few; the more is the
pity, and never so few as now,

³ A low worthless fellow, a scoundrel.

⁴ A gold coin first struck in the reign of Edward IV.

⁵ Charles I., King of Spain, who became Holy Roman Emperor as Charles V. in 1519.

By this, then, it appeareth that a prelate, or any that hath cure of souls, must diligently and substantially work and labour. Therefore saith Paul to Timothy, *Qui episcopatum desiderat, hic bonum opus desiderat*: "He that desireth to have the office of a bishop, or a prelate, that man desireth a good work." Then if it be a good work, it is work: ye can make but a work of it. It is God's work, God's plough, and that plough God would have still going. 10 Such then as loiter and live idly, are not good prelates, or ministers. . . . How many such prelates, how many such bishops, Lord, for thy mercy, are there now in England? And what shall we in this case do? shall we company 15 with them? O Lord, for thy mercy! shall we not company with them? O Lord, whither shall we flee from them? But "cursed be he that doth the work of God negligently or guilefully." A sore word for them that are 20 negligent in discharging their office, or have done it fraudulently; for that is the thing that maketh the people ill.

But true it must be that Christ saith, *Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*: "Many are called, 25 but few are chosen." . . . Now what shall we say of these rich citizens of London? What shall I say of them? Shall I call them proud men of London, malicious men of London, merciless men of London? No, no, I may not 30 say so; they will be offended with me then. Yet must I speak. For is there not reigning in London as much pride, as much covetousness, as much cruelty, as much oppression, as much superstition, as was in Nebo?¹ Yes, I think, 35 and much more too. Therefore I say, repent, O London; repent, repent. Thou hearest thy faults told thee, amend them, amend them. I think if Nebo had had the preaching that thou hast, they would have converted. And, 40 you rulers and officers, be wise and circumspect, look to your charge, and see you do your duties; and rather be glad to amend your ill living than to be angry when you are warned or told of your fault. What ado was there made in 45 London at a certain man, because he said (and indeed at that time on a just cause), "Burgesses!" quoth he, "nay, Butterflies." Lord, what ado there was for that word! And yet would God they were no worse than butter- 50 flies! Butterflies do but their nature: the butterfly is not covetous, is not greedy of other men's goods; is not full of envy and hatred, is not malicious, is not cruel, is not merciless. The

butterfly glorieth not in her own deeds, nor preferreth the traditions of men before God's word; it committeth not idolatry, nor worshippeth false gods. But London cannot abide 5 to be rebuked; such is the nature of man. If they be pricked, they will kick; if they be rubbed on the gall, they will wince; but yet they will not amend their faults, they will not be ill spoken of. But how shall I speak well of them? If you could be content to receive and follow 10 the word of God, and favour good preachers, if you could bear to be told of your faults, if you could amend when you hear of them, if you would be glad to reform that is amiss; if I might see any such inclination in you, that leave to be merciless, and begin to be charitable, I would then hope well of you. But London was never so ill as it is now. In times past men were full of pity and compassion, but now 15 there is no pity; for in London their brother shall die in the streets for cold, he shall lie sick at the door between stock and stock,² I cannot tell what to call it, and perish there for hunger; was there any more unmercifulness in Nebo? 20 I think not. In times past, when any rich man died in London, they were wont to help the poor scholars of the university with exhibition. When any man died, they would bequeath great sums of money toward the relief of the poor. When I was a scholar in Cambridge 25 myself, I heard very good report of London, and knew many that had relief of the rich men of London, but now I can hear no such good report, and yet I enquire of it, and hearken for it; but now charity is waxen cold, none helpeth the scholar, nor yet the poor. And in those days, what did they when they helped the scholars? Marry, they maintained and gave them livings that were very papists, and pro- 30 fessed the pope's doctrine; and now that the knowledge of God's word is brought to light, and many earnestly study and labour to set it forth, now almost no man helpeth to maintain them.

Oh London, London! repent, repent; for I think God is more displeased with London than ever He was with the city of Nebo. Repent 35 therefore, repent, London, and remember that the same God liveth now that punished Nebo, even the same God, and none other; and He will punish sin as well now as He did then: and He will punish the iniquity of London, as well as He did then of Nebo. Amend therefore. And ye that be prelates, look well to your office: for 40 right prelating, is busy labouring, and not lording. Therefore preach and teach, and let your plough be doing. Ye lords, I say, that live like loiterers, look well to your office:

¹ A city on the east side of the Jordan, which was taken from the Israelites by the Moabites. Latimer says in a foregoing passage: "Among (the cities of Moab) there was one called *Nebo*, which was much reprov'd for idolatry, superstition, pride, avarice, cruelty, tyranny, and for hardness of heart; and for these sins was plagued of God and destroyed."

² Post and post.

the plough is your office and charge. If you live idle and loiter, you do not your duty, you follow not your vocation: let your plough therefore be going, and not cease, that the ground may bring forth fruit.

But now methinketh I hear one say unto me: Wot ye what you say? Is it a work? Is it a labour? How then hath it happened that we have had so many hundred years so many unpreaching prelates, lording loiterers, and idle ministers? Ye would have me here to make answer, and to shew the cause thereof. Nay, this land is not for me to plough; it is too stony, too thorny, too hard for me to plough. They have so many things that make for them, many things to lay for themselves, that it is not for my weak team to plough them. They have to lay for themselves long customs, ceremonies and authority, placing in parliament, and many things more. And I fear me this land is not yet ripe to be ploughed: for, as the saying is, it lacketh weathering;³ this gear lacketh weathering; at least way it is not for me to plough. For what shall I look for among thorns, but pricking and scratching? What among stones, but stumbling? What (I had almost said) among serpents, but stinging? But this much I dare say, that since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the apostles' times: for they preached and lorded not, and now they lord and preach not. For they that be lords will ill go to plough: it is no meet office for them; it is not seeming for their state. Thus came up lording loiterers: thus crept in unpreaching prelates; and so have they long continued. For how many unlearned prelates have we now at this day? And no marvel: for if the ploughmen that now be were made lords, they would clean give over ploughing; they would leave off their labour, and fall to lording outright, and let the plough stand: and then both ploughs not walking, nothing should be in the commonweal but hunger. For ever since the prelates were made lords and nobles, the plough standeth, there is no work done, the people starve. They hawk, they hunt, they card, they dice; they pastime in their prelacies with gallant gentlemen, with their dancing minions, and with their fresh companions, so that ploughing is set aside: and by the lording and loitering, preaching and ploughing is clean gone. And thus if the ploughmen of the country were as negligent in their office as prelates be, we should not long live, for lack of sustenance. And as it is necessary for to have this ploughing for the sustentation of the

body, so must we also have the other for the satisfaction of the soul, or else we cannot live long ghostly.⁴ For as the body wasteth and consumeth away for lack of bodily meat, so doth the soul pine away for default of ghostly meat. But there be two kinds of inclosing, to let or hinder both these kinds of ploughing; the one is an inclosing to let or hinder the bodily ploughing, and the other to let or hinder the holiday-ploughing, the church ploughing. . . . And as diligently as the husbandman plougheth for the sustentation of the body, so diligently must the prelates and ministers labour for the feeding of the soul: both the ploughs must still be going, as most necessary for man. And wherefore are magistrates ordained, but that the tranquility of the commonweal may be confirmed, limiting both ploughs.

But now for the default of unpreaching prelates, methinks I could guess what might be said for excusing of them. They are so troubled with lordly living, they be so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their rents,⁵ dancing in their dominions, burdened with embassages, pampering of their paunches, like a monk that maketh his jubilee; munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions, and so troubled with loitering in their lordships, that they cannot attend it. They are otherwise occupied, some in the king's matters, some are ambassadors, some of the privy council, some to furnish the court, some are Lords of the Parliament, some are presidents, and some comptrollers of mints. . . .

And now I would ask a strange question: who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him, who it is: I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way, call for him when you will he is ever at home; the diligentest preacher in all the realm; he is ever at his plough: no lording nor loitering can hinder him; he is ever applying his business, ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. . . .

⁴ Spiritually.

⁵ Putting on airs, or swaggering, because of their riches or rents.

³ Exposure to the air for drying purposes.

Oh that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine, as Satan is to sow cockle and darnell! . . .

But in the meantime the prelates take their pleasures. They are lords, and no labourers, but the devil is diligent at his plough. He is no unpreaching prelate: he is no lordly loiterer from his cure,⁶ but a busy ploughman; so that among all the prelates, and among all the pack of them that have cure, the devil shall go for my money,⁷ for he still applieth his business. Therefore ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil: to be diligent in doing of your office, learn of the devil: and if you will not learn of God nor of good men for shame learn of the devil. Howbeit there is now very good hope that the king's majesty, being by the help of good governance of his most honourable counsellors, he is trained and brought up in learning, and knowledge of God's word, will shortly provide a remedy, and set an order herein; which thing that it may so be, let us pray for him. Pray for him, good people: pray for him. Ye have great cause and need to pray for him.

DESCRIPTION OF HIS FATHER

(From First Sermon preached before King Edward VIth, March 8th, 1549)

My Father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pounds by year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk¹ for a hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able and did find the king a harness, with himself and his horse, while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went unto Blackheath field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pounds, or twenty nobles apiece; so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbors, and some alms he gave to the poor. And all this did he of the said farm, where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pounds by year, or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor.

⁶ Parish.

⁷ i. e. I'll stake my money on the devil.

¹ A sheep-walk in a pasture.

Roger Ascham

1515-1568

ASCHAM EXPLAINS THE PURPOSE OF HIS BOOK

(From the Preface to *The Schoolmaster*, pub. 1570)

Yet some men, friendly enough of nature, but of small judgment in learning, do think I take too much pains and spend too much time in setting forth these children's affairs. But those good men were never brought up in *Socrates'* school, who saith plainly, that no man goeth about a more goodly purpose, than he that is mindful of the good bringing up both of his own and other men's children.

Therefore, I trust, good and wise men will think well of this my doing. And of other, that think otherwise, I will think myself, they are but men to be pardoned for their folly and pitied for their ignorance.

In writing this book, I have had earnest respect to three special points, truth of religion, honesty in living, right order in learning. In which three ways, I pray God, my poor children may diligently walk; for whose sake, as nature would and reason required and necessity also somewhat compelled, I was the willingest to take these pains.

For, seeing at my death I am not like to leave them any great store of living, therefore in my lifetime I thought good to bequeath unto them in this little book, as in my Will and Testament, the right way to good learning: which if they follow with the fear of God, they shall very well come to sufficiency of living.

I wish also, with all my heart, that young Mr. *Rob. Sackville*¹ may take that fruit of this labour, that his worthy grandfather purposed he should have done; and if any other do take either profit or pleasure hereby, they have cause to thank Mr. *Robert Sackville*, for whom specially this my *Schoolmaster* was provided.

THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN

(From the same)

Yet, some will say, that children of nature¹ love pastime, and mislike learning: because, in their kind, the one is easy and pleasant, the other hard and wearisome, which is an opinion not so true as some men ween: for, the matter lieth not so much in the disposition of them

¹ Second Earl of Dorset (1561-1609), whose education was entrusted to Ascham by his grandfather, Sir Richard Sackville.

¹ Naturally.

that be young, as in the order and manner of bringing up, by them that be old, nor yet in the difference of learning and pastime. For, beat a child, if he dance not well, and cherish him though he learn not well, ye shall have him unwilling to go to dance, and glad to go to his book. Knock him always, when he draweth his shaft² ill, and favour him again, though he fault at his book, ye shall have him very loth to be in the field, and very willing to be in the school. Yea, I say more, and not of myself, but by the judgment of those, from whom few wise men will gladly dissent, that if ever the nature of man be given at any time, more than other, to receive goodness, it is in innocency of young years, before that experience of evil have taken root in him. For, the pure clean wit of a sweet young babe is like the newest wax, most able to receive the best and fairest printing: and like a new bright silver dish never occupied, to receive and keep clean any good thing that is put into it.

And thus, will in children, wisely wrought withal, may easily be won to be very well willing to learn. And wit in children, by nature, namely memory, the only key and keeper of all learning, is readiest to receive, and surest to keep any manner of thing, that is learned in youth: this, lewd³ and learned, by common experience, know to be most true. For we remember nothing so well when we be old, as those things which we learned when we were young: and this is not strange, but common in all nature's works. Every man sees (as I said before) new wax is best for printing: new clay, fittest for working: new shorn wool, aptest for soon and surest dying: new fresh flesh, for good and durable salting. And this similitude is not rude, nor borrowed of the larder house, but out of his schoolhouse, of whom the wisest of England need not be ashamed to learn. Young grafts grow not only soonest, but also fairest, and bring always forth the best and sweetest fruit: young whelps learn easily to carry: young poppinjays learn quickly to speak: and so, to be short, if in all other things, though they lack reason, sense, and life, the similitude of youth is fittest to all goodness, surely nature, in mankind, is most beneficial and effectual in this behalf.

Therefore, if to the goodness of nature be joined the wisdom of the teacher, in leading young wits into a right and plain way of learning, surely, children, kept up in God's fear, and governed by His grace, may most easily be brought well to serve God and country both by virtue and wisdom.

But if will and wit, by farther age, be once

² Arrow.

³ Unlearned.

allured from innocency, delighted in vain sights, filled with foul talk, crooked with wilfulness, hardened with stubbornness, and let loose to disobedience, surely it is hard with gentleness, but impossible with severe cruelty, to call them back to good frame again. For, where the one perchance may bend it, the other, shall surely break it; and so instead of some hope, leave an assured desperation, and shameless contempt of all goodness, the farthest point in all mischief, as *Xenophon* doth most truly and most wittily mark.

Therefore, to love or to hate, to like or condemn, to ply this way or that way to good or to bad, ye shall have as ye use a child in his youth.

And one example, whether love or fear doth work more in a child, for virtue and learning, I will gladly report: which may be heard with some pleasure, and followed with more profit. Before I went into *Germany*, I came to Brodgate in Leicestershire, to take my leave of that noble Lady *Jane Grey*,⁴ to whom I was exceeding much beholden. Her parents, the Duke and Duchess, with all the household, Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, were hunting in the Park: I found her, in her chamber, reading *Phædon Platonis*⁵ in Greek, and that with as much delight, as some gentlemen would read a merry tale in *Boccaccio*.⁶ After salutation, and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her why she would lose such pastime in the Park? Smiling she answered me: I wisse,⁷ all their sport in the Park is but a shadow to that pleasure, that I find in Plato: Alas good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant. And how came you Madame, quoth I, to this deep knowledge of pleasure, and what did chiefly allure you unto it: seeing, not many women, but very few men have attained thereunto? I will tell you, quoth she, and tell you a truth, which perchance ye will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits, that ever God gave me, is that he sent me so sharp and severe parents, and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry, or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea presently sometimes with pinches, nips, and bobs, and other ways, which I will not name, for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in

⁴ Lady Jane Grey (c. 1537–1554), great grand-daughter of Henry VIIIth was made queen at 17, by ambitious and self-seeking men. She reigned for nine days and was then beheaded in the tower.

⁵ The *Phædo* of Plato.

⁶ Boccaccio.

⁷ Indeed.

hell, till time come, that I must go to *M. Elmer*,⁸ who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing, whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because, whatsoever I do else but learning, is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me: and thus my book hath been so much my pleasure, and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deed, be but trifles and troubles unto me. I remember this talk gladly, both because it is so worthy of memory, and because also, it was the last talk that ever I had, and the last time that ever I saw that noble and worthy Lady.

THE EVIL ENCHANTMENT OF ITALY

(From the same)

Sir *Richard Sackville*,¹ that worthy gentleman of worthy memory, as I said in the beginning, in the Queen's privy Chamber at Windsor, after he had talked with me for the right choice of a good wit in a child for learning, and of the true difference betwixt quick and hard wits, of alluring young children by gentleness to love learning, and of the special care that was to be had to keep young men from licentious living, he was most earnest with me to have me say my mind also, what I thought concerning the fancy that many young gentlemen of England have to travel abroad, and namely to lead a long life in Italy. His request, both for his authority and good will toward me, was a sufficient commandment unto me to satisfy his pleasure with uttering plainly my opinion in that matter. Sir, quoth I, I take going thither and living there, for a young gentleman, that doth not go under the keep and guard of such a man as both by wisdom can and authority dare rule him, to be marvelous dangerous. And why I said so then, I will declare at large now, which I said then privately and write now openly, not because I do contemn, either the knowledge of strange and diverse tongues, and namely the Italian tongue, which next the Greek and Latin tongue I like and love above all other: or else because I do despise the learning that is gotten, or the experience that is gathered in strange countries: or for any private malice that I bear to Italy: which country and in it namely Rome, I have always specially

honoured: because time was, when Italy and Rome have been, to the great good of us that now live, the best breeders and bringers up of the worthiest men, not only for wise speaking but also for well doing, in all Civil affairs, that ever was in the world. But now, that the time is gone, and though the place remain, yet the old and present manners do differ as far, as black and white, as virtue and vice. Virtue once made that country mistress over all the world. Vice now maketh that country slave to them that before were glad to serve it. All men seeth it: they themselves confess it, namely such as be best and wisest amongst them. For sin, by lust and vanity, hath and doth breed up everywhere common contempt of God's word, private contention in many families, open factions in every city: and so, making themselves bond to vanity and vice at home, they are content to bear the yoke of serving strangers abroad. *Italy* now, is not that *Italy* that it was wont to be and therefore now hot so fit a place, as some do count it, for young men to fetch either wisdom or honesty from thence. For surely they will make other but bad scholars, that be so ill masters to themselves. Yet, if a gentleman will needs travel into *Italy*, he shall do well to look on the life of the wisest traveller that ever travelled thither, set out by the wisest writer that ever spake with tongue, God's doctrine only excepted: and that is *Ulysses* in Homer. *Ulysses* and his travel I wish our travelers to look upon, not so much to fear them with the great dangers that he many times suffered, as to instruct them with his excellent wisdom which he always and everywhere used. Yea even those that be learned and witty travellers, when they be disposed to praise travelling, as a great commendation and the best Scripture they have for it, they gladly recite the third verse of *Homer* in his first book of *Odyssey*, containing a great praise of *Ulysses* for the wit he gathered and wisdom he used in travelling.

John Foxe

1516-1587

THE EXECUTION OF LADY JANE GREY¹

(From *Book of Martyrs*, 1563)

When she first mounted the scaffold, she spake to the spectators in this manner: Good people, I am come hither to die, and by a law I am condemned to the same. The fact against the queen's highness was unlawful, and

⁸ John Aylmer (1521-1594), was a tutor to Lady Jane Grey.

¹ Under treasurer of the Exchequer, and who occupied many high places, was a most influential man of his time. It was he who encouraged Ascham to write *The Schoolmaster*.

¹ See p. 134, note 4.

the consenting thereunto by me: but, touching the procurement and desire thereof by me, or on my behalf, I do wash my hands thereof in innocency before God, and the face of you, good christian people, this day: and therewith she wrung her hands, wherein she had her book. Then she said, I pray you all, good christian people, to bear me witness that I die a good christian woman, and that I do look to be saved by no other means, but only by the mercy of God in the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ: and I confess, that when I did know the word of God, I neglected the same, loved myself and the world, and therefore this plague and punishment is happily and worthily happened unto me for my sins: and yet I thank God, that of his goodness he hath thus given me a time and a respite to repent: and now, good people, while I am alive, I pray you assist me with your prayers. And then, kneeling down, she turned to Feckenham,² saying, Shall I say this psalm? and he said, Yea. Then she said the Psalm of *Miserere mei Deus*,³ in English, in a most devout manner throughout to the end; and then she stood up, and gave to her maid, Mrs. Ellen, her gloves and handkerchief, and her book to Mr. Bruges; and then she untied her gown, and the executioner pressed upon her to help her off with it: but she, desiring him to let her alone, turned toward her two gentlewomen, who helped her off therewith, and also with her frowes,⁴ paste,⁵ and neckerchief, giving to her a fair handkerchief to put about her eyes.

Then the executioner kneeled down, and asked her forgiveness, whom she forgave most willingly. Then he desired her to stand upon the straw; which doing, she saw the block. Then she said, I pray you despatch me quickly. Then she kneeled down, saying, Will you take it off before I lay me down? And the executioner said, No, madam. Then she tied the handkerchief about her eyes, and feeling for the block, she said, What shall I do? Where is it? Where is it? One of the standers-by guiding her thereunto, she laid her head down upon the block, and then stretched forth her body, and said, Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and so finished her life, in the year of our Lord 1554, the 12th day of February, about the seventeenth year of her age.

Thus died the Lady Jane: and on the same

² John of Feckenham (1518?–1585), private Chaplain and Confessor to Queen Mary. He was sent to Lady Jane Grey before her execution, to attempt her conversion to the Romish faith. He acknowledged he felt himself fitter to be her disciple than her teacher.

³ Psalm 51. "Have mercy upon me, O God."

⁴ Possibly a false wig.

⁵ Some kind of headdress apparently made on a paste-board foundation.

day the Lord Guildford,⁶ her husband, one of the Duke of Northumberland's sons, was likewise beheaded, two innocents in comparison of them that sat upon them. For they were both very young, and ignorantly accepted that which others had contrived, and by open proclamation consented to take from others, and give to them.

Touching the condemnation of this pious lady, it is to be noted, that Judge Morgan⁷ who gave sentence against her, soon after he had condemned her, fell mad, and in his raving cried out continually, to have the lady Jane taken away from him, and so he ended his life.

THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

c. 1579–1637

Edmund Spenser

1552–1599

THE FAERIE QUEENE

(1590)

BOOK I

I

Lo! I, the man¹ whose Muse whylome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,

Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten reeds,

And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds; 5
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds²
To blazon broad eamongst her learned throng:

Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

II

Helpe then, O holy virgin,³ chiefe of nyne, 10
Thy weaker novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne⁴
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,

Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,⁵

¹ The fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland. He was executed immediately after his wife.

² Sir Richard Morgan (d. 1556) was a member of the commission for the trial of Lady Jane Grey, and was the one to pass sentence upon her.

³ An allusion to Spenser's first important work, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, a pastoral, 1579.

⁴ Directa, counsels.

⁵ The muse Clio.

⁶ A box for keeping books. See Lat. *scrinium*.

⁷ Spenser evidently refers to Queen Elizabeth under this name. Kitchin and others assert that *Tanaquill* was a British princess. Spenser may have had *Tanaquill*, the wife of *Tarquinius Priscus*, in mind.

Whom that most noble Briton Prince so
long 15
Sought through the world, and suffered so
much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my
dull tong!

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III

And thou, most dreaded impe^d of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell
dart 20
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly heben⁷ bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine
ayde;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant
Mart,⁸ 25
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murderous spoyles and bloudie rage
allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly
bright,
Mirrour of grace, and maiestie divine,
Great ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light 30
Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world
doth shine.
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too
vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,⁹
The argument of mine afflicted stile: 35
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest
Dread, a while.

CANTO I

*The patron of true Holinesse,
Foule Error doth defeate;
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.*

I

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did
remaine, 39
The cruell markes of many a bloody felde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters
fitt. 45

II

And on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he
wore,
And dead, as living ever, him ador'd:

⁶ Cupid or Eros. *Imp* was formerly used in a good
sense, and meant simply child, or acion.

⁷ Ebony.

⁸ Mars.

⁹ *Una*, the type of his "Goddesse heavenly bright,"
Queen Elizabeth, as well as of Truth.

Upon his shield the like was also scor'd, 50
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he
had,
Right, faithfull, true he was in deede and
word;
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.¹⁰

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond, 55
That greatest Gloriana¹¹ to him gave,
That greatest glorious Queene of Faery lond,
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to
have,
Which of all earthly thinges, he most did
crave:
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne,¹²
To prove his puissance in battell brave 61
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a Dragon¹³ horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely Ladie¹⁴ rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white then snow; 65
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heave eate upon her palfry slow; 70
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had;
And by her in a line a milke-white lambe she
lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from royall lynage came 75
Of ancient kinges and queenes, that had of
yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne
shore,
And all the world in their subiection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule upore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far
compeld. 81

VI

Behind her farre away a Dwarf¹⁵ did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they
past, 85
The day with cloudes was suddeine over-
cast,
And angry Iove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves
were fain. 90

¹⁰ Dreaded. ¹¹ Queen Elizabeth. ¹² Yearn.

¹³ Error, or more particularly the false doctrines of the
Romish church, which the Red Cross Knight, or Re-
formed England, must combat.

¹⁴ *Una*, or *Truth*, which is one, in contrast to *Duessas*,
Falsehood, or Doubtfulness. *Una* is also, in a more de-
finite sense, Truth as embodied in the true Church.

¹⁵ Supposed by some to represent Common sense, or
Prudence.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove¹⁶ not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did
hide. 95

Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:
Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they
entred ar.

VIII

And forth they passe, with pleasure forward
led, 100
Ioying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest
dred,
Seemed in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight
and hy, 104
The sayling pine; the cedar proud and tall;
The vine-prop elme; the poplar never dry:
The builder oake, sole king of Forrests all;
The aspine good for staves; the cypresse
funerall;

IX

The laurell, meed of mightie conquerours
And poets sage; the firre that weepeth still;
The willow, worne of forlorne paramours; 111
The eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The birch for shaftes; the sallow for the
mill;¹⁷
The mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter
wound;
The warlike beech; the ash for nothing ill; 115
The fruitfull olive; and the platane round;
The carver holme;¹⁸ the maple seeldom inward
sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did
stray, 120
They cannot finde that path, which first was
showne
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they nearest
weene,
That makes them doubt their wits be not
their owne;
So many pathes, so many turnings seene, 125
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt
they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most
bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about; 130

¹⁶ The thick wood of Error, into which the heavenly
light of the stars cannot penetrate.

¹⁷ The wood of the *sallow*, or *willow*, made the best
charcoal for the manufacture of Gunpowder; the bark
of the willow is also used for tanning.

¹⁸ *Holly*, which is especially fit for carving.

Which when by tract they hunted had
throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion
stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarfes a while his needlesse spere
he gave. 135

XII

"Be well aware," quoth then that Ladie
milde,
"Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash pro-
voke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and
wilde,
Breeds dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without
smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your
stroke, 140
Sir Knight, withhold, till further tryall
made."
"Ah, Ladie," sayd he, "shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through darknesse
for to wade."

XIII

"Yea, but," quoth she, "the perill of this
place 145
I better wot then you: though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule dis-
grace,
Yet wisdome warnes, whilst foot is in the
gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does
hate: 151
Therefore I read¹⁹ beware." "Fly, fly,"
quoth then
The fearful Dwarfes; "This is no place for living
men."

XIV

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be
staide; 155
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A little glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide, 160
But th'other halfe did womans shape re-
taine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile
disdaine.

[The Red Cross Knight, assisted by Una,
does battle with the dragon, Error. As the
combat progresses, the hideous serpent-brood
of Error, "deformed monsters, foul and black
as ink," swarming about the Knight sorely
encumber him. The poet thus compares them
to a cloud of gnats.]

¹⁹ Counsel.

XXIII

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide, 244
 When ruddy Phebus gins to welke²⁰ in west,
 High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
 Markes which doe byte their hasty supper
 best;
 A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
 All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
 That from their noyance he no where can
 rest; 250
 But with his clownish hands their tender
 wings
 He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their mur-
 murings.

XXIV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
 Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
 Halfe furious unto his foe he came, 255
 Resolved in minde all suddenly to win,
 Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;²¹
 And stroke at her with more then manly
 force,
 That from her body, full of filthie sin, 259
 He raft her hateful heade without remorse;
 A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed
 from her corse. . . .

XXVII

His Lady seeing all that chaunst, from farre,
 Approcht in hast to greet his victorie; 290
 And saide, "Faire Knight, borne under
 happie starre,
 Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye;
 Well worthie be you of that armory,
 Wherein ye have great glory wonne this
 day,
 And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie;
 Your first adventure: Many such I pray, 296
 And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it
 may!"

[Having re-mounted his steed, the Red-
 Cross Knight and Una at length meet in the
 forest an "aged sire" clad in black, having a
 gray beard and a sober aspect. The Knight,
 having saluted him, is conducted to a hermitage
 on the skirts of the forest, where the old man
 tells him in pleasing words about Saints and
 popes: so they pass the evening in discourse.]

XXXVI

The drouping night thus creepeth on them
 fast;
 And the sad humor loading their eyeliddes,
 As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast 381
 Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep
 them biddes.
 Unto their lodgings then his guesstes he riddes
 Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he
 findes,
 He to his studie goes; and there amidde 385
 His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie
 kindes,
 He seeks out mighty charmes to trouble sleepey
 minds.

²⁰ To fade.²¹ Cease.

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
 (Let none them read!) thereof did verses
 frame;
 With which, and other spellles like terrible, 390
 He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly dame;²²
 And cursed heven; and spake reprochful
 shame
 Of highest God, the Lord of life and light.
 A bold bad man! that dar'd to call by name
 Great Gorgon,²³ prince of darknes and dead
 night; 395
 At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to
 flight.

XXXVIII

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes dredd
 Legions of sprights, the which, like litle flyes,
 Fluttering about his ever-damned hedd,
 Awaitte whereto their service he applyes, 400
 To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies:
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
 And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
 The one of them he gave a message too,
 The other by him selfe staide other worke to
 doo. 405

XXXIX

He, making speedy way through spersed ayre
 And through the world of waters wide and
 deepe,
 To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
 And low, where dawning day doth never
 peepe, 410
 His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed
 Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe
 In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
 Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black
 doth spred.

XL

Whose double gates²⁴ he findeth locked
 fast; 415
 The one faire fram'd of burnisht yvory,
 The other all with silver overcast;
 And wakeful dogges before them farre doe
 lye,
 Watching to banish Care their enemy,
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe. 420
 By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned
 deepe
 In drowse fit he findes; of nothing he takes
 keepe.

²² Proserpina had both a creative and a destroying power. As the daughter of Demeter we think of her in the first, and as the wife of Pluto and queen of Erebus, in the second capacity. She is here called *griesly*, or *terrible*, because the poet has the dark and death-dealing side of her function in mind.

²³ *Demogorgon*, a mysterious divinity, associated with darkness and the underworld.

²⁴ Spenser here follows Homer and Vergil. According to these poets, true dreams were supposed to pass through a gate of horn, false dreams through one of ivory. The second gate is here spoken of as "overcast" with silver.

XLI

And, more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
 A trickling streame from high rock tumbling
 downe, 425
 And ever-drizzling raine upon the loft,
 Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the
 sowne
 Of swarming bees, did caste him in a swowne.
 No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
 As still are wont t' annoy the walled towne,
 Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet
 lyes, 431
 Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimes.

XLII

The messenger approaching to him spake;
 But his waste words retourn'd to him in vaine.
 So sound he slept, that nought mought him
 awake. 435
 Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with
 paine,
 Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe
 Shooke him so hard, that forced him to
 speake.
 As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
 Is tost with troubled sights and fancies
 weake, 440
 He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence
 breake.

XLIII

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake
 And threatend unto him the dreaded name
 Of Hecate:²² whereat he gan to quake,
 And, lifting up his lompish head, with
 blame 445
 Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
 "Hether," quoth he, "me Archimago²³ sent,
 He that the stubborne sprites can wisely
 tame;
 He bids thee to him send for his intent
 A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers
 sent." 450

XLIV

The god obayde; and, calling forth straight
 way
 A diverse dreame out of his prison darke,
 Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
 His heaue head, deuoide of careful carke;
 Whose sences all were straight benumbd and
 starke. 455
 He, backe returning by the yvorie dore,
 Remounted up as light as chearefull larke;
 And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
 In hast unto his lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden
 artes, 460
 Had made a lady of that other spright,

²² A powerful female divinity, supposed to have been introduced into the Greek from an earlier mythology. Like Demogorgon, she is associated with darkness and the nether world.

²³ Personifies *Hypocrisy*. His name indicates that he is the chief of those who assume various lying, or unusual shapes, in order to deceive.

And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
 So lively, and so like in all mens sight,
 That weaker sence it could have ravishd
 quight:
 The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt, 465
 Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
 Her all in white he clad, and over it
 Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una
 fit.

XLVI

Now when that ydle Dreame was to him
 brought,
 Unto that Elfin Knight he bad him fly, 470
 Where he slept soundly, void of evil thought,
 And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
 In sort as he him schooled privily.
 And that new creature, borne without her
 dew,²⁴
 Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly, 475
 He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
 Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned
 hew.

[This phantom, in the outward semblance of Una, conducts herself with such lightness that the Knight is perplexed with doubts of her goodness and truthfulness. At last, restless and tormented by evil delusions conjured up by Archimago, the Knight mounts his steed and flies with the dwarf. Thus parted from Una, or Truth, by the wiles of the Enchanter, the deluded Knight falls into peril in a meeting with Duessa, or Falsehood.

Meanwhile the heavenly Una, his true bride, missing her Knight, sets out in search of him, alone and sorrowful. The poet then tells how the lion comes to guard her in her need.]

CANTO III

*Forsaken Truth long seeks her love,
 and makes the Lyon mylde;
 Marres blind Devotions mart, and fals
 in hand of treachour vyld.*

I

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollow-
 nesse,
 That moves more cleare compassion of mind,
 Then²⁵ beautie brought t' unworthie wretch-
 ednesse
 Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes
 unkind.
 I, whether lately through her brightnes
 blynd, 5
 Or through alleageance and fast fealty,
 Which I do owe unto all woman kynd,
 Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
 When such I see, that all for pittie I could
 dy.

II

And now it is empassioned so deepe, 10
 For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
 That my fraile eyes these lines with teares do
 steepe,
 To thinke how she through guileful handeling,
²⁶ Made in an unnatural manner. ²⁷ Than.

Though true as touch,²⁹ though daughter of a
king,
Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting, 16
Is from her Knight divorc'd in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile witches
shayre.

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III

Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd, 20
Far from all peoples preace,³⁰ as in exile,
In wilderness and wastfull deserts strайд,
To seeke her Knight; who subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision, which th' en-
chanter wrought, 24
Had her abandoned. She of naught affrayd,
Through woods and wastness wide him daily
sought;
Yet wished tydings none of him unto her
brought.

IV

One day, nigh wearie of the yrksome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight; 29
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight;
From her fayre head her fillet she undight;
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place; 35
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly
grace.

V

It fortun'd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood;
Soone as the royall Virgin he did spy, 40
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devoured her tender corse.
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswag'd with remorse,
And, with the sight amaz'd, forgat his furious
force. 45

VI

Instead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong;
As he her wronged innocence did weat.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong! 50
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked
long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion;
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

VII

"The lyon, lord of everie beast in field," 55
Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth
abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does
yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late

²⁹ Touch here probably used for touchstone. The touchstone, used to test the purity of precious metals, came to symbolize the power of telling the false from the true.

³⁰ Press, a throng.

Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:—
But he, my lyon, and my noble lord, 60
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lov'd, and ever most adord,
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?"

VIII

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her
plaint,
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour
wood; 65
And, sad to see her sorrowful constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the Virgin borne of heavenly brood, 70
And to her snowy palfrey got agayne
To seeke her strayed champion, if she might
attayne.

IX

The lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate 75
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and
ward;
And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepar'd:
From her fayre eyes he took commandē-
ment, 80
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

[Archimago, learning of the whereabouts of Una, assumes the arms and appearance of the Red Cross Knight, and,—being too fearful of the lion to join her,—approaches near enough to her to be seen. Una seeing, as she supposes, him whom she has sought through wide deserts, and with great toil and peril, goes up to him in joy and humbleness, while Archimago, feigning to be her Knight, greets her with words of welcome and vows of faithful service.]

XXX

His lovely words her seemd due recompence
Of all her passed paines; one loving howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispence;
A dram of sweete is worth a pound of sowre.
Shee has forgott how many woful stowre 275
For him she late endurd; she speakes no more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre
To looken backe; his eies be fixt before.
Before her stands her Knight, for whom she
toyl'd so sore.

XXXI

Much like, as when the beaten marinere, 280
That long hath wandred in the ocean wide,
Ofte sount in swelling Tethys saltish teare;
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustering breath of heaven, that none
can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound;
Soone as the port from far he has espide, 286
His chearfull whistle merly doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him
pledge around.

XXXII

Such ioy made Una, when her Knight she
found;
And eke th' Enchanter ioyous seemde no
lesse 290
Then the glad marchant that does vew from
ground
His ship far come from watrie wilderness;
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth
blesse.
So forth they past; and all the way they
spent 294
Discoursing of her dreadful late distresse,
In which he askt her, what the lyon ment;
Who told her all that fell, in iourney as she
went.

XXXIII

They had not ridden far, when they might
see
One pricking towards them with hastie
heat,
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free 300
That through his fiersenesse fomed all with
sweat,
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to
threat 304
Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde;
And on his shield *Sans loy* in bloody lines was
dyde.

[Archimago, in the guise of the Red Cross Knight, thus journeying with Una meets a Paynim, or Saracen, named *Sansloy*. *Sansloy* attacks Archimago, who is overthrown. When he is unhelmed, Una sees to her surprise the face of Archimago instead of that of the Red Cross Knight. The Paynim, leaving Archimago dying, rudely approaches Una and drags her from her palfrey. The poet then describes the combat of the Paynim with the lion.]

XLI

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw
And high disdain, whenas his souveraine
Dame 380
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
With gaping iawes full greedy at him came,
And, ramping in his shield, did weene the
same
Have reft away with his sharp rending
clawes: 384
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His corage more, that from his griping pawes
He hath his shield redeemd; and forth his
sword he drawes.

XLII

O then, too weake and feeble was the forse
Of salvage beast, his puissance to withstand!
For he was strong, and of so mightie
corse, 390
As ever wielded speare in warlike hand;
And feates of armes did wisely understand.

Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed
chest
With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,
And launght, his lordly hart: with death
opprest 395
He ro'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stub-
borne brest.

XLIII

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne Maid
From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?
Her faithful gard remov'd; her hope dis-
maid;
Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill! 400
He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foule reproches and disdaineful spright
Her vildly entertaines; and, will or nill
Beares her away upon his courser light:
Her prayers naught prevaile; his rage is more of
might. 405

XLIV

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
And piteous plaintes she filleth his dull cares,
That stony hart could riven have in twaine;
And all the way she wetts with flowing teares;
But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,
But followes her far of, ne ought he feares 412
To be partaker of her wandring woe,
More mild in beastly kind, then that her
beastly foe.

[After many mishaps and adventures the Book ends with the happy union of the Red Cross Knight and Una;—the marriage of Holiness and Truth.]

BOOK II

CANTO VI

THE STORY OF SIR GUYON, OR THE KNIGHT OF
TEMPERANCE

*Guyon is of immodest Merth
Led into loose desyre;
Fights with Cymochles, whiles his bro-
ther burnes in furious fyre.*

I

A harder lesson to learne Continence
In ioyous pleasure then in grievous paine;
For sweetnesse doth allure the weaker sence
So strongly, that uncatches it can refrain
From that which feeble nature covets faine;
But grieve and wrath, that be her enemies,
And foes of life, she better can abstaine: 7
Yet Vertue vauntes in both her victories;
And Guyon in them all shewes goodly mysteries.

[Cymochles having met a damsel who represents intemperate pleasure, is tempted by her to neglect duty in inglorious idleness and self-indulgence. He falls under the spell of her blandishments and his coming under her allurements to the Idle Lake, the home of pleasure, is thus described:]

XI

Whiles thus she talked, and whiles thus she
 toyd, 100
 They were far past the passage which he
 spake,
 And come unto an island waste and voyd,
 That floted in the midst of that great lake;
 There her small gondelay³¹ her port did make
 And that gay payre, issewing on the shore, 105
 Disburdened her. Their way they forward
 take
 Into the land that lay them faire before,
 Whose pleasaunce she him shewde, and plenti-
 full great store.

XII

It was a chosen plott of fertile land,
 Emongst wide waves sett, like a little nest,
 As if it had by Nature's cunning hand 111
 Bene choycely picked out from all the rest,
 And laid forth for ensample of the best:
 No daintie flowre or herbe that growes on
 grownd,
 No arborett with painted blossomes drest
 And smelling sweete, but there it might be
 fownd 116
 To bud out faire, and throwe her sweete smels
 al around.

XIII

No tree whose braunches did not bravely
 spring;
 No braunch, whereon a fine bird did not sitt;
 No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetly sing;
 No song but did containe a lovely ditt. 121
 Trees, braunches, birds, and songs, were
 framed fitt
 For to allure fraile mind to careless ease:
 Carelesse the man soone woxe, and his
 weake witt
 Was overcome of thing that did him please;
 So pleased did his wrathfull purpose faire
 appease. 126

XIV

Thus when shee had his eyes and sences fed
 With false delights, and fild with pleasures
 vayn,
 Into a shady dale she soft him led,
 And layd him downe upon a grassy playn;
 And her sweete selfe without dread or dis-
 dayn 131
 She sett beside, laying his head disarmd
 In her loose lap, it softly to sustayn,
 Where soone he slumbred fearing not be
 harm'd,
 The whiles with a love lay she thus him sweetly
 charmd: 135

XV

"Behold,"³² O man! that toilsome paines doest
 take,
 The flowers, the fields, and all that pleasaunt
 growes,

³¹ Gondola.

³² This song is apparently suggested by Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Bk. XIV. 62. Cf. Tennyson's *Lotus Eaters*.
 -tanzas II and III.

How they themselves doe thine ensample
 make,
 Whiles nothing envious nature them forth
 throwes
 Out of her fruitfull lap; how, no man knowes,
 They spring, they bud, they blossome fresh
 and faire, 141
 And decke the world with their rich pompous
 showes;
 Yet no man for them taketh paines or care,
 Yet no man to them can his carefull paines
 compare.

XVI

"The lilly, lady of the flowing field, 145
 The flowre-de-luce, her lovely paramoure,
 Bid thee to them thy fruitlesse labors yield,
 And soone leave off this toylsome weary
 stoure:
 Loe! loe! how brave she decks her bounteous
 boure,
 With silkin curtens, and gold coverletts, 150
 Therein to shrowd her sumptuous belamoure!
 Yet neither spinnes nor cards, ne cares nor
 fretts,
 But to her mother Nature all her care she letts.

XVII

"Why then doest thou, O man, that of them
 all
 Art lord, and eke of nature soveraine, 155
 Wilfully make thyselfe a wretched thrall,
 And waste thy ioyous howres in needelesse
 paine,
 Seeking for daunger and adventures vaine?
 What bootes it al to have, and nothing use?
 Who shall him rew that swimming in the
 maine 160
 Will die for thrist, and water doth refuse?
 Refuse such fruitlesse toile, and present
 pleasures chuse."

XVIII

By this she had him lulled fast asleepe,
 That of no worldly thing he care did take:
 Then she with liquors strong his eies did
 steepe, 165
 That nothing should him hastily awake.
 So she him lefte, and did herselfe betake
 Unto her boat again, with which she cleft
 The slouthfull wave of that great griesly lake:
 Soone shee that Island far behind her lefte,
 And now is come to that same place where first
 she wefte. 171

[Sir Guyon, who has also been assailed by the
 temptations of Pleasure, next encounters
 Mammon, or the temptations of Avarice.]

CANTO VII

*Guyon findes Mamon³³ in a delve
 sunning his threasure hore;
 Is by him tempted, and led downe
 To see his secret store.*

³³ Mammon was not a heathen divinity but, as in the
New Testament, a simple personification of money or
 worldly ambition, from the Syriac word for riches.

II

So Guyon, having lost his trustie guyde, 10
 Late left beyond that Ydle Lake, procedes
 Yet on his way, of none accompanye;
 And evermore himselfe with comfort feedes
 Of his own vertues and praise-worthie deedes.
 So, long he yode, yet no adventure found, 15
 Which Fame of her shrill trumpet worthy
 reedes:
 For still he traveld through wide wastfull
 ground,
 That nought but desert wilderness shewed all
 around.

III

At last he came unto a gloomy glade,
 Cover'd with boughes and shrubs from
 heavens light, 20
 Whereas he sitting found in secret shade
 An uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight,
 Of grisely hew and fowle ill-favour'd sight;
 His face with smoke was tand, and eies were
 beard,
 His head and beard with sout were ill bedight,
 His cole-blacke hands did seeme to have ben
 seard 26
 In synthes fire-spitting forge, and nayles like
 clawes appeared.

IV

His yron cote, all overgrowne with rust,
 Was underneath enveloped with gold;
 Whose glistering glosse darkened with
 filthy dust, 30
 Well yet appeared to have beene of old
 A worke of rich entayle and curious mould,
 Woven with antickes and wyld ymagery;
 And in his lap a masse of coyne he told,
 And turned upside downe, to feede his eye
 And covetous desire with his huge theasury. 36

V

And round about him lay on every side
 Great heapes of gold that never could be
 spent;
 Of which some were rude owre, not purifide
 Of Mulcibers³⁴ devouring element; ^{→ fire} 40
 Some others were new driven, and distent
 Into great Ingowes and to wedges square;
 Some in round plates withouten moniment;
 But most were stamp't, and in their metal
 bare
 The antique shapes of kings and kesars stroung
 and rare. 45

VI

Soone as he Guyon saw, in great affright
 And haste he rose for to remove aside
 Those pretious hills from straungers envious
 sight,
 And downe they poured through an hole full
 wide

³⁴ The name given to Vulcan (Lat. *mulceo*, to soften), as the smother of metals by fire. *Of* is here used in the sense of *by*.

Into the hollow earth, them there to hide; 50
 But Guyon, lightly to him leaping, stayd
 His hand that trembled as one terrifyde;
 And though himselfe were at the sight dismayd,
 Yet him perforce restraynd, and to him doubt-
 full said:

VII

"What art thou, Man (if man at all thou art),
 That here in desert hast thine habitaunce, 56
 And these rich hills of welth doest hide apart
 From the worldes eye, and from her right
 usaunce?"
 Thereat, with staring eyes fixed askaunce,
 In great disdain he answerd: "Hardy Elfe,
 That darest vew my direful countenance! 61
 I read thee rash and heedlesse of thy self,
 To trouble my still seate, and heapes of pretious
 pelfe.

VIII

"God of the world and worldlings I me call,
 Great Mammon, greatest god below the skye,
 That of my plenty poure out unto all, 66
 And unto none my graces do envye:
 Riches, renowne, and principality,
 Honour, estate, and all this worldes good,
 For which men swinck³⁵ and sweat inces-
 santly, 70
 Fro me do flow into an ample flood,
 And in the hollow earth have their eternall
 brood.

IX

"Wherefore, if me thou deigne to serve and
 sew,
 At thy commaund, ~~be~~ all these mountaines
 bee;
 Or if to thy great mind, or greedy vew, 75
 All these may not suffice, there shall to thee
 Ten times so much be nombred francke and
 free."
 "Mammon," said he, "thy godheads vaunt
 is vaine,
 And idle offers of thy golden fee;
 To them that covet such eye-glutting gaine
 Proffer thy giftes, and fitter servaunte enter-
 taine. 81

X

"Me ill besits, that in derdoing armes
 And honours suit my vowed daies do spend,
 Unto thy bounteous baytes, and pleasing
 charmes,
 With which weake men thou witchest, to
 attend; 85
 Regard of worldly mucke doth fowly blend,
 And low abase the high heroicke spright,
 That ioyes for crownes and kingdomes to
 contend;
 Faire shields, gay steedes, bright armes, be
 my delight;
 Those be the riches fit for an advent'rous
 knight." 90

³⁵ Toil.

XI

"Vaine glorious Elfe," saide he, "doest not
thou weet,²⁸
That money can thy wantes at will supply?
Shields, steeds, and armes, and all things for
thee meet,
It can purvay in twynckling of an eye;⁹⁴
And crownes and kingdomes to thee multiply.
Doe not I kings create, and throw the crowne
Sometimes to him that low in dust doth ly,
And him that raignd into his rowme thrust
downe,
And whom I lust do heape with glory and re-
nowne?"

XII

"All otherwise," said he, "I riches read, 100
And deeme them roote of all disquietnesse;
First got with guile, and then preserv'd with
dread,
And after spent with pride and lavishnesse,
Leaving behind them grieve and heavinessse:
Infinite mischiefes of them doe arise; 105
Strife and debate, bloodshed and bitternesse,
Outrageous wrong and hellish covetize,
That noble heart, in great dishonour, doth des-
pise.

XIII

"Ne thine be Kingdomes, ne the scepters
thine;
But realmes and rules thou doest both con-
found, 110
And loyall truth to treason doest incline:
Witness the guiltlesse blood pourd oft on
ground;
The crowned often slaine; the slayer croud;
The sacred diademe in peeces rent. 114
And purple robe gored with many a wound,
Castles surprizd, great cities sackt and brent:
So mak'st thou kings, and gaynest wrongful
government!

XIV

"Long were to tell the troublous stormes that
toesse
The private state, and make the life unsweet:
Who swelling sayles in Caspian sea doth
crosse, 120
And in frayle wood on Adrian gulf doth fleet,
Doth not, I weene, so many evils meet."
Then Mammon waxing wroth: "And why
then," sayd,
"Are mortall men so fond and undiscreet
So evill thing to seeke unto their ayd;
And having not, complaine, and having it, up-
brayd?" . . .

XIX

"Me list not," said the Elfin Knight, "re-
ceave
Thing offred, till I know it well be gott;
Ne wote I but thou didst these goods bereave
From rightfull owner by unrighteous lott, 175
Or that blood-guiltinesse or guile them blott."

²⁸ Know.

"Perdy," quoth he, "yet never eie did vew,
Ne tong did tell, ne hand these handled not;
But safe I have them kept in secret mew
From hevens sight and powre of al which them
poursew." 180

XX

"What secret place," quoth he, "can safely
hold
So huge a masse, and hide from hevens eie?
Or where hast thou thy wonne, that so much
gold
Thou canst preserve from wrong and rob-
bery?" 184
"Come thou," quoth he, "and see." So by
and by
Through that thick covert he him led, and
fowned
A darksome way, which no man could descry,
That deep descended through the hollow
grownd,
And was with dread and horror compassed
arownd.

XXI

At length they came into a larger space, 190
That strecht itselfe into an ample playne;
Through which a beaten broad high way did
trace
That streight did lead to Plutoes griesly
rayne:
By that wayes side there sate infernall
Payne,²⁹
And fast beside him sat tumultuous Strife;
The one in hand an yron whip did strayne, 196
The other brandished a bloody knife;
And both did gnash their teeth, and both did
threten Life.

XXII

On th'other side in one consórt there sate
Cruell Revenge, and rancorous Despight, 200
Disloyall Treason, and hart-burning Hate;
But gnawing Gealosy, out of their sight
Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bight;
And trembling Feare still to and fro did fly,
And found no place wher safe he shroud him
might: 205
Lamenting Sorrow did in darknes lye;
And Shame his ugly face did hide from living
eye.

XXIII

And over them sad Horror with grim hew
Did alwaies sore, beating his yron wings;
And after him owles and night-ravens flew, 210
The hateful messengers of heavy things,
Of death and dolor telling sad tidings;
Whiles sad Celeno,³⁰ sitting on a clifte,
A song of bale and bitter sorrow sings,
That hart of flint a sonder could have rifte;
Which having ended, after him she flyeth
swift. 216

²⁹ Not pain in the sense of suffering, but *Poena*, the
avenging, punishing deity.

³⁰ One of the Harpies; filthy, vulture-like creatures, with
head and breast of a woman.

XXIV

All these before the gates of Pluto lay;
 By whom they passing spake unto them
 nought;
 But th' Elfin Knight with wonder all the
 way
 Did feed his eyes, and fild his inner thought.
 At last him to a little dore he brought, 221
 That to the gate of hell, which gaped wide,
 Was next adiogning, ne them parted ought:
 Betwixt them both was but a little stride,
 That did the house of Richesse from hell-
 mouth divide. 225

XXV

Before the dore sat self-consuming Care,
 Day and night keeping wary watch and
 ward,
 For feare least Force or Fraud should un-
 aware
 Breake in, and spoile the treasure there in
 gard:
 Ne would he suffer Sleepe once thether-ward
 Approch, albe his drowsy den were next; 231
 For next to Death is Sleepe to be compard;
 Therefore his house is unto his annex:
 Here Sleepe, there Richesse, and Hel-gate them
 both betwext.

XXVI

So soone as Mammon there arrivd, the dore
 To him did open, and afforded way: 236
 Him followed eke Sir Guyon evermore;
 Ne darknesse him, ne daunger might dismay.
 Soone as he entred was, the dore streight way
 Did shutt, and from behind it forth there
 left 240
 An ugly feend, more fowle than dismall day;
 The which with monstrous stalke behind him
 stept,
 And ever as he went dew watch upon him
 kept. . . .

XXVIII

That houses forme within was rude and
 strong,
 Lyke an huge cave hewne out of rocky clifte,
 From whose rough vout the ragged breaches³⁸
 hong
 Embost with massy gold of glorious guifte,
 And with rich metall loaded every rifte, 266
 That heavy ruine they did seeme to threat;
 And over them Arachne³⁹ high did lifte
 Her cunning web, and spred her subtile nett,
 Enwrapped in fowle smoke and clouds more
 black then iett. 270

XXIX

Both rooffe, and floore, and walls, were all of
 gold,
 But overgrown with dust and old decay,
 And hid in darknes, that none could behold
 The hew thereof: for vew of cherefull day
 Did never in that house it selfe display, 275

³⁸ Stalactites.³⁹ Spider, Arachne was a skilful needlewoman changed
 into a spider by Minerva.

But a faint shadow of uncertein light;
 Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;
 Or as the moone, cloathed with clowdy night,
 Does shew to him that walks in feare, and sad
 affright.

XXX

In all that rowme was nothing to be seene
 But huge great yron chests, and coffers
 strong, 281
 All bard with double bends, that none could
 weene
 Them to efforce by violence or wrong;
 On every side they placed were along.
 But all the grownd with sculs was scattered
 And dead mens bones, which round about
 were flong; 286
 Whose lives, it seemed, whilome there were
 shed,
 And their vile carcases now left unburied.

XXXI

They forward passe; ne Guyon yet spoke
 word,
 Till that they came unto an yron dore, 290
 Which to them opened of his owne accord.
 And shewd of riches such exceeding store,
 As eie of man did never see before,
 Ne ever could within one place be fownd,
 Though all the wealth which is, or was of yore
 Could gathered be through all the world
 arownd, 296
 And that above were added to that under
 grownd.

XXXII

The charge thereof unto a covetous spright
 Commaunded was, who thereby did attend,
 And warily awaited day and night, 300
 From other covetous feends it to defend,
 Who it to rob and ransacke did intend.
 Then Mammon, turning to that warriour,
 said:
 "Loe, here the world's blis! loe, here the
 end, 304
 To which al men doe ayme, rich to be made!
 Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid."

XXXIII

"Certes," said he, "I n' ill thine offred grace,
 Ne to be made so happy doe intend!
 Another blis before mine eyes I place,
 Another happines, another end. 310
 To them that list, these base regards I lend:
 But I in armes, and in atchievements brave,
 Do rather choose my fitting houres to
 spend,
 And to be lord of those that riches have,
 Then them to have myselfe, and be their servile
 slave." 315

XXXIV

Thereat the Feend his gnashing teeth did
 grate,
 And griev'd, so long to lacke his greedie pray;
 For well he weened that so glorious bayte
 Would tempt his guest to take thereof assay;

Had he so doen, he had him snatcht away 320
More light then culver¹ in the faulcons fist:
Eternall God thee save from such decay!
But, whenas Mammon saw his purpose mist,
Him to entrap unwarres another way he wist.

[The poet then goes on to tell of the further temptations to which Guyon is subjected, and of how the Knight withstands them. At length, after three days have passed, according to men's reckoning, Guyon begs to be taken back into the world, and Mammon, though loth, is constrained to comply with the request. But as soon as Guyon reaches the vital air he swoons, and lies as one dead. The next *Canto* (which ends with the Knight's recovery and reunion with the Palmer, his appointed guide), begins with the following stanzas on the care of God for man, thus leading us to anticipate the happy ending.]

(FROM CANTO VIII)

I

And is there care in heaven? And is there
love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures bace,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is: else much more wretched were the
cace
Of men then beasts. But O! th' exceeding
grace 5
Of highest God that loves his creatures so,
And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed Angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe.

II

How oft do they their silver bowers leave, 10
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pineons cleave
The fitting skyes, like flying Pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and dewly
ward, 15
And their bright squadrons round about us
plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward.
O! why should heavenly God to men have such
regard?

THE COURTIER¹

(From *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, 1591)

Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court, to sue for had ywist,
That few have found, and manie one hath mist!
Full little knowest thou that hast not tride,
What hell it is in suing long to bide: 5

¹ Dove.

¹ The poem from which this extract is taken first appeared in a miscellaneous collection entitled *Complaints* (1591). It was in this year that Spenser returned to his home in Ireland, after a stay in London of some two years. This visit to England had been made under the encouragement of Raleigh, who, Spenser tells us, secured his admission to the queen. The poet gives us an account of this visit in his *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* (pub. 1596), but in the lines here given we have probably an insight into the real mood in which he left the court.

To loose good dayes, that might be better spent;
To wast long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to day, to be put back tomorrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;
To have thy Princes grace, yet want her
Peeres; 10
To have thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres;
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares;
To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dis-
paires;
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to
ronne,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne. 15
Unhappie wight, borne to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend!
Who ever leaves sweete home, where meane
estate
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
Findes all things needfull for contentment
meeke, 20
And will to court for shadowes vaine to seeke,
Or hope to gaine, himselfe will one dale crie,
That curse God send unto mine enemy!

PROTHALAMION¹

(1596)

Calm was the day, and through the trembling
air
Sweet-breathing Zephyrus did softly play,
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans beams, which then did glisten fair,
When I (whom sullen care, 5
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
In Princes Court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes, which still do fly away,
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,) 10
Walked forth to ease my pain
Along the shore of silver streaming Thames;
Whose ruddy² bank, the which his river hems,
Was painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meads adorned with dainty gems 15
Fit to deck maidens bowers
And crown their paramours
Against the bridal day,³ which is not long.
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

There, in a meadow by the river's side
A flock of Nymphs I chanced to spy 20
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untied,
As each had been a Bride;
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs entrayled curiously, 25
In which they gathered flowers to fill their
flasket,⁴
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously⁵
The tender stalks on high.

¹ Prothalamion (or Prothalamium), a marriage song; or as Spenser himself defines it, "A Spousal Verse." This song, the last complete poem of Spenser extant, was written in 1596, to celebrate the approaching marriage of "two honourable and vertuous ladies, the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Catherine Somerset."

² Ruddy.

³ In provision for the bridal-day, which is not far off.

⁴ Little basket.

⁵ Nimble, dextrously.

Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
 They gathered some, the Violet pallid blue, 30
 The little Daisy that at evening closes,
 The Virgin Lily, and the Primrose true,
 With store of vermeil^a Roses,
 To deck their Bridegroomes posies
 Against the bridal day, which was not long; 35
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swans of goodly hue
 Come softly swimming down along the Lee;⁷
 Two fairer birds I yet did never see;
 The snow which doth the top of Pindus strew,
 Did never whiter shew; 41
 Nor Jove himself, when he a Swan would be,
 For Love of Leda, whiter did appear;
 Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,
 Yet not so white as these, nor nothing near; 45
 So purely white they were,
 That e'en the gentle stream, the which them
 bare,
 Seem'd foul to them, and bade his billows spare
 To wet their silken feathers, lest they might
 Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair, 50
 And mar their beauties bright,
 That shone as heaven's light,
 Against their bridal day, which was not long.
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoons^a the Nymphs, which now had flowers
 their fill, 55
 Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
 As they came floating on the crystal flood;
 Whom when they saw, they stood amazed still
 Their wondering eyes to fill;
 Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fair, 60
 Of fowls so lovely, that they sure did deem
 Them heavenly born, or to be that same pair
 Which through the sky draw Venus' silver
 team;
 For sure they did not seem
 To be begot of any earthly seed, 65
 But rather Angels, or of Angels' breed;
 Yet were they bred of Somers-heat^b they say,
 In sweetest season when each flower and
 weed
 The earth did fresh array;
 So fresh they seem'd as day, 70
 E'en as their bridal day, which was not long.
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
 Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
 That to the sense did fragrant odours yield, 75
 All which upon those goodly birds they threw
 And all the waves did strew,
 That like old Peneus waters they did seem,
 When down along by pleasant Tempes shore,
 Scattered with flowers, through Thessaly they
 stream, 80

That they appear through lillies pleanteous
 store,
 Like a bride's chamber floor.
 Two of those Nymphs, meanwhile, two gar-
 lands bound
 Of freshest flowers which in that mead they
 found,
 The which presenting all in trim array, 85
 Their snowy foreheads therewithal they
 crowned,
 Whil'st one did sing this lay,
 Prepar'd against that day,
 Against their bridal day which was not long.
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my
 song. 90

"Ye gentle Birds! the world's fair ornament,
 And heaven's glory, whom this happy hour
 Doth lead unto your lovers' blissful bower,
 Joy may you have, and gentle hearts content
 Of your love's complement; 95
 And let fair Venus, that is Queen of Love,
 With her heart-quelling son upon you smile,
 Whose smile, they say, hath virtue to remove
 All love's dislike, and friendship's faulty guile
 For ever to assail;¹⁰ 100
 Let endless peace your steadfast hearts accord,
 And blessed plenty wait upon your board;
 And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,
 That fruitful issue may to you afford,
 Which may your foes confound, 105
 And make your joys redound
 Upon your bridal day, which is not long."
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

So ended she; and all the rest around
 To her redoubled that her undersong,¹¹ 110
 Which said their bridal day should not be long:
 And gentle Echo from the neighbour-ground
 Their accents did resound.
 So forth those joyous birds did pass along,
 Adown the Lee, that to them murmured low,
 As he would speak, but that he lacked a tongue,
 Yet did by signs his glad affection show, 117
 Making his stream run slow.
 And all the fowl which in his flood did dwell
 'Gan flock about these twain, that did excel 120
 The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend
 The lesser stars. So they enrang'd well,
 Did on those two attend,
 And did their best service lend
 Against their wedding day, which was not
 long: 125
 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to merry London came,
 To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
 That to me gave this life's first native source;
 Though from another place I take my name,
 An house¹² of ancient fame: 131

^a Vermilion-colored, red.

⁷ Apparently the river Lee, which flows into the Thames by Blackwall, opposite Greenwich.

^b Soon after, thereupon.

^a A pun on Somerset, the name of the prospective brides.

¹⁰ Absolve.

¹¹ The refrain of her song, the purport of which is given in the following line.

¹² Spenser claimed kinship with the Spencers of Althorpe, "the ancestors of the Spencers and Churchills of modern days."

There when they came, whereas those bricky
towers
The which on Thames' broad, aged back to
ride,

Where now the studious lawyers have their
bowers,
There whilom wont the Templar Knights to
bide, 135

Till they decayed through pride:
Next whereunto there stands a stately place,¹³
Where oft I gained gifts and goodly grace
Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless
case; 140

But ah! here fits not well
Old woes, but joys, to tell
Against the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer, 145
Great England's glory, and all the world's wide
wonder,

Whose dreadful name late through all Spain
did thunder,
And Hercules' two pillars standing near
Did make to quake and fear:

Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry! 150
That fillest England with thy triumph's fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,¹⁴
And endless happiness of thy own name,
That promiseth the same;

That through thy prowess, and victorious
arms, 155

Thy country may be freed from foreign harms;
And great Eliza's glorious name may ring
Through all the world, filled with thy wide
alarms,¹⁵

Which some brave muse may sing
To ages following, 160
Upon the bridal day, which is not long:

Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hair
In the Ocean's billows he hath bathed fair, 165
Descended to the river's open viewing,
With a great train ensuing.

Above the rest were goodly to be seen
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature
Beseeming well the bower of any queen, 170
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,

That like the twins of Jove they seemed in sight,
Which deck the baldrick of the heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the river's side, 175
Received those two fair brides, their love's de-
light;

Which, at the appointed tide,
Each one did make his bride
Against their bridal day, which is not long: 179

Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

¹³ A palace adjoining the Temple, formerly occupied by Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester (the "gentle lord" here referred to) and afterwards by the Earl of Essex, the "noble peer" alluded to in the next stanza.

¹⁴ The capture of Cadix, June 1596, by Raleigh, Lord Howard of Effingham, and Essex.

¹⁵ i. e. The alarm you excite.

SONNETS

(From *Amoretti*, 1595)

XL¹

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye lyken it;
When on each eyelid sweetly doe appeare
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Lykest it seemeth, in my simple wit, 5
Unto the fayre sunshine in somers day;
That, when a dreadfull storm away is flit,
Through the broad world doth spread his goodly
ray:

At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
And every beast that to his den was fled, 10
Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
And to thy light lift up their drouping hed.

So my storme-beaten hart likewise is cheared
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are
cleared.

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the strand;
But came the waves and washed it away:
Agayne, I wrote it with a second hand;
And came the tyde, and made my paynes his
pray.

"Vayne man," sayd she, "that doest in vayne
assay 5

A mortall thing so to immortalize;
For I myselve shall lyke to this decay,
And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize."
"Not so" (quod I); "let baser things devise
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame: 10

My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens wryte your glorious name;
Where, when as death shall all the world
subdew,

Our love shall live, and later life renew."

Sir Walter Raleigh

1552-1618

THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE PAS-
SIONATE SHEPHERD

(From *England's Helicon*, 1600)

If all the world and Love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pleasures might my passion move,
To live with thee, and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold, 5
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb,
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields 10
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancies spring but sorrows fall.

¹ XL and LXXV. These are from a series of eighty-eight sonnets entitled *Amoretti*, published together with the splendid *Epithalamion*, or marriage hymn, in 1595. The sonnets commemorate Spenser's courtship of, and the *Epithalamion* his marriage to, a certain Irish country girl whose Christian name was certainly Elizabeth, and whose last name (according to Grosart) was Boyle.

150 WYATT AND SURREY TO THE DEATH OF BEN JONSON

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten, 15
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy-buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee, and be thy love. 20

But could youth last, could love still breed,
Had joys no date, had age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

PILGRIM TO PILGRIM

As you came from the holy land
Of Walsinghame,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?

How shall I know your true love,
That have met many one,
As I went to the holy land,
That have come, that have gone?

She is neither white nor brown,
But as the heavens fair;
There is none hath a form so divine
In the earth or the air. 10

Such a one did I meet, good sir,
Such an angel-like face,
Who like a queen, like a nymph, did appear, 15
By her gait, by her grace.

She hath left me here all alone,
All alone, as unknown,
Who sometimes did me lead with herself,
And me loved as her own. 20

What's the cause that she leaves you alone,
And a new way doth take,
Who loved you once as her own,
And her joy did you make?

I have loved her all my youth,
And now old, as you see,
Love likes not the falling fruit
From the withered tree.

Know that love is a careless child,
And forgets promise past;
He is blind, he is deaf when he list,
And in faith never fast. 30

His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair
And is lost with a toy. 35

Of womankind such indeed is the love,
Or the word love abused,
Under which many childish desires
And conceits are excused. 40

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never old, never dead,
From itself never turning.

LINES WRITTEN THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS DEATH¹

Even such is time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with (Earth) and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
(When we have wandered all our ways), 5
Shuts up the story of our days:
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust!

John Lyly

1553-1606

APELLES' SONG

5 (From *Alexander and Campaspe*, 1584; acted
1581)

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses,—Cupid paid;
He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows:
Loses them too; then down he throws 5
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how);
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win. 10
At last he set her both his eyes;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love, has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

Sir Philip Sidney

1554-1586

SONNETS

(From *Astrophel and Stella*, c. 1591)

XXXI

25 With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the
skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eye 5
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks, thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of
wit? 10
35 Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth pos-
sess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

¹ Raleigh was executed Oct. 29th, 1618. These lines
are said to have been found in Raleigh's Bible.

George Peele
XXXIX—ON SLEEP

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;

With shield of proof, shield me from out the prease 5

Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;

I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.

Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed;

A chamber deaf of noise, and blind of light; 10

A rosy garland and a weary head:

And if these things, as being thine in right,

Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,

Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

A FAREWELL

Leave me, O Love! which reachest but to dust;

And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things:

Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;

What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might 5

To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,

Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,

That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide,

In this small course, which birth draws out to death, 10

And think how ill becometh him to slide,

Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.

Then farewell, World, thy uttermost I see,

Eternal Love, maintain thy life in Me!

Splendidis Longum Valedico Nugis¹

Thomas Lodge

1558–1625

A PROTESTATION

(From *Rosalind*, 1590)

First shall the heavens want starry light,

The seas be robbed of their waves;

The day want sun, and sun want bright,

The night want shade, the dead men graves; 5

The April flowers and leaf and tree,

Before I false my faith to thee.

First shall the tops of highest hills

By humble plains be overprided;¹

And poets scorn the Muses' quills,

And fish forsake the water glide: 10

And Iris loose her colored weed,

Before I fail thee at thy need.

¹ A long farewell to shining baubles.

¹ Overlooked.

First direful hate shall turn to peace,
And love relent in deep disdain;
And death his fatal stroke shall cease, 15
And envy pity every pain;
And pleasure mourn, and sorrow smile,
Before I talk of any guile.

First Time shall stay his stayless race,
And winter bless his brows with corn; 20
And snow bemoisten July's face,
And winter spring, and summer mourn;
Before my pen by help of fame,
Cease to recite thy sacred name.

PHILLIS

(From *Phillis Honoured with Pastoral Sonnets*, 1593)

My Phillis hath the morning sun

At first to look upon her.

And Phillis hath morn-waking birds

Her risings for to honour.

My Phillis hath prime-feathered flowers 5

That smile when she treads on them;

And Phillis hath a gallant flock

That leaps since she doth own them.

But Phillis hath so hard a heart 10

(Alas that she should have it),

As yields no mercy to desert

Nor grace to those that crave it:

Sweet sun, when thou lookest on

Pray her regard my moan.

Sweet birds, when you sing to her 15

To yield some pity woo her.

Sweet flowers, when as she treads on

Tell her her beauty deads one

And if in life her love she will agree me,¹

Pray her before I die she will come see me. 20

George Peele

c. 1558–c. 1598

SONG

(From *The Arraignment of Paris*, printed, 1584)

CENONE. Fair and fair, and twice so fair,

As fair as any may be;

The fairest shepherd on our green,

A love for any lady.

PARIS. Fair and fair, and twice so fair, 5

As fair as any may be;

Thy love is fair for thee alone,

And for no other lady.

CENONE. My love is fair, my love is gay,

As fresh as bin the flowers in May,

And of my love my roundelay, 11

My merry, merry, merry roundelay.

Concludes with Cupid's curse,—

They that do change old love for new,

Pray gods they change for worse! 15

¹ Will not (will) bring in agreement with me.

BOTH. Fair and fair, etc. (*repeated*)

ENONE. My love can pipe, my love can sing,
My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring
My merry, merry roundelays,
Amen to Cupid's curse!²⁰
They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!

HIS GOLDEN LOCKS TIME HATH TO SILVER TURNED

(From *Polyhymnia*, 1590)

His golden locks Time hath to silver turned—
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever
spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by in-
creasing!
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading
seen;⁵
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are Old Age his
alms:¹⁰
But, though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song:—
"Blessed be the hearts that wish my sovereign
well,¹⁵
Cursed be souls that think here any wrong!"
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,
To be your bedesman¹ now that was your
knight.

ILLUSTRIOUS ENGLAND, ANCIENT SEAT OF KINGS

(From *Edward Ist*, 1593)

Illustrious England, ancient seat of kings,
Whose chivalry hath royalized thy fame,
That sounding bravely through terrestrial vale,
Proclaiming conquests, spoils, and victories,
Rings glorious echoes through the farthest
world;⁵
What warlike nation, trained in feats of arms,
What barbarous people, stubborn, or untamed,
What climate under the meridian signs,¹
Or frozen zone under his brumal plague,²
Ere have not quaked and trembled at the
name¹⁰
Of Britain and her mighty conquerors?
Her neighbour realms, as Scotland, Denmark,
France,

¹ *Bedesman* or *bedsman*, one who prays, for himself or, more especially, for another.

² Under the signs of the Zodiac, i. e. under the heaven.

³ The firmament was divided into four quarters, each of which was called a *plage*, or region; the *brumal* (or *inty*) *plage*, was the wintry quarter above the frozen zone.

Awed with her deeds and jealous of her arms,
Have begged offensive and defensive leagues.
Thus Europe, rich and mighty in her kings,¹⁵
Hath feared brave England, dreadful in her
kings.

And now, t' eternise Albion's champions
Equivalent with Trojans' ancient fame,
Comes lovely Edward from Jerusalem,
Veering before the wind, ploughing the sea;²⁰
His stretched sails filled with the breath of men
That through the world admires his manliness.
And, lo, at last arrived in Dover-road,
Longshanks,³ your king, your glory, and our
son,

With troops of conquering lords, and warlike
knights,²⁵
Like bloody-crested Mars, o'erlooks his host,
Higher than all his army by the head,
Marching along as bright as Phoebus eyes!
And we, his mother, shall behold our son,
And England's peers shall see their sovereign.³⁰

George Chapman

c. 1559–1634

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE

(From translation of Homer's *Iliad*, Bk. VI.
1610)

He answer'd: "Helen, do not seek to make
me sit with thee;
I must not stay, though well I know thy
honour'd love of me.
... I myself will now go home, and see
My household, my dear wife and son, that little
hope of me;
For, sister, 'tis without my skill, if I shall ever-
more⁵
Return, and see them, or to earth, her right in
me, restore.
The Gods may stoop me by the Greeks." This
said, he went to see
The virtuous princess, his true wife, white-
arm'd Andromache.
She, with her infant son and maid, was climb'd
the tow'r, about
The sight of him that sought for her, weeping
and crying out.¹⁰
Hector, not finding her at home, was going
forth; retir'd;
Stood in the gate; her woman call'd, and
curiously inquir'd
Where she was gone; bade tell him true, if she
were gone to see
His sisters, or his brothers' wives; or whether
she should be
At temple with the other dames, t' implore
Minerva's ruth.¹⁵

Her woman answer'd: Since he ask'd, and
urg'd so much the truth,
The truth was she was neither gone, to see his
brothers' wives,

³ *Longshanks*: Edward Ist was given this surname on account of his unusual height.

His sisters, nor t' implore the ruth of Pallas on
 their lives;
 But she (advertis'd of the bane Troy suffer'd,
 and how vast
 Conquest herself had made for Greece) like
 one distraught, made haste 20
 To ample Ilion with her son, and nurse, and all
 the way
 Mourn'd, and dissolv'd in tears for him. Then
 Hector made no stay,
 But trod her path, and through the streets,
 magnificently built,
 All the great city pass'd, and came where,
 seeing how blood was spilt,
 Andromache might see him come; who made as
 he would pass 25
 The ports without saluting her, not knowing
 where she was.
 She, with his sight, made breathless haste, to
 meet him; she, whose grace
 Brought him withal so great a dow'r; she that
 of all the race
 Of King Aëtion only lived: Aëtion, whose house
 stood
 Beneath the mountain Placius, environ'd with
 the wood 30
 Of Theban Hypoplace, being court to the
 Cilician land.
 She ran to Hector, and with her, tender of
 heart and hand,
 Her son, borne in his nurse's arms; when, like a
 heav'nly sign,
 Compact of many golden stars, the princely
 child did shine,
 Whom Hector call'd Scamandrius; but whom
 the town did name 35
 Astyanax, because his sire did only prop the
 same.
 Hector, though grief bereft his speech, yet
 smil'd upon his joy.
 Andromache cried out, mix'd hands, and to the
 strength of Troy
 Thus wept forth her affection: "O noblest in
 desire,
 Thy mind, inflam'd with others' good, will set
 thyself on fire: 40
 Nor pitiest thou thy son, nor wife, who must
 thy widow be,
 If now thou issue; all the field will only run on
 thee.
 Better my shoulders underwent the earth, than
 thy decease:
 For then would earth bear joys no more; then
 comes the black increase
 Of griefs (like Greeks on Ilion). Alas! what one
 survives 45
 To be my refuge? One black day bereft seven
 brothers' lives,
 By stern Achilles; by his hand my father
 breathed his last,
 His high-wall'd rich Cilician Thebes sack'd by
 him, and laid waste;
 The royal body yet he left unspoil'd; religion
 charm'd
 That act of spoil; and all in fire he burn'd him
 complete arm'd; 50

Built over him a royal tomb; and to the monu-
 ment
 He left of him, th' Oreades (that are the high
 descent
 Of *Egis*-bearing Jupiter) another of their
 own
 Did add to it, and set it round with elms; by
 which is shown,
 In theirs, the barrenness of death; yet might it
 serve beside 55
 To shelter the sad monument from all the
 ruffinous pride
 Of storms and tempests, us'd to hurt things of
 that noble kind.
 The short life yet my mother liv'd he sav'd, and
 serv'd his mind
 With all the riches of the realm; which not
 enough esteem'd,
 He kept her pris'ner; whom small time, but
 much more wealth, redeem'd; 60
 And she, in sylvan Hypoplace, Cicilia rul'd
 again,
 But soon was over-rul'd by death; Diana's
 chaste disdain
 Gave her a lance, and took her life. Yet, all
 these gone from me,
 Thou amply render'st all; thy life makes still
 my father be,
 My mother, brothers; and besides thou art my
 husband too, 65
 Most lov'd, most worthy. Pity then, dear love,
 and do not go,
 For thou gone, all these go again; pity our com-
 mon joy,
 Lest, of a father's patronage, the bulwark of all
 Troy,
 Thou leav'st him a poor widow's charge. Stay,
 stay then, in this tow'r,
 And call up to the wild fig-tree all thy retir'd
 pow'r; 70
 For there the wall is easiest scal'd, and fittest
 for surprise,
 And there, th' Ajaces, Idomen, th' Atrides,
 Diomed, thrice
 Have both survey'd and made attempt; I
 know not if induc'd
 By some wise augur, or the fact was naturally
 infus'd
 Into their wits, or courages." To this, great
 Hector said: 75
 "Be well assur'd, wife, all these things in my
 kind cares are weigh'd.
 But what a shame, and fear, it is to think how
 Troy would scorn
 (Both in her husbands, and her wives, whom
 long-train'd gowns adorn)
 That I should cowardly fly off! The spirit I
 first did breath
 Did never teach me that; much less, since the
 contempt of death 80
 Was settled in me, and my mind knew what a
 worthy was,
 Whose office is to lead in fight, and give no
 danger pass
 Without improvement. In this fire must
 Hector's trial shine;

Here must his country, father, friends, be, in
him, made divine.
And such a stormy day shall come (in mind and
soul I know) 85
When sacred Troy shall shed her tow'rs, for
tears of overthrow;
When Priam, all his birth and pow'r, shall in
those tears be drown'd. *libtool.com.cn*
But neither Troy's posterity so much my soul
doth wound,
Priam, nor Hecuba herself, nor all my brothers'
woes,
(Who though so many, and so good, must all be
food for foes) 90
As thy sad state; when some rude Greek shall
lead thee weeping hence,
These free days clouded, and a night of captive
violence
Loading thy temples, out of which thine eyes
must never see,
But spin the Greek wives' webs of task, and
their fetch-water be
To Argos, from Messeides, or clear Hyperia's
spring: 95
Which howsoever thou abhorr'st, Fate's such a
shrewish thing
She will be mistress; whose curs'd hands, when
they shall crush out cries
From thy oppressions (being beheld by other
enemies)
Thus they will nourish thy extremes: 'This
dame was Hector's wife,
A man that, at the wars of Troy, did breathe
the worthiest life 100
Of all their army.' This again will rub thy
fruitful wounds,
To miss the man that to thy hands could give
such narrow bounds.
But that day shall not wound mine eyes; the
solid heap of night
Shall interpose, shall stop mine ears against
thy complaints, and plight."

This said, he reach'd to take his son; who, of
his arms afraid, 105
And then the horse-hair plume, with which he
was so overlaid,
Nodded so horribly, he cling'd back to his nurse,
and cried.
Laughter affected his great sire, who doff'd, and
laid aside
His fearful helm, that on the earth cast round
about it light;
Then took and kiss'd his loving son, and
(balancing his weight 110
In dancing him) these loving vows to living
Jove he us'd,
And all the other bench of Gods: "O you that
have infus'd
Soul to this infant, now set down this blessing
on his star:—
Let his renown be clear as mine; equal his
strength in war;
And make his reign so strong in Troy, that
years to come may yield 115

His facts this fame, when, rich in spoils, he
leaves the conquer'd field
Sown with his slaughters: 'These high deeds
exceed his father's worth!'
And let this echo'd praise supply the comforts
to come forth
Of his kind mother with my life." This said,
th' heroic sire
Gave him his mother; whose fair eyes fresh
streams of love's salt fire 120
Billow'd on her soft cheeks, to hear the last of
Hector's speech,
In which his vows compris'd the sum of all he
did beseech
In her wish'd comfort. So she took into her
od'rous breast
Her husband's gift; who, mov'd to see her
heart so much oppress'd,
He dried her tears, and thus desir'd: "Afflict
me not, dear wife, 125
With these vain griefs. He doth not live, that
can disjoin my life
And this firm bosom, but my fate; and Fate,
whose wings can fly?
Noble, ignoble, Fate controls. Once born, the
best must die.
Go home, and set thy housewif'ry on these
extremes of thought;
And drive war from them with thy maids; keep
them from doing nought. 130
These will be nothing; leave the cares of war to
men, and me
In whom, of all the Ilion race, they take their
high'st degree."

On went his helm; his princess home, half
cold with kindly fears;
When every fear turn'd back her looks, and
every look shed tears.

ZEUS SENDS HERMES TO CALYPSO

(From translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, Bk. V.
1614)

Thus charged he; nor Argicides denied,
But to his feet his fair wing'd shoes he tied,
Ambrosian, golden; that in his command
Put either sea, or the unmeasured land,
With pace as speedy as a puff of wind. 5
Then up his rod went, with which he declined
The eyes of any waker, when he pleased,
And any sleeper, when he wish'd, diseased.
This took; he stoop'd Pieria, and thence
Glid through the air, and Neptune's confluence,
Kiss'd as he flew, and check'd the waves as
light 11
As any sea-mew in her fishing flight
Her thick wings sousing in the savoury seas.
Like her, he pass'd a world of wilderness;
But when the far-off isle he touch'd, he went 15
Up from the blue sea to the continent,
And reach'd the ample cavern of the Queen,
Whom he within found; without seldom seen.
A sun-like fire upon the hearth did flame;
The matter precious, and divine the frame; 20

Of cedar cleft and incense was the pile,
That breathed an odour round about the isle.
Herself was seated in an inner room,
Whom sweetly sing he heard, and at her loom,
About a curious web, whose yarn she threw 25
In with a golden shuttle.¹ A grove grew
In endless spring about her cavern round,
With odorous cypress, pines, and poplars,
crown'd,

Where hawks, sea-owls, and long-tongued
bittours² bred,

And other birds their shady pinions spread; 30
All fowls maritimal; none roosted there,
But those whose labours in the waters were.

A vine did all the hollow cave embrace,
Still green, yet still ripe bunches gave it brace.
Four fountains, one against another, pour'd 35
Their silver streams; and meadows all enflour'd
With sweet balm-gentle, and blue violets hid,
That deck'd the soft breasts of each fragrant
mead.

Should any one, though he immortal were,
Arrive and see the sacred objects there, 40
He would admire them, and be over-joy'd;
And so stood Hermes' ravish'd powers employ'd.

Robert Greene

1560-1592

CONTENT

(From *Farewell to Folly*, 1591)

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content,

The quiet mind is richer than a crown,

Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent,

The poor estate scorns fortune's angry
frown:

Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep,
such bliss, 5

Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss,

The homely¹ house that harbours quiet rest,

The cottage that affords no pride nor care,

The mean that grees² with country music best,

The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare.

Obscur'd life sets down a type of bliss: 11

A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

Samuel Daniel

1562-1619

SONNET LI

(From *Delia*, Containing certain Sonnets, 1592)

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,

Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:

Relieve my languish and restore the light;

With dark forgetting of my care, return, 5

And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:

¹ Shuttle.

² Bitterns.

³ Homelike.

⁴ The middle state, or modest circumstances. That
best agrees, etc.

Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease dreams, the images of day desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow; 10
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

PROPHECY OF LITERATURE IN AMERICA

(From *Musophilus*, 1599)

Pow'r above powers! O heavenly Eloquence!
That with the strong rein of commanding
words

Dost manage, guide, and master th' eminence
Of men's affections, more than all their swords!
Shall we not offer to thy excellence, 5
The richest treasure that our wit affords?

Thou that canst do much more with one poor
pen,

Than all the pow'rs of princes can effect;
And draw, divert, dispose and fashion men,
Better than force or rigour can direct! 10
Should we this ornament of glory then,
As th' unmaterial fruit of shades, neglect?

Or should we careless come behind the rest
In power of words, that go before in worth;
When as our accent's equal to the best, 15
Is able greater wonders to bring forth?
When all that ever hotter spir'ts expressed,
Comes better'd by the patience of the north.

And who (in time) knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue? To what strange
shores 20

This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
T' enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in th' unform'd Occident,
May come refin'd with th' accents that are
ours?

Or who can tell for what great work in hand 25
The greatness of our style is now ordain'd?

What pow'rs it shall bring in, what spir'ts
command?

What thoughts let out; what humours keep
restrain'd?

What mischief it may pow'rfully withstand;
And what fair ends may thereby be attain'd? 30

TO THE LADY MARGARET, COUNTESS OF CUMBERLAND

He that of such a height hath built his mind,
And rear'd the dwelling of his thoughts so
strong,

As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame
Of his resolved powers; nor all the wind
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong 5
His settled peace, or to disturb the same:
What a fair seat hath he, from whence he may
The boundless wastes and wilds of man survey!

And with how free an eye doth he look down
Upon these lower regions of turmoil? 10
Where all the storms of passions mainly beat
On flesh and blood: where honour, power,
renown,

Are only gay afflictions, golden toil;
Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet. 15
As frailty doth; and only great doth seem
To little minds, who do it so esteem.

He looks upon the mightiest monarch's wars
But only as on stately robberies;
Where evermore the fortune that prevails
Must be the right: the ill-succeeding mars 20
The fairest and the best-fac'd enterprise.
Great pirate Pompey lesser pirates quails:
Justice, he sees (as if seduced) still
Conspires with power, whose cause must not be
ill.

He sees the face of right t' appear as manifold 25
As are the passions of uncertain man;
Who puts it in all colours, all attires,
To serve his ends, and make his courses hold.
He sees, that let deceit work what it can,
Plot and contrive base ways to high desires; 30
That the all-guiding Providence doth yet
All disappoint, and mocks the smoke of wit.

Nor is he mov'd with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Pow'r, that proudly sits on others' crimes: 35
Charg'd with more crying sins than those he
checks.

The storms of sad confusion, that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can 40
fall. . . .

And whereas none rejoice more in revenge;
Than women use to do; yet you well know,
That wrong is better check'd by being con-
temn'd,

Than being pursu'd; leaving him t' avenge,
To whom it appertains. Wherein you show 45
How worthily your clearness hath condemn'd
Base malediction, living in the dark,
That at the rays of goodness still doth bark.

Knowing the heart of man is set to be
The centre of this world, about the which 50
These revolutions of disturbances
Still roll; where all th' aspects of misery
Predominate: whose strong effects are such,
As he must bear, being pow'rless to redress:
And that unless above himself he can 55
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man.

And how turmoil'd they are that level lie
With earth, and cannot lift themselves from
thence;

That never are at peace with their desires,
But work beyond their years; and ev'n deny 60
Dotage her rest, and hardly will dispense
With death. That when ability expires,
Desire lives still—So much delight they have,
To carry toil and travel to the grave.

TO HENRY WRIOTHESLY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

Non ferat ullum ictum illasa felicitas¹

He who hath never war'd with misery,
Nor ever tugg'd with fortune and distress,
Hath had n' occasion, nor no field to try
The strength and forces of his worthiness.
Those parts of judgment which felicity 5
Keeps as conceal'd, affliction must express;
And only men show their abilities,
And what they are, in their extremities.

The world had never taken so full note
Of what thou art, had'st thou not been un-
done; 10

And only thy affliction hath begot
More fame, than thy best fortunes could have
done:

For ever by adversity are wrought
The greatest works of admiration;
And all the fair examples of renown, 15
Out of distress and misery are grown.

Mutius the fire, the tortures Regulus,
Did make the miracles of faith and zeal;
Exile renown'd and grac'd Rutilius:
Imprisonment and poison did reveal 20
The worth of Socrates. Fabritius'
Poverty did grace that commonweal,
More than all Sylla's riches got with strife;
And Cato's death did vie with Caesar's life.

Not to b' unhappy is unhappiness, 25
And mis'ry not to have known misery:
For the best way unto discretion is
The way that leads us by adversity,
And men are better show'd what is amiss,
By th' expert finger of calamity, 30
Than they can be with all that fortune brings,
Who never shows them the true face of things.

How could we know that thou couldst have
endur'd,
With a repos'd cheer, wrong, and disgrace;
And with a heart and countenance assur'd, 35
Have look'd stern Death and horror in the face!
How should we know thy soul had been secur'd,
In honest counsels, and in way unbase;
Had'st thou not stood to show us what thou
wer't,
By thy affliction that descry'd thy heart! 40

It is not but the tempest that doth show
The seaman's cunning; but the field that tries
The captain's courage: and we come to know
Best what men are, in their worst jeopardies.
For lo! how many have we seen to grow 45
To high renown from lowest miseries,
Out of the hands of Death? And many a one
T' have been undone, had they not been un-
done?

¹ Unbroken prosperity is unable to bear any evil stroke
Seneca, *De Providentia*.

He that endures for what his conscience knows
 Not to be ill, doth from a patience high 50
 Look only on the cause whereto he owes
 Those sufferings, not on his misery:
 The more he 'endures, the more his glory grows,
 Which never grows from imbecility:
 Only the best compos'd, and worthiest hearts, 55
 God sets to act the hard'st and constant'st
 parts.

Michael Drayton

1563-1631

SONNET LXI

(From *Idea's Mirror*, 1594)

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,
 Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
 And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
 Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows, 5
 And when we meet at any time again,
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
 When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies, 10
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes:
 Now if thou would'st, when all have given
 him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet re-
 cover.

AGINCOURT

TO MY FRIENDS THE CAMBER-BRITONS¹ AND
 THEIR HARP

(From *Poems, Lyrics and Pastorals*, 1605?)

Fair stood the wind for France,
 When we our sails advance,
 And now to prove our chance
 Longer not tarry,
 But put unto the main, 5
 At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
 With all his warlike train,
 Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
 Furnished in warlike sort, 10
 Coming toward Agincourt
 In happy hour,
 Skirmishing day by day
 With those oppose his way,
 Where as the gen'ral lay, 15
 With all his power:

Which in his height of pride,
 As Henry to deride,
 His ransom to provide
 Unto him sending; 20

¹ The Britons of Cambria, or Wales, as distinguished from the Britons of Cornwall and Armorica. The harp was intimately associated with the Welsh poetry as it was with that of Celtic Ireland.

Which he neglects the while,
 As from a nation vile,
 Yet with an angry smile,
 Their fall portending;

And, turning to his men, 25
 Quoth famous Henry then,
 "Though they to one be ten,
 Be not amazed;
 Yet have we well begun,
 Battles so bravely won, 30
 Ever more to the sun
 By fame are raised.

"And for myself," quoth he,
 "This my full rest shall be,
 England ne'er mourn for me, 35
 Nor more esteem me.
 Victor I will remain,
 Or on this earth be slain,
 Never shall she sustain
 Loss to redeem me. 40

"Poyters and Cressy tell,
 When most their pride did swell,
 Under our swords they fell,
 No less our skill is 45
 Than when our grandsire great,
 Claiming the regal seat,
 In many a warlike feat
 Lopp'd the French lilics."

The Duke of York² so dread,
 The eager vaward led; 50
 With the main Henry sped,
 Amongst his henchmen.³
 Excester had the rear,
 A braver man not there,
 And now preparing were 55
 For the false Frenchman,

And ready to be gone,
 Armor on armor shone,
 Drum unto drum did groan,
 To hear was wonder; 60
 That with the cries they make
 The very earth did shake,
 Trumpet to trumpet spake,
 Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became, 65
 O noble Erpingham,⁴
 Thou did'st the signal frame
 Unto the forces;
 When from a meadow by,
 Like a storm suddenly, 70
 The English archery
 Stuck the French horses.

The Spanish yew so strong,
 Arrows a cloth-yard long,
 That like to serpents stong, 75
 Piercing the wether;

² Edward, second Duke of York, and grandson of Edward III.

³ Followers.

⁴ Sir Thomas Erpingham, "who threw up his truncheon as a signal to the English forces, who lay in ambush, to advance."

None from his death now starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts
Stuck close together. 80

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbows⁶ drew,
And on the French they flew:
No man was tardy;
Arms from the shoulders sent, 85
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,
These were men hardy.

When now that noble king,
His broad sword brandishing, 90
Into the host did fling,
As to o'erwhelm it;
Who many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent 95
Bruised his helmet.

Gloster⁸ that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood,
With his brave brother, 100
Clarence, in steel most bright,
That yet a maiden knight,
Yet in this furious fight
Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade, 105
Oxford the foes invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby 110
Bear them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.

On happy Crispin day⁷
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay 115
To England to carry;
O when shall Englishmen,
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry? 120

FROM THE "VIRGINIAN VOYAGE"

You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your countries name,
That honour still pursue,
Go, and subdue, 5
Whilst loit' ring hinds
Lurke here at home with shame.

Britons, you stay too long,
Quickly aboard bestow you,
And with a merry gale
Swell your stretch'd sail, 10
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you.

Your course securely steer,
West and by south forth keep,
Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals, 15
When Eolus scowls,
You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And cheerfully at sea,
Success you still intice, 20
To get the pearl and gold,
And ours to hold,
Virginia,
Earth's only paradise. . . .

When as the luscious smell
Of that delicious land,
Above the seas that flows,
The clear wind throws, 45
Your hearts to swell
Approaching the dear strand;

In kenning¹ of the shore
(Thanks to God first given),
O you the happy 'st men, 50
Be frolic then,
Let cannons roar,
Frighting the wide heaven.

And in regions far
Such heroes bring ye forth, 55
As those from whom we came,
And plant our name
Under that starre
Not known unto our North.

Christopher Marlowe

1564-1593

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

(In *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599, enlarged
form in *England's Helicon*, 1600)

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves,¹ hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks, 5
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies, 10
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

¹ In sight, or view.

¹ Groves is here a dissyllable.

⁶ Swords. From Bilboa in Spain, a town famous for its blades.

⁸ Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of the king. Thomas, Duke of Clarence, alluded to here as Clarence, was also the King's brother.

⁷ The Feast of Crispin, Saint and martyr, which falls on Oct. 25th.

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold; 15

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
An if these pictures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love. 20

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:²
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

PASSAGES FROM THE DRAMAS

AMBITION

(From *Tamburlaine¹ the Great*, Pt. II. Pub. 1590)

Nature that framed us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,²
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world, 5
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all, 10
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

TAMBURLAINE TO THE SUBJECT KINGS¹

(From the same, Act IV. iii.)

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!
What! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine,
But from Asphaltis, where I conquered you, 5
To Byron here, where thus I honour you?
The horse that guide the golden eye of Heaven,
And blow the morning from their nosterils,
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honoured in their governor, 10
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.
The headstrong jades of Thrace Alcides tamed,
That King Egeus fed with human flesh,
And made so wanton, that they knew their
strengths,

¹ *Tamburlaine*, or *Tamerlaine*, i. e. the Tartar conqueror *Timur* or *Timour* (1333–1405), who subdued Persia, central Asia, and finally a great part of India. The first part of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* was acted in 1587.

² Rule.

¹ We must imagine Tamburlaine, in this scene, standing in his chariot, which is drawn by the conquered Kings of Trebison and Syria. The Kings have bits in their mouths, and Tamburlaine drives them before him, lashing them with his whip.

Were not subdued with valour more divine 15
Than you by this unconquered arm of mine.
To make you fierce, and fit my appetite,
You shall be fed with flesh as raw as blood,
And drink in pails the strongest muscadell;
If you can live with it, then live, and draw 20
My chariot swifter than the racking clouds;
If not, then die like beasts, and fit for naught
But perches for the black and fatal ravens,
Thus am I right the highest scourge of Jove;
And see the figure of my dignity 25
By which I hold my name and majesty!

FAUSTUS' VISION OF HELEN

(From *Doctor Faustus*, Pub. 1604)

Was this the face that launched a thousand
ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium!
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul! see where it flies;
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again. 5
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sacked;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus, 10
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest:
Yea I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars; 15
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appeared to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour! 20

FAUSTUS FULFILS HIS COMPACT WITH THE DEVIL

(From the same, Act V. sc. IV.)

Oh, Faustus!
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still you ever-moving spheres of heaven,¹
That time may cease, and midnight never
come. 5
Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul.
O lente² lente currite noctis equi! 10
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will
strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be
damned.
Oh, I'll leap up to heaven!—Who pulls me
down?
See where Christ's blood streams in the firma-
ment:

¹ The transparent spheres which, according to the Ptolomaic system of astronomy envelope and move about the earth.

² O run slowly, slowly, ye coursers of night.

One drop of blood will save me: oh, my Christ!
 Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ;
 Yet will I call on him. Oh, spare me Lucifer!—
 Where is it now?—'tis gone!

And see, a threatening arm, an angry brow! 19
 Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven!
 No!

Then will I headlong run into the earth:
 Gape, earth! —O no, it will not harbour me.
 You stars that reigned at my nativity, 25
 Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
 Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
 Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud;
 That, when ye vomit forth into the air
 My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths;
 But let my soul mount and ascend to heaven. 31

(The clock strikes the half hour.)

Oh, half the hour is past, 'till all be past anon.
 Oh! if my soul must suffer for my sin,
 Impose some end to my incessant pain.

Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years— 35
 A hundred thousand—and at last be saved:
 No end is limited to damnèd souls.

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
 Oh! Pythagorus^a Metempsychosis! 40

Were that (but) true; this soul should fly from
 me,

And I be changed into some brutish beast.
 All beasts are happy, for when they die
 Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
 But mine must live still to be plagued in hell. 45
 Cursed be the parents that engendered me!
 No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
 That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.

(The clock strikes twelve.)

It strikes, it strikes! now body, turn to air,
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell. 50

(Thunder and rain.)

O soul! be changed into small water-drops,
 And fall into the ocean; ne'er be found.

Enter the Devils

Oh! mercy, heaven, look not so fierce on me!
 Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!—
 Ugly hell, gape not!—Come not, Lucifer! 55
 I'll burn my books!—Oh, Mephistophilis!

LEANDER SEES HERO AT THE FEAST AT SESTOS

(From Hero and Leander)

The men of wealthy Sestos every year, 91
 For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,
 Rose-cheeked Adonis, kept a solemn feast;
 Thither resorted many a wandering guest
 To meet their loves: such as had none at all, 95
 Came lovers home from this great festival;
 For every street, like to a firmament,
 Glistered with breathing stars, who, where they
 went,

Frighted the melancholy earth, which deemed
 Eternal heaven to burn, for so it seemed, 100
 As if another Phaeton had got
 The guidance of the sun's rich chariot.

But, far above the loveliest, Hero shined,
 And stole away the enchanted gazer's mind;
 For the sea-nymph's inveigling harmony, 105
 So was her beauty to the standers by;
 Not that night-wandering, pale, and watery
 star

(When yawning dragons draw her thirling¹ car
 From Latmus' mount up to the gloomy sky,
 Where, crowned with blazing light and maj-
 esty, 110

She proudly sits) more over-rides the flood
 Than she the hearts of those that near her stood.
 Even as when gaudy nymphs pursue the chase,
 Wretched Ixion's shaggy-footed race,
 Incensed with savage heat, gallop amain 115
 From steep pine-bearing mountains to the
 plain,

So ran the people forth to gaze upon her,
 And all that viewed her were enamoured on her:
 And as in fury of a dreadful fight,
 Their fellows being slain or put to flight, 120
 Poor soldiers stand with fear of death dread-
 strooken,

So at her presence all surprised and taken,²
 Await the sentence of her scornful eyes;
 He whom she favours lives; the other dies:
 There might you see one sigh; another rage; 125
 And some, their violent passions to assuage,
 Compile sharp satires; but, alas, too late!
 For faithful love will never turn to hate;
 And many, seeing great princes were denied,
 Pined as they went, and thinking on her
 died. 130

On this feast-day—oh, cursed day and hour!—
 Went Hero, thorough Sestos, from her tower
 To Venus' temple, where unhappily,
 As after chanced, they did each other spy.

So fair a church as this had Venus none: 135
 The walls were of discoloured jasper-stone,
 Wherein was Proteus carved; and over-head
 A lively vine of green sea-agate spread,
 Where by one hand light-headed Bacchus hung,
 And with the other wine from grapes out-
 wrung. 140

Of crystal shining fair the pavement was;
 The town of Sestos called it Venus' glass. . . .

There Hero sacrificing turtles' blood, 158
 Veiled to the ground, veiling her eyelids close;
 And modestly they opened as she rose: 160
 Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head;
 And thus Leander was enamoured.
 Stone-still he stood, and evermore he gazed,
 Till with the fire, that from his countenance
 blazed,

Relenting gentle Hero's heart was strook: 165
 Such force and virtue hath an amorous look.
 It lies not in our power to love or hate,
 For will in us is over-ruled by fate,
 When two are stript, long ere the course begin,
 We wish that one should lose, the other win; 170

¹ Quivering.

² Captured, taken captive.

^a According to the doctrine of *Metempsychosis*, taught by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras and others, souls passed after death, either into the body of an animal, or of some human being, in reincarnation. This is sometimes called "the transmigration of souls."

And one especially do we affect
 Of two gold ingots, like in each respect:
 The reason no man knows; let it suffice,
 What we behold is censured* by our eyes.
 Where both deliberate, the love is slight: 175
 Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?

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William Shakespeare

1564-1616

SONGS

SILVIA

(From *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, acted 1592-93)

Who is Silvia? what is she, 4
 That all our swains commend her? 3
 Holy, fair, and wise is she, 4
 The heaven such grace did lend her, 3
 That she might admired be. 5

Is she kind as she is fair?
 For beauty lives with kindness:
 Love doth to her eyes repair,
 To help him of his blindness;
 And, being help'd, inhabits there. 10

Then to Silvia let us sing,
 That Silvia is excelling:
 She excels each mortal thing,
 Upon the dull earth dwelling:
 To her let us garlands bring. 15

FAIRY SONG

(From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1593-4)

Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough briar,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
 I do wander everywhere, 5
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;
 And I serve the fairy queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green:
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
 In their gold coats spots you see; 10
 Those be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours:
 I must go seek some dew-drops here,
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

YOU SPOTTED SNAKES, WITH DOUBLE TONGUE

(From the same)

You spotted snakes, with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts, and blind-worms do no wrong;
 Come not near our fairy queen:

* Judged, estimated.

Chorus

Philomel, with melody 5
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
 Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby. 10

II

Weaving spiders, come not here:
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence:
 Beetles black, approach not near;
 Worm, nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus

Philomel, with melody, etc.

FAIRIES SONG

(From the same)

Now the hungry lion roars,
 And the wolf howls the moon;
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
 All with weary task fordone. 5
 Now the wasted brands do glow,
 Whilst the scritch-owl, scritch'ing loud,
 Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night,
 That the graves, all gaping wide, 10
 Every one lets forth his sprite,
 In the church-way paths to glide:
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecate's team,
 From the presence of the sun, 15
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic; not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
 I am sent with broom before,
 To sweep the dust behind the door. 20

Through the house give glimmering light,
 By the dead and drowsy fire;
 Every elf, and fairy sprite,
 Hop as light as bird from briar;
 And this ditty, after me, 25
 Sing and dance it trippingly.
 First, rehearse this song by rote:
 To each word a warbling note,
 Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
 Will we sing, and bless this place. 30

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

(From *As You Like It*, acted 1599)

Under the greenwood tree
 Who loves to lie with me,
 And turn his merry note
 Unto the sweet bird's throat,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither:
 Here shall he see 6
 No enemy

But winter and rough weather.
 Who doth ambition shun
 And loves to live i' the sun, 10
 Seeking the food he eats
 And pleas'd with what he gets,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither:
 Here shall he see
 No enemy 15
 But winter and rough weather.

O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING

(From *Twelfth Night*, c. 1601)

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
 O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
 That can sing both high and low:
 Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
 Journeys end in lovers' meeting, 5
 Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter:
 Present mirth hath present laughter;
 What's to come is still unsure:
 In delay there lies no plenty; 10
 Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
 Youth's a stuff will not endure.

TAKE, OH, TAKE THOSE LIPS AWAY

(From *Measure for Measure*, 1603)

Take, oh take those lips away,
 That so sweetly were forsworn;
 And those eyes, the break of day,
 Lights that do mislead the morn;
 But my kisses bring again, bring again. 5
 Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in vain.

HARK, HARK, THE LARK

(From *Cymbeline*, 1609)

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
 And Phœbus 'gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chalic'd flowers that lies;
 And winking Mary-buds¹ begin to ope their
 golden eyes; 5
 With everything that pretty is—My lady sweet,
 arise: Arise, arise.

DIRGE

(From the same)

Fear no more the heat of the sun
 Nor the furious winter's rages;
 Thou thy worldly task hast done,
 Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages: 5
 Golden lads and girls all must,
 As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

¹ Marigold.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
 Thou art past the tyrants' stroke;
 Care no more to clothe, and eat;
 To thee the reed is as the oak: 10
 The sceptre, learning, physic, must
 All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the light'ning flash;
 Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
 Fear not slander, censure rash;
 Thou hast finished joy and moan: 15
 All lovers young, all lovers must
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.
 No exorciser harm thee!
 Nor no witchcraft charm thee! 20
 Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
 Nothing ill come near thee!
 Quiet consummation have;
 And renowned be thy grave!

A SEA DIRGE

(From *The Tempest*, 1610)

Full fathom five thy father lies;
 Of his bones are coral made;
 Those are pearls that were his eyes:
 Nothing of him that doth fade, 5
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange.
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
 Ding-dong.
 Hark! now I hear them—Ding-dong bell.

ARIEL'S SONG

(From the same)

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
 In a cowslip's bell I lie;
 There I couch when owls do cry.
 On the bat's back I do fly 5
 After summer merrily.
 Merrily, merrily shall I live now
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

(From *The Passionate Pilgrim*, pub. 1599)

Crabbed age and youth
 Cannot live together;
 Youth is full of pleasance;
 Age is full of care; 5
 Youth like summer morn,
 Age like winter weather;
 Youth like summer brave;
 Age like winter bare.
 Youth is full of sport,
 Age's breath is short, 10
 Youth is nimble; age is lame.
 Youth is hot and bold,
 Age is weak and cold;
 Youth is wild, and age is tame. 15
 Age, I do abhor thee,

Youth, I do adore thee,
 O, my love, my love is young!
 Age, I do defy thee;
 O sweet shepherd, hie thee,
 For methinks thou stay'st too long! 20

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SONNETS

(From *Sonnets*, pub. 1609)

XV

When I consider everything that grows
 Holds in perfection but a little moment,
 That this huge stage presenteth naught but
 shows
 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
 When I perceive that men as plants increase, 5
 Cheered and check'd even by the selfsame sky,
 Vaut in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
 And wear their brave state out of memory;
 Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
 Sets you most rich in youth before my sight, 10
 Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
 To change your day of youth to sullied night;
 And all in war with Time for love of you,
 As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, 5
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course un-
 trimm'd:
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest, 10
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his
 shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless
 cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
 Featured like him, like him with friends poss-
 sess'd,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state, 10
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's
 gate:
 For thy sweet love rememb'ed such wealth
 brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with
 kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's
 waste:
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless
 night,
 And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
 And moan the expense of many a vanish'd
 sight:
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

XXXIII

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 5
 With ugly rack on his celestial face,
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine
 With all-triumphant splendour on my brow; 10
 But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine,
 The region cloud hath mask'd him from me
 now.
 Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
 Suns of the world may stain when heaven's
 sun staineth.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
 But you shall shine more bright in these con-
 tents
 Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish
 time.
 When wasteful war shall statues overturn, 5
 And broils root out the work of masonry,
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall
 burn
 The living record of your memory.
 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
 Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find
 room 10
 Even in the eyes of all posterity
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes.

LX

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled
 shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end;
 Each changing place with that which goes
 before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity, once in the main of light, 5
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow, 10
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXV

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless
 sea,
 But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
 How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
 Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
 O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out 5
 Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
 When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
 Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
 O fearful meditation! where, alack,
 Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie
 hid? 10
 Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot
 back?
 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
 O, none, unless this miracle have might,
 That in black ink my love may still shine
 bright.

LXVI

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry, 5
 As, to behold desert a beggar born,
 And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And gilded honour shamefully misplaced, 5
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
 And strength by limping sway disabled,
 And art made tongue-tied by authority, 10
 And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
 And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
 And captive good attending captain ill:
 Tired with all these, from these would I be
 gone,
 Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

LXXIII

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds
 sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day 5
 As after sunset fadeth in the west;
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
 Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love
 more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere
 long.

CXI

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide
 Than public means which public manners
 breeds,
 Thence comes it that my name receives a
 brand, 5
 And almost thence my nature is subdued
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
 Pity me then and wish I were renew'd;
 Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
 Potions of eisel, 'gainst my strong infection; 10
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,
 Nor double penance, to correct correction.
 Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove: 5
 O, no! It is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height
 be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and
 cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come; 10
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXLVI

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 (Press'd by) these rebel powers that thee array,
 Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease, 5
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store; 10
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more:
 So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on
 men,
 And Death once dead, there's no more dying
 then.

FROM THE DRAMAS

THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

HENRY VI.'S SOLILOQUY AT THE BATTLE OF
 TOWTON

(From *III Henry VI.*, Act II. v., 1590-92)

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
 When dying clouds contend with growing light;
 What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
 Can neither call it perfect day nor night.

And still yet never is.
 Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea, 5
 Forc'd by the tide to combat with the wind;
 Now sways it that way, like the self-same sea
 Forc'd to retire by the fury of the wind:
 Sometime, the flood prevails; and then, the
 wind:

Now, one the better, then, another best; 10
 Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
 Yet neither conqueror, nor conquered:
 So is the equal poise of this fell war.
 Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
 To whom God will, there be the victory! 15
 For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
 Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
 They prosper best of all when I am thence.
 Would I were dead! if God's good will were so:
 For what is in this world but grief and woe? 20
 O God! methinks it were a happy life,
 To be no better than a homely swain:
 To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
 To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
 Thereby to see the minutes how they run: 25
 How many make the hour full complete;
 How many hours bring about the day,
 How many days will finish up the year,
 How many years a mortal man may live.
 When this is known, then to divide the times: 30
 So many hours must I tend my flock;
 So many hours must I take my rest;
 So many hours must I contemplate;
 So many hours must I sport myself;
 So many days my ewes have been with young;
 So many weeks ere the poor fools will yeau; 36
 So many years ere I shall shear the fleece;
 So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and
 years,

Pass'd over to the end they were created,
 Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave. 40
 Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
 Gives not the hawthorne bush a sweeter shade
 To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
 Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
 To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery? 45
 O, yes it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
 And to conclude,—the shepherd's homely
 curds,

His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
 His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
 All which secure and sweetly he enjoys, 50
 Is far beyond a prince's delicacies,
 His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
 His body couched in a curious bed,
 When, care, mistrust, and treason wait on him.

ENGLAND

(From *Richard II.*, Act II., i., 1594)

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle, 40
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-paradise;
 This fortress, built by nature for herself,
 Against infection and the hand of war;
 This happy breed of men, this little world; 45
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands;
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this
 England. 50

SLEEP

(From *II Henry IV.*, Act III., i., 1597–98)

How many thousand of my poorest subjects 4
 Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,
 Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee, 6
 That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
 And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
 Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
 Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee, 10
 And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy
 slumber,
 Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
 Under the canopies of costly state,
 And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?
 O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile, 15
 In loathsome beds; and leav'st the kingly
 couch,
 A watch-case, or a common 'larum-bell?
 Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
 Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
 In cradle of the rude imperious surge, 20
 And in the visitation of the winds,
 Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
 Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging
 them
 With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds,
 That, with the hurly, death itself awakes? 25
 Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose
 To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
 And, in the calmest and most stillest night,
 With all appliances and means to boot,
 Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down!
 Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. 31

HENRY V'S ADDRESS TO HIS
SOLDIERS BEFORE HARFLEUR

(From *Henry V.*, Act III., i., 1599)

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once
 more;
 Or close the wall up with our English dead!
 In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
 As modest stillness and humility:
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears, 5
 Then imitate the action of the tiger;
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage:
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
 Let it pry through the portage of the head, 10
 Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm
 it,
 As fearfully as does a galled rock
 O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
 Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
 Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide;
 Hold hard the breath, and bend up every
 spirit 16
 To his full height! On, on, you nobless Eng-
 lish,

Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!
 Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
 Have in these parts from morn till even fought,
 And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument.
 Dishonour not your mothers; now attest 22
 That those whom you call'd fathers did beget
 you!

Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
 And teach them how to war!—And you, good
 yeomen, 25
 Whose limbs were made in England, show us
 here

The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
 That you are worth your breeding; which I
 doubt not;

For there is none of you so mean and base
 That hath not noble lustre in your eyes. 30
 I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
 Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;
 Follow your spirit; and, upon this charge,
 Cry—God for Harry! England! and Saint
 George!

DEATH AND HEREAFTER

(From *Measure for Measure*, Act III., i., 1603)

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
 To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
 This sensible warm motion to become 120
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
 In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
 To be imprison'd in the viewless winds, 124
 And blown with restless violence round about
 The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
 Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
 Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
 The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
 That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment 130
 Can lay on nature, is a paradise
 To what we fear of death.

ISABELLA'S PLEA FOR MERCY

(From the same, Act II., ii.)

He's sentenc'd; 'tis too late.
 Too late? why, no, I, that do speak a word,
 May call it back again: Well believe this,
 No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
 Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, 60
 The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
 Become them with one half so good a grace
 As mercy does.
 If he had been as you, and you as he,
 You would have slipp'd like him; but he, like
 you, 65
 Would not have been so stern. . . .

Alas! Alas! 72

Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
 And He that might the vantage best have took
 Found out the remedy; How would you be,
 If He, which is the top of judgment, should

But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
 And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
 Like a man new made.

Waste have been his last play

PROSPERO'S SOLILOQUY

(From *The Tempest*, Act IV., i., 1610)

Our revels now are ended: these our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
 Are melted into air, into thin air; 150
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, 155
 Leave not a wrack behind: We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep.

Thomas Nash

c. 1567-1601

DEATH'S SUMMONS

(From *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600)

Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss,
 This world uncertain is:
 Fond ¹ are life's lustful joys,
 Death proves them all but toys.
 None from his darts can fly: 5
 I am sick, I must die.
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
 Gold cannot buy you health;
 Physic himself must fade; 10
 All things to end are made;
 The plague ² full swift goes by:
 I am sick, I must die.
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower, 15
 Which wrinkles will devour:
 Brightness falls from the air;
 Queens have died young and fair;
 Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
 I am sick, I must die. 20
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave;
 Worms feed on Hector brave;
 Swords may not fight with fate;
 Earth still holds ope her gate; 25
 Come, come, the bells do cry.
 I am sick, I must die!
 Lord, have mercy on us!

Wit with his wantonness,
 Tasteth death's bitterness; 30
 Hell's executioner
 Hath no ears for to hear

¹ Foolish.

² London was suffering from the plague in 1598, when the play from which this song is taken was produced.

What vain art can reply;
I am sick, I must die:
Lord, have mercy on us! 35

Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny!
Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage;
Mount we unto the sky: 40
I am sick, I must die.
Lord, have mercy on us!

THE COMING OF WINTER

(From the same)

Autumn hath all the summer's fruitful treasure;
Gone is our sport, fled is our Croydon's pleasure!
Short days, sharp days, long nights come on
apace:

Ah, who shall hide us from the winter's face?
Cold doth increase, the sickness will not cease, 5
And here we lie, God knows, with little ease.

From winter, plague and pestilence, good
Lord, deliver us!

London doth mourn, Lambeth is quite forlorn!
Trades cry, woe worth that ever they were
born!

The want of term is town and city's harm;¹ 10
Close chambers we do want to keep us warm.
Long banished must we live from our friends:
This low-built house will bring us to our ends.

From winter, plague and pestilence, good
Lord, deliver us!

Thomas Dekker

c. 1570-c. 1637

O SWEET CONTENT

(From *The Patient Grissell*, acted 1599)

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?
O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd 5
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny! 10

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?
O sweet content!

Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own
tears?

O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears 15
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny! 20

¹ In this year, 1598, the Michaelmas (autumn) Term, or session of the Law Court, was held in St. Albans instead of London, in consequence of the plague.

SAINT HUGH!

(From *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, 1594)

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed!
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

Troll the bowl,¹ the jolly nut-brown bowl, 5
And here kind mate to thee!
Let's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul,
And down it merrily.

Down-a-down, hey, down-a-down.
Hey derry derry down-a-down. 10
Ho! well done, to me let come,
Ring compass, gentle joy!²
Troll the bowl, the nut-brown bowl,
And here kind mate to thee!

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain, 15
Saint Hugh! be our good speed;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

John Donne

1573-1631

AN ELEGY UPON THE DEATH OF THE LADY MARKHAM

(First published 1633)

Man is the world, and death the ocean
To which God gives the lower parts of man.
This sea environs all, and though as yet
God hath set marks and bounds 'twixt us and it,
Yet doth it roar and gnaw, and still pretend 5
To break our bank, whene'er it takes a friend:
Then our land-waters (tears of passion) vent;
Our waters then above our firmament—
Tears, which our soul doth for her sin let fall,—
Take all a brackish taste, and funeral. 10
And even those tears, which should wash sin,
are sin.

We, after God, new drown our world again.
Nothing but man of all envenom'd things,
Doth work upon itself with inborn stings.
Tears are false spectacles; we cannot see 15
Through passion's mist, what we are, or what
she.

In her this sea of death hath made no breach;
But as the tide doth wash the shining beach,
And leaves embroider'd works upon the sand,
So is her flesh refin'd by Death's cold hand. 20
As men of China, after an age's stay,
Do take up porcelain, where they buried clay,
So at this grave, her limbec (which refines
The diamonds, rubies, sapphires, pearls and
mines,

Of which this flesh was) her soul shall inspire 25
Flesh of such stuff, as God, when His last fire

¹ Pass round the wine, or drink.

² Let the bowl, (the gentle joy) come to me; let it circle or ring the compass, or circle, formed by those about the table. To ring compass, was therefore equivalent to let the bowl go round, or circulate freely.

Annuls this world, to recompense it, shall
Make and name them th' elixir of this all.
They say the sea, when th' earth it gains, loseth
too;

If carnal Death, the younger brother, do 30
Usurp the body; our soul, which subject is
To th' elder Death by sin, is free by this;
They perish both, when they attempt the just;
For graves our trophies are, and both Death's
dust.

So, unobnoxious now, she hath buried both; 35
For none to death sins, that to sin is loath,
Nor do they die, which are not loath to die;
So she hath this and that virginity.
Grace was in her extremely diligent,
That kept her from sin, yet made her repent. 40
Of what small spots pure white complains!
Alas!

How little poison cracks a crystal glass!
She sinn'd, but just enough to let us see
That God's word must be true,—*all sinners be*.
So much did seal her conscience rarify, 45
That extreme truth lack'd little of a lie,
Making omissions acts; laying the touch
Of sin on things, that sometimes may be such.
As Moses' cherubims, whose natures do
Surpass all speed, by him are wing'd too, 50
So would her soul, already in heaven, seem then
To climb by tears the common stairs of men.
How fit she was for God, I am content
To speak, that Death his vain haste may
repent;

How fit for us, how even and how sweet, 55
How good in all her titles, and how meet
To have reform'd this forward heresy,
That women can no parts of friendship be;
How moral, how divine, shall not be told,
Lest they, that hear her virtues, think her old:
And lest we take Death's part, and make him
glad 61
Of such a prey, and to his triumphs add.

A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

(Sometimes called "*Upon Parting from his
Mistress*," written, 1612?)

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No;"

So let us melt, and make no noise, 5
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys,
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harm and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant; 10
But trepidations of the spheres,
Though greater far, are innocent.

Dull sublunary Lovers' love,
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence; for that it doth remove 15
Those things which elemented it.

But we, by a love so far refin'd
That ourselves know now what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind
Careless eyes, lips, and hands, to miss. 20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so 25
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixt foot, makes no show,
To move, but doth if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam, 30
It leans and harkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just, 35
And makes me end where I begun.

SONG

(From *Poems, with Elegies on the Author's
Death*, 1633)

Sweetest Love, I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter Love for me;
But since that I 5
Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest,
Thus by feign'd death to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day; 10
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way.
Then fear not me;
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he. 15

O how feeble is man's power,
That, if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall. 20
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us t' advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st no wind, 25
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's-blood doth decay.

It cannot be
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st, 30
If in thine my life thou waste
That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill; 35
Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfil;
But think that we
Are but turned aside to sleep:
They, who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be. 40

SONNET X.—ON DEATH

(From *Holy Sonnets*, written before 1607)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet cans't thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be, 5
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow!
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men, 9
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou, then?
One short sleep pass, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

(First published 1631)

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin, through which I run
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more. 6
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score? 10
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy
Son 15
Shall shine, as He shines now and heretofore:
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more.

Ben Jonson

1573–1637

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND WHAT HE HATH LEFT US

(From First Folio edition of Shakespeare, 1623)

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such,
As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways 5

Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For silliest ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise, 11
And think to ruin where it seemed to raise. . . .
But thou art proof against them and, indeed, 15
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin: Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My SHAKESPEARE, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie 20
A little further, to make thee a room:
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
Thou art alive still while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so my brain excuses,— 25
I mean with great but disproportioned Muses;
For if I thought my judgment were of years,¹
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd,² or Marlowe's mighty line. 30
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,

From thence to honour thee I would not seek
For names, but call forth thund'ring Æschylus,⁴

Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead, 35
To life again, to hear thy buskin's tread,
And shake a stage; or when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for a comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show, 41
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.

¹ Chaucer, Spenser and Beaumont are buried near each other in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Proximity to the tomb of Chaucer, the first great English poet, was considered as a great honor. Spenser had been granted this in 1599, and Beaumont in 1616.

² One that would last, or go down to posterity.

³ A satirical play upon the dramatist's name, since Thomas Kyd was anything but "Sporting," being chiefly known as the author of tragedies.

⁴ The three great poets, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, represent three stages in the development of the Greek tragic drama; so Pacuvius, Accius, and "him of Cordova" (Seneca) stand in a similar manner for Roman tragedy-writing at successive epochs.

⁵ The ancients are summoned to hear Shakespeare both as a tragic and a comic writer; the *buskin*, or shoe worn by Greek and Roman actors in tragedy, stands for tragedy; as the *sock* worn for comedy, meant comedy.

He was not of an age, but for all time!
 And all the Muses still were in their prime,
 When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm 45
 Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
 Nature herself was proud of his designs,
 And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines,
 Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
 As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit. 50
 The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
 Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
 But antiquated and deserted lie,
 As they were not of Nature's family.
 Yet must I not give Nature all; thy Art, 55
 My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
 For though the poet's matter nature be,
 His art doth give the fashion; and that he
 Who casts to write a living line, must sweat
 (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
 Upon the Muses' anvil, turn the same, 61
 And himself with it, that he thinks to frame;
 Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn;
 For a good poet's made, as well as born.
 And such wert thou! Look, how the father's
 face 65
 Lives in his issue, even so the race
 Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly
 shines
 In his well turnèd and true filed lines,
 In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
 As brandished at the eyes of ignorance. 70
 Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
 To see thee in our waters yet appear,
 And make those flights upon the banks of
 Thames,
 That so did take Eliza and our James!
 But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere 75
 Advanced, and made a constellation there!
 Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage
 Or influence chide or cheer the drooping stage,
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath
 mourned like night,
 And despairs day but for thy volume's light. 80

SONG.—TO CYNTHIA

(From *Cynthia's Revels*, 1600)

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
 Now the sun is laid to sleep;
 Seated in thy silver chair,
 State in wonted manner keep:
 Hesperus entreats thy light, 5
 Goddess excellently bright.
 Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare itself to interpose;
 Cynthia's shining orb was made
 Heaven to clear, when day did close;
 Bless us then with wished sight, 10
 Goddess excellently bright.
 Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal-shining quiver;
 Give unto the flying hart 15
 Space to breathe, how short soever:
 Thou that makest a day of night,
 Goddess excellently bright.

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS¹(From *Epicane; or, The Silent Woman*, 1609–10)

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
 As you were going to a feast;
 Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
 Lady, it is to be presumed,
 Though art's hid causes are not found. 5
 All is not sweet, all is not sound.
 Give me a look, give me a face,
 That makes simplicity a grace;
 Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
 Such sweet neglect more taketh me 10
 Than all the adulteries of art;
 They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

SONG TO CELIA

(From *The Forest*, 1616)

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
 And I will pledge with mine;
 Or leave a kiss within the cup,
 And I'll not look for wine.
 The thirst that from the soul doth rise 5
 Doth ask a drink divine;
 But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
 I would not change for thine.
 I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honouring thee 10
 As giving it a hope, that there
 It could not withered be.
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me.
 Since when it grows, and smells, I swear, 15
 Not of itself, but thee.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHARIS

(From "A Celebration of Charis" in *Underwoods*,¹ 1616)

See the chariot at hand here of Love,
 Wherein my Lady rideth!
 Each that draws is a swan or a dove,
 And well the car Love guideth.
 As she goes, all hearts do duty 5
 Unto her beauty;
 And enamoured do wish, so they might
 But enjoy such a sight,
 That they still were to run by her side,
 Through swords, through seas, whither she 10
 would ride.

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
 All that Love's world compriseth!
 Do but look on her hair, it is bright
 As Love's star when it riseth!

¹ Plain, or unadorned, in thy neatness, the phrase is from Horace's ode to Pyrrha (*Odes*, Lib. I. Car. V.).¹ Jonson thus explains the title *Underwoods*, which consists of a collection of comparatively short poems on various subjects: "As the multitude called Timber-trees promiscuously growing, a Wood, or Forest; so I am bold to entitle these lesser poems of later growth by this name of *Underwood*." Preface "To the Reader."

Do but mark, her forehead's smother 15
 Than words that soothe her;
 And from her arched brows, such a grace
 Sheds itself through the face,
 As alone there triumphs to the life
 All the gain, all the good of the elements'
 strife. 20

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Have you seen but a bright lily grow
 Before rude hands have touched it?
 Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
 Before the soil hath smutched it?
 Have you felt the wool of beaver? 25
 Or swan's down ever?
 Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?
 Or the nard in the fire?
 Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
 O so white,—O so soft,—O so sweet is she! 30

LIFE'S TRUE MEASURE

(From *A Pindaric Ode* in the same)

To the immortal memory of that noble pair, Sir
Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison

For what is life, if measur'd by the space,
 Not by the act?
 Or masked man, if valued by his face,
 Above his fact?
 Here's one outliv'd his peers, 5
 And told forth fourscore years:
 He vexed time, and busied the whole state;
 Troubled both foes and friends;
 But ever to no ends;
 What did this stirrer but die late? 10
 How well at twenty had he fallen or stood!
 For three of his fourscore he did no good.

He enter'd well by virtuous parts,
 Got up, and thrived with honest arts;
 He purchased friends, and fame, and honours 15
 then,
 And had his noble name advanc'd with men:
 But weary of that flight,
 He stooped in all men's sight
 To sordid flatteries, acts of strife,
 And sunk in that dead sea of life, 20
 So deep, as he did then death's waters sup,
 But that the cork of title buoy'd him up.

Alas! But Morison fell young:
 He never fell,—thou falls't my tongue,
 He stood a soldier to the last right end, 25
 A perfect patriot and a noble friend;
 But most a virtuous son.
 All offices were done
 By him, so ample, full, and round,
 In weight, in measure, number, sound, 30
 As, though his age imperfect might appear,
 His life was of humanity the sphere.

It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk, doth make men better be.
 Or standing long an oak, three hundred year, 35
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and scar:
 A lily of a day,
 Is fairer far, in May,

Although it fall and die that night;
 It was the plant and flower of light. 40
 In small proportions we just beauties see;
 And in short measures, life may perfect be.

Thomas Campion

c. 1575–1620?

TO LESBIA¹

(In Rosseter's *Book of Airs*, 1601)

My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love,
 And though the sager sort our deeds reprove
 Let us not weigh them. Heaven's great lamps
 do dive
 Into their west, and straight again revive;
 But soon as once set is our little light, 5
 Then must we sleep one ever-during night.

If all would lead their lives in love like me,
 Then bloody swords and armour should not be;
 No drum nor trumpet peaceful sleeps should
 move,
 Unless alarm came from the Camp of Love: 10
 But fools do live and waste their little light,
 And seek with pain their ever-during night.

When timely death my life and fortunes ends,
 Let not my hearse be vexed with mourning
 friends;
 But let all lovers, rich in triumph, come 15
 And with sweet pastimes grace my happy tomb;
 And, Lesbia, close up thou my little light
 And crown with love my ever-during night.

THE ARMOUR OF INNOCENCE¹

(From the same)

The man of life upright,
 Whose guiltless heart is free
 From all dishonest deeds,
 Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days 5
 In harmless joys are spent,
 Whom hopes cannot delude
 Nor sorrow discontent:

That man needs neither towers
 Nor armour for defence, 10
 Nor secret vaults to fly
 From thunder's violence:

He only can behold
 With unaffrighted eyes
 The horrors of the deep 15
 And terrors of the skies.

Thus scorning all the cares
 That fate or fortune brings,
 He makes the heaven his book;
 His wisdom heavenly things; 20

¹ A paraphrase of an ode of Catullus, *Vivamus mea Lesbia, atque amemus*. (Car. V.).

¹ One of the many variations of the noble theme of Horace's *Integer Vitæ*. (*Odes*, Bk. I, Car. XXII.).

Good thoughts his only friends,
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
And quiet pilgrimage.

FORTUNATI NIIMIUM¹

Jack and Joan, they think no ill,
But loving live, and merry still;
Do their week-day's work, and pray
Devoutly on the holy-day:
Skip and trip it on the green, 5
And help to choose the Summer Queen;
Lash out at a country feast
Their silver penny with the best.

Well can they judge of nappy ale,
And tell at large a winter tale; 10
Climb up to the apple loft,
And turn the crabs till they be soft.
Tib is all the father's joy,
And little Tom the mother's boy:—
All their pleasure is, Content, 15
And care, to pay their yearly rent.

Joan can call by name her cows
And deck her windows with green boughs;
She can wreaths and tutties make, 20
And trim with plums a bridal cake.
Jack knows what brings gain or loss,
And his long flail can stoutly toss:
Makes the hedge which others break,
And ever thinks what he doth speak.

Now, you courtly dames and knights, 25
That study only strange delights,
Though you scorn the homespun gray,
And revel in your rich array;
Though your tongues dissemble deep
And can your heads from danger keep; 30
Yet, for all your pomp and train,
Securer lives the silly swain!

Thomas Heywood

c. 1581–1640 (?)

GOOD MORROW

(From *The Rape of Lucrece*, acted c. 1605)

Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount lark aloft,
To give my love good-morrow. 5
Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow;
Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my love good-morrow,
To give my love good-morrow, 10
Notes from them both I'll borrow.

Wake from thy rest, robin redbreast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair love good-morrow.

¹ Happy beyond measure. See Vergil, *Georgics*, Bk. ii., 168 *et seq.*

¹ More.

Blackbird and thrush in every bush, 15
Stare,¹ linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
Sing my fair love good-morrow;
To give my love good-morrow
Sing birds in every furrow. 20

John Fletcher

1579–1625

WEEP NO MORE

(From *Queen of Corinth*)

Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that's gone:
Violets pluck'd, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again. 5
Trim thy locks, look cheerfully;
Fate's hid ends eyes cannot see.
Joys as winged dreams fly fast,
Why should sadness longer last?
Grief is but a wound to wee;
Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no moe.¹ 10

THE PRAISES OF PAN

(From *The Faithful Shepherdess*, acted 1610)

Sing his praises that doth keep
Our flocks from harm,
Pan, the father of our sheep;
And arm in arm 5
Tread we softly in a round,¹
Whilst the hollow neighbouring ground
Fills the music with her sound.

Pan, O great god Pan, to thee
Thus do we sing!
Thou that keep'st us chaste and free 10
As the young spring;
Ever be thy honour spoke,
From that place the Morn is broke
To that place Day doth unyoke!

SONG OF THE PRIEST OF PAN

(From the same)

Shepherds all, and maidens fair
Fold your flocks up, for the air
'Gins to thicken, and the sun
Already his great course hath run. 5
See the dew-drops how they kiss
Every little flower that is;
Hanging on their velvet heads,
Like a rope of crystal beads;
See the heavy clouds low falling,
And bright Hesperus down calling. 10
The dead night from under ground;
At whose rising mists unsound,
Damps and vapours fly apace,
Hovering o'er the wanton face
Of these pastures, where they come 15
Striking dead both bud and bloom:

¹ Starling.

¹ Round-dance.

Therefore from such danger lock
 Every one his loved flock;
 And let your dogs lie loose without,
 Lest the wolf come as a scout 20
 From the mountain, and, ere day,
 Bear a lamb or kid away;
 Or the crafty thievish fox
 Break upon your simple flocks.
 To secure yourselves from these 25
 Be not too secure in ease;
 Let one eye his watches peep
 While the other eye doth sleep;
 So you shall good shepherds prove,
 And for ever hold the love 30
 Of our great god. Sweetest slumbers,
 And soft silence, fall in numbers¹
 On your eyelids! So, farewell!
 Thus I end my evening's knell.

SONG TO PAN

(From the same)

All ye woods, and trees, and bowers,
 All ye virtues and ye powers
 That inhabit in the lakes,
 In the pleasant springs or brakes,
 Move your feet 5
 To our sound,
 Whilst we greet
 All this ground
 With his honour and his name
 That defends our flocks from blame. 10

He is great, and he is just,
 He is ever good, and must
 Thus be honoured. Daffodillies,
 Roses, pinks, and loved lilies,
 Let us fling 15
 Whilst we sing
 Ever holy,
 Ever holy,
 Ever honoured, ever young!
 Thus great Pan is ever sung! 20

MELANCHOLY

(From "Nice Valour")

Hence all you vain delights,
 As short as are the nights
 Wherein you spend your folly!
 There's naught in this life sweet,
 If man were wise to see 't,
 But only melancholy; 5
 O sweetest melancholy!

Welcome folded arms, and fixed eyes,
 A sigh that piercing mortifies,
 A look that's fastened to the ground, 10
 A tongue chained up, without a sound!

¹ Fall with a musical or rhythmical cadence.

Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
 Places which pale passion loves!
 Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
 Are warmly housed, save bats and owls! 15
 A midnight bell, a parting groan!
 These are the sounds we feed upon;
 Then stretch your bones in a still gloomy valley:
 Nothing's so dainty-sweet as lovely melancholy.

Francis Beaumont

1586 (?)–1616

ON THE LIFE OF MAN¹(From *Poems*, 1640)

Like to the falling of a star,
 Or as the flights of eagles are,
 Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
 Or silver drops of morning dew,
 Or like the wind that chafes the flood, 5
 Or bubbles which on water stood;
 Even such is man, whose borrowed light
 Is straight called in and paid to-night.
 The wind blows out, the bubble dies, 10
 The spring entombed in autumn lies,
 The dew's dried up, the star is shot,
 The flight is past, and man forgot.

ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(From *Poems*, 1653)

Mortality, behold and fear!
 What a change of flesh is here!
 Think how many royal bones
 Sleep within this heap of stones;
 Here they lie, had realms and lands, 5
 Who now want strength to stir their hands;
 Where from their pulpits sealed with dust
 They preach, "In greatness is no trust."
 Here's an acre sown indeed
 With the richest, royall'st seed 10
 That the earth did e'er suck in
 Since the first man died for sin:
 Here the bones of birth¹ have cried,
 "Though gods they were, as men they died!"

John Webster

Fl. 1602–1624

A DIRGE

(From *The White Devil; or, Vittoria Corombona*, 1612)

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

¹ Sometimes attributed to Henry King (1592–1669).² The ashes or remains of those of high or royal lineage.

Call unto his funeral dole!¹
 The ant, the field-mouse and the mole,
 To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
 And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no
 harm;
 But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
 For with his nails he'll dig them up again!¹⁰

DIRGE BEFORE DEATH
 (From *The Duchess of Malfy*, 1623)

Hark, now everything is still,
 The screech-owl, and the whistler¹ shrill,
 Call upon our dame aloud,
 And bid her quickly don her shroud!
 Much you had of land and rent;
 Your length in clay's now competent:
 A long war disturbed your mind;
 Here your perfect peace is signed.
 Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?
 Since their conception, their birth weeping,
 Their life a general mist of error,
 Their death, a hideous storm of terror.
 Strew your hair with powders sweet,
 Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
 And (the foul fiend more to check),
 A crucifix let bless your neck:
 'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
 End your groan, and come away.

SONG: "ALL THE FLOWERS OF THE
 SPRING"

(From *The Devil's Law Case*)

All the flowers of the spring
 Meet to perfume our burying;
 These have but their growing prime,
 And man does flourish but his time:
 Survey our progress from our birth—
 We are set, we grow, we turn to earth.
 Courts adieu, and all delights,
 All bewitching appetites!
 Sweetest breath and clearest eye
 Like perfumes go out and die;
 And consequently this is done
 As shadows wait upon the sun.
 Vain the ambition of kings
 Who seek by trophies and dead things
 To leave a living name behind,
 And weave but nets to catch the wind.

William Drummond

1585-1649

ON SLEEP

(From *Poems, Amorous, Funeral, etc.*, 1616)

Sleep, Silence' child, sweet father of soft rest,
 Prince whose approach peace to all mortals
 brings,
 Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
 Sole comforter of minds which are oppress'd;

¹ Gifts of food or money and the like, were sometimes distributed at funerals for the benefit of the soul of the deceased.

¹ Green plover or lapwing.

Lo, by thy charming rod, all breathing things
 Lie slumb'ring, with forgetfulness possess'd,
 And yet o'er me to spread thy drowsy wings
 Thou spar'st, alas! who cannot be thy guest.
 Since I am thine, O come, but with that face
 To inward light, which thou are wont to shew,¹⁰
 With feigned solace ease a true-felt woe;
 Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,
 Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt be-
 queath,
 I long to kiss the image of my death.

SONNET

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
 And what by mortals in this world is brought
 In time's great periods shall return to naught;
 That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
 I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
 With toil of sprite, which are so dearly bought,
 As idle sounds, of few, or none are sought,
 That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
 I know frail beauty's like the purple flow'r,
 To which one morn oft birth and death affords,
 That love a jarring is of mind's accords,
 Where sense and will bring under reason's
 power:
 Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
 But that, alas, I both must write and love.

SONNET

Of this fair volume which we world do name,
 If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
 Of him who it corrects, and did it frame,
 We clear might read the art and wisdom rare,
 Find out his power which wildest powers doth
 tame,
 His providence extending everywhere,
 His justice, which proud rebels doth not spare,
 In every page, no period of the same:
 But silly we, like foolish children, rest
 Well pleas'd with colour'd vellum, leaves of
 gold,
 Fair dangling ribbands, leaving what is best,
 On the great writer's sense ne'er taking hold:
 Or if by chance we stay our minds on aught,
 It is some picture on the margin wrought.

MADRIGAL

This life, which seems so fair,
 Is like a bubble blown up in the air,
 By sporting children's breath,
 Who chase it every where,
 And strive who can most motion it bequeath.
 And though it sometime seem of its own might
 Like to an eye of gold to be fix'd there,
 And firm to hover in that empty height,
 That only is because it is so light.
 But in that pomp it doth not long appear;
 For when 'tis most admired, in a thought,
 Because it erst was nought, it turns to nought.

MADRIGAL

This world a hunting is,
 The prey poor man, the Nimrod fierce is Death;
 His speedy greyhounds are
 Lust, sickness, envy, care,
 Strife that ne'er falls amiss,
 With all those ills which haunt us while we
 breathe.

Now, if by chance we fly
 Of these the eager chase,
 Old age with stealing pace
 Casts up his nets, and there we panting die.

John Stow

1525-1605

SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF OLD LONDON

(From *A Survey of London*, 1598)

"Let us now," saith Fitzstephen,¹ "come to the sports and pastimes, seeing that it is fit that a city should not only be commodious and serious, but also merry and sportful. . . .

"But London, for the shows upon theatres, and comical pastimes, hath holy plays, representations of miracles, which holy confessors have wrought, or representations of torments wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared. Every year also at Shrove Tuesday,² that we may begin with children's sports, seeing we all have been children, the schoolboys do bring cocks of the game to their master, and all the forenoon they delight themselves in cock-fighting: after dinner all the youths go into the fields to play at the ball.

"The scholars of every school have their ball, or baton, in their hands; the ancient and wealthy men of the city come forth on horseback to see the sport of the young men, and to take part of the pleasure in beholding their agility. . . .

"When the great fen, or moor, which watereth the walls of the city on the north side, is frozen, many young men play upon the ice; some striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice, as great as millstones; one sits down, many hand in hand to draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together; some tie bones to their feet and under their heels; and shoving themselves by a little picked staff, do slide as swiftly as a bird flieth in the air, or an arrow out of a cross-bow. Sometime two run together with poles, and hitting one the other, either one or both do fall, not without hurt; some break their

arms, some their legs, but youth desirous of glory in this sort exerciseth itself against the time of war. Many of the citizens do delight themselves in hawks and hounds; for they have liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, all Chiltern, and in Kent to the water of the Cray." Thus far Fitzstephen of sports.

These, or the like exercises, have been continued till our time, namely, in stage plays, whereof ye may read in anno 1391, a play by the parish clerks of London at the Skinner's Well besides Smithfield, which continued three days together, the king, queen, and nobles of the realm being present. And of another, in the year 1419, which lasted eight days, and was of matter from the creation of the world, whereat was present most part of the nobility and gentry of England. Of late time, in place of those stage plays, hath been used comedies, tragedies, interludes, and histories, both true and feigned; for the acting whereof certain public places, as the Theatre, the Curtain,³ etc., have been erected. Also cocks of the game are yet cherished by divers men for their pleasures much money being laid on their heads, when they fight in pits, whereof some be costly made for that purpose. The ball is used by noblemen and gentlemen in tennis courts, and by people of meaner sort in the open fields and streets. . . .

Thus much for sportful shows in triumphs may suffice. Now for sports and pastimes yearly used.

First, in the feast of Christmas, there was in the King's house, wheresoever he was lodged, a lord of misrule, or master of merry disports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honor or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. Amongst the which the mayor of London, and either of the sheriffs, had their several lords of misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholders. These lords beginning their rule on Alhollon eve,⁴ continued the same until the morrow after the Feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas Day.⁵ In all which space there were fine and subtle disguisings, masks, and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nails, and points, in every house more for pastime than for gain.

Against the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also the parish churches, were decked with holm, ivy, bays, and whatsoever the

¹ William Fitzstephen (d. 1191), a monk of Canterbury, and biographer and friend of Thomas à Becket. The passage here quoted by Stow, and given by him in translation, is from Fitzstephen's description of London in his life of Becket.

² i. e., shroving Tuesday. The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

³ The Theatre (1576) and The Curtain, the earliest English play-houses, were situated in the fields, not far beyond the London walls.

⁴ All-hallows Eve, i. e., the eve of November 1st, or All-Saints Day.

⁵ The feast of the presentation of Christ in the temple, February 2d. It takes its name from the custom of carrying lighted candles in the procession at the service.

season of the year afforded to be green. The conduits and standards in the streets were likewise garnished; amongst the which I read, in the year 1444, that by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the 1st of February, at night, Paule's Steeple was fired, but with great labor quenched; and towards the morning of Candlemas Day, at the Leadenhall in Cornhill, a standard of tree being set up in midst of the pavement, fast in the ground, nailed full of holm and ivy, for disport of Christmas to the people, was torn up, and cast down by the malignant spirit (as was thought), and the stones of the pavement all about were cast in the streets, and into divers houses, so that the people were sore aghast of the great tempests.

In the week before Easter, had ye great shows made for the fetching in of a twisted tree, or with,* as they termed it, out of the woods into the king's house; and the like into every man's house of honor or worship.

In the month of May, namely, on May-day in the morning, every man except impediment, would walk into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savor of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praising God in their kind; and for example hereof, Edward Hall[†] hath noted, that King Henry VIII, as in the 3rd of his reign, and divers other years, so namely in the 7th of his reign, on May-day in the morning, with Queen Katherine his wife, accompanied with many lords and ladies, rode a-maying from Greenwich to the high ground of Shooter's Hill, where, as they passed by the way, they espied a company of tall yeomen, clothed all in green, with green hoods, and bows and arrows, to the number of two hundred; one being their chieftan, was called Robin Hood, who required the king and his company to stay and see his men shoot; whereunto the king granting, Robin Hood whistled, and all the two hundred archers shot off, loosing all at once; and when he whistled again they likewise shot again; their arrows whistled by craft of the head, so that the noise was strange and loud, which greatly delighted the king, queen, and their company. Moreover, this Robin Hood desired the king and queen, with their retinue, to enter the greenwood, where in harbors made of boughs, and decked with flowers, they were set and served plentifully with venison and wine by Robin Hood and his men, to their great contentment, and had other pageants and pastimes, as ye may read in my said author.

* Withe, or withy.

[†] Edward Hall (1490-1547), author of *The Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and Yorke*, commonly known as "Hall's Chronicle."

I find also, that in the month of May, the citizens of London of all estates, lightly^a in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joining together, had their several mayings, and did fetch in maypoles, with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris dancers, and other devices, for pastime all the day long; and toward the evening they had stage plays, and bonfires in the streets. Of these mayings we read, in the reign of Henry VI. that the aldermen and sheriffs of London, being on May-day at the Bishop of London's woods, in the parish of Stebunheath, and having there a worshipful dinner for themselves and other commoners, Lydgate the poet, that was a monk of Bury, sent to them, by a pursuivant, a joyful commendation of that season, containing sixteen staves of meter royal, beginning thus:—

"Mightie Flora! goddess of fresh flowers,—" &c.

These great mayings, and May games, made by the governors and masters of this city, with the triumphant setting up of the great shaft (a principal maypole in Cornhill, before the parish church of St. Andrew therefore called Undershaf)^b by means of an insurrection of youths against aliens on May-day, 1517, the 9th of Henry VIII., have not been so freely used as afore, and therefore I leave them.

Sir Thomas North

1535-1601

THE DEATH OF CÆSAR

(From translation of *Plutarch's Lives*, 1597)

Now a day being appointed for the meeting of the Senate, at what time they hoped Cæsar would not fail to come: the conspirators determined then to put their enterprise in execution, because they might meet safely at that time without suspicion; and the rather, for that all the noblest and chiefest men of the city would be there. Who, when they should see such a great matter executed, would every man then set to their hands, for the defence of their liberty. Furthermore, they thought also, that the appointment of the place where the council should be kept, was chosen of purpose by divine providence, and made all for them. For it was one of the porches about the Theatre, in

^a Usually.

^b St. Andrew's Undershaf was in Leadenhall street. The shaft (or May pole) which was higher than the church steeple, was set up before it for the last time in 1517, after which it was hung on iron hooks over the doors in a neighboring alley. In 1550, a young curate declared that this shaft had been made an idol, and to show the superstitious subjection of the parish to the old relic, spoke of the church as St. Andrew's "Under-that-shaft."

the which there was a certain place full of seats for men to sit in, where also was set up the image of *Pompey*, which the city had made and consecrated in honor of him: when he did beautify that part of the city with the Theatre he built, with divers porches about it. In this place was the assembly of the Senate appointed to be; just on the fifteenth day of the month of March, which the Romans call, *Idus Martias*: so that it seemed some god of purpose had brought *Cæsar* thither to be slain, for revenge of *Pompey's* death. So when the day was come, *Brutus* went out of his house with a dagger by his side under his long gown, that nobody saw nor knew, but his wife only. The other conspirators were all assembled at *Cassius's* house, to bring his son into the market place, who on that day did put on the man's gown, called *Toga Virilis*, and from thence they came all in a troop together unto *Pompey's* porch, looking that *Cæsar* would straight come thither. . . . When *Cæsar* came out of his litter: *Popilius Læna*, that had talked before with *Brutus* and *Cassius*, and had prayed the gods they might bring this enterprise to pass: went unto *Cæsar* and kept him a long time with a talk. *Cæsar* gave good ear unto him. Wherefore the conspirators (if so they should be called) not hearing what he said to *Cæsar*, but conjecturing by that he had told them a little before, that his talk was none other but the very discovery of their conspiracy: they were afraid every man of them; and one looking in another's face, it was easy to see they all were of a mind, that it was no tarrying for them till they were apprehended, but rather that they should kill themselves with their own hands. And when *Cassius* and certain other clapped their hands on their swords under their gowns to draw them: *Brutus* marking the countenance and gesture of *Læna*, and considering that he did use himself rather like an humble and earnest suitor than like an accuser: he said nothing to his companion (because there were many amongst them that were not of the conspiracy), but with a pleasant countenance encouraged *Cassius*. And immediately after, *Læna* went from *Cæsar*, and kissed his hand: which showed plainly that it was for some matter concerning himself that he had held him so long in talk. Now all the Senators being entered first into this place or chapter house where the council should be kept, all the other conspirators straight stood about *Cæsar's* chair, as if they had had something to have said unto him. And some say that *Cassius* casting his eyes upon *Pompey's* image, made his prayer unto it, as if it had been alive. *Trebonius* on the other side, drew *Antonius* aside, as he came into the house

where the Senate sat, and held him with a long talk without. When *Cæsar* was come into the house, all the Senate rose to honor him at his coming in. So when he was set, the conspirators flocked about him, and amongst them they presented one *Tullius Cimber*, who made humble suit for the calling home again of his brother that was banished. They all made as they were intercessors for him, and took him by the hands, and kissed his head and breast. *Cæsar* at the first simply refused their kindness and entreaties: but afterwards, perceiving they still pressed on him, he violently thrust them from him. Then *Cimber* with both his hands plucked *Cæsar's* gown over his shoulders, and *Casca* that stood behind him, drew his dagger first, and struck *Cæsar* upon the shoulder, but gave him no great wound. *Cæsar* feeling himself hurt, took him straight by the hand he held his dagger in, and cried out in Latin: O traitor *Casca*, what doest thou? *Casca* on the other side cried in Greek, and called his brother to help him. So divers running on a heap together to fly upon *Cæsar*, he looking about him to have fled, saw *Brutus* with a sword drawn in his hand ready to strike at him: then he let *Casca's* hand go, and casting his gown over his face, suffered every man to strike at him that would. Then the conspirators thronging one upon another because every man was desirous to have a cut at him, so many swords and daggers lighting upon one body, one of them hurt another, and among them *Brutus* caught a blow on his hand, because he would make one in murdering of him, and all the rest also were every man of them bloodied. *Cæsar* being slain in this manner, *Brutus* standing in the midst of the house, would have spoken, and stayed the other Senators that were not of the conspiracy, to have told them the reason why they had done this fact. But they as men both afraid and amazed, fled one upon another's neck in haste to get out at the door, and no man followed them. For it was set down and agreed between them, that they should kill no man but *Cæsar* only, and should entreat all the rest to look to defend their liberty.

Raphael Holinshed

d. 1580

MACBETH'S MEETING WITH THE WEIRD SISTERS

(From *A Chronicle of England and Scotland*, 1578)

Shortly after happened a strange and uncouth wonder, which afterward was the cause of much trouble in the realm of Scotland, as ye

shall after hear. It fortun'd as Makbeth and Banquo journeyed towards Fores, where the king then lay, they went sporting by the way together without other company save only themselves, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenly in the midst of a land, there met them three women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of the elder world, whom when they attentively beheld, wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said:—

"All hail Makbeth, thane of Glamis!"

(for he had lately entered into that office by the death of his father Sinell). The second then said:—

"Hail Makbeth, thane of Cawder!"

But the third said:—

"All hail Makbeth, that hereafter shall be King of Scotland!"

Then Banquo: "What manner of women (saith he) are you that seem so little favorable unto me, whereas to my fellow here, besides high offices, ye assign also the kingdom, appointing forth nothing for me at all?" "Yes," (saith the first of them), "we promise greater benefits unto thee than unto him; for he shall reign indeed, but with an unlucky end; neither shall he leave any issue behind him to succeed in his place, when certainly thou indeed shalt not reign at all, but of thee those shall be born which shall govern the Scottish kingdom by long order of continual descent." Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediately out of their sight. This was reputed at the first but some vain fantastical illusion by Makbeth and Banquo, insomuch that Banquo would call Makbeth in jest, King of Scotland; and Makbeth again would call him in sport likewise, father of many kings. But afterwards the common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destiny, or else some nymphs or fairies, indued with knowledge of prophecy by their necromantical science, because everything came to pass as they had spoken.

Richard Hakluyt

1553-1616

DEDICATION TO SIR FRANCIS WAL- SINGHAM¹

(From *Voyages and Discoveries*, 1589)

Right honorable, I do remember that being a youth, and one of her Majesty's scholars at

¹ Francis Walsingham (1536-1590), one of the most statesmen of Elizabeth's reign. He was em-

Westminster,² that fruitful nursery, it was my hap to visit the chamber of Mr. Richard Hakluyt, my cousin, a gentleman of the Middle Temple,³ well known unto you, at a time when I found lying open on his board certain books of cosmography, with a universal map. He, seeing me somewhat curious in the view thereof, began to instruct my ignorance by showing me the division of the earth into three parts after the old account, and then according to the latter, and better distribution, into more. He pointed with his wand to all the known seas, gulfs, bays, straits, capes, rivers, empires, kingdoms, dukedoms, and territories of each part with declaration also of their special commodities, and particular wants, which, by the benefit of traffic and intercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied. From the map he brought me to the Bible, and turning to the 107th Psalm, directed me to the 23rd and 24th verses, where I read, that they which go down to the sea in ships and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep, etc. Which words of the prophet, together with my cousin's discourse (things of high and rare delight to my young nature), took in me so deep an impression that I constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the university, where better time and more convenient place might be ministered for these studies, I would by God's assistance prosecute that knowledge and kind of literature, the doors whereof, after a sort, were so happily opened before me.

According to which my resolution, when, not long after, I was removed to Christ Church in Oxford, my exercises of duty first performed, I fell to my intended course, and by degrees read over whatsoever printed or written discoveries and voyages I found extant either in the Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portugal, French, or English languages, and in my public lectures⁴ was the first that produced and showed both the old imperfectly composed, and the new lately reformed maps, globes, spheres, and other instruments of this art for demonstration in the common schools, to the singular pleasure

played on various diplomatic missions, and was one of the Commissioners to try Mary, Queen of Scots, pp. 721, 764.

² One of the oldest and best of the London "Grammar Schools." Founded by Henry VIII., it was so reorganized by Queen Elizabeth in 1560, that its revenues were sufficient to provide for some 40 "free," or "Queen's scholars." Besides Hakluyt, George Herbert, Dryden, and Warren Hastings were among its free, or foundation, scholars.

³ This implies that he belonged to the legal profession, as the Middle Temple was one of the legal societies of London.

⁴ Hakluyt is believed to have lectured at Oxford, shortly after taking his degree of M. A. in 1577. These were probably the first public lectures on geography ever given at an English University.

and general contentment of my auditory. In continuance of time, and by reason principally of my insight in this study, I grew familiarly acquainted with the chiefest captains at sea, the greatest merchants, and the best mariners of our nation; by which means having gotten somewhat more than common knowledge, I passed at length the narrow seas into France with Sir Edward Stafford, her Majesty's careful and discreet Ligier,⁵ where during my five years' abode with him in his dangerous and changeable residence in her Highness' service, I both heard in speech, and read in books other nations miraculously extolled for their discoveries and notable enterprises by sea, but the English of all others for their sluggish security, and continual neglect of the like attempts, especially in so long and happy a time of peace, either ignominiously reported, or exceedingly condemned; which singular opportunity, if some other people, our neighbors, had been blessed with, their protestations are often and vehement, they would far otherwise have used. . . .

Thus both hearing and reading the obloquy of our nation, and finding few or none of our own men to reply herein; and further, not seeing any man to have care to recommend to the world the industrious labors and painful travels of our countrymen: for stopping the mouths of the reproachers, myself being the last winter returned from France with the honorable the Lady Sheffield, for her passing good behavior highly esteemed in all the French court, determined notwithstanding all difficulties to undertake the burden of that work wherein all others pretended either ignorance or lack of leisure, or want of sufficient argument, whereas (to speak truly) the huge toil and the small profit to ensue were the chief causes of the refusal. I call the work a burden in consideration that these voyages lay so dispersed, scattered, and hidden in several hucksters' hands, that I now wonder at myself to see how I was able to endure the delays, curiosity, and backwardness of many from whom I was to receive my originals, so that I have just cause to make that complaint of the maliciousness of divers in our time, which Pliny made of the men of his age: *At nos elaborata iis abscondere atque suppressere cupimus et fraudare vilam etiam alienis bonis, etc.*⁶

To harp no longer upon this string, and to speak a word of that just commendation

which our nation do indeed deserve: it cannot be denied, but as in all former ages they have been men full of activity, stirrers abroad, and searchers of the remote parts of the world, so in this most famous and peerless government of her most excellent Majesty, her subjects, through the special assistance and blessing of God, in searching the most opposite corners and quarters of the world, and to speak plainly, in compassing the vast globe of the earth more than once, have excelled all the nations and people of the earth. For which of the kings of this land before her Majesty had their banners ever seen in the Caspian sea? Which of them hath ever dealt with the emperor of Persia as her Majesty hath done, and obtained for her merchants large and loving privileges? who ever saw, before this regiment, an English Ligier in the stately porch of the Grand Signor at Constantinople? who ever found English consuls and agents at Tripolis in Syria, at Aleppo,⁷ at Babylon, at Balsara, and which is more, who ever heard of Englishmen at Goa⁸ before now? what English ships did heretofore ever anchor in the mighty river of Plate? pass and repass the unpassable (in former opinion) Strait of Magellan, range along the coast of Chili, Peru, and all the backside of Nova Hispania,⁹ further than any Christian ever passed, traverse the mighty breadth of the South Sea, land upon the Luzones in despite of the enemy, enter into alliance, amity, and traffic with the princes of the Moluccas and the isle of Java, double the famous cape of Bona Speranza,¹⁰ arrive at the isle of St. Helena, and last of all return home most richly laden with the commodities of China, as the subjects of this now flourishing monarchy have done?

THE LOSS OF SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT¹

(From a report of the voyage and success thereof, attempted in the year of our Lord, 1583, by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, knight, with other gentlemen assisting him in that action,

¹ In Asiatic Turkey.

² On the west coast of India.

³ The regions governed by the Viceroy of New Spain. It included originally Mexico, the West Indies, and various adjacent Spanish possessions.

⁴ Cape of Good Hope.

⁵ Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539–1583) was one of the great English navigators in the age of Drake, Hawkins, and Frobiisher. He was half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, and like other great sailors of the time, he was born in Devon. He started from Plymouth on what proved to be his last voyage of discovery, June 11th, 1583. After landing in Newfoundland, which he took possession of in the name of the Queen, he lost his largest ship, and was forced to return home, with the only two vessels left him, the *Golden Hind* and the *Squirrel* or, as it is called in the text the *Frigate*.

⁶ (The same as *leiger*, and *ledger*, q. v.) A resident agent, or ambassador.

⁷ But we are anxious to steal away from them and suppress the result of their labors, and even to beguile the very life from the goods of others.

intended to discover and to plant christian inhabitants in place convenient, upon those large and ample countries extended northward from the cape of Florida, lying under very temperate climes, esteemed fertile and rich in minerals, yet not in the actual possession of any christian prince, written by Mr. Edward Haie, gentleman, and principal actor in the same voyage, who alone continued to the end, and by God's special assistance returned home with his retinue safe and entire.)

So upon Saturday in the afternoon, the 31st of August, we changed our course and returned back for England, at which very instant, even in winding about, there passed along between us and towards the land which we now forsook, a very lion to our seeming, in shape, hair, and color, not swimming after the manner of a beast, by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body (excepting the legs) in sight; neither yet diving under, and again rising above the water, as the manner is of whales, dolphins, tunnies, porpoises, and all other fish, but confidently showing himself above water without hiding. Notwithstanding, we presented ourselves in open view and gesture to amaze him, as all creatures will be commonly at a sudden gaze and sight of men. Thus he passed along turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes, and to bid us a farewell (coming right against the *Hind*)² he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring or bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld so far as we were able to discern the same, as me prone to wonder at every strange thing, as this doubtless was, to see a lion in the ocean sea, or fish in shape of a lion. What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the general himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *bonum omen*,³ rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil. The wind was large for England at our return, but very high, and the sea rough, insomuch as the frigate wherein the general went was almost swallowed up.

Monday in the afternoon (Sept. 2), we passed in the sight of Cape Race, having made as much way in little more than two days and nights back again, as before we had done in eight days from Cape Race unto the place where our ship perished, which hindrance thitherward and speed back again, is to be imputed unto the swift current, as well as to the winds, which we had more large in our return.

This Monday the general came aboard the *Hind* to have the surgeon of the *Hind* to dress his foot, which he hurt by treading upon a nail. At what time we comforted each other with the hope of hard success to be all past, and of the good to come. So agreeing to carry out lights always by night, that we might keep together, he departed into his frigate, being by no means to be entreated to tarry in the *Hind*, which had been more for his security. Immediately after followed a sharp storm which we overpassed for that time. Praised be God.

The weather fair, the general came aboard the *Hind* again to make merry together with the captain, master, and company, which was the last meeting, and continued there from morning until night. During which time there passed sundry discourses, touching affairs past and to come, lamenting greatly the loss of his great ship, more of the men, but most of all his books and notes, and what else I know not; for which he was out of measure grieved, the same doubtless being of some matter of more importance than his books, which I could not draw from him, yet by circumstance I gathered the same to be the ore which Daniel the Saxon had brought unto him in the New-found-land. Whatsoever it was, the remembrance touched him so deep as not able to contain himself, he beat his boy in great rage, even at the same time, so long after the mis-carrying of the great ship, because upon a fair day, when we were becalmed upon the coast of the New-found-land, near unto Cape Race, he sent his boy aboard the Admiral to fetch certain things, amongst which, this being chief, was yet forgotten, and left behind. After which time he could never conveniently send again aboard the great ship; much less he doubted her ruin so near at hand.

Herein my opinion was better confirmed diversely, and by sundry conjectures, which maketh me have the greater hope of this rich mine. For whereas the general had never before good conceit of these north parts of the world, now his mind was wholly fixed upon the New-found-land. And as before he refused not to grant assignments liberally to them that required the same into these north parts, now he became contrarily affected, refusing to make any so large grants, especially of St. John's which certain English merchants made suit for, offering to employ their money and travel upon the same. Yet neither by their own suit, nor of others of his own company, whom he seemed willing to pleasure, it could be obtained.

Also laying down his determination in the

² i. e. the *Golden Hind*, the name of Gilbert's vessel.

³ Good omen.

spring following, for disposing of his voyage then to be re-attempted, he assigned the captain and master of the *Golden Hind* unto the south discovery, and reserved unto himself the north, affirming that this voyage had won his heart from the south, and that he was now become a northern man altogether.

Last, being demanded what means he had at his arrival in England to compass the charges of so great preparation as he intended to make the next spring, having determined upon two fleets, one for the south, another for the north: Leave that to me (he replied), I will ask a penny of no man. I will bring good tidings unto her Majesty, who will be so gracious to lend me 10,000 pounds, willing as before to be of good cheer, for he did thank God (he said) with all his heart for that he had seen, the same being enough for us all, and that we needed not to seek any further. And these last words he would oft repeat with demonstration of great fervency of mind, being himself very confident and settled in belief of inestimable good by this voyage, which the greater number of his followers nevertheless mistrusted altogether, not being made partakers of those secrets, which the general kept unto himself. Yet all of them that are living may be witnesses of his words and protestations, which sparingly I have delivered.

Leaving the issue of this good hope unto God, who knoweth the truth only, and can at his good pleasure bring the same to light, I will hasten to the end of this tragedy, which must be knit up in the person of our general. And as it was God's ordinance upon him, even so the vehement persuasion and entreaty of his friends could nothing avail to divert him from a wilful resolution of going through in his frigate; which was overcharged upon their decks, with fights, nettings, and small artillery, too cumbersome for so small a boat that was to pass through the ocean sea at that season of the year, when by course we might expect much storm of foul weather, whereof indeed we had enough.

But when he was entreated by the captain, master, and other his well-willers of the *Hind*, not to venture in the frigate, this was his answer: I will not forsake my little company going homeward, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils. And in very truth, he was urged to be so over hard, by hard reports given of him, that he was afraid of the sea, albeit this was rather rashness than advised resolution, to prefer the wind of a vain report to the weight of his own life.

Seeing that he would not bend to reason, he had provision out of the *Hind*, such as was

wanting aboard his frigate. And so we committed him to God's protection, and set him aboard his pinnace, we being more than 300 leagues onward of our way home.

By that time we had brought the islands of Azores south of us; yet we then much keeping to the north, until we had got into the height and elevation of England, we met with very foul weather and terrible seas, breaking short and high, pyramid wise. The reason whereof seemed to proceed either of hilly grounds, high and low, within the sea, (as we see hills and dales upon the land), upon which the seas do mount and fall; or else the cause proceedeth of diversity of winds, shifting often in sundry points, all which having power to move the great ocean, which again is not presently settled, so many seas do encounter together as there had been diversity of winds. Howsoever it cometh to pass, men which all their lifetime had occupied the sea, never saw more outrageous seas. We had also upon our main-yard, an apparition of a little fire by night, which seamen do call Castor and Pollux. But we had only one; which they take an evil sign of more tempest; the same is usual in storms.

Monday the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away, oppressed by waves; yet at that time recovered; and giving forth signs of joy, the general sitting abaft with a book in his hand cried out unto us in the *Hind* (so oft as we did approach within hearing): We are as near to heaven by sea as by land. Reiterating the same speech, well beseming a soldier, resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was.

The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the *Golden Hind*, suddenly her lights were out, whereof, as it were in a moment, we lost the sight, and withal our watch cried, the general was cast away, which was too true. For in that moment, the frigate was devoured and swallowed up of the sea. Yet still we looked out all that night and ever after, until we arrived upon the coast of England, omitting no small sail at sea, unto which we gave not the tokens between us agreed upon, to have perfect knowledge of each other, if we should at any time be separated.

In great torment of weather, and peril of drowning, it pleased God to send safe home the *Golden Hind*, which arrived in Falmouth, the 22nd day of September, being Sunday, not without as great danger escaped in a flaw, coming from the south-east, with such thick mist that we could not discern land, to put in right with the haven.

Sir Walter Raleigh

1552-1618

RALEIGH'S ACCOUNT OF HIS BOOK

(From the Preface to *The History of the World*, 1614)

How unfit, and how unworthy a choice I have made of myself, to undertake a work of this mixture; mine own reason, though exceeding weak, hath sufficiently resolved me. For had it been begotten then with my first dawn of day, when the light of common knowledge began to open itself to my younger years; and before any wound received, either from Fortune or Time: I might yet well have doubted that the darkness of age and death would have covered over both it and me, long before the performance. For beginning with the creation, I have proceeded with the History of the World; and lastly purposed (some few sallies excepted) to confine my discourse within this our renowned Island of Great Britain. I confess that it had better sorted with my disability, the better part of whose times are run out in other travails; to have set together (as I could) the unjointed and scattered frame of our English affairs, than of the Universal; in whom, had there been no other defect (who am all defect) than the time of the day, it were enough; the day of a tempestuous life, drawn on to the very evening ere I began.¹ But those inmost, and soul-piercing wounds, which are ever aching while uncured; with the desire to satisfy those few friends, which I have tried by the fire of adversity, the former enforcing, the latter persuading; have caused me to make my thoughts legible, and myself the subject of every opinion wise or weak.

To the world I present them, to which I am nothing indebted: neither have authors that were (Fortune changing), sped much better in any age. For, prosperity and adversity have evermore tied and untied vulgar affections. And as we see it in experience, that dogs do always bark at those they know not, and that it is their nature to accompany one another in those clamours: so it is with the inconsiderate multitude; who, wanting that virtue which we call honesty in all men and that especial gift of God which we call charity in Christian men; condemn without hearing; and wound, with-

out offense given: led thereunto by uncertain report only; which His Majesty truly acknowledgeth for the author of all lies. Blame no man (saith Siracides²) before thou have enquired the matter; understand first, and then reform righteously. *Rumor, res sine teste, sine judice, maligna, fallax*; Rumor is without witness, without judge, malicious, and deceivable. This vanity of vulgar opinion it was, that gave Saint Augustine argument to affirm, that he feared the praise of good men, and detested that of the evil. And herein no man hath given a better rule, than this of Seneca; *Conscientia satisfaciamus: nihil in famam laboremus, sequitur vel mala, dum bene merearis*. Let us satisfy our own consciences, and not trouble ourselves with fame: be it never so ill, it is to be despised so we deserve well.

For myself, if I have in anything served my country, and prized it before my private: the general acceptance can yield me no other profit at this time than doth a fair sunshine day to a seaman after shipwreck: and the contrary, no other harm than an outrageous tempest after the port attained. . . .

However, I know that it will be said by many, that I might have been more pleasing to the reader, if I had written the story of mine own times, having been permitted to draw water as near the well-head as another. To this I answer, that whosoever in writing a modern history, shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth. There is no mistress or guide, that hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries. He that goes after her too far off, loseth her sight, and loseth himself: and he that walks after her at a middle distance; I know not whether I should call that kind of course temper or baseness. It is true, that I never travailed after men's opinions, when I might have made the best use of them: and I have now too few days remaining, to imitate those, that either out of extreme ambition, or extreme cowardice, or both, do yet (when death hath them on his shoulders) flatter the world, between the bed and the grave. It is enough for me (being in that state I am) to write of the eldest times: wherein also why may it not be said, that in speaking of the past, I point at the present, and tax the vices of those that are yet living, in their persons that are long since dead; and have it laid to my charge? But this I cannot help, though innocent. And certainly if there be any, that finding themselves spotted like the tigers of old time, shall find fault with me for

¹ Raleigh was condemned to death for treason in 1603, but the sentence was commuted by James I. to imprisonment for life. *The History of the World* (which he left unfinished) was written during his imprisonment in the Tower, so that it must have been begun when he was over fifty years old.

² i. e. The son of Sirach, the author of the apocryphal book *Ecclesiasticus*. Raleigh's quotation is, apparently a paraphrase of *Ecclesiasticus*, xi. 7.

painting them over anew, they shall therein accuse themselves justly, and me falsely.

And if we could afford ourselves but so much leisure as to consider, that he which hath most in the world hath, in respect of the world, nothing: and that he which hath the longest time lent him to live in it, hath yet no proportion at all therein, setting it either by that which is past, when we were not, or by that time which is to come, in which we shall abide forever: I say, if both, to wit, our proportion in the world, and our time in the world, differ not much from that which is nothing; it is not out of any excellency of understanding, that we so much prize the one, which hath (in effect) no being: and so much neglect the other, which hath no ending: coveting those mortal things of the world, as if our souls were therein immortal, and neglecting those things which are immortal, as if ourselves after the world were but mortal.

But let every man value his own wisdom as he pleaseth. Let the rich man think all fools, that cannot equal his abundance; the revenger esteem all negligent, that have not trod down their opposites; the politician, all gross, that cannot merchandise their faith: yet when we come in sight of the port of death, to which all winds drive us; and when by letting fall that fatal anchor, which can never be weighed again, the navigation of this life takes end: then it is, I say, that our own cogitations (those sad and severe cogitations, formerly beaten from us by our health and felicity) return again, and pay us to the uttermost for all the pleasing passages of our lives past. It is then that we cry out to God for mercy; then, when ourselves can no longer exercise cruelty to others; and it is only then, that we are stricken through the soul with this terrible sentence, *that God will not be mocked.*¹

Rea l C. u. f. u. l. l. y.
FAME AND DEATH

(From *The History of the World*, 1614)

By this which we have already set down, is seen the beginning and end of the first three Monarchies of the world;¹ whereof the founders and erectors thought, that they could never have ended. That of Rome which made the fourth, was also at this time almost at the highest. We have left it flourishing in the middle of the field; having rooted up, or cut down, all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world. But after some continuance, it shall begin to lose the beauty it

had; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another; her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither, and a rabble of barbarous nations enter the field, and cut her down.

Now these great Kings, and conquering nations, have been the subject of those ancient histories, which have been perused, and yet remain among us; and withal of so many tragical poets, as in the persons of powerful princes, and other mighty men have complained against infidelity, time, destiny, and most of all against the variable success of worldly things, and instability of fortune. To these undertakings, these great lords of the world have been stirred up, rather by the desire of fame, which ploweth up the air, and soweth in the wind; than by the affection of bearing rule, which draweth after it so much vexation and so many cares. And that this is true, the good advice of *Cineas* to *Pyrrus*² proves. And certainly, as fame hath often been dangerous to the living, so is it to the dead of no use at all, because separate from knowledge. Which were it otherwise, and the extreme ill bargain of buying this lasting discourse, understood by them which are dissolved; they themselves would then rather have wished, to have stolen out of the world without noise; than to be put in mind, that they have purchased the report of their actions in the world, by rapine, oppression, and cruelty; by giving in spoil the innocent and labouring soul to the idle and insolent, and by having emptied the cities of the world of their ancient inhabitants, and filled them again with so many and so variable sorts of sorrows. . . .

For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal man, we may add to that which hath been already said; that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them, the actions, but not the ends of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of *God*, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of death, upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world without speaking a word; which *God* with all the words of His law, promises, or threats, doth infuse. *Death*, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; *God*, which hath made him, is always deferred. *I have con-*

¹ *Pyrrhus* (c. 318-272 B. C.) was King of Epirus and an antagonist of Rome. He had dreams of world empire, but *Cineas* (his Chief Minister) advised him to be content with what he already possessed.

² *V. Gal.* vi. 7.

³ Assyria, Persia, Greece.

sidered (saith Solomon) all the works that are under the sun and behold, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit; but who believes it, till death tells it us? It was death, which opening the conscience of Charles the fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and king Francis the first of France to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in *Merindol* and *Cabrieres*, which till then he neglected. It is therefore death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent, that they are but objects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing, but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein, their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hath cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the star-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet*.

Richard Hooker.

1553-1600

A PLEA FOR CHARITY IN CONTROVERSIES, AND FOR SINCERITY

(From the Preface to *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1594)

The best and safest way for you, therefore, my dear brethren, is to do all your deeds past to a new reckoning, to re-examine the cause ye have taken in hand, and to try it even point by point, argument by argument, with all the legal exactness ye can, to lay aside the gall of that bitterness wherein your minds have hitherto over-abounded, and with meekness to search the truth. Think, ye are men, deem it not impossible for you to err; sift impartially your own hearts whether it be force of reason or vehemence of affection which hath bred, and still doth feed these opinions in you. If truth do anywhere manifest itself seek not to smother it with glossing delusion, acknowledge the greatness thereof, and think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you.

That ye have been earnest in speaking or writing again and again the contrary way should be no blemish or discredit at all unto you. Amongst so many so huge volumes as the infinite pains of St. Augustine have brought forth, what one hath gotten him greater love, commendation and honour than the book wherein he carefully collecteth his own oversights and sincerely condemneth them? Many speeches there are of Job, whereby his wisdom and other virtues may appear, but the glory of an ingenuous mind he hath purchased by these words only, "Behold I will lay mine hand on my mouth; I have spoken once, yet will I not therefore maintain argument; yea, twice, howbeit for that cause further I will not proceed."¹ Far more comfort it were for us, so small is the joy we take in these strifes, to labour under the same yoke, as men that look for the same eternal reward of their labours, to be enjoyed with you in bands of indissoluble love and amity, to live as if our persons being many our souls were but one, rather in such dismembered sort to spend our few and wretched days in a tedious prosecuting of wearisome contentions, the end whereof, if they have not some speedy end, will be heavy even on both sides. Brought already we are even to that estate which Gregory Nazianzen mournfully describeth, saying:

"My mind leadeth me (since there is no other remedy) to fly and to convey myself into some corner out of sight, where I may escape from this cloudy tempest of maliciousness, whereby all parts are entered into a deadly war amongst themselves, and that little remnant of love which was is now consumed to nothing. The only godliness we glory in is to find out somewhat whereby we may judge others to be ungodly. Each other's faults we observe as matter of exprobation² and not of grief. By these means we are grown hateful in the eyes of the heathens themselves, and (which woundeth thus the more deeply) able we are not to deny but that we have deserved their hatred. With the better sort of our own our fame and credit is clean lost. The less we are to marvel if they judge vilely of us, who although we did well would hardly allow thereof. On our backs they also build that are lewd,³ and what we object one against another the same they use to the utter scorn and disgrace of us all. This we have gained by our mutual home dissensions. This we are worthily rewarded with, which are more forward to strive than becometh men of virtuous and mild disposition." But our trust in the Almighty is,

¹ Job, xl. 5.

² Reproach, accusation.

³ Ignorant, uneducated.

that with us contentions are now at their highest float, and that the day will come (for what cause of despair is there) when the passions of former enmity being allayed, we shall with ten times redoubled tokens of our unfeignedly reconciled love, show ourselves each toward the other the same, which Joseph and the brethren of Joseph were at the time of their interview in Egypt. Our comfortable expectation and most thirsty desire, whereof what man soever amongst you shall anyway help to satisfy (as we truly hope there is no one amongst you but some way or other will) the blessings of the God of peace, both in this world and in the world to come, be upon him more than the stars of the firmament in number.

THE DIVINE SOURCE OF LAW

(From the same)

This world's first creation, and the preservation since of things created, what is it but only so far forth a manifestation by execution what the eternal law of God is concerning things natural? And as it cometh to pass in a kingdom rightly ordered, that after a law is once published it presently takes effect far and wide, all states framing themselves thereunto, even so let us think it fareth in the natural course of the world. Since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts of His law upon it, heaven and earth have harkened unto His voice, and their labour hath been to do His will. He made a law for the rain, He gave His decree unto the sea that the waters should not pass his commandment. Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for awhile, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world whereof all things in this lower world are made should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as

children at the withered breasts of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief—what would become of man himself whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world? . . . Thus far, therefore, we have endeavoured in part to open of what nature and force laws are, according unto their several kinds: the law which God with Himself hath eternally set down to follow in His own works; the law which He hath made for His creatures to keep, the law of natural and necessary agents; the law which angels in heaven obey; the law whereunto, by the light of reason, men find themselves bound in that they are men; the law which they make, by composition, for multitudes and politic societies of men to be guided by; the law which belongeth unto each nation, the law that concerneth the fellowship of all; and lastly the law which God Himself hath supernaturally revealed. . . .

Wherefore that here we may briefly end, of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power, both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever though each in a different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

John Lyly

1553–1606

A GOOD SCHOOLMASTER

(From *Euphues*, 1579)

A good and discreet schoolmaster should be such an one as *Phemix* was the instructor of *Achilles*, whom *Pelleus* (as *Homer* reporteth) appointed to that end that he should be unto *Achilles* not only a teacher of learning, but an ensample of good living. But that is most principally to be looked for, and most diligently to be forseen, that such tutors be sought out for the education of a young child, whose life hath never been stained with dishonesty, whose good name hath never been called into question, whose manners hath been irreprehensible before the world. As husbandmen hedge in their trees, so should good schoolmasters with good manners hedge in the wit and disposition of the scholar, whereby the

blossoms of learning may the sooner increase to a bud.

Many parents are in this to be disliked, which having neither trial of his honesty, nor experience of his learning to whom they commit the child to be taught, without any deep or due consideration, put them to one either ignorant or obstinate, the which if they themselves shall do of ignorance the folly cannot be excused, if of obstinacy their lewdness¹ is to be abhorred.

Some fathers are overcome with the flattery of those fools who profess outwardly great knowledge, and show a certain kind of disssembling sincerity in their life, others at the entreating of their familiar friends are content to commit their sons to one, without either substance of honesty or shadow of learning. By which their indiscreet dealing, they are like those sick men which reject the expert and cunning physician, and at the request of their friends admit the heedless practiser, which dangereth the patient, and bringeth the body to his bane:² or not unlike unto those, which at the instant and importunate suit of their acquaintance refuse a cunning pilot, and choose an unskillful mariner, which hazardeth the ship and themselves in the calmest sea.

Good God, can there be any that hath the name of a father that will esteem more the fancy of his friend than the nurture of his son? It was not in vain that *Crates* would often say, that if it were lawful even in the market place he would cry out: Whether run you fathers, which have all your care and care to multiply your wealth, nothing regarding your children unto whom you must leave all. In this they resemble him which is very curious about the shoe and hath no care for the foot. Besides this there be many fathers so inflamed with the love of wealth, that they be as it were incensed with hate against their children; which *Arisippus* seeing in an old miser did partly note it, this old miser asking of *Arisippus* what he would take to teach and bring up his son, he answered a thousand groats: a thousand groats, God shield, answered this old huddle, I can have two servants at that price. Unto whom he made answer, thou shalt have two servants and one son, and whether wilt thou sell? Is it not absurd to have so great a care of the right hand of the child to cut his meat, that if he handle his knife in the left hand we rebuke him severely, and to be sure of his nurture in discipline and learning? . . .

¹ Ignorance.

² Destruction.

It is good nurture that leadeth to virtue, and discreet demeanour that plaineth the path to felicity. If one have either the gifts of Fortune, as great riches, or of Nature, as seemly personage, he is to be despised in respect of learning. To be a noble man it is most excellent, but that is our ancestors, as *Ulysses* said to *Ajax*, as for our nobility, our stock, our kindred, and whatsoever we ourselves have not done, I scarcely account ours. Riches are precious, but Fortune ruleth the roost, which oftentimes taketh away all from them that have much, and giveth them more that had nothing, glory is a thing worthy to be followed, but as it is gotten with great travail, so is it lost in a small time.

Beauty is such a thing as we commonly prefer before all things, yet it fadeth before we perceive it to flourish: health is that which all men desire, yet ever subject to any disease; strength is to be wished for, yet is it either abated with an ague, or taken away with age; whosoever therefore boasteth of force, is too beastly, seeing he is in that quality not to be compared with beasts, as the lion, the bull, the elephant.

It is virtue, yea virtue, Gentlemen, that maketh gentlemen; that maketh the poor rich, the base born noble, the subject a sovereign, the deformed beautiful, the sick whole, the weak strong, the most miserable, the most happy. There are two principal and peculiar gifts in the nature of man, knowledge and reason: the one commandeth, the other obeyeth; these things neither the whirling wheel of fortune can change, neither the deceitful calling of worldlings separate, neither sickness abate, neither age abolish.

It is only knowledge, which worn with years waxeth young, and when all things are cut away with the sickle of Time, knowledge flourisheth so high that Time cannot reach it. War taketh all things with it even as the whirlpool, yet must it leave learning behind it, wherefore it was wisely answered in my opinion, of *Stilpo* the Philosopher, for when *Demetrius* won the City, and made it even to the ground leaving nothing standing, he demanded of *Stilpo* whether he had lost anything of his in this great spoil; unto whom he answered, no verily, for war getteth no spoil of virtue.

Unto the like sense may the answer of *Socrates* be applied, when *Gorgias* asked him whether he thought the Persian king happy or not; I know not, said he, how much virtue or discipline he hath, for happiness doth not consist in the gifts of fortune, but in the grace of virtue.

EUPHUES GLASS FOR EUROPE

(From *Euphues and His England*, 1580)TO THE LADIES AND GENTLEWOMEN OF ITALY:
EUPHUES WISHETH HEALTH AND HONOUR

If I had brought (ladies) little dogs from Malta, or strange stones from India, or fine carpets from Turkey, I am sure that you would have either wooed me to have them, or wished to see them.

But I am come out of England with a glass, wherein you shall behold the things which you never saw, and marvel at the sights when you have seen. Not a glass to make you beautiful, but to make you blush, yet not at your vices, but at others' virtues, not a glass to dress your hairs but to redress your harms, by the which if you every morning correct your manners, being as careful to amend faults in your hearts, as you are curious to find faults in your heads, you shall in short time be as much commended for virtue of the wise, as for beauty of the wanton.

Thus, fair ladies, hoping you will be as willing to pry in this glass for amendment of manners, as you are to prank yourselves in a looking-glass, for commendation of men, I wish you as much beauty as you would have, so as you would endeavour to have as much virtue as you should have. And so farewell.

EUPHUES.

There is an isle lying in the ocean sea, directly against that part of France, which containeth Picardy and Normandy, called now *England*, heretofore named Britain, it hath Ireland upon the west side, on the north the main sea, on the east side the German Ocean. This Island is in circuit 1720 miles, in form like unto a triangle, being broadest in the south part, and gathering narrower and narrower till it come to the farthest point of Caithness, northward where it is narrowest, and there endeth in manner of a promontory. To repeat the ancient manner of this island or what sundry nations have inhabited there, to set down the giants, which in bigness of bone have passed the ordinary size, and almost common credit, to rehearse what diversity of languages have been used, into how many kingdoms it hath been divided, what religions have been followed before the coming of Christ, although it would breed great delight to your ears, yet might it happily seem tedious: for that honey taken excessively cloyeth the stomach though it be honey.

But my mind is briefly to touch such things as at my being there I gathered by mine own

study and enquiry, not meaning to write a chronicle, but to set down in a word what I heard by conference. . . .

Their air is very wholesome and pleasant, their civility not inferior to those that deserve best, their wits very sharp and quick, although I have heard that the Italian and Frenchmen have accounted them but gross and dull pated, which I think came not to pass by the proof they made of their wits, but by the Englishman's report.

But this is strange (and yet how true it is, there is none that ever travelled thither but can report) that it is always incident to an Englishman, to think worst of his own nation, either in learning, experience, common reason, or wit, preferring always a stranger rather for the name, than for the wisdom. I for mine own part think, that in all Europe there are not lawyers more learned, divines more profound, physicians more expert, than are in England.

But that which most allureth a stranger is their courtesy, their civility and good entertainment. I speak this by experience, that I found more courtesy in England among those I never knew, in one year, than I have done in Athens or Italy among those I ever loved, in twenty.

But having entreated of the country and their conditions, let me come to the glass I promised, being the court.¹ . . .

Is not this a glass, fair ladies, for all other countries to behold, where there is not only an agreement in faith, religion, and counsel, but in friendship, brotherhood, and living? By whose good endeavours vice is punished, virtue rewarded, peace established, foreign broils repressed, domestical cares appeased? what nation can of counsellors desire more? what dominion, yet excepted hath so much? when neither courage can prevail against their counsel, nor both joined in one be of force to undermine their country, when you have dazzled your eyes with this glass, behold here is another. It was my fortune to be acquainted with certain English gentlemen, which brought me to the court, where when I came, I was driven into a maze to behold the lusty and brave gallants, the beautiful and chaste ladies, the rare and godly orders, so as I could not tell whether I should most commend virtue or bravery. At the last coming oftener thither, than it beseeemed one of my degree, yet not so often as they desired my company, I began to pry after their manners, natures, and lives, and that which followeth I saw, whereof whoso doubteth, I will swear.

¹ i. e. the glass in which he will picture the court.

The ladies spend the morning in devout prayer, not resembling the gentlewomen in Greece and Italy, who begin their morning at mid-noon, and make their evening at midnight, sing sonnets for psalms, and pastimes for prayers, reading the Epistle of a Lover, when they should peruse the Gospel of our Lord, drawing wanton lines when death is before their face, as *Archimedes* did triangles and circles when the enemy was at his back.³ Behold, ladies, in this glass, that the service of God is to be preferred before all things, imitate the English damoselles who have their books tied to their girdles, not feathers; who are as cunning in the scriptures, as you are in *Ariosto* 15 or *Petrarch* or any book that liketh you best, and becometh you most.

For bravery I cannot say that you exceed them, for certainly it is the most gorgeous court that ever I have seen, read, or heard of, 20 but yet do they not use their apparel so nicely as you in Italy, who think scorn to kneel at service, for fear of wrinkles in your silks, who dare not lift up your head to heaven, for fear of rumpling the ruff in your neck, yet your hands I confess are holden up, rather I think, to show your rings, than to manifest your righteousness. The bravery they use is for the honour of their Prince, the attire you wear for the alluring of your prey, the rich apparel 30 maketh their beauty more seen, your disguising causeth your faces to be more suspected, they resemble in their raiment the *Ostrich* who being gazed on, closeth her wings and hideth her feathers, you in your robes are not unlike the peacock, who being praised spreadeth her tail, and betrayeth her pride. Velvets and silks in them are like gold about a pure diamond, in you like a green hedge, about a filthy dunghill. Think not, ladies, that be- 40 cause you are decked with gold, you are endued with grace, imagine not that shining like the sun in earth, ye shall climb the sun in heaven, look diligently into this English glass, and then shall you see that the more costly your apparel is, the greater your courtesy should be, that you ought to be as far from pride, as you are from poverty, and as near to princes in beauty, as you are in brightness. Because you are brave, disdain not those that are base, think with yourselves that russet coats have their Christendom, that the sun when he is at his height shineth as well upon coarse kersey, as cloth of tissue, though you have pearls in your ears, jewels in your breasts, precious stones 55 on your fingers, yet disdain not the stones in

the street, which although they are nothing so noble, yet are they much more necessary. Let not your robes hinder your devotion, learn of the English ladies, that God is worthy to be 5 worshipped with the most price, to whom you ought to give all praise, then shall ye be like stars to the wise, who now are but staring stocks to the foolish, then shall you be praised of most, who are now pointed at of all, then shall 10 God bear with your folly, who now abhorreth your pride.

Sir Philip Sydney

1554-1586

THE PREËMINENCE OF POETRY

(From *The Defense of Poesy*, c. 1581)

Now therein of all sciences—I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit—is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only 25 show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent¹ with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness. But he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchancing skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner, and, 40 pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste,—which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarb they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So it is in men, most of which are childish in the best things, till they be cradled 50 in their graves,—glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Cyrus, Æneas; and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valor, and justice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.

That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other; inso-

¹ Margin.

³ When the Romans surprised and captured Syracuse, the native city of Archimedes, the great mathematician is said to have been found in the public square, poring over geometrical figures which he had drawn in the sand.

much that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made in poetical imitation delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule*,² which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect poesy, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. Who readeth *Æneas* carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom do not those words of Turnus move, the tale of Turnus having planted his image in his imagination?

Fugientem hæc terra videbit?
Usque adeone mori miserum est?³

Where⁴ the philosophers, as they scorn to delight, so must they be content little to move—saving wrangling whether virtue be the chief or the only good, whether the contemplative or the active life do excel—which Plato and Boethius well knew, and therefore made Mistress Philosophy very often borrow the masking raiment of Poesy. For even those hard hearted evil men who think virtue a school-name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*,⁵ and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be content to be delighted, which is all the good-fellow poet seemeth to promise; and so steal to see the form of goodness—which, seen, they cannot but love—ere themselves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.

CLAIUS DESCRIBES URANIA

(From *The Arcadia*, 1590)

Who can choose that saw her but think where she stayed, where she walked, where she turned, where she spoke? But what is all this? Truly no more, but as this place served us to think of those things, so those things serve as places to call to memory more excellent matters. No, no, let us think with consideration, and consider with acknowledging, and acknowledge with admiration, and admire with love, and love with joy in the midst of all woes; let us

² *Amadis of Gaul*, like *Arthur* and *Charlemagne*, was a famous hero of medieval romance. A French version of the story (which had been previously told in Spanish) appeared in 1540 and became widely popular.

³ "Shall this land see [Turnus] dying?
Is it always so bitter a thing to die?" (*Æneid*, XII. 245-46.)

⁴ Whereas.

⁵ "Indulge your natural inclinations [let us grasp pleasures]." *Permeus*, Sat. 5, 151.

in such sort think, I say, that our poor eyes were so enriched as to behold; and our low hearts so exalted as to love, a maid, who is such, that as the greatest thing the world can show, is her beauty, so the least thing that may be praised in her, is her beauty. Certainly as her eyelids are more pleasant to behold, than two white kids climbing up a fair tree, and browsing on his tenderest branches, and yet are nothing compared to the day-shining stars contained in them; and as her breath is more sweet than a gentle South-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields and shadowed waters in the extreme heat of the summer, and yet is nothing, compared to the honey-flowing speech that breath doth carry: no more all that our eyes can see of her (though when they have seen her, what else they shall ever see is but dry stubble after clover's grass) is to be matched with the flock of unspeakable virtues laid up delightfully in that best builded fold. But indeed as we can best consider the sun's beauty, by marking how he gilds these waters and mountains, than by looking upon his own face, too glorious for our weak eyes: so it may be our conceits (not able to bear her sun staining excellency) will better weigh it by her works upon some meaner subject employed. And alas, who can better witness that than we, whose experience is grounded upon feeling? Hath not the only love of her made us (being silly ignorant shepherds) raise up our thoughts above the ordinary level of the world, so as great clerks do not disdain our conference? Hath not the desire to seem worthy in her eyes, made us, when others were sleeping, to sit viewing the course of the heavens? When others were running at Base,¹ to run over learned writings? When others mark their sheep, we to mark ourselves? Hath not she thrown reason upon our desires, and, as it were, given eyes unto Cupid? Hath in any, but in her, love-fellowship maintained friendship between rivals, and beauty taught the beholders chastity?

A DESCRIPTION OF ARCADIA

(From the same)

There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees: humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers: meadows, enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposi-

¹ An exercise much used by the country people called *Prison-base*.

tion of many well tuned birds: each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs with bleating oratory craved the dams' comfort, here a shepherd's boy piping, as though he should never be old: there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music. As for the houses of the country (for many houses came under my eye) they were all scattered, no two being one by the other, and yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour: a show, as it were of an accompanable solitariness, and of a civil wildness. I pray you (said *Musidorus*, then first unsealing his long silent lips) what countries be these we pass through, which are so divers in show, the one wanting no store, the other having no store but of want?

The country (answered *Claius*) where you were cast ashore, and now are passed through, is *Laconia*, not so poor by the barrenness of the soil (though in itself not passing fertile) as by a civil war, which being these two years within the bowels of that estate, between the gentlemen and the peasants (by them named *Helots*) hath in this sort as it were disfigured the face of nature, and made it so inhospitable as now you have found it: the towns neither of the one side, nor the other, willingly opening their gates to strangers, nor strangers willingly entering for fear of being mistaken.

But this country (where now you set your foot) is *Arcadia*: and even hard by is the house of *Kalander*, whither we lead you. This country being thus decked with peace, and (the child of peace) good husbandry, these houses you see so scattered, are of men, as we two are, that live upon the commodity of their sheep: and therefore in the division of the *Arcadian* estate are termed shepherds; a happy people, wanting little, because they desire not much.

Thomas Lodge

c. 1558-1625

SALADIN AND ROSADER¹

(From *Rosalind*, 1590)

Saladin, how art thou disquieted in thy thoughts, and perplexed with a world of restless passions, having thy mind troubled with

¹ Sir John of Bordeaux divided his estate among his three sons: Saladin, Fernandine, and Rosader. After his father's death, Saladin was discontented, because, although he was the eldest, he considered that he had inherited less than either of his brothers. At the beginning of the selection, we find Saladin brooding over his supposed wrongs.

the tenor of thy father's testament, and thy heart fired with the hope of present preferment? By the one thou art counseled to content thee with thy fortunes, by the other, persuaded to aspire to higher wealth. Riches, Saladin, is a great royalty, and there is no sweeter physic than store. Avicenna² like a fool forgot in his aphorisms to say that gold was the most precious restorative, and that treasure was the most excellent medicine of the mind. Oh Saladin! what, were thy father's precepts breathed into the wind? hast thou so soon forgotten his principles? did he not warn thee from coveting without honor, and climbing without virtue? did he not forbid thee to aim at any action that should not be honorable? and what will be more prejudicial to thy credit, than the careless ruin of thy brothers' prosperity? and wilt thou become the subversion of their fortunes? Is there any sweeter thing than concord, or a more precious jewel than amity? are you not sons of one father, scions of one tree, birds of one nest? and wilt thou become so unnatural as to rob them whom thou shouldst relieve? No, Saladin, entreat them with favors, and entertain them with love, so shalt thou have thy conscience clear and thy renown excellent. Tush, what words are these, base fool, far unfit (if thou be wise) for thy honor. What though thy father at his death talked of many frivolous matters, as one that doated for age and raved in his sickness, shall his words be axioms, and his talk be so authentical, that thou wilt (to observe them) prejudice thyself? No, no, Saladin, sick men's wills that are parole, and have neither hand nor seal, are like the laws of a city written in dust, which are broken with the blast of every wind. What, man! thy father is dead, and he can neither help thy fortunes nor measure thy actions; therefore bury his words with his carcase, and be wise for thyself. What, 'tis not so old as true:

"Non sapit, qui sibi non sapit."³

Thy brother is young, keep him now in awe, make him not cheekmate with thyself: for

"Nimia familiaritas contemptum parit."⁴

Let him know little, so shall he not be able to execute much; suppress his wits with a base estate, and though he be a gentleman by nature yet form him anew, and make him a peasant by nurture; so shalt thou keep him as a slave, and reign thyself sole lord over all thy father's possessions. As for Fernandine,

² Avicenna (980-1037) a celebrated Arabian physician and philosopher.

³ He knows nothing, who is not wise for himself.

⁴ Too much familiarity breeds contempt.

thy middle brother, he is a scholar, and hath no mind but on Aristotle; let him read on Galen⁵ while thou riftest with gold, and pore on his book till thou dost purchase lands: wit is great wealth; if he have learning it is enough, and so let all rest.

In this humor was Saladin, making his brother Rosader his foot-boy for the space of two or three years, keeping him in such servile subjection, as if he had been the son of any country vassal. The young gentleman bore all with patience, till on a day walking in the garden by himself, he began to consider how he was the son of John of Bordeaux, a knight renowned for many victories, and a gentleman famous for his virtues; how, contrary to the testament of his father, he was not only kept from his land, and entreated as a servant, but smothered in such secret slavery, as he might not attain to any honorable actions. Alas, quoth he to himself (nature working these effectual passions), why should I, that am a gentleman born, pass my time in such unnatural drudgery?⁶ were it not better either in Paris to become a scholar, or in the court a courtier, or in the field a soldier, than to live a foot-boy to my own brother? Nature hath lent me wit to conceive, but my brother denied me art to contemplate: I have strength to perform any honorable exploit, but no liberty to accomplish my virtuous endeavors: those good parts that God hath bestowed upon me, the envy of my brother doth smother in obscurity; the harder is my fortune, and the more his frowardness. With that casting up his hand he felt hair on his face, and perceiving his beard to bud, for choler he began to blush, and swore to himself he would be no more subject to such slavery. As thus he was ruminating of his melancholy passions, in came Saladin with his men, and seeing his brother in a brown study, and to forget his wonted reverence, thought to shake him out of his dumps thus: "Sir," quoth he, "what, is your heart on your halfpenny, or are you saying a dirge for your father's soul? what, is my dinner ready?" At this question—Rosader turning his head askance, and bending his brows as if anger there had ploughed the furrows of her wrath, with his eyes full of fire—he made this reply, "Dost thou ask me, Saladin, for thy cates? ask some of thy churls who are fit

for such office; I am thine equal by nature, though not by birth, and though thou hast more cards in the bunch, have as many trumps in my hand as thyself. Let me question with thee, why thou hast felled my woods, spoiled my manor houses, and made havoc with such utensils as my father bequeathed unto me? I tell thee, Saladin, either answer me as a brother, or I will trouble thee as an enemy."

At this reply of Rosader's, Saladin smiled as laughing at his presumption, and frowned as checking his folly: he therefore took him up thus shortly: "What, sir! well I see early pricks the tree that will prove a thorn: hath my familiar conversing with you made you coy,⁷ or my good looks drawn you to be thus contemptuous? I can quickly remedy such a fault, and I will bend the tree while it is a wand. In faith, sir boy, I have a snaffle for such a headstrong colt. You, sirs, lay hold on him and bind him, and then I will give him a cooling card for his choler." This made Rosader half mad, that stepping to a great rake that stood in the garden, he laid such load upon his brother's men that he hurt some of them, and made the rest of them run away. Saladin seeing Rosader so resolute, and with his resolution so valiant, thought his heels his best safety, and took him to a loft adjoining the garden, whither Rosader pursued him hotly. Saladin, afraid of his brother's fury, cried out to him thus, "Rosader, be not so rash, I am thy brother, and thy elder, and if I have done thee wrong, I'll make thee amends: revenge not anger in blood, for so shalt thou stain the virtue of old Sir John of Bordeaux: say wherein thou art discontent and thou shalt be satisfied. Brothers' frowns ought not to be periods of wrath: what, man, look not so sourly; I know we shall be friends, and better friends than we have been; for, *Amantium ira amoris redintegratio est.*"⁸

These words appeased the choler of Rosader, for he was of a mild and courteous nature, so that he laid down his weapons, and upon the faith of a gentleman assured his brother he would offer him no prejudice: whereupon Saladin came down, and after a little parley, they embraced each other and became friends, and Saladin promising Rosader the restitution of all his lands, and what favor else, quoth he, anyways my ability or the nature of a brother may perform.

⁵ A Greek physician and philosopher of the second century; author of numerous works on medicine, logic, etc.

⁶ Rosader's soliloquy, and the interview with his brother which follows, should be compared with the opening scene of *As You Like It*. That comedy appeared some eight or nine years after the publication of Lodge's romance, and Shakespeare's indebtedness to Lodge is self-evident.

⁷ Disdainful, contemptuous. The word is used in this sense by Shakespeare. (*Tam. Shr.* II. 245.)

⁸ The anger of lovers is the restoration of love. This saying is the theme of a well-known poem, the *Amantium irae* of Richard Edwards, which appeared in 1576. In this poem the proverb recurs as a kind of refrain.

Robert Greene

1560-1592

GREENE'S FAREWELL TO HIS
FELLOW-PLAYWRIGHTS(From *A Groat's worth of Wit, bought with a
million of Repentance*, 1592)*To those Gentlemen his quondam acquaintances,
that spend their wits in making Plays R. G.
wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent
his extremities.*

If woeful experience may move you (Gentlemen) to beware, or unheard of wretchedness entreat you to take heed: I doubt not but you will look back with sorrow on your time past, and endeavor with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, (for with thee will I first begin, thou famous gracer of tragedians,¹ that *Greene*, who hath said with thee like the fool in his heart "there is no God," should now give glory unto his greatness: for penetrating is his power, his hand lies heavy upon me, he hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian policy² that thou hast studied? O punish folly! What are his rules but mere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in some small time the generation of mankind. For if *Sic volo, sic jubeo*,³ hold in those that are able to command: and if it be lawful *Fas et nefas*⁴ to do anything that is beneficial, only Tyrants should possess the earth, and they striving to exceed in tyranny, should each to other be a slaughter man; till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were left for Death, that in one age a man's life should end. The brother of this Diabolical atheism is dead, and in his life had never the felicity he aimed at; but as he began in craft, lived in fear, and ended in despair. *Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei judicia!*⁵ This murderer of many brethren, had his conscience seared like *Cain*: this betrayer of him that gave his life for him, inherited the portion of *Judas*: this *Apostata* perished as

¹ Christopher Marlowe. Charges against Marlowe as a free-thinker and scorner of God's word had been laid before Elizabeth's council, but further procedure was interrupted by the poet's sudden death.

² The policy, or doctrine, popularly attributed to the Italian statesman and writer Niccolò Machiavelli, 1469-1527. Machiavelli was commonly supposed to teach that treachery, deceit, or even crime, were justified by political expediency. He was opposed by the Church, and was generally believed to have died utterly bitter and blasphemous.

³ Thus I will, thus I command.

⁴ Right or wrong.

⁵ How inscrutable are the judgments of God.

ill as *Julian*,⁶ and wilt thou, my friend, be his Disciple? Look unto me, by him persuaded to that liberty, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage. I know the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilful striving against known truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soul. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremity; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

10 With thee I join young Juvenal,⁷ that biting Satyrist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inveigh against vain men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a liberty to reprove all and none more; for one being spoken to, all are offended, none being blamed no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, tread on a worm and it will turn: then blame not scholars vexed with sharp lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproof.

And thou no less deserving than the other two,⁸ in some things rarer, in nothing inferior; driven (as myself) to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee; and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet St. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou depended on so mean a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you (like me) sought those burrs to cleave, those Puppets (I mean) that speech from our mouths, those anticks⁹ garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that 35 I, to whom they all have been beholding:¹⁰ is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart 40 Crow,¹¹ beautiful with our feathers that with his *Tigers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you! and being an absolute *Johannes fac tolem*,¹² is in his own conceit the 45 only Shake-scene in a county. O that I might entreat your rare wit to be employed in more profitable courses; and let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. I know 50 the best husband¹³ of you all will never prove an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will

⁶ Julian, Roman Emperor from 361-363, called "the Apostate."

⁷ i. e. Thomas Nash (1567-c. 1601), poet and dramatist, was also author of various satirical pamphlets, and hence here referred to as a follower of the great Latin Satirist.

⁸ George Peele (c. 1558-c. 1598.)

⁹ Clowns, buffoons.

¹⁰ Beholden.

¹¹ i. e. Jack-of-all-trades.

¹² i. e. the one who takes best care of his own, who husbands it the most carefully.

¹³ Shakespeare.

never prove a kind nurse: Yet whilst you may, seek you better masters; for it is a pity men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude grooms.

In this I might insert two more, that both have writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but let their own works serve to witness against their own wickedness, if they persevere to maintain any such peasants. For other new comers, I leave them to the mercy of these 10 painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will drive the best minded to despise them, for the rest, it skills not though they make a jest at them.

But now return I again to you three, knowing my misery is to you no news; and let me 15 heartily entreat you to be warned by my harms. Delight not (as I have done) in irreligious oaths; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkenness, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all 20 equal unto beasts. Fly lust, as the deathsmans of the soul, and defile not the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Abhor thou Epicurus, whose loose life hath made religion loathsome to your ears; and when they soothe you with terms 25 of mastership, remember *Robert Greene*, whom they have so often flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember, Gentlemen, your lives are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care delivered to all of you to maintain; 30 these with wind-puffed wrath may be extinguished, which drunkenness put out, which negligence let fall: for man's time of itself is not so short, but it is more shortened by sin. The fire of my life is now at its last snuff, and the want of wherewith to sustain it, there is no substance left for life to feed on. Trust 35 not then (I beseech ye) to such weak stays; for they are as changeable in mind, as in many attires. Well, my hand is tired, and I am forced to leave when I would fain begin; for a whole book cannot contain these wrongs, which I am forced to knit up in some few lines of words.

Desirous that you should live, though himself be dying,

ROBERT GREENE.

Francis Bacon

1561-1626

OF DEATH

(*Essays*, 1597, 1612, 1625)

Men fear death as children fear to go into the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the

wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture 5 of vanity and of superstition. You shall read in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself what the pain is, if he have but his finger's end pressed, or tortured, and thereby imagine what the pains of death are when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb—for the most vital parts are not the 10 quickest of sense: and by him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, "*Pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa.*"¹ Groans, and convulsions, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping, and blacks,² and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him, 15 that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it, grief flieth to it; fear pre-occupateth it; nay, we read, after Otho³ the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die but of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds, niceness and satiety: "*Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest.*"⁴ "A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over." It is no less 20 worthy to observe, how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men till the last instant. Augustus Cæsar died in a compliment: "*Livia, conjugii nostri memor vive, et vale.*"⁵ Tiberius in dissimulation, as Tacitus saith of him, "*Jam 25 Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant.*"⁶ . . . Galba with a sentence, "*Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani,*"⁷ holding forth his neck: Septimus Severus in despatch, "*Adeste si quid mihi restat agendum,*"⁸ and the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost

¹ The trappings of death terrify more than death itself.

² Hired mourners, or mutes, who were dressed in funeral black.

³ Marcus Salvius Otho, Emperor of Rome, who committed suicide A. D. 69, after his overthrow by Vitellius, who succeeded him.

⁴ Livia, mindful of our wedlock, live, and farewell.

⁵ Already the mental powers and bodily strength were leaving Tiberius, but not his dissimulation.

⁶ Strike, if it be for the benefit of the Roman people.

⁷ Despatch, if there is anything left for me to do.

upon death, and by their great preparations made it appear more fearful. Better, saith he, "qui finem vitæ extremum inter munera ponat naturæ."⁸ It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolours of death: but, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is, *Nunc dimittis*,⁹ when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also, that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy: "Extinctus amabitur idem."¹⁰

OF ADVERSITY

(From the same)

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), that the "good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired"—"*Bona rerum secundarum optabilia, adversarum mirabilia.*" Certainly, if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen) "It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God"—"*Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.*" This would have done better in poesy, where transcendencies¹ are more allowed; and the poets, indeed, have been busy with it—for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery;² nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian, "that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus (by whom human nature is represented), sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher, lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean,³ the virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater

benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad⁴ and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant where they are incensed, or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

OF WISDOM FOR A MAN'S SELF

(From the same)

An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a shrewd¹ thing in an orchard or garden; and certainly men that are great lovers of themselves waste the public. Divide with reason between self-love and society; and be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others, especially to thy king and country. It is a poor center of a man's actions, himself. It is right earth; for that only stands fast² upon his own center; whereas all things that have affinity with the heavens move upon the center of another, which they benefit. The referring of all to a man's self is more tolerable in a sovereign prince, because themselves are not only themselves, but their good and evil is at the peril of the public fortune: but it is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince, or a citizen in a republic; for whatsoever affairs pass such a man's hands, he crooketh them to his own ends, which must needs be often eccentric, to the ends of his master or State: therefore, let princes or States chuse such servants as have not this mark, except they mean their service should be made but the accessory. That which maketh the effect more pernicious is, that all proportion is lost. It were disproportion enough for the servant's good to be preferred before the master's; but yet it is a greater extreme, when a little good of the servant shall carry things against a great good of the master's: and yet that is the case of bad officers, treasurers, ambassadors, generals, and other false

⁸ Who places the final end of life among the gifts of nature.

⁹ "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." *St. Luke*, xi., 29.

¹⁰ The same man will be loved when dead.

¹ Lofty flights, language not held down to prosaic fact

² Without an allegorical meaning.

³ In moderate style, i. e. to come down from the lofty heights of poetry.

⁴ Dark, somber.

¹ Hurtful, troublesome.

² Copernicus published his theory of the universe in 1543, but it gained acceptance very slowly, even among men of learning.

and corrupt servants, which set a bias¹ upon their bowl, of their own petty ends and envies, to the overthrow of their master's great and important affairs. And for the most part, the good such servants receive is after the model of their own fortune, but the hurt they sell for that good is after the model of their master's fortune. And certainly it is the nature of extreme self-lovers, as they will set a house on fire and it were but to roast their eggs; and yet these men many times hold credit with their masters, because their study is but to please them, and profit themselves; and for either respect they will abandon the good of their affairs.

Wisdom for a man's self is, in many branches thereof, a depraved thing: it is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house some time before its fall: it is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him: it is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour. But that which is specially to be noted is, that those which (as Cicero says of Pompey) are "sui amantes sine rivali"⁴ are many times unfortunate: and whereas they have all their time sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconsistency of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.

OF RICHES

(From the same)

I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue: the Roman word is better—*impedimenta*; for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue—it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory. Of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit; so saith Solomon, "Where much is, there are many to consume it; and what hath the owner but the sight of it with his eyes?"¹ The personal fruition in any man cannot reach to feel great riches: there is a custody of them, or a power of dole, and a donative of them, or a fame of them, but no solid use to the owner. Do you not see what feigned prices are set upon little stones or rarities—and what works of ostentation are undertaken, because there might seem to be some use of great riches?

¹ In the game of bowls, the bowl (or ball) was not perfectly round, but disproportionately swelled out on one side to prevent it from running in a straight course; this irregularity in shape was called the *bias*. Sometimes the same end was gained by weighting one side of the bowl.

⁴ Lovers of themselves without rivals.

¹ Eccles. v., 11.

But then, you will say, they may be of use to buy men out of dangers or troubles; as Solomon saith, "Riches are as a stronghold in the imagination of the rich man;"² but this is excellently expressed, that it is in imagination, and not always in fact; for, certainly great riches have sold more men than they have bought out. Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly: yet have no abstract or friarly contempt of them, but distinguish, as Cicero saith well of Rabirius Posthumus, "In studio rei amplificandæ, apparebat, non avaritiæ prædam, sed instrumentum bonitati quæri."³ Hearken also to Solomon, and beware of hasty gathering of riches: "Qui festinat ad divitias, non erit insons."⁴ The poets feign that when Plutus (which is riches) is sent from Jupiter, he limps, and goes slowly, but when he is sent from Pluto, he runs, and is swift of foot; meaning, that riches gotten by good means and just labour pace slowly, but when they come by the death of others (as by the course of inheritance, testaments, and the like) they come tumbling upon a man: but it might be applied likewise to Pluto taking him for the devil: for when riches come from the Devil (as by fraud, and oppression, and unjust means) they come upon speed. The ways to enrich are many, and most of them foul: parsimony is one of the best, and yet it is not innocent, for it withholdeth men from works of liberality and charity. The improvement of the ground is the most natural obtaining of riches, for it is our great mother's blessing, the earth; but it is slow: and yet, where men of great wealth do stoop to husbandry, it multiplieth riches exceedingly. I knew a nobleman of England that had the greatest audits⁵ of any man in my time,—a great grazier, a great sheep master, a great timber man, a great collier, a great corn master, a great lead man, and so of iron, and a number of the like points of husbandry; so as the earth seemed a sea to him in respect of the perpetual importation. It was truly observed by one, "that himself came very hardly to little riches, and very easily to great riches:" for when a man's stock is come to that, that he can expect the prime of markets,⁶ and over-

² Prov. x., 15.

³ In his zeal to increase his fortune, it was evident that not the gain of avarice was sought, but the means of beneficence.

⁴ "He that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent." Prov. xxviii., 20.

⁵ i. e., Money receipts as shown by his accounts.

⁶ i. e., afford to wait until the market-price has risen to its highest point before he sells. By this means he can, through his wealth, capture (overcome) those bargains, which few men can afford to take advantage of and thus share in the industries of younger men.

come those bargains, which for their greatness are few men's money, and the partner in the industries of younger men, he cannot but increase mainly.⁷ The gains of ordinary trades and vocations are honest, and furthered by two things, chiefly, by diligence, and by a good name for good and fair dealing; but the gains of bargains are of a more doubtful nature, when men shall wait upon others' necessity,⁸ broke by servants,⁹ and instruments to draw them on; put off others cunningly that would be better chapmen,¹⁰ and the like practices, which are crafty and naughty. As for the chopping of bargains,¹¹ when a man buys not to hold, but to sell over again, that commonly grindeth double, both upon the seller and upon the buyer. Sharings do greatly enrich, if the hands be well chosen that are trusted. Usury¹² is the certainest means of gain, though one of the worst, as that whereby a man doth eat his bread, "in sudore vultus alieni,"¹³ and besides, doth plough upon Sundays; but yet certain though it be, it hath flaws; for that the scriveners and brokers do value unsound men to serve their own turn. The fortune in being the first in an invention, or in a privilege, doth cause sometimes a wonderful overgrowth in riches; as it was with the first sugar man in the Canaries: therefore, if a man can play the true logician, to have as well judgment as invention, he may do great matters, especially if the times be fit. He that resteth upon gains certain, shall hardly grow to great riches; and he that puts all upon adventures, doth oftentimes break and come to poverty: it is good, therefore, to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses. Monopolies, and coemption of wares for re-sale, where they are not restrained, are great means to enrich; especially if the party have intelligence what things are like to come into request, and so store himself beforehand. Riches gotten by service, though it be of the best, rise; yet when they are gotten by flattery, feeding humours, and other servile conditions, they may be placed among the worst. As for "fishing for testaments and executorships," (as Tacitus saith of Seneca, "Testamenta et orbos tanquam indagare capi,")¹⁴ it is yet worse, by how much men submit themselves to meaner persons than in service.

⁷ Greatly.

⁸ Watch for the necessity of others, so as to take advantage of it by driving a hard bargain.

⁹ "When men shall" transact business (*broke*) through agents, who are used as tools to draw on the buyer to give a high price.

¹⁰ Merchants, dealers.

¹¹ The changing of investments, or business ventures: Bacon goes on to explain the expression.

¹² Interest.

¹³ In the sweat of another's brow.

¹⁴ Wills and childless parents, taken as with a net.

Believe not much them that seem to despise riches, for they despise them that despair of them; and none worse when they come to them. Be not penny-wise; riches have wings, and sometimes they fly away of themselves, sometimes they must be set flying to bring in more. Men leave their riches either to their kindred, or to the Public; and moderate portions prosper best in both. A great estate left to an heir, is as a lure to all the birds of prey round about to seize on him, if he be not the better established in years and judgment: likewise, glorious gifts and foundations are like sacrifices without salt;¹⁵ and but the painted sepulchres of alms, which soon will putrify and corrupt inwardly. Therefore measure not thine advancements¹⁶ by quantity, but frame them by measure: and defer not charities till death: for, certainly, if a man weigh it rightly, he that doth so is rather liberal of another man's than his own.

OF STUDIES

(From the same)

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness, and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar;¹ they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience—for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them, for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be

¹⁵ Among the Greeks, Romans, and other ancient peoples, salt was an indispensable element in the sacrificial offering, at least when it was partly or wholly cereal.

¹⁶ Here, probably, = *gifts*, whether by will or otherwise.

¹ The weakness peculiar to the scholastic temperament.

read, but not curiously;² and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: "Abeunt studia in mores"³—nay, there is no stond nor impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies, like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises—bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wits be wandering, let him study the mathematics, for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are "cymini sectores";⁴ if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call upon one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases—so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

Ben Jonson

1573-1637

FROM TIMBER, OR DISCOVERIES¹

(Pub. 1641)

De Shakespeare nostrat [i].²—I remember the players have often mentioned it as an

¹ Not with minute care.

² Studies pass into character.

³ Splitters of cummin seed, in our phrase, "hair splitters."

⁴ The character and scope of this work of Jonson, is indicated in its title: *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men or Matter, as they have flowed out of his daily reading; or had their reflux to his peculiar notions of the time*. The book, in other words, is a reflection upon men and things, suggested by Jonson's "daily reading." It is similar to Bacon's *Essays*, but Jonson's thoughts are jotted down as they occur to him, with little regard to logical order or grouping. The unsystematic, miscellaneous character of the book is indicated by its main title, — *Timber*. Jonson uses *Timber* (i. e. a forest) as the English equivalent of the Latin word *Silva* (a wood, a crowded mass), which as Jonson explains, was applied by the ancients "to those of their books in which were collected random articles upon diverse and various topics." *Timber*, the crude wood of the forest is thus "the raw material of facts and thoughts;" the "promiscuous" growth, undeveloped by art.

⁵ Of Shakespeare, our fellow-countryman.

honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, "Would he had blotted a thousand," which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometime it was necessary he should be stopped. "*Sufflaminatus erat*,"³ as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him: "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong." He replied: "Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause;"⁴ and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.

De piis et probis.⁵—Good men are the stars, the planets of the ages wherein they live and illustrate the times. God never let them be wanting to the world: as Abel, for an example of innocency, Enoch of purity, Noah of trust in God's mercies, Abraham of faith, and so of the rest. These, sensual men thought mad because they would not be partakers or practisers of their madness. But they, placed high on the top of all virtue, looked down on the stage of the world and contemned the play of fortune. For though the most be players, some must be spectators.

Amor nummi.⁷—Money never made any man rich, but his mind. He that can order himself to the law of Nature is not only without the sense but the fear of poverty. O, but to strike blind the people with our wealth and pomp is the thing! What a wretchedness is this, to thrust all our riches outward, and be beggars within; to contemplate nothing but the little, vile, and sordid things of the world; not the great, noble, and precious! We serve our avarice, and, not content with the good of the earth that is offered us, we search, and dig for the evil that is hidden. God offered us those things, and placed them at hand, and near us, that He knew were profitable for us,

³ He ought to have been clogged. Haterius was senator under the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius.

⁴ *Julius Cæsar*, III. i. 47.

⁵ Of devout and honorable men.

⁶ Illuminate, make glorious.

⁷ The love of money.

but the hurtful He laid deep and hid. Yet do we seek only the things whereby we may perish, and bring them forth, when God and Nature hath buried them. We covet superfluous things, when it were more honour for us if we could condemn necessary. What need hath Nature of silver dishes, multitudes of waiters, delicate pages, perfumed napkins? She requires meat only, and hunger is not ambitious. Can we think no wealth enough but such a state for which a man may be brought into a *præmunire*,⁸ begged,⁹ proscribed, or poisoned? O! if a man could restrain the fury of his gullet and groin, and think how many fires, how many kitchens, cooks, pastures, and ploughed lands; what orchards, stews,¹⁰ ponds and parks, coops and garners, he could spare; what velvets, tissues,¹¹ embroideries, laces, he could lack; and then how short and uncertain his life is; he were in a better way to happiness than to live the emperor of these delights, and be the dictator of fashions. But we make ourselves slaves to our pleasures, and we serve fame and ambition, which is an equal slavery. Have not I seen the pomp of a whole kingdom, and what a foreign king could bring hither also to make himself gazed and wondered at, laid forth, as it were, to the show, and vanish

⁸ i. e., to incur the penalty (viz. loss of the protection of the Crown, forfeiture of goods, etc.) provided in one or more of the laws known as the *Statutes of Præmunire*. These statutes obtained their name from the first words of a writ issued under them; *Præmunire facias A. B.*, etc.—you shall cause A. B. to be *forewarned* that he appear before us etc.

⁹ Beggared.

¹⁰ Pools or tanks in which fish are kept for the table.

¹¹ *Tissue*, a richly ornamented material, often interwoven with gold or silver threads.

all away in a day? And shall that which could not fill the expectation of few hours, entertain and take up our whole lives, when even it appeared as superfluous to the possessors as to me that was a spectator? The bravery was shown, it was not possessed; while it boasted itself it perished. It is vile, and a poor thing to place our happiness on these desires. Say we wanted them all, famine ends famine.

De stultitia.¹²—What petty things they are we wonder at, like children that esteem every trifle, and prefer a fairing¹³ before their fathers! What difference is between us and them but that we are dearer fools, coxcombs at a higher rate? They are pleased with cockleshells, whistles, hobbyhorses, and such like; we with statues, marble pillars, pictures, gilded roofs, where underneath is lath and lime, perhaps loam. Yet we take pleasure in the lie, and are glad we can cozen ourselves. Nor is it only in our walls and ceilings, but all that we call happiness is mere painting and gilt, and all for money. What a thin membrane¹⁴ of honour that is, and how hath all true reputation fallen, since money began to have any! Yet the great herd, the multitude, that in all other things are divided, in this alone conspire and agree—to love money. They wish for it, they embrace it, they adore it, while yet it is possessed with greater stir and torment than it is gotten.

¹² Of Folly.

¹³ An article purchased at a fair, a present brought from a fair.

¹⁴ Covering, tissue. The deceitful outward show, the (lath and lime, the painting and gilt) is but a thin and superficial layer of honor.

V. THE AGE OF MILTON

c. 1625-1660

Phineas Fletcher

1582-1650

THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

(From *The Purple Island*, 1633)

CANTO I

Let others trust the seas, dare death and Hell,
Search either Ind', vaunt of their scars and wounds:

Let others their dear breath (nay, silence) sell
To fools, and (swol'n, not rich) stretch out
their bounds, 160

By spoiling those that live, and wronging
dead;

That they may drink in pearl, and couch
their head

In soft, but sleepless down; in rich, but restless
bed.

O, let them in their gold quaff dropsies down!
O, let them surfeits feast in silver bright! 165

Whilst sugar hires the taste the brain to drown,
And bribes of sauce corrupt false appetite,
His master's rest, health, heart, life, soul,
to sell;

Thus plenty, fulness, sickness, ring their
knell.

Death weds, and beds them; first in grave, and
then in Hell. 170

But ah! let me, under some Kentish hill,
Near rolling Medway, 'mong my shepherd
peers,

With fearless merry-make, and piping still,
Securely pass my few and slow-pac'd years:

While yet the great Augustus of our nation,
Shuts up old Janus¹ in this long cessation,
Strength'ning our pleasing ease, and gives us
sure vacation.

There may I, master of a little flock,
Feed my poor lambs, and often change their
fare: 179

My lovely mate shall tend my sparing stock,
And nurse my little ones with pleasing care;
Whose love, and look, shall speak their
father plain.

Health be my feast, Heaven hope, content
my gain;

So in my little house my lesser heart shall reign.

The beech shall yield a cool safe canopy, 185
While down I sit, and chant to th' echoing
wood:

Ah, singing might I live, and singing die!
So by fair Thames, or silver Medway's flood,

¹ The Roman god, the doors of whose temple at Rome
were shut only in a time of universal peace. In 1642,
less than ten years after this tribute was written, the
Civil War began, and in 1649, Charles I, the "great
Augustus," was beheaded.

The dying swan, when years her temples
pierce,
In music's strains breathes out her life and
verse, 190
And chanting her own dirge tides on her 'wat'ry
hearse.

What, shall I then need seek a patron out:
Or beg a favour from a mistress' eyes,
To fence my song against the vulgar rout:
Or shine upon me with her geminies?²
What care I, if they praise my slender
song? 196
Or reckon I, if they do me right or wrong?
A shepherd's bliss nor stands, nor falls, to every
tongue. . . .

CANTO XII

Thrice, oh, thrice happy shepherd's life and
state!

When courts are happiness, unhappy pawns!
His cottage low, and safely humble gate, 10
Shuts out proud Fortune with her scorns and
fawns:

No feared treason breaks his quiet sleep:
Singing all day, his flocks he learns to
keep;
Himself as innocent as are his simple sheep.

No Serian worms³ he knows, that with their
thread 15

Draw out their silken lives:—nor silken
pride!

His lambs' warm fleece well fits his little need,
Not in that proud Sidonian tincture⁴ dy'd:
No empty hopes, no courtly fears him
fright;

Nor begging wants his middle fortune
bite: 20
But sweet content exiles both misery and spite.

Instead of music, and base flattering tongues,
Which wait to first salute my lord's uprise;
The cheerful lark wakes him with early songs,
And birds' sweet whistling notes unlock his
eyes. 25

In country plays is all the strife he uses;
Or sing, or dance, unto the rural Muses;
And but in music's sports, all differences re-
fuses.

His certain life, that never can deceive him,
Is full of thousand sweets, and rich content: 30

² Gemini, twins, here "a pair of eyes," i. e. both her
eyes.

³ Silk worms. Serian means pertaining to the Seres,
an Asiatic people from whom the Greeks and Romans
got their first silk.

⁴ The Royal purple. This color (tincture) is more
generally associated with Tyre, than with Sidon, as is
the corresponding expression *Tyrian dye*.

The smooth-leav'd beeches, in the fields receive
him
With coolest shades, till noon-tide's rage is
spent:
His life is neither tost in boist'rous seas
Of troublous world, nor lost in slothful
ease;
Pleas'd and full blest he lives, when he his God
can please. 35

His bed of wool, yields safe and quiet sleeps,
While by his side his faithful spouse hath
place:
His little son into his bosom creeps,
The lively picture of his father's face:
Never his humble house or state torment
him;
Less he could like, if less his God had sent
him;
And when he dies, green turfs, with grassy
tomb, content him.

Giles Fletcher

1588-1623

CHRIST'S VICTORY AND TRIUMPH, 1610

(Christ's Victory in Heaven)

What hath man done, that man shall not
undo, 600
Since God to him is grown so near a-kin?
Did his foe slay him? he shall slay his foe:
Hath he lost all? he all again shall win:
Is sin his master? he shall master sin:
Too hardy soul, with sin the field to try: 605
The only way to conquer, was to fly:
But thus long death hath liv'd, and now death's
self shall die.

He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, he is bread; 610
If any be a bondman, he is free;
If any be but weak, how strong is he?
To dead men life he is, to sick men health:
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth;
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without
stealth. 615

Who can forget, never to be forgot,
The time, that all the world in slumber lies:
When, like the stars, the singing angels shot
To Earth, and Heav'n awak'd all his eyes,
To see another Sun at midnight rise 620
On Earth? was never sight of pareil¹ fame:
For God before, man like himself did frame,
But God himself now like a man became.

A child he was, and had not learn't to speak,
That with his word the world before did make:
His mother's arms him bore, he was so weak, 626
That with one hand the vaults of Heav'n could
shake.

See how small room my infant Lord doth take,
Whom all the world is not enough to hold.
Who of his years, or of his age hath told? 630
Never such age so young, never a child so old.

George Wither

1588-1667

THE AUTHOR'S RESOLUTION IN A SONNET

(From *Fidelia*, 1615)

Shall I, wasting in despair
Dye, because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
Cause anothers Rosie are? 5
Be she fairer than the Day
Or the flowry Meads in May,
If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my seely¹ heart be pin'd
Cause I see a woman kind? 10
Or a well disposed Nature
Joyned with a lovely feature?
Be she Meeker, Kinder than
Turtle-dove or *Pellican*:
If she be not so to me, 15
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's Vertues move
Me to perish for her Love?
Or her well deservings known
Make me quite forget mine own? 20
Be she with that Goodness blest
Which may merit name of best:
If she be not such to me,
What care I how Good she be?

Cause her *Fortune* seems too high 25
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that beares a Noble mind,
If not outward helpes she find,
Thinks what with them he would do,
That without them dares her woo. 30
And unlesse that *Minde* I see
What care I how great she be?

Great, or Good, or Kind, or Faire
I will ne're the more despair:
If she love me (this believe) 35
I will Die ere she shall grieve.
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go,
For if she be not for me
What care I for whom she be? 40

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

So now is come our joyful feast,
Let every man be jolly;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.

¹ Used here in the sense of "simple," "artless," or
"foolish."

¹ Equal.

Though some churls at our mirth repine, 5
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimnies smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning; 10
Their ovens they with bak'd meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it hap could die,
We'll bury it in a Christmas pie; 15
And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
A bag-pipe and a tabor. 20
Young men and maids, and girls and boys
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun, 25
Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.
The country-folk themselves advance,
For Crowd'y-Mutton's¹ come out of France;
And Jack shall pipe and Jyll shall dance, 30
And all the town be merry.

Ned Swash hath fetch'd his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn 35
With droppings of the barrel.
And those, that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dain' fare,
And all the day be merry. . . . 40

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased;
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased. 45
Though other's purses be m^ore fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that;
Hang sorrow, care will kill, cat,
And therefore let us be merry.

Now kings and queens poor slep-cotes have,
And mate with every body; 50
The honest now may play th^onavé
And wise men play at nodd.²
Some youths will now a^umming go,
Some others play at rownd-hoe;³
And twenty other gameys⁴ m^oe; 55
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merr'days
Should we I pray be duller
No, let us sing some roundel⁵
To make our mirth the ful' 60

¹ Crowd is an old name for fidd, so some think a Crowd'y-Mutton may mean a fiddle. Possibly it is the name of some game of the French Gascons, which involved music and dancing.

² A game of cards resembling crille. As nodd³ also means fool, it may suggest play the.

³ Evidently a Christmas game.

⁴ Gambols.

And whilst thus inspir'd we sing,
And all the streets with echoes ring;
Woods, and hills, and every thing
Bear witness we are merry.

William Browne

1590-1645

BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS, 1613-16

(Book I. Song V)

Now as an angler melancholy standing,
Upon a green bank yielding room for landing,
A wiggling yellow worm thrust on his hook, 640
Now in the midst he throws, then in a nook:
Here julls his line, there throws it in again,
Mending his crook and bait, but all in vain,
He long stands viewing of the curled stream;
At last, hungry pike, or well-grown breame, 645
Snatch at the worm, and hasting fast away
He, mowing it a fish of stubborn sway,
Puls up his rod, but soft; (as having skill)
Wherewith the hook fast holds the fish's gill.
Then all his line he freely yieldeth him, 650
Whilst furiously all up and down doth swim
Th' ensnared fish, here on the top doth scud,
There, underneath the banks, then in the mud;
And with his frantic fits so scares the shoal,
That each one takes his hide or starting hole; 655
By this the pike, clean wearied, underneath
A willow lies, and pants (if fishes breathe);
Wherewith the angler gently pulls him to him,
And, lest his haste might happen to undo him,
Lays down his rod, then takes his line in hand,
And by degrees getting the fish to land, 661
Walks to another pool: at length is winner
Of such a dish as serves him for his dinner:
So when the climber half the way had got,
Musing he stood, and busily gan plot, 665
How (since the mount did always steeper
tend)

He might with steps secure his journey end. . . .

Then, as a nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filbert-food,
Sits partly on a bough his brown nuts crack-
ing,

And from the shell the sweet white kernel
taking, 695

Till (with their crooks and bags) a sort of boys
(To share with him) come with so great a noise,
That he is forc'd to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life leap to a neighbor oak;
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes; 700
Whilst thro' the quagmires and red water
plashes,

The boys run dabbling through thick and thin,
One tears his hose, another breaks his shin;
This, torn and tatter'd, hath with much ado 704
Got by the briars; and that hath lost his shoe;
This drops his band; that head-long falls f
haste;

Another cries behind for being last:

With sticks and stones, and many a sounding
hollow,

The little fool, with no small sport, they follow,
 Whilst he, from tree to tree, from spray to spray, 710
 Gets to the wood, and hides him in his dray:
 Such shift made Riot, ere he could get up.
 And so from bough to bough, then won the top,
 Though hind'rances from ever coming there,
 Were often thrust upon him by Despair. 715

Francis Quarles

1592-1644

MORS TUA

(From *A Feast for Wormes*, 1620)

Can he be fair that withers at a blast?
 Or he be strong that every breath can last?
 Or he be wise that knows not how to lye?
 Or he be rich that nothing hath to give?
 Can he be young, that's feeble, weak, and wan?
 So fair, strong, wise, so rich, so young's man.
 So fair is man, that Death (a parting blast) 7
 Blasts his fair flower, and makes him carth at last;
 So strong is man, that with a gasping breath
 He totters, and bequeathes his strength to Death; 10
 So wise is man, that if with Death he strive,
 His wisdom cannot teach him how to live;
 So rich is man, that (all his debts being paid)
 His wealth's the winding-sheet wherein he's laid;
 So young is man, that, broke with care and sorrow, 15
 He's old enough today to die tomorrow:
 Why brag'st thou, then, thou worm of five foot long?
 Th' art neither fair, nor strong, nor wise, nor rich, nor young.

INVIDIOSA SENECTUS

(From *Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man*, 1638)

Envious old age obscures thy feeble light,
 And gives thee warning of approaching night.

St. John XII. 35

Yet a little while the light is with you.

The days grow old, the low-pitch'd lamp hath made

No less than treble shade,
 And the descending damp doth now prepare 5

To uncurl bright Titan's hair;
 Whose western wardrobe now begins to unfold
 Her purples, fring'd with gold,
 To clothe his ev'ning glory, when th' alarms
 Of rest shall call to rest in restless Thetis' arms. 10

Nature now calls to supper, to refresh

The spirits of all flesh;

The toiling ploughman drives his thirsty teams
 To taste the slipp'ry streams:

The droiling¹ swineherd knocks away,² and feasts 15

His hungry whining guests:

The box-bill ouzel, and the dappled thrush,
 Like hungry rivals, meet at their beloved bush.

And now the cold autumnal dews are seen
 To cobweb ev'ry green; 20

And by the low-shorn rowens doth appear

The fast-declining year:

The sapless branches doff their summer suits,
 And wane their winter fruits;

And stormy blasts have forc'd the quaking trees 25

To wrap their trembling limbs in suits of mossy frieze.

Our wasted taper now has brought her light
 To the next door to-night;

Her spriteless flame, grown great with snuff,
 doth turn

Sad as her neighb'ring urn: 30

Her slender inch, that yet unspent remains,
 Lights but to further pains;

And, in a silent language, bids her guest
 Prepare his weary limbs to take eternal rest.

Now careful age hath pitch'd her painful plough 35

Upon the furrow'd brow;

And snowy blasts of discontented care

Have blanch'd the falling hair:

Suspicious envy, mix'd with jealous spite,

Disturbs his weary night: 40

L¹ threatens youth with age; and now, alas!

H² owns not what he is, but vaunts the man he was.

Grey hairs, peruse thy days; and let thy past

Had lectures to thy last:

Those last wings that hurried them away, 45

Will give these days no day:

The constant wheels of nature scorn to tire
 Until her works expire:

That blat that nipp'd thy youth, will ruin thee;
 That harl that shook the branch, will quickly stike the tree. 50

EPIGRAMME 3

Art thou cnsam'd with soul-afflicting crosses?
 Disturb'd with grief? annoy'd with worldly losses?

Hold up thy head: the taper, lifted high,
 Will brook the wind, when lower tapers die.

George Herbert

1593-1633

VERTUE

(From *The Temple*, 1631)

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

¹ Plodding, slugging.

² Knocks-off, stops work.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie¹ and brave 5
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie, 10
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal, 15
Then chiefly lives.

THE PULLEY

(From the same)

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said He, "poure on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span." 5

So strength first made a way;
Then beutie flow'd, then wisdom, honour,
pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottome lay. 10

"For if I should," said He,
"Bestow this jewell also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts in stead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be. 15

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlesnesse:
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tosse him to my breast." 20

THE ELIXIR¹

(From the same)

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee:
Not rudely, as a beast, 5
To runne into an action;
But still to make Thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye; 10
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of Thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture² "for Thy sake," 15
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine. 20

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for leasse be told.³

THE COLLAR

(From the same)

I struck the board, and cry'd, "No more;
I will abroad."
What, shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road, 5
Loose as the winde, as large as suite.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
Sure there was wine, 10
Before my sighs did drie it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it;
Is the yeare onely lost to me?
Have I no bayes to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted, 15
All wasted?
Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.

Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute 20
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands
Which pettie thoughts have made; and made to thee

Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law, 25
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy fears;
He that forbears 30
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I raved and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Childe";
And I reply'd, "My Lord." 35

¹ Tincture being here, the same as the *Elixir*, the sense is, that there is no action however mean which, imbued or purified by his (i. e. its) tincture for *Thy sake*, will not grow bright. To do a thing as for *Thee* is to transmute the action from base metal to fine gold, and the talisman for *Thy sake* is the magic tincture or *Elixir* which can effect the change.

² Counted. Cannot be counted less.

¹ Red (*angrie*) and gorgeous, or splendid.

² An *Elixir* was in alchemy a substance supposed to possess the power of transmuting the baser metals into gold. The *Great Elixir* (or Philosopher's Stone) was also called the *red tincture*.

James Shirley

1596-1667

A DIRGE(From *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*,
1659)

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and crown 5
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill; 10
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath, 15
When they, poor captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
See, where the victor-victim bleeds: 20
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

William Habington

1605-1654

NOX NOCTI INDICAT SCIENTIAM¹

When I survey the bright
Celestial sphere:
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear;

My soul her wings doth spread, 5
And heaven-ward flies,
The Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volume of the skies.

For the bright firmament
Shoots forth no flame 10
So silent, but is eloquent
In speaking the Creator's name.

No unregarded star
Contracts its light
Into so small a character,
Remov'd far from our human sight:

But if we steadfast look
We shall discern
In it, as in some holy book,
How man may heavenly knowledge learn. 20

¹ "Night to night sheweth knowledge." *Psalm xix. 2.*
Vulgate.

It tells the conqueror,
That far-stretched power,
Which his proud dangers traffick for,
Is but the triumph of an hour.

That from the farthest North, 25
Some nation may
Yet undiscovered issue forth,
And o'er his new-got conquest sway.

Some nation, yet shut in 30
With hills of ice,
May be let out to scourge his sin,
Till they shall equal him in vice.

And then they likewise shall
Their ruin have; 35
For as your selves your empires fall,
And every kingdom hath a grave.

Thus those celestial fires,
Though seeming mute,
The fallacy of our desires 40
And all the pride of life confute.

For they have watched since first
The world had birth;
And found sin in itself accurst,
And nothing permanent on earth.

Richard Crashaw

c. 1613-1649

**AN EPITAPH UPON HUSBAND AND
WIFE, WHO DIED AND WERE BURIED
TOGETHER**

To these whom death again did wed,
This grave's the second marriage-bed.
For though the hand of Fate could force
"Twixt soul and body a divorce, 5
It could not sever man and wife,
Because they both lived but one life.
Peace, good reader, do not weep;
Peace, the lovers are asleep.

They, sweet turtles, folded lie 10
In the last knot that love could tie.
Let them sleep, let them sleep on,
Till the stormy night be gone,
And the eternal morrow dawn;
Then the curtains will be drawn, 10
And they wake into a light
Whose day shall never die in night.

15 WISHES TO HIS SUPPOSED MISTRESS

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she,
That shall command my heart and me:

Where'er she lie
Lock'd up from mortal eye, 5
In shady leaves of destiny:

Till that ripe birth
Of studied fate, stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth:

Till that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine: 10

Meet you her, my Wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye call'd my absent kisses. 15

I wish her beauty,
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ring shoe-tie.

Something more than
Taffata¹ or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan. 20

More than the spoil
Of shop, or silkworm's toil,
Or a bought blush, or a set smile.

A face that's best
By its own beauty dress'd,
And can alone command the rest. . . . 25

A cheek, where youth
And blood, with pen of truth,
Write what the reader sweetly rueth. . . . 30

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

Tresses, that wear
Jewels, but to declare
How much themselves more precious are. . . . 35

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

Eyes, that bestow
Full quivers on love's bow,
Yet pay less arrows than they owe. . . . 40

Days, that need borrow
No part of their good morrow,
From a fore-spent night of sorrow. 45

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

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end, 50
And when it comes, say, Welcome friend. . . .

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

¹ Silk, in Crashaw's time applied to a soft, thin, silken fabric.

Now, if Time knows 55
That her, whose radiant brows
Weave them a garland of my vows;

Her, whose just bays
My future hopes can raise,
A trophy to her present praise; 60

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

Henry Vaughan

1621-1695

Hardy's edition of Vaughan's Poems, 1893

THE RETREAT

(From *Silex Scintillans*, Part I., 1650)

Happy those early dayes, when I
Shin'd in my Angell-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy ought¹ 5
But a white, celestiall thought;
When yet I had not walkt above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face; 10
When on some *gilded Cloud* or *Floure*
My gazing soul would dwell an houre,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound 15
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispence
A sev'rall sinne to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dresse
Bright *Shooles* of everlastingnesse. 20
O how I long to travell back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plaine,
Where first I left my glorious traine;
From whence th' inlightened spirit sees 25
That shady City of Palme trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move; 30
And, when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

DEPARTED FRIENDS

(From the same, Part II., 1655)

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

It glows and glitters in my cloudy brest 5
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
After the Sun's remove.

¹ Aught.

I see them walking in an air of glory
 Whose light doth trample on my days; 10
 My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
 Meer glimmerings and decays.

O holy Hope! and high Humility!
 High as the Heavens above;
 These are your walks, and you have shew'd
 them me 15
 To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death; the Jewel of the Just!
 Shining nowhere but in the dark;
 What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
 Could man outlook that mark! 20

THE WORLD

(From the same, Part I.)

1

I saw Eternity the other night,
 Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
 All calm, as it was bright;
 And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days,
 years, 5

Driv'n by the spheres,
 Like a vast shadow mov'd, in which the world
 And all her train were hurl'd.

The doting Lover in his quaintest strain
 Did there complain;
 Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights, 10
 Wit's four delights;

With gloves, and knots the silly snares of
 pleasure,
 Yet his dear Treasure,
 All scatter'd lay, while he his eyes did pour
 Upon a flower. 15

2

The darksome Statesman, hung with weights
 and woe,

Like a thick midnight fog, mov'd there so slow,
 He did not stay, nor go;
 Condemning thoughts (like sad eclipses) scowl
 Upon his soul, 20

And crowds of crying witnesses without
 Pursued him with one shout.
 Yet digged the Mole, and, lest his ways be
 found

Worked under ground,
 Where he did clutch his prey. But one did see
 That policy; 26
 Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
 Were gnats and flies;
 It rain'd about him blood and tears; but he
 Drank them as free. 30

3

The fear full miser on a heap of rust
 Sate pining all his life there, did scarce trust
 His own hands with the dust,
 Yet would not place one pierce above, but lives
 In fear of thieves. 35
 Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
 And hugg'd each one his pig;

The down-right epicure plac'd heav'd in sense,¹
 And scorn'd pretense;
 While others, slipped into a wide excess, 40
 Said little less;
 The weaker sort slight, trivial wares enslave,
 Who think them brave,
 And poor, despised truth sate counting by
 Their victory. 45

4

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
 And sing and weep, soar'd up into the *Ring*;
 But most would use no wing.

O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
 Before true light! 50

To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
 Because it shows the way,

The way, which from this dead and dark abode
 Leads up to God,

A way where you might tread the Sun, and be
 More bright than he! 56

But, as I did their madness so discuss,
 One whisper'd thus

*This Ring the Bride-groom did for none provide,
 But for his Bride.* 60

Thomas Traherne

1634 ?-1674

THE APPROACH

I

That childish thoughts such joy inspire,
 Doth make my wonder and His glory higher:
 His bounty and my wealth more great,
 It shows His Kingdom and His work complete:
 In which there is not anything 5
 Not meet to be the joy of Cherubim.

II

He in our childhood with us walks,
 And with our thoughts mysteriously he talks;
 He often visiteth our minds,
 But cold acceptance in us ever finds: 10
 We send Him often grieved away;
 Else would He show us all His Kingdom's joy.

III

O Lord, I wonder at Thy Love,
 Which did my Infancy so early move:
 But more at that which did forbear, 15
 And move so long, tho' slighted many a year:
 But most of all, at last that Thou
 Thyself shouldst me convert I scarce know how.

IV

Thy Gracious motions oft in vain
 Assaulted me: my heart did hard remain 20
 Long time: I sent my God away,
 Grieved much that He could not impart His
 joy.

I careless was, nor did regard
 The end for which He all those thoughts pre-
 par'd;

¹ Swollen, with the pleasures of sense.

V

But now with new and open eyes, 25
 I see beneath as if above the skies;
 And as I backward look again,
 See all His thoughts and mine most clear and
 plain.
 He did approach, He me did woo; 30
 I wonder that my God this thing would do. 30

VI

From nothing taken first I was;
 What wondrous things His glory brought to
 pass!
 Now in this world I Him behold,
 And me enveloped in more than gold;
 In deep abyasses of delights, 35
 In present hidden precious benefits. 35

VII

Those thoughts His goodness long before
 Prepared as precious and celestial store;
 With curious art in me inlaid,
 That Childhood might itself alone be said 40
 My tutor, teacher, guide to be,
 Instructed then even by the Deity. 40

WONDER

I

How like an Angel came I down!
 How bright are all things here!
 When first among His works I did appear
 O how their Glory me did crown!
 The world resembled His Eternity, 5
 In which my soul did walk;
 And everything that I did see:
 Did with me talk.

II

The skies in their magnificence,
 The lively, lovely air; 10
 Oh how divine, how soft, how sweet, how fair!
 The stars did entertain my sense,
 And all the works of God, so bright and pure,
 So rich and great did seem,
 As if they ever must endure 15
 In my esteem. 15

III

A native health and innocence
 Within my bones did grow,
 And while my God did all His Glories show,
 I felt a vigour in my sense 20
 That was all Spirit. I within did flow
 With seas of life, like wine;
 I nothing in the world did know
 But 'twas divine.

IV

Harsh ragged objects were concealed, 25
 Oppressions, tears and cries,
 Sins, griefs, complaints, dissensions, weeping
 eyes
 Were hid, and only things revealed 30
 Which heavenly Spirits and the Angels prize.
 The state of Innocence 30
 And bliss, not trades and poverties,
 Did fill my sense.

V

The streets were paved with golden stones,
 The boys and girls were mine,
 Oh how did all their lovely faces shine! 35
 The sons of men were holy ones,
 In joy and beauty they appeared to me,
 And everything which here I found,
 While like an angel I did see,
 Adorned the ground. 40

VI

Rich diamond and pearl and gold
 In every place was seen;
 Rare splendours, yellow, blue, red, white and
 green,
 Mine eyes did everywhere behold.
 Great Wonders clothed with glory did appear, 45
 Amazement was my bliss,
 That and my wealth was everywhere;
 No joy to this!

VII

Cursed and devised proprieties,
 With envy, avarice 50
 And fraud, those fiends that spoil even Para-
 dise,
 Flew from the splendour of mine eyes,
 And so did hedges, ditches, limits, bounds,
 I dreamed not aught of those,
 But wandered over all men's grounds, 55
 And found repose. 55

VIII

Proprieties themselves were mine
 And hedges ornaments,
 Walls, boxes, coffers, and their rich contents
 Did not divide my joys, but all combine. 60
 Clothes, ribbons, jewels, laces, I esteemed
 My joys by others worn:
 For me they all to wear them seemed
 When I was born.

Edmund Waller

1605–1687

ON A GIRDLE

(From *Poems*, 1645)

That which her slender waist confin'd,
 Shall now my joyful temples bind;
 No monarch but would give his crown,
 His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere, 5
 The pale which held that lovely deer,¹
 My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
 Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass, and yet there
 Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair: 10
 Give me but what this riband bound,
 Take all the rest the sun goes round.

¹ This well-worn pun is characteristically Elisabethan. *Pale* = that which encompasses (i.e., the girdle) as well as the fence of the deer-park.

SONG

(From the same)

Go, lovely Rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee. 5
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That had'st thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died. 10

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired. 15

Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair. 20

ON THE FOREGOING DIVINE POEMS

(1686?)

When we for age could neither read nor write,
The subject made us able to indite.
The soul, with nobler resolutions deckt,
The body stooping, does herself erect: 5
No mortal parts are requisite to raise
Her, that unbodily can her Maker praise.
The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er:
So, calm are we, when passions are no more:
For, then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost. 10
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness, which age describes,

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become, 15
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

John Milton

1608-1674

L'ALLEGRO

(1634)

Hence, loath'd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights
unholy!

Find out some uncouth¹ cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous
wings,

And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed
rocks,

As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. 10

But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven ycleped² Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,

With two sister Graces more, 15
To ivy-crown'd Bacchus bore:

Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee 25
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek; 30
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.

Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee 35
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,

In unreprieved pleasures free; 40
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;

Then to come in spite of sorrow, 45
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted cglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;

And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before: 50
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,

Through the high wood echoing shrill: 55
Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state

Robed in flames and amber light, 60
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,

And the mower whets his scythe, 65

¹ *Uncouth* means here *unknown, strange, remote*.² *Named*.

And every shepherd tells his tale^a
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,

Whilst the landskip round it measures: 70

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,

Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

Mountains, on whose barren breast

The labouring clouds do often rest;

Meadows trim, with daisies pied, 75

Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;

Towers and battlements it sees

Bosomed high in tufted trees,

Where perhaps some beauty lies,

The cynosure of neighbouring eyes. 80

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes

From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,

Are at their savoury dinner set

Of herbs, and other country messes, 85

Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;

And then in haste her bower she leaves,

With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;

Or, if the earlier season lead,

To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90

Sometimes, with secure delight,

The upland hamlets will invite,

When the merry bells ring round,

And the jocund rebecks' sound

To many a youth and many a maid 95

Dancing in the checkered shade,

And young and old come forth to play

On a sunshine holyday,

Till the livelong daylight fail: 100

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,

With stories told of many a feat,

How Faery Mab the junkets^b eat.

She was pinched and pulled, she said;

And he, by Friar's lantern led, 105

Tells how the drudging goblin^c sweat

To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,

His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn

That ten day-labourers could not end;

Then lies him down the lubber^d fiend, 110

And, stretched out all the chimney's length,

Basks at the fire his hairy strength,

And crop-full out of doors he flings,

Ere the first cock his matin rings. 115

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,

By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.

Towered cities please us then,

And the busy hum of men,

Where throngs of knights and barons hold,

In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold, 120

^a This ambiguous expression has been frequently discussed: it may mean that every shepherd tells his tale of love; or that the shepherds tell stories to each other; or that each shepherd counts his sheep. *Tell* may mean either *relate* or *count*, as to "tell a story," or to "tell one's beads," or "to tell one's money." If this last interpretation is adopted *tale* = simply to *count* the sheep.

^b An early form of violin.

^c A kind of cream cheese, here = delicious sweetmeats. *Eat* is the old form of the past tense.

^d Robin Goodfellow, a serviceable fairy refined and etherialised by Shakespeare into Puck in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

^e Clumey, sluggish.

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence,^e and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.

There let Hymen oft appear 125

In saffron robe, with taper clear,

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,

With mask and antique pageantry;

Such sights as youthful poets dream 130

On summer eyes by haunted stream.

Then to the well-trod stage anon,

If Jonson's learned sock be on,

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,

Warble his native wood-notes wild. 135

And ever, against eating cares,

Lap me in soft Lydian^f airs,

Married to immortal verse,

Such as the meeting soul may pierce,

In notes with many a winding bout, 140

Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

With wanton heed and giddy cunning,

The melting voice through mazes running,

Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of harmony;

That Orpheus' self may heave his head 145

From golden slumber on a bed

Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear

Such strains as would have won the ear

Of Pluto to have quite set free

His half-regained Eurydice. 150

These delights if thou canst give,

Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENNEROSO

(1634)

Hence, vain deluding Joys,

The brood of Folly without father bred!

How little you bested,¹ 5

Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!

Dwell in some idle brain,

And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,

As thick and numberless

As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,

Or likest hovering dreams,

The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10

But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy,

Hail, divinest Melancholy!

Whose saintly visage is too bright

To hit the sense of human sight,

And therefore to our weaker view 15

O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue

Black, but such as in esteem

Prince Memnon's sister² might beseech,

Or that starred Ethiop³ queen that strove

To set her beauty's praise above 20

¹ Used here in its astrological sense. The ladies' eyes influence the contents, as the stars (according to astrology) influenced human events and destinies.

² The music of the Lydians, a people of Asia Minor, was soft and voluptuous.

³ Profit, avail.

² Memnon was an Ethiopian Prince famous for his dusky beauty; in this his sister presumably resembled him.

³ Cassiope, who was starred, i. e., turned into the constellation Cassiopeia.

The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.

Yet thou art higher far descended:

Thee bright-haired Vesta⁴ long of yore

To solitary Saturn bore;

His daughter she; in Saturn's reign 25

Such mixture was not held a stain.

Of in glimmering bowers and glades

He met her, and in secret shades

Of woody Ida's inmost grove,

Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. 30

Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,

Sober, steadfast, and demure,

All in a robe of darkest grain,

Flowing with majestic train,

And sable stole of cypress lawn

Over thy decent shoulders drawn. 35

Come; but keep thy wonted state,

With even step, and musing gait,

And looks commercing with the skies,

Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:

There, held in holy passion still,

Forget thyself to marble, till

With a sad leaden downward cast

Thou fix them on the earth as fast.

And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,

Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,

And hears the Muses in a ring

Aye round about Jove's altar sing;

And add to these retired Leisure,

That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;

But, first and chiefest, with thee bring 50

Him that yon soars on golden wing,

Guiding the fiery-wheel'd throne,

The Cherub Contemplation;

And the mute Silence hist⁵ along,

'Less Philomel will deign a song,

In her sweetest saddest plight,

Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,

While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke

Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60

Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,

Most musical, most melancholy!

Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among

I woo, to hear thy even-song;

And, missing thee, I walk unseen

On the dry smooth-shaven green,

To behold the wandering moon,

Riding near her highest noon,

Like one that had been led astray

Through the heaven's wide pathless way,

And oft, as if her head she bowed,

Stooping through a fleecy cloud. 70

Of, on a plat of rising ground,

I hear the far-off curfew sound,

Over some wide-watered shore,

Swinging slow with sullen roar;

Or, if the air will not permit,

Some still removed place will fit,

Where glowing embers through the room

Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,

Far from all resort of mirth,

Save the cricket on the hearth,

Or the bellman's drowsy charm

To bless the doors from nightly harm.

Or let my lamp, at midnight hour, 85

Be seen in some high lonely tower,

Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,⁶

With thrice great Hermes,⁷ or unsphere

The spirit of Plato, to unfold 90

What worlds or what vast regions hold

The immortal mind that hath forsook

Her mansion in this fleshly nook;

And of those demons⁸ that are found

In fire, air, flood, or underground,

Whose power hath a true consent⁹ 95

With planet or with element.

Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy

In sceptred pall come sweeping by,

Presenting Thebes,¹⁰ or Pelops' line,

Or the tale of Troy divine, 100

Or what (though rare) of later age

Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.¹¹

But, O sad Virgin! that thy power

Might raise Musæus¹² from his bower;

Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing 105

Such notes as, warbled to the string,

Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,

And made Hell grant what love did seek;

Or call up him that left half-told

The story of Cambuscan¹³ bold, 110

Of Camball, and of Algarsife,

And who had Canace to wife,

That owned the virtuous ring and glass,

And of the wondrous horse of brass 115

On which the Tartar king did ride;

And if aught else great bards beside

In sage and solemn tunes have sung,

Of turneys, and of trophies hung,

Of forests, and enchantments drear,

Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,

Till civil-suited Morn appear,

Not tricked and frownced, as she was wont

With the Attic boy¹⁴ to hunt, 125

But kercheft in a comely cloud,

While rocking winds are piping loud,

Or ushered with a shower still,

When the gust hath blown his fill,

Ending on the rustling leaves, 130

With minute-drops from off the eaves.

And, when the sun begins to fling

His flaming beams, me, Goddess, bring

To arch'd walks of twilight groves,

And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,

'The constellation of Ursa Major, which never

sets.

⁷ *Hermes Triemepistus* (i. e., superlatively or thrice great), an Egyptian god to whom many mystical books were ascribed. 75

⁸ Indwelling spirits.

⁹ Agreement, accord.

¹⁰ *Thebes, Pelops*. Themes of some of the greatest of the Greek tragedies.

¹¹ The stage of tragedy, or the tragic drama. The

buskin was the boot worn by the actor in tragedy.

¹² A legendary Greek poet.

¹³ *Cambuscan* (said to be a corruption of *Cambus*, or *Genghis Khan*): A Tartar king in Chaucer's unfinished *Squire's Tale*, who had various magical articles;—a ring, a mirror, a sword, and a brassen horse. *Camball, Algarsife*, and *Canace*, were his children.

¹⁴ *Cephalus*, who (according to Greek legend) was carried away by Eos, the goddess of the Dawn, while he was hunting in the mountains.

⁴ Goddess of the fire-side.

⁵ Apparently an imperative, "bring silently along."

Of pine, or monumental oak, 135
 Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
 Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
 There, in close covert, by some brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look, 140
 Hide me from day's garish eye,
 While the bee with honied thigh,
 That at her flowry work doth sing,
 And the waters murmuring,
 With such consort¹⁵ as they keep,
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
 And let some strange mysterious dream
 Wave at his wings, in airy stream
 Of lively portraiture displayed,
 Softly on my eyelids laid;
 And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
 Above, about, or underneath,
 Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
 Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
 But let my due feet never fail
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,
 And love the high embowèd roof,
 With antique pillars massy-proof,
 And storied windows¹⁶ richly dight,
 Casting a dim religious light.
 There let the pealing organ blow
 To the full-voiced quire below.
 In service high and anthems clear,
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
 Dissolve me into ecstasies,
 And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
 And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell,
 Where I may sit and rightly spell
 Of every star that heaven doth shew,
 And every herb that sips the dew,
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
 And I with thee will choose to live.

SONG. SWEET ECHO

(From *Comus*, acted 1634)

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st un-
 seen 230
 Within thy airy shell,
 By slow Meander's¹ margent green,
 And in the violet-embroidered vale
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well: 235
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair²
 That likest thy Narcissus are?
 O, if thou have
 Hid them in some flowery cave,
 Tell me but where, 240

¹⁵ Concert, agreement.¹⁶ Stained glass windows with scenes illustrative of sacred story.¹ A river celebrated for its winding course (hence our verb to *meander*).² The two brothers of the singer, from whom she has been accidentally separated.

Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the
 Sphere!
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
 And give resounding grace to all heaven's har-
 monies.

SONG. SABRINA FAIR

(From the same)

Sabrina! fair, 859
 Listen where thou art sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
 Listen for dear honour's sake, 150
 Goddess of the silver lake, 865
 Listen and save!
 Listen, and appear to us,
 In name of great Oceanus.
 By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
 And Tethys' grave majestic pace; 870
 By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
 And the Carpathian wizard's² hook;
 By scaly Triton's winding shell,
 And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
 By Leucothea's lovely hands, 875
 And her son that rules the strands;
 By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
 And the songs of Sirens sweet;
 By dead Parthenope's dear tomb, 165
 And fair Ligea's golden comb, 880
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
 By all the Nymphs that nightly dance
 Upon thy streams with wily glance;
 Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head 885
 From thy coral-paven bed,
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,
 Till thou our summons answered have.
 Listen and save! 175

LYCIDAS¹

(1638)

Yet once more,² O ye laurels, and once more,
 Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
 And with forced fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.⁵
 Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
 Compels me to disturb your season due;
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew 10

¹ A legendary British princess, who became the goddess of the river Severn.² Proteus, a sea-god, who had the power of changing his shape. He had a hook (i. e. shepherd's crook) "because he was the shepherd of the sea-calves."³ *Lycidas* is a lament for the death of Edward King, a young man of much promise who had been a fellow-student of Milton at Cambridge some five years before. King was drowned while on his way to Ireland,—the ship striking a hidden rock off the Welsh coast and going down in a calm sea.⁴ Milton had probably written no poetry since *Comus*, produced three years earlier (1634).

Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well 15
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string:
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:

So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words³ favour my destined urn, 20
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed⁴ upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared 25
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battering our flocks with the fresh dews of
night,

Oft till the star that rose at evening bright 30
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his
westering wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven
heel

From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Dametas loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art
gone,

Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert
caves,

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'er-
grown, 40

And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

As killing as the canker to the rose, 45
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorse-
less deep 50

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep⁵
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona⁶ high,
Nor yet where Deva⁷ spreads her wizard
stream. 55

Ay me! I fondly dream

"Had ye been there," . . . for what could
that have done?

What could the Muse herself⁸ that Orpheus
bore,

The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament, 60
When, by the rout that made the hideous
roar,

His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse? 65

Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis⁹ in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Næra's⁹ hair?

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth
raise 70

(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury¹⁰ with the abhorred
shears, 75

And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the
praise,"

Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling
ears:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glittering foil

Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies, 80
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove:

As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse,¹¹ and thou honoured
flood, 85

Smooth-sliding Mincius,¹¹ crowned with vocal
reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oar proceeds,

And listens to the Herald of the Sea,¹²
That came in Neptune's plea. 90

He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle
swain?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each bleaked promontory.
They knew not of his story; 95

And sage Hippotades¹³ their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:

The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope¹⁴ with all her sisters played.

It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100

³ *The Muse herself* = Calliope. Orpheus was torn in pieces by the Thracian women at a Bacchanalian festival, his limbs strewn upon the plain, and his head cast into the river Hebrus.

⁴ *Amaryllis*—*Næra*. These names borrowed from the classic pastorals, simply stand for young and beautiful maidens.

⁵ Atropos, who cut the thread of life, was one of the Fates. Milton did not hesitate to add to or modify classic myths, when it suited his purpose.

⁶ *Arethusa*—*Mincius*. Rivers suggestive respectively of Greek and Latin pastoral poetry.

⁷ Triton.

⁸ *Hippotades*, the son of Hippotas, i. e. Æolus.

⁹ *Panope*, or *Panepe*, was one of the Nereids.

¹ Words favorable to the repose of the departed. Such, according to the Roman rite, were the words *sit tibi terra levis*, uttered by the mourner as he sprinkled the earth three times over the dead.

² Milton now shadows forth the early companionship of King and himself at Cambridge. Thus the "Satyrs" and "Fauns" (34) are supposed to represent the undergraduates, and "Old Dametus" (36) one of the tutors of Christ's College.

³ One of the mountainous heights on the Welsh coast.

⁴ Anglesey, a great center of Druidic religion.

⁵ The Dee, down which King sailed on his way from Chester. As many memories of Arthur and of the old Druidic faith were associated with the "holy Dee," it called the "wizard," i. e. the enchanted, or magic stream.

Built in the eclipse,¹⁵ and rigged with curses
dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus,¹⁶ reverend sire, went footing
slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge, 104
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower¹⁷ inscribed with
woe.

"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest
pledge?"

Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;¹⁸
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain 110
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain.)¹⁹
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—

"How well could I have spared for thee, young
swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold! 115
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how
to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the
least 120

That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They
are sped;²⁰

And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel²¹ pipes of wretched
straw;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, 125
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they
draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw,
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

But that two-handed engine²² at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus,²³ the dread voice is past

That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star²⁴ sparely
looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed
showers, 140

And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe²⁵ primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked²⁶ with
jet,

The glowing violet, 145
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With crowslips wan that hang the pensive
head,

And every flower that sad embroidery²⁷ wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,²⁸
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding
seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides, 156
Where thou perhaps under thewhelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;²⁹
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus³⁰ old, 160
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount³¹
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with
ruth:

And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no
more, 165
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled
ore 170

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Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding
seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides, 156
Where thou perhaps under thewhelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;²⁹
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus³⁰ old, 160
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount³¹
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with
ruth:

And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no
more, 165
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled
ore 170

That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star²⁴ sparely
looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed
showers, 140

And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe²⁵ primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked²⁶ with
jet,

The glowing violet, 145
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With crowslips wan that hang the pensive
head,

And every flower that sad embroidery²⁷ wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,²⁸
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding
seas

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The white pink, and the pansy freaked²⁶ with
jet,

¹⁵ Eclipses were considered by the ancients as out of the order of nature, and were supposed to exert a mysterious and disastrous influence.

¹⁶ The god or genius of the Cam, the stream on which Cambridge is situated. "He comes attired in a mantle of the hairy river weed that floats on the Cam; his bonnet is of the sedge of that river, which exhibits peculiar markings, something like the *de de* (alas! alas!) which the Greek detected on the leaves of the hyacinth, in token of the sad death of the Spartan youth from whose blood the flower had sprung" (Masson).

¹⁷ Bloody flower, i. e. the hyacinth, which Apollo caused to spring up from the blood of the beautiful youth Hyacinthus.

¹⁸ St. Peter.

¹⁹ Forcibly, with power.

²⁰ They are sped, i. e. they are advanced in worldly prosperity.

²¹ Lean, thin, or harsh sounding.

²² An obscure expression. Masson supposes that it referred to the two Houses of Parliament; Newton, to the "axe that is laid unto the root of the tree." *St. Matt.* iii, 10. The essential meaning is, that the end is at hand, and the avenger, with his weapon of destruction, is at the door.

²³ A youthful hunter, who, changed into a river, pursued the nymph Arethusa by a channel under the sea. He overtook her, and the pursuer and pursued were united in a fountain on an island off the coast of Sicily. Alpheus being thus related to Sicily, to invoke him is to invoke the "Sicilian Muse," the muse of pastoral poetry.

²⁴ Sirius, or the Dog-star, was anciently associated with sultry weather. Here called "swart," i. e. dark, or swarthy, because of the tanning effect of the summer suns.

²⁵ Rathe = early; the positive, now out of use, of rather, earlier, sooner.

²⁶ Streaked, spotted.

²⁷ Sad embroidery, i. e., the garb of mourning.

²⁸ An untrue fancy; the body of the drowned Lycidas never having been recovered.

²⁹ The world of monsters at the bottom of the sea.

³⁰ Lands End in Cornwall was called *Bellerium* by the Romans. Bellerus here does not appear to be a real personage; the name was apparently coined by Milton from that of the promontory, with the idea of raising the implication that the region was named after some one so-called.

³¹ St. Michael's Mount, a rocky islet near the coast of Cornwall, supposed to be guarded by the Archangel Michael. "The great vision" is St. Michael, seated on the ledge of rock called St. Michael's chair, and gazing far across the sea towards *Namancos* and *Bayona's hold* (the former being a town, the second a stronghold on the Spanish coast), i. e., looking in the direction of Spain.

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked
the waves,

Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and
rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals
gray:

He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:³²
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay. 191
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

SONNETS

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

(1631)

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,^A
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth^B
year!

My hasting days fly on with full career,^B
But my late spring no bud nor blossom^A
shew'th.

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the^A
truth 5
That I to manhood am arrived so near; 3
And inward ripeness doth much less appear, 3
That some more timely-happy spirits en-^A
du'th.

Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow, 5
It shall be still in strictest measure even 0 10
To that same lot, however mean or high, 5
Towards which Time leads me, and the will of^E
Heaven, 0

All is, if I have grace to use it so, 5
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye. 5

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT (1655)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose
bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and
stones,

Forget not: in thy book record their groans 5
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient
fold

³² So called because Lycidas follows the elegiac manner
of Theocritus and Moschus, who wrote in Doric Greek.

Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their
moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes
sow 10
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth
away
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

(From *Poems*, etc., 1673. Written c. 1655?)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul
more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present 5
My true account, lest He returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light
denied?"

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not
need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who
best 10

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.
His state

Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

(First printed in Phillips' *Life of Milton*, 1694.
Written c. 1655)

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes,
though clear,

To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear

Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year, 5
Of man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou
ask?

The conscience, friend, to have lost them
over-plied 10

In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.

This thought might lead me through the
world's vain mask,
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

XXI

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

Cyriack, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our
laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,

To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to
drench 5
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the
French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest
way; 10
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, re-
frains.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK I

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat, 5
Sing, heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb,¹ or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd² who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's³ brook that
flowed

Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song.
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues 15
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the
first

Wast present, and, with mighty wings out-
spread, 20
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence, 25
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy
view,

Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived 35
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring

To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High, 40
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle
proud,

With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal
sky, 45

With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and
night 50

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the
thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain 55
Tortures him: round he throws his baleful
eyes,

That witnessed⁴ huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild. 60
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those
flames

No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where
peace 65

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared 70
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of Heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.⁵
O how unlike the place from whence they fell! 75
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous
fire,

He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named 81
Beëlzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan,⁶ with bold
words

Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—

"If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen! how
changed

From him!—who, in the happy realms of light,
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness, didst
outshine 86

¹ Bore witness to.

² According to the old astronomy, the earth was the center of the physical universe. Milton declares that the distance from hell to heaven is thrice the distance from the earth to the outer limit of the physical universe, or the "utmost pole."

³ The name Satan means in Hebrew an enemy, or adversary.

¹ Oreb: Sinai. At Oreb (Horeb) God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush: from Mt. Sinai Moses received the Law. *Exod.* iii. 1, and xiv., 12-18.

² Moses.

³ The pool or brook of Siloah near the temple at Jerusalem.

Myriads, though bright—If he whom mutual league,

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what height fallen; so much the stronger
proved

He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage 95
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed
mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along 100
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field
be lost? 105

All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might 110
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of his arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath 115
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of
Gods,

And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve 120
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”
So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain, 125
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
And him thus answered soon his bold com-
peer:—

“O Prince, O chief of many-thronèd Powers,
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds 130
Fearless, endangered Heaven’s perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow, and foul defeat, 135
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remain
Invincible, and vigour soon returns, 140
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o’erpower’d such force as
ours) 145

Have left us in this our spirit and strength
entire,

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate’er his business be, 150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?” 155
Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend
replied:—

“Fallen Cherub! to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure—
To do aught good, never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil; 165
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 170
Back to the gates of Heaven; the sulphurous
hail,

Shot after us in storm, o’erblown, hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless
deep. 177

Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn.
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light, 181
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there; 185
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope, 190
If not, what resolution from despair.”

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large, 195
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name, of monstrous size,
Titanian⁷ or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareus,⁸ or Typhon,⁹ whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast 200

⁷ The Titans, in Greek mythology, were the children of heaven and Earth. Of gigantic size, the Titans typify strength and lawlessness.

⁸ A giant, with a hundred arms and fifty heads.

⁹ A giant brought forth by the Earth to contend with the Gods. Overcome by Jupiter, he was placed beneath Ætna, or according to others under the “serbonian bog.”

Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell, 205
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morning delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend

lay, 209
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought 215
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On Man by him seduced, but on himself 219
Trebble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driv'n backward, slope their pointing spires,
and rolled

In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air, 226
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights—if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire, 229
And such appeared in hue: as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,¹⁰ or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire, 234
Sublimed¹¹ with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a sing'd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found
the sole

Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next mate;
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power. 241

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven?—this
mournful gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since he 245
Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made
supreme

Above his equals—Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail horrors! hail
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell, 251
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same, 256
And what I should be, all but less than he

¹⁰ A promontory on the coast of Sicily, not far from
Mt. Ætna.

¹¹ *Sublimed*, i. e. either *uplifted*, or *changed into vapor*, by
the *fury* (violent inter-action) of the combustible min-
erals, which are the *fuelled entrails* of the volcano.

Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at
least

We shall be free: the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: 260
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss, 265
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub 271
Thus answered:—"Leader of those armies
bright

Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have
foiled!

If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft 275
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height!"

He scarce had ceased, when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous
shield,

Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, 285
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist¹² views
At evening, from the top of Fesole,¹³
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.

His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral¹⁴ were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps 295
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.

Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called 300
His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves, that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa,¹⁵ where the Etrurian shades,
High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed 305
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves
o'er threw

Busiris¹⁶ and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310

¹² Galileo. *Artist*, one versed in the liberal arts.

¹³ *Fesole* is a hill near Florence, and *Valdarno* the valley
of the Arno, in which Florence is situated.

¹⁴ *Ammiral*=admiral, hence the admiral's ship, the
flag-ship.

¹⁵ *Vallombrosa* (i. e. "shady valley"), a valley about
15 miles from Florence.

¹⁶ An Egyptian King, here wrongly identified with the
Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites. *Memphian*, here
used in the general sense of Egyptian.

And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,
 Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
 Under amazement of their hideous change.
 He called so loud that all the hollow deep
 Of Hell resounded:—"Princes, Potentates, 315
 Warriors, the Flower of Heaven—once yours;
 now lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize
 Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
 After the toil of battle to repose
 Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find 320
 To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
 To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
 Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon 325
 His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
 The advantage, and descending, tread us down
 Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?—
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!" 330

They heard, and were abashed, and up they
 sprung

Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
 On duty sleeping found by whom they dead,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight 335

In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;

Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed

Innumerable. As when the potent rod

Of Amram's son,¹⁷ in Egypt's evil day,

Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud

Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind, 341

That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung

Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;

So numberless were those bad Angels seen

Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell, 345

'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;

Till, as a signal given, th' uplifted spear

Of their great Sultan waving to direct

Their course, in even balance down they light

On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain: 350

A multitude like which the populous North

Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass

Rhene¹⁸ or the Danaw,¹⁹ when her barbarous

sons

Came like a deluge on the South, and spread

Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. 355

Forthwith from every squadron and each band,

The heads and leaders thither haste where

stood

Their great Commander—godlike Shapes, and

Forms

Excelling human; princely Dignities; 359

And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,

Though of their names in Heavenly records now

Be no memorial, blotted out and rased

By their rebellion from the Books of Life.

Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve

Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the

earth, 365

Through God's high sufferance for the trial of

man,

By falsities and lies the greatest part

Of mankind they corrupted to forsake

God their Creator, and the invisible
 Glory of Him that made them to transform 370
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities:

Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who
 first, who last, 378

Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,

At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth,

Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,

While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.

The chief were those who, from the pit of

Hell 381

Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix

Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,

Their altars by His altar, gods adored

Among the nations round, and durst abide 385

Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned

Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed

Within His sanctuary itself their shrines,

Abominations; and with cursed things

His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390

And with their darkness durst affront his light.

First, *Moloch*, horrid king, beamereared with

blood

Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;

Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels

loud,

Their children's cries unheard that passed

through fire 395

To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite

Worshipp'd in Rabba²⁰ and her watery plain,

In Argob and in Basan, to the stream

Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such

Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart 400

Of Solomon he led by fraud to build

His temple right against the temple of God

On that opprobrious hill,²¹ and made his grove

The pleasant valley of Hinnom,²² Tophet

thence

And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.

Next, *Chemos*,²³ the obscene dread of Moab's

sons, 406

From Arar to Nebo, and the wild

Of southmost Abarim: in Hesebon

And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond

The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines, 410

And Eleale to the Asphaltic²⁴ pool:

Peor his other name, when he enticed

Israel in Sittim,²⁵ on their march from Nile,

To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.

Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged 415

Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove

Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate;

²⁰ "City of Waters," capital of the land of the Ammor-
 ites.

²¹ The Mount of Olives. *I Kings*, xi. 7.

²² Hinnom (*Tophet*, or *Gehenna*) a beautiful valley near
 Jerusalem, which, after it had been defiled by the sacrifi-
 cial worship of Moloch, was converted into a repulsive
 place where the refuse of the city was cast and burnt.

²³ The chief god, or Baal of the Moabites, and wor-
 shipped as Moloch by the Ammonites. He is spoken of as
 Baal Peor (*Numb.* xxv. 3) i. e. the Baal who was wor-
 shipped at Mt. Peor, in Moab.

²⁴ The Dead Sea.

²⁵ A valley in the land of Moab. *Numb.* xxv.

¹⁷ Moses. *Exod.* x. 12-15. ¹⁸ Rhine. ¹⁹ Danube.

Till good Josiah²⁰ drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering
flood

Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts 420
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of *Baalim*²¹ and *Ashoroth*—those male,
These feminine: For Spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure, 425
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they
choose,

Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes, 430
And works of love or enmity fulfil.

For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low 435
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop,
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon 440
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs:
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king whose heart, though
large,

Beguil'd by fair idolatresses, fell 445
To idols foul. *Thammuz*²² came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis, with his native blood 450
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of *Thammuz* yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led, 455
His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopt
off

In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,²³ 460
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
*Dagon*²⁴ his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon, 465
And Accaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him follow'd *Rimmon*,²⁵ whose delightful seat

¹ ²⁰ Josiah. *II Kings*, xxiii. 10.

²¹ *Baalim*—*Ashoroth*, the Hebrew plurals of *Baal* (the sun god) and *Astoreth* (the moon-goddess). Milton means that with the gods before named, came other gods of the sun and moon, worshipped under various names from the Euphrates on the East to the brook Sihor. (*Joshua*, xv. 4) that divided Egypt from Syria.

²² The Oriental original of the Greek Adonis. *Thammuz* (or *Tammuz*) was killed by a wild boar, and every year, when the stream Adonis (which flows from Lebanon, the scene of his death) was colored by the red washings of its upper banks, the waters were supposed to be tinged with his blood.

²³ Threshold. ²⁴ The god of the Philistines.

²⁵ A Syrian god (v. *II Kings*, v.).

Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharpar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold: 470
A leper once he lost, and gained a king—
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods 475
Whom he had vanquished. After these, ap-
peared

A crew who, under names of old renown—
Osiris, *Isis*, *Orus*, and their train—
With monstrous shapes and sorceries, abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek 480
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish
forms

Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold com-
posed

The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king²⁶
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan, 485
Likening his Maker to the graz'd ox—
Jehovah, who in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equall'd with one
stroke

Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
*Belial*²⁷ came last; than whom a Spirit more
lewd 490

Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood,
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled 495
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage; and when night 500
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the
sons

Of Belial, flown²⁸ with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape. 505

These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell; though far re-
nowned

The Ionian gods—of Javan's issue²⁹ held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and
Earth,

Their boasted parents;—*Titan*, Heaven's first-
born, 510

With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger *Saturn*; he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in
Crete

And Ida known, thence on the snowy top 515
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,

²⁶ Jeroboam. *I Kings*, xii. 26-29.

²⁷ The spirit of evil, or worthlessness, here personified by Milton. Cf. the scriptural "sons of Belial," "sons of wickedness," "children of the devil."

²⁸ Flooded, filled.

²⁹ *Javan's issue*, i. e. the Ionians, or Greeks, who were among those supposed to be descended from Javan, the son of Japhet. *Gen.* x. 2-4.

Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria³⁶ to the Hesperian³⁷ fields, 520
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found
their Chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not
lost 525

In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently
raised

Their fainting courage, and dispelled their
fears: 530

Then straight commands that, at the warlike
sound

Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard: that proud honour
claimed

Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff un-
furled 535

Th' imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: 540
At which the universal host up-sent

A shout, that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air, 545

With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood³⁸ 550
Of flutes and soft recorders,³⁹—such as raised
To height of noblest temper, heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm and un-
moved

With dread of death to flight or foul retreat; 555
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and
chase

Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and
pain

From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixed thought, 560
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charmed

³⁶ The Adriatic Sea.

³⁷ *Hesperian* = Western; here, the lands west of Greece,—Italy, the Celtic lands of Gaul etc. as far as the British Isles.

³⁸ In Dorian music the scale differed from that in use among the Lydians and others, this distinctive scale (or arrangement of tones and half tones in the octave) was called the *Dorian mood*, i. e. *mode*, or system. Doric music was invigorating and martial in character.

³⁹ A musical instrument resembling a flageolet.

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And
now

Advanced in view they stand—a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief 566
Had to impose. He through the armed files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views,—their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods; 570
Their number last he sums. And now his
heart

Distends with pride, and, hardening in his
strength,

Glories: for never since created Man
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry⁴⁰ 575
Warred on by cranes—though all the giant
brood

Of Phlegra⁴¹ with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxilial gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,⁴² 580

Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,

Or whom Biserta⁴³ sent from Afric shore 585
When Charlemain with all his peerage, fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond

Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All its original brightness, nor appeared

Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air 595
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds

On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Archangel: but his face 600
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows

Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold 605
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned

For ever now to have their lot in pain—
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood, 611
Their glory withered; as when Heaven's fire

Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though
bare,

Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared

⁴⁰ Pygmies, a legendary nation of dwarfs, v. *Iliad*. iii. 3-6.

⁴¹ The early name of a peninsula in Thrace, the scene of a conflict between the gods and the Titans, or "giant brood."

⁴² King Arthur.

⁴³ A Saracen town on the Mediterranean coast of Africa.

To speak; whereat their double ranks they
bend 616

From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs, found out their
way:— 621

“O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that
strife

Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind, 626
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have
feared

How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss, 631
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?

For me, be witness all the host of Heaven, 635
If counsels different, or dangers shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state 640
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed:

Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our
fall.

Henceforth his might we know, and know our
own,

So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked; our better part remains 645
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, Who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that He ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant 652

A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven;
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps 655
Our first eruption—thither or elsewhere:
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despair'd;
For who can think submission? War, then,
war 661

Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake: and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the
thighs

Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze 665
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped
arms

Clashed on their sounding shields the din of
war,

Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top

Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign 672
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with
speed,

A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed, 676
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and
thoughts 680

Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught, 685
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious
hands

Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire⁴⁴
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best 691
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone 696
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour

What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, 700
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-
dross;

A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells 706
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook:
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board
breathes.

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet—
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon 717

Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat 720
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height; and straight the
doors,

Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth 725
And level pavement; from the archèd roof
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light

⁴⁴ Wonder.

As from a sky. The hasty multitude 730
 Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
 And some the architect. His hand was known
 In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
 Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
 And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King 735
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
 Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unadored
 In ancient Greece; and in the Ausonian land⁴⁴
 Men called him Mulciber,⁴⁵ and how he fell
 From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry
 Jove 741
 Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day, and with the setting sun
 Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star, 745
 On Lemnos, the Ægean isle. Thus they relate,
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout,
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
 To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he
 scape

By all his engines, but was headlong sent, 750
 With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile, the winged Heralds, by command

Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
 And trumpet's sound, throughout the host
 proclaim

A solemn council forthwith to be held 755
 At Pandemonium,⁴⁶ the high capital
 Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
 From every band and squared regiment

By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping

came, 760
 Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
 (Though like a covered field, where champions
 bold

Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's⁴⁷
 chair,

Defied the best of Panim⁴⁸ chivalry 765
 To mortal combat, or career with lance),
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the
 air

Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As
 bees

In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus
 rides,

Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank, 772
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer

Their state-affairs: so thick the airy crowd 775
 Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal
 given,

Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless—like that pygmean race⁵⁰

gave,

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 In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless—like that pygmean race⁵⁰

gave,

Beyond the Indian mount; or fairy elves, 781
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
 Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while over-head the Moon
 Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth 785
 Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and
 dance

Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at
 large, 790

Though without number still, amidst the hall
 Of that infernal court. But far within,
 And in their own dimensions, like themselves,
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
 In close recess and secret conclave sat, 795
 A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
 Frequent and full. After short silence then,
 And summons read, the great consult began.

From Book III

Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven first-born!
 Or of the Eternal coeternal beam

May I express thee unblamed? since God is
 light,

And never but in unapproachèd light
 Dwelt from eternity—dwelt then in thee, 5
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate!

Or hear'st thou¹ rather pure Ethereal stream,
 Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,

Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice
 Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest 10
 The rising World of waters dark and deep,
 Won from the void and formless Infinite.

Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
 Escaped the Stygian pool, though long de-
 tained

In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
 Through utter and through middle Darkness
 borne, 16

With other notes than to the Orphean lyre
 I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
 Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down
 The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, 20
 Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,
 And feel thy sovereign vital lamp; but thou
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
 So thick a drop serene hath quenched their
 orbs, 25

Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
 Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
 Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
 Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget 32
 Those other two equalled with me in fate,
 So were I equalled with them in renown,
 Blind Thamyris² and blind Mæonides,³ 35

⁴⁴ Italy. ⁴⁵ The softener, i. e. Vulcan.
⁴⁶ The abode of all the Demons, as the Pantheon is the
 abode of all the gods.

⁴⁷ Sultan. ⁴⁸ Pagan.
⁴⁹ The ancients placed the Pygmies in India.

¹ i. e. would you rather hear yourself called (do you
 hear rather when you are called).

² A legendary poet of Greece.

³ Homer, reputed son of Maion.

And Tiresias⁴ and Phineus⁴ prophets old:
 Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
 Sings dawning, and in shadiest covert hid,
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
 Seasons return; but not to me returns 41
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn;
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead and ever-during dark 45
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair,
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. 50
 So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her
 powers
 Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight. 55

From Book VII

Descend from Heaven, Urania,¹ by that name
 If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
 Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
 Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
 The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou 5
 Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
 Of old Olympus dwell'st; but heavenly-born,
 Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
 Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
 Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play 10
 In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
 With thy celestial song. Up led by thee,
 Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
 An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
 Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
 Return me to my native element; 16
 Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
 Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
 Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,
 Erroneous there to wander and forlorn. 20
 Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
 Within the visible Diurnal Sphere.
 Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
 More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
 To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil 25
 days,
 On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
 In darkness, and with dangers compassed
 round,
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
 Purples the East. Still govern thou my song, 30
 Urania, and fit audience find, though few,
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard²
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears 35
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned

⁴ Blind prophets in Greek legends.

¹ Literally ("the heavenly one") one of the Muses in Greek mythology; but here the Divine inspiration, the "heavenly Muse" invoked at the beginning of the poem.

² Orpheus. Cf. Lycidas, lines. 57-63.

Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
 Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores;
 For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.

From Book IX

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest
 With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
 To sit indulgent, and with him partake
 Rural repast, permitting him the while
 Venial discourse unblamed. I now must 5
 change
 Those notes to tragic—foul distrust, and breach
 Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
 And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
 Now alienated, distance and distaste,
 Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, 10
 That brought into this World a world of woe,
 Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
 Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument
 Not less but more heroic than the wrath
 Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued 15
 Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
 Of Turnus for Lavinia dispossessed;
 Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
 Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:
 If answerable style I can obtain 20
 Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
 Her nightly visitation unimplored,
 And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
 Easy my unpremeditated verse,
 Since first this subject for heroic song 25
 Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late,
 Not sedulous by nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only argument
 Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabled knights 30
 In battles feigned (the better fortitude
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom
 Unsung), or to describe races and games,
 Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
 Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds, 35
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneshals:
 The skill of artifice or office mean;
 Not that which justly gives heroic name 40
 To person or to poem! Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climate, or years, damp my intended wing 45
 Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,
 Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.

Abraham Cowley

1618-1667

THE WISH

(From *The Mistress*, 1647)

Well then, I now do plainly see
 This busy world and I shall ne'er agree;
 The very honey of all earthly joy
 Does, of all meats, the soonest cloy;

And they, methinks, deserve my pity
 Who for it can endure the stings,
 The crowd, the buzz, and murmurings
 Of this great hive, the city!

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave,
 May I a small house and large garden have;
 And a few friends, and many books, both true,
 Both wise, and both delightful too!

And since Love ne'er will from me flee,—
 A mistress moderately fair,
 And good as guardian-angels are,
 Only beloved, and loving me!

O fountains! when in you shall I
 Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
 O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
 The happy tenant of your shade?

Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood!
 Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
 Where all the riches lie, that she
 Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here
 Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
 Here naught but winds can hurtful murmurs
 scatter,

And naught but echo flatter.
 The gods when they descended hither
 From heaven did always choose their way;
 And therefore we may boldly say
 That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I
 And one dear She live, and embracing die!
 She who is all the world, and can exclude
 In deserts solitude.

I should have then this only fear:
 Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
 Should hither throng to live like me,
 And so make a city here.

THE GRASSHOPPER

(From *Miscellanies*, 1650)

Happy Insect, what can be
 In happiness compar'd to thee?
 Fed with nourishment divine,
 The dewy morning's gentle wine!
 Nature waits upon thee still,
 And thy verdant cup does fill.
 'Tis fill'd where ever thou dost tread,
 Nature selfe's thy Ganimed.¹
 Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing;
 Happier than the happiest King!
 All the fields which thou dost see,
 All the plants belong to thee,
 All that summer hours produce,
 Fertile made with early juice.
 Man for thee does sow and plow;
 Farmer he and land-lord thou!
 Thou dost innocently joy;
 Nor does thy luxury destroy;
 The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
 More harmonious than he.

¹ Ganymede, the cup-bearer of Zeus.

Thou country hindes with gladness hear,
 Prophet of the ripened year!
 Thee Phœbus loves, and does inspire;
 Phœbus is himself thy sire.
 To thee of all things upon earth,
 Life is no longer than thy mirth,
 Happy insect, happy thou,
 Dost neither age, nor winter know,
 But when thou'st drunk, and danced, and
 sung,
 Thy fill, the flowery leaves among
 (Volutuous, and wise with all,
 Epicurean animal!)
 Sated with thy summer feast,
 Thou retir'st to endless rest.

BREAD AND LIBERTY

(From *Essay Of Liberty*)

For the few hours of life allotted me,
 Give me (great God) but bread and liberty.
 I'll beg no more: if more thou'rt pleas'd to give,
 I'll thankfully that overplus receive:
 If beyond this no more be freely sent,
 I'll thank for this, and go away content.

Andrew Marvell

1621-1678

THE GARDEN

(Written c. 1650, published first in first collected edition of Marvell's *Poems*, 1681)

How vainly men themselves amaze,
 To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
 And their incessant labours see
 Crowned from some single herb, or tree,
 Whose short and narrow-verged shade,
 Does prudently their toils upbraid,
 While all the flowers and trees do close,
 To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
 And Innocence, thy sister dear?
 Mistaken long, I sought you then
 In busy companies of men.
 Your sacred plants, if here below,
 Only among the plants will grow;
 Society is all but rude
 To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
 So amorous as this lovely green.
 Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
 Cut in these trees their mistress' name,
 Little, alas! they know or heed,
 How far these beauties her exceed!
 Fair trees! where'er your barks I wound,
 No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
 Love hither makes his best retreat.
 The gods, who mortal beauty chase,
 Still in a tree did end their race;

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of a vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine, and curious¹ peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;—
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas,
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest² aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plume the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises are in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers, and herbs, this dial new,
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run,
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we!
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?

BERMUDAS

Where the remote Bermudas ride,
In the ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that rowed along,
The listening winds received this song.

"What should we do but sing his praise, 5
That led us through the watery maze,
Unco an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where he the huge sea-monster wracks,¹
That lift the deep upon their backs, 10

He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms and prelate's rage.
He gave us this eternal spring,
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care, 15
On daily visits through the air;
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close,
Jewels more rich than Ormus² shows; 20
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet,
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice;
With cedars chosen by his hand, 25
From Lebanon, he stores the land,
And makes the hollow seas, that roar,
Proclaim the ambergrease on shore;
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast, 30
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound his name.

"Oh! let our voice his praise exalt,
"Till it arrive at heaven's vault,
Which, then (perhaps) rebounding, may 35
Echo beyond the Mexique Bay."

Thus sung they in the English boat,
A holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time. 40

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by Indian Ganges' side 5
Should'st rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse 10
Till the conversion of the Jews;
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, 15
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate. 20

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near,
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found, 25
Nor, in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,

¹ Here, in the unusual sense of *delicious*.

² The body is the *vest* (vestment, garment) of the soul.
Cf. "this muddy *vesture* of decay." (*Mchl. of Ven. V.*, 1).

¹ Wracks, destroys.

² Or Hormus, a city at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Cf. *Par. Lost* ii. 2.

And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust: 30
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires 35
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chaped¹ power. 40
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife,
Thorough the iron gates of life;
Thus, though we cannot make our sun 45
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Thomas Carew

1589-1639

DISDAIN RETURNED

(Printed, without concluding stanza, in Porter's
Madrigalles and Ayres, 1632)

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires;
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires, 5
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires; 10
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

No tears, Celia, now shall win,
My resolved heart to return;
I have searched that soul within 15
And find naught but pride and scorn;
I have learned thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou!

Robert Herrick

1591-1674

ARGUMENT TO HESPERIDES

(From *Hesperides*, 1648)

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July-flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts,¹ wassails,²
wakes,³
Of bride-grooms, brides, and of their bridal-
cakes;

¹ Slow-jawed. (Chap. or chop = a jaw.) Rather let us
devour time at once, than be eaten by his slow jaws.

² The last carts to return from the fields at harvest-
home.

³ It was a rural custom to drink the health of, or to
wassail, the fruit trees on Christmas eve.

⁴ Originally festivals held in celebration of the dedica-
tion of a church.

I write of youth, of love, and have access 5
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white; 10
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the fairy king;
I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

(From the same)

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see 5
The dew bespangling herb and tree.

Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the
east

Above an hour since: yet you have not dress'd;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said 10
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen 15
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and
green,

And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair;
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you: 20
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan on the eastern hill 25
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in
praying:

Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a
park 30

Made green and trimm'd with trees; see
how

Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,

Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove; 35
As if here were those cooler shades of love.

Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see 't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May; 40

And sin no more, as we have done, by stay-
ing;

But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
 But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
 A deal of youth, ere this, is come 45
 Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
 Some have dispatched their cakes and cream,
 Before that we have left to dream:
 And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted
 troth,
 And chose their priest, ere we can cast off
 sloth: 50
 Many a green-gown has been given;
 Many a kiss, both odd and even:
 Many a glance, too, has been sent
 From out the eye, love's firmament;
 Many a jest told of the keys betraying 55
 This night, and locks pick'd, yet we're not
 a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
 And take the harmless folly of the time.
 We shall grow old apace, and die
 Before we know our liberty. 60
 Our life is short, and our days run
 As fast away as does the sun:
 And, as a vapour or a drop of rain
 Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
 So when you or I are made 65
 A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
 All love, all liking, all delight
 Lies drowned with us in endless night.
 Then while time serves, and we are but decay-
 ing,
 Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying. 70

TO PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORN- ING DEW

(From the same)

Why do ye weep, sweet babes? can tears
 Speak grief in you,
 Who were but born
 Just as the modest morn
 Teem'd her refreshing dew? 5
 Alas! you have not known that shower
 That mars a flower,
 Nor felt th' unkind
 Breath of a blasting wind,
 Nor are ye worn with years, 10
 Or warp'd as we,
 Who think it strange to see
 Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
 To speak by tears, before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimpr'ing younglings, and make
 known 15
 The reason why
 Ye droop and weep;
 Is it for want of sleep?
 Or childish lullaby?
 Or that ye have not seen as yet 20
 The violet?
 Or brought a kiss
 From that sweetheart to this?
 No, no, this sorrow shown
 By your tears shed 25
 Would have this lecture read:

That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
 Conceiv'd with grief are, and with tears brought
 forth.

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

(From the same)

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old time is still a-flying:
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow will be dying.
 The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun, 5
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.
 That age is best which is the first,
 When youth and blood are warmer; 10
 But being spent, the worse, and worst
 Times still succeed the former.
 Then be not coy, but use your time,
 And while ye may go marry:
 For having lost but once your prime 15
 You may forever tarry.

TO DAFFODILS

(From the same)

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
 As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon. 5
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the evensong;
 And, having prayed together, we
 Will go with you along. 10
 We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything. 15
 We die,
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away,
 Like to the summer's rain;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again. 20

THE HAG

(From the same)

The hag is astride
 This night for to ride,
 The devil and she together;
 Through thick and through thin, 5
 Now out and then in,
 Though ne'er so foul be the weather.
 A thorn or a burr
 She takes for a spur,
 With a lash of a bramble she rides now;

Through brakes and through briars, 10
O'er ditches and mires,
She follows the spirit that guides now.

No beast for his food
Dare now range the wood,
But hush'd in his lair he lies lurking; 15
While mischiefs, by these,
On land and on seas,
At noon of night are a-working.

The storm will arise
And trouble the skies; 20
This night, and more for the wonder,
The ghost from the tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Call'd out by the clap of the thunder.

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD, FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, thou hast given me a cell,
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather proof; 5
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep. 10
Low is my porch, as is my fate;
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get 15
Good words, or meat.
Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttry, and therein
A little bin, 20
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipt, unfead;¹
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit, 25
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee; 30
The worts,² the purslane,³ and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet, 35
To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink. 40
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,

¹ Unbroken, uncut.

² Vegetables, such as cabbage, turnips, etc. ³ Salad.

And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay 45
Her egg each day;
Besides, my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream for wine; 50
All these, and better, thou dost send
Me, to this end,—
That I should render for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fired with incense, I resign, 55
As wholly thine;
—But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

HIS GRANGE, OR PRIVATE WEALTH

Though clock,
To tell how night draws hence, I've none,
A cock
I have to sing how day draws on: 5
A maid, my Prue,¹ by good luck sent,
To save
That little, Fates me gave or lent.
A hen
I keep, which, creaking day by day, 10
Tells when
She goes her long white egg to lay:
A goose
I have, which, with a jealous ear,
Lets loose 15
Her tongue, to tell what danger's near.
A lamb
I keep, tame, with my morsels fed,
Whose dam
An orphan left him, lately dead: 20
A cat
I keep, that plays about my house,
Grown fat
With eating many a miching² mouse:
To these 25
A Trasy³ I do keep, whereby
I please
The more my rural privacy:
Which are:
But toys, to give my heart some ease:— 30
Where care
None is, slight things do lightly please.

Sir John Suckling

1609-1641

ORSAMES' SONG

(From *Aglaure*, acted 1637)

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale? 5

¹ An old servant of Herrick's, named Prudence.

² Sly.

³ His pet spaniel.

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
 Prithee, why so mute?
 Will, when speaking well can't win her,
 Saying nothing do't?
 Prithee, why so mute? 10

Quit, quit, for shame, this will not move
 This cannot take her.
 If of herself she will not love,
 Nothing can make her:
 The devil take her! 15

Richard Lobelace

1618-1658

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

(From *Lucasta*, 1649)

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
 That from the nunnery
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
 To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase, 5
 The first foe in the field,
 And with a stronger faith embrace
 A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such 10
 As you, too, shall adore,—
 I could not love thee, dear, so much,
 Loved I not honour more.

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON¹

(From the same)

When Love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates,
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the grates;
 When I lie tangled in her hair,
 And fettered to her eye,
 The birds that wanton in the air
 Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
 With no allaying Thames,
 Our careless heads with roses bound,
 Our hearts with loyal flames;
 When thirsty grief in wine we steep
 When healths and draughts go free,
 Fishes that tinkle in the deep
 Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
 With shriller throat shall sing
 The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
 And glories of my King;
 When I shall voice aloud, how good
 He is, how great should be,
 Enlarged winds that curl the flood
 Know no such liberty.

¹ Composed in 1642 during the poet's confinement in the Gatehouse at Westminster, for his advocacy of the royal cause.

Stone walls do not a prison make, 25
 Nor iron bars a cage;
 Minds innocent and quiet take
 That for an hermitage;
 If I have freedom in my love,
 And in my soul am free, 30
 Angels alone, that soar above,
 Enjoy such liberty.

Robert Burton

1577-1640

BURTON TELLS WHY HE WRITES UNDER THE NAME OF DEMOCRITUS JUNIOR

(From the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621)

Democritus,¹ as he is described by *Hippocrates*,² and *Laertius*,³ was a little wearish⁴ old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness, a famous Philosopher in his age, *coevus* with *Socrates*, wholly addicted to his studies at the last, and to a private life, writ many excellent works, a great Divine, according to the divinity of those times, an expert 5 Physician, a Politician, an excellent Mathematician, as *Diacosmus* and the rest of his works do witness. He was much delighted with the studies of Husbandry, saith *Columella*,⁵ and often I find him cited by *Constantinus* and 15 others, treating of that subject. He knew the natures, differences of all beasts, plants, fishes, birds; and, as some say, could understand the tunes and voices of them. In a word, he was *omnifariam doctus*, a general scholar, a great 5 student; and to the intent he might better contemplate, I find it related by some, that he put out his eyes, and was in his old age voluntarily blind, yet saw more than all Greece besides, and writ of every subject, *Nihil in toto opificio naturæ de quo non scripsit*.⁶ A man of 10 an excellent wit, profound conceit; and to attain knowledge the better in his younger

¹ *Democritus* (c. 400-c. 357 B. C.) was a Greek philosopher, traveller, and author. He is supposed to have gained his title, "The Laughing Philosopher," from the humorous delight he took in watching the follies of other men. Burton called himself *Democritus Junior*, because he believed that he resembled the elder *Democritus* in disposition;—at least in some particulars. Hence, in describing "The Laughing Philosopher," Burton is also giving us a glimpse into the peculiarities of his own character and humors.

² A famous Greek physician called "the father of medicine."

³ *Diogenes Laertius*, a Greek author, who wrote a book on the lives of the ancient philosophers.

⁴ Weak, withered.

⁵ A Roman writer on agriculture, who was born in Spain about the beginning of the Christian era.

⁶ There was nothing in the entire workings of nature that he did not write about.

years, he travelled to *Egypt* and *Athens*, to confer with learned men, *admired of some, despised of others*. After a wandering life, he settled at *Abdera*, a town in *Thrace*, and was sent for thither to be their Law-maker, Recorder or Town-clerk of some will; or as others, he was there bred and born. However it was, there he lived at last in a garden in the suburbs, wholly betaking himself to his studies, and a private life, *saving that sometimes he would walk down to the haven, and laugh heartily at such variety of ridiculous objects, which there he saw.*⁷ Such a one was *Democritus*.

But in the mean time, how doth this concern me, or upon what reference do I usurp his habit? I confess that indeed to compare myself to him for aught I have yet said, were both impudency and arrogancy, I do not presume to make any parallel. *Antistat mihi milibus trecentis, parvus sum, nullus sum, altum nec spiro, nec spero.*⁸ Yet thus much I will say of myself, and that I hope without all suspicion of pride, or self conceit, I have lived a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life, *mihi and musis*⁹ in the University as long almost as *Xenocrates* in *Athens*, *ad senectam fere*,¹⁰ to learn wisdom as he did, penned up most part in my study. For I have been brought up a student in the most flourishing College of *Europe*, *augustissimo collegio*, and can brag with *Jovius*,¹¹ almost, *in ea luce domicilii Vaticani, totius orbis celeberrimi, per 37 annos nullq' oppor'unaque didici*,¹² for 30 years I have continued (having the use of as good Libraries as ever he had) a scholar, and would be therefore loth, either by living as a drone, to be an unprofitable or unworthy a Member of so learned and noble a society, or to write that which should be any way dishonourable to such a royal and ample foundation. Something I have done, though by my profession a Divine, yet *turbine raptus ingenii*,¹³ as he said, out of a running wit, an unconstant, unsettled mind, I had a great desire (not able to attain to a superficial skill in any), to have some smattering in all, to be *aliquis in omnibus, nullus in singulis*,¹⁴ which

Plato commends, out of him *Lipsius*¹⁵ approves and furthers, as fit to be imprinted in all curious wits, not be a slave of one science, or dwell altogether in one subject as most do, but to rove abroad, *centum puer artium*,¹⁶ to have an oar in every man's boat, to taste of every dish, and sip of every cup, which saith *Montaigne*, was well performed by *Aristotle* and his¹⁷ learned countryman *Adrian Turnebus*. This roving humour (though not with like success) I have ever had, and like a ranging spaniel, that barks at every bird he sees, leaving his game, I have followed all, saving that which I should, and may justly complain, and truly, *qui ubique est, nusquam est*,¹⁸ which *Gesner*¹⁹ did in modesty, that I have read many books, but to little purpose, for want of good method, I have confusedly tumbled over divers authors in our Libraries, with small profit for want of art, order, memory, judgement. I never travelled but in Map or Card, in which my unconfined thoughts have freely expatiated, as having ever been especially delighted with the study of *Cosmography*. *Saturn* was the lord of my geniture,²⁰ culminating, etc., and *Mars* principal significator of manners, in partile conjunction with mine *Ascendant*; both fortunate in their houses, etc. I am not poor, I am not rich; *nihil est, nihil deest*,²¹ I have little, I want nothing; all my treasure is in *Minerva's* tower. Greater preferment as I could never get, so am I not in debt for it, I have a competency (*Laus Deo*) from my noble and munificent Patrons, though I live still a Collegiate student, as *Democritus* in his garden, and lead a monastick life, *ipse mihi theatrum*,²² sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world, *et tanquam in specula positus*,²³ (as he said) in some high place above you all, like *Stoicus Sapiens*, *omnia secula, praeterita presentiaque videns, uno velut intuitu*,²⁴ I hear and see what is done abroad, how

¹⁵ Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) a Flemish philologist and critic.

¹⁶ The child of a hundred arts.

¹⁷ Montaigne's. Montaigne (1533–1592), the great French essayist, refers several times to his friend Adrian Turnebus, and he says that Turnebus "knew more, and knew what he did know better, than any man of his time, or long before him."

¹⁸ He who is everywhere, is nowhere.

¹⁹ Konrad von Gesner (1516–1565), a Swiss naturalist and scholar, who was professor first of Greek and afterwards of physics.

²⁰ According to the old pseudo-science of Astrology, the character and destiny of a person was determined by the position of the planets at the time of his birth. In Burton's time even learned men still believed in the influence of the stars on human affairs. Burton tells us that he was born when Saturn and Mars were in partile (exact) conjunction. One born under the influence of Saturn was supposed to have a saturnine (grave, or gloomy) disposition.

²¹ Nothing is there, nothing is lacking.

²² I myself make a theatre for myself.

²³ And set as it were in a watch tower.

²⁴ Beholding all ages, past and present, as if in one view.

⁷ We are told that Burton would go "down to the Bridge-foot in Oxford," and listen to "the Bargemen scold and storm and swear at one another, at which he would set his hands to his sides and laugh most profusely."

⁸ He excels me in three hundred thousand ways, I am small, I am nothing, nor do I either wish for greatness, or expect it.

⁹ For myself and for my studies.

¹⁰ Almost to old age. Burton was about forty-five when the *Anatomy* was published.

¹¹ Paulus Jovius (1483–1552) a noted Italian historian.

¹² In that enlightened air of the Vatican Library, the most famous in the whole world, I have come to know in thirty-seven years many useful things.

¹³ Snatched from the whirlpool of my natural inclination.

¹⁴ Literally—"Somebody in all (branches of learning although), nothing in each (special branch)."

others, run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in court and country, far from those wrangling lawsuits, *aulæ vanitatum, fort ambitionem, ridere mecum soleo*:²⁵ I laugh at all, only secure lest my suit go amiss, my ships perish, corn and cattle miscarry, trade decay. I have no wife nor children good or bad to provide for. A mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me, as from a common theatre or scene.

REMEDIES AGAINST DISCONTENTS

(From the same)

Discontents and grievances are either general or particular; general are wars, plagues, dearths, famine, fires, inundations, unseasonable weather, epidemical diseases, which afflict whole Kingdoms, Territories, Cities: or peculiar to private men, as cares, crosses, losses, death of friends, poverty, want, sickness, orbities,¹ injuries, abuses, etc. generally all discontent, *homines qualimur fortunæ salo*² no condition free; *quisque suos patimur manes*.³ Even in the midst of our mirth and jollity, there is some grudging, some complaint; as he saith, our whole life is a *glucupicron*, a bitter sweet passion, honey and gall mixt together, we are all miserable and discontent; who can deny it? If all, and that it be a common calamity, an inevitable necessity, all distressed, then as Cardan⁴ infers, *who art thou that hopest to go free? Why dost thou not grieve thou art a mortal man, and not governor of the world? Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes, Nemo recuset! If it be common to all, why should one man be more disquieted than another? If thou alone wert distressed, it were indeed more irksome, and less to be indured; but, when the calamity is common, comfort thyself with this, thou hast more fellows, Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris*,⁵ 'tis not thy sole case, and why shouldst thou be so impatient? *I, but, alas! we are more miserable than others; what shall we do? Besides private miseries, we live in perpetual fear, and danger of common enemies: we have Bellona's whips, and pitiful outcries, for Epithalamiums; for pleasant Musick, that fearful noise of Ordinance, Drums, and warlike Trumpets, still*

sounding in our ears: instead of nuptial Torches, we have firing of Towns and Cities: for triumphs, lamentations; for joy, tears. So it is, and so it was, and ever will be. He that refuseth to see and hear, to suffer this, is not fit to live in this world, and knows not the common condition of all men, to whom, so long as they live, with a reciprocal course, joys and sorrows are annexed, and succeed one another. It is inevitable, it may not be avoided, and why then shouldst thou be so much troubled? Grave nihil est homini quod fert necessitas,⁶ as Tully deems out of an old Poet, that which is necessary cannot be grievous. If it be so, then comfort thyself in this, *that, whether thou wilt or no, it must be endured: make a virtue of necessity, and conform thyself to undergo it. Si longa est, levis est; si gravis est, brevis est; if it be long, 'tis light; if grievous, it cannot last; it will away, dies dolorem minuit*,⁷ and if naught else, yet time will wear it out, custom will ease it; oblivion is a common medicine for all losses, injuries, griefs, and detriments whatsoever, *and when they are once past, this commodity comes of infelicity, it makes the rest of our life sweeter unto us: atque hæc olim meminisse juvabit*,⁸ the privation and want of a thing many times makes it more pleasant and delightful than before it was. We must not think, the happiest of us all, to escape here without some misfortunes,

Usque adeo nulla est sincera voluptas, Sollicitumque aliquid lætis intervenit.⁹ . . .

Whatsoever is under the Moon is subject to corruption, alteration; and, so long as thou livest upon the earth, look not for other. *Thou shalt not here find peaceable and cheerful days, quiet times, but rather clouds, storms, calumnies; such is our fate.* . . .

Yea, but thou thinkest thou art more miserable than the rest, other men are happy in respect of thee, their miseries are but flea-bitings to thine, thou alone art unhappy, none so bad as thyself. Yet if, as Socrates said, *all the men in the world should come and bring their grievances together, of body, mind, fortune, sores, ulcers, madness, epilepsies, agues, and all those common calamities of beggary, want, servitude, imprisonment, and lay them on a heap to be equally divided, wouldst thou share alike, and take thy portion, or be as thou art? Without question thou wouldst be as thou art. If some Jupiter should say, to give us all content,*

²⁵ I am wont to smile to myself at the empty vanity of the palace, and the ambition of the market-place.

¹ Bereavements (Lat. *orbis*).

² We men are tossed on the sea of fortune.

³ We suffer each one of us his own punishment.

⁴ Giralamo Cardano (1501-1576), an Italian philosopher, mathematician, and astrologer.

⁵ The solace of the unhappy is to have had companions in suffering.

⁶ Nothing which necessity imposes is burdensome to men.

⁷ A day makes trouble less.

⁸ And moreover it will delight us to remember these things in time to come.

⁹ All the way along there is no true pleasure. Some trouble intrudes upon our joys.

"Jam faciam, quod vultis; eris tu, qui modo miles,
Mercator; tu, consultus modo, rusticus; hinc vos,
Vos hinc mutatis discedite partibus; eia!
Quid statis? nolint."

Well, be 't so then: you, master soldier,
Shall be a merchant; you, sir lawyer,
A country gentleman; go you to this,
That side you; why stand ye? It's well as 'tis.

*Every man knows his own, but not others' defects and miseries; and 'tis the nature of all men still to reflect upon themselves, their own misfortunes, not to examine or consider other men's, not to confer themselves with others: to recount their miseries, but not their good gifts, fortunes, benefits, which they have, to ruminate on their adversity, but not once to think on their prosperity, not what they have, but what they want: to look still on them that go before, but not on those infinite numbers that come after. Whereas many a man would think himself in heaven, a petty Prince, if he had but the least part of that fortune which thou so much repinest at, abhorrest, and accountest a most vile and wretched estate. How many thousands want that which thou hast! how many myriads of poor slaves, captives, of such as work day and night in coal-pits, tin-mines, with sore toil to maintain a poor living, of such as labour in body and mind, live in extreme anguish, and pain, all which thou art free from! O fortunatos nimium bona si sua norint!*¹⁰ Thou art most happy if thou couldst be content, and acknowledge thy happiness. . . .

Be content and rest satisfied, for thou art well in respect of others; be thankful for that thou hast, that God hath done for thee; he hath not made thee a monster, a beast, a base creature, as he might, but a man, a Christian, such a man; consider aright of it, thou art full well as thou art. . . .

Our life is but short, a very dream, and while we look about, *immortalitas adest*, eternity is at hand: *our life is a pilgrimage on earth, which wise men pass with great alacrity.* If thou be in woe, sorrow, want, distress, in pain, or sickness, think of that of our Apostle, *God chastiseth them whom He loveth. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* Psal. 126, 6. *As the furnace proveth the potter's vessel, so doth temptation try men's thoughts,* Eccl. 27, 5; 'tis for thy good, *periuisses nisi periuisses:* hadst thou not been so visited, thou hadst been utterly undone; *as gold in the fire, so men are tried in adversity.* . . .

¹⁰ O too happy ones, if only they realized their own good fortune. V. Virg. *Georg.* II. 458.

We are sent as so many soldiers into this world, to strive with it, the flesh, the devil; our life is a warfare, and who knows it not? *Non est ad astra mollis e terris via:*¹¹ and therefore, *peradventure, this world here is made troublesome unto us, that, as Gregory notes, we should not be delighted by the way, and forget whither we are going.* . . .

Go on then merrily to heaven. If the way be 10 troublesome, and you in misery, in many grievances, on the other side you have many pleasant sports, objects, sweet smells, delightful tastes, musick, meats, herbs, flowers, etc. to recreate your senses. Or put case thou art 15 now forsaken of the world, dejected, contemned, yet comfort thyself, as it was said to *Hagar* in the wilderness, *God sees thee, he takes notice of thee:* there is a God above that can vindicate thy cause, that can relieve thee. And surely *Seneca* thinks he takes delight in seeing thee. *The gods are well pleased when they see great men contending with adversity,* as we are to see men fight, or a man with a beast. But these are toys in respect. Behold, saith he, 25 *a spectacle worthy of God: a good man contented with his estate.* A tyrant is the best sacrifice to *Jupiter*, as the ancients held, and his best object a contented mind. For thy part then rest satisfied, *cast all thy care on him, thy burden on him, rely on him, trust on him, and he shall nourish thee, care for thee, give thee thine heart's desire;* say with *David*, *God is our hope and strength, in troubles ready to be found,* Psal. 46, 1. *For they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed,* Psal. 125 1, 2. *As the mountains are about Jerusalem, so is the Lord about his people, henceforth and forever.*

Sir Thomas Overbury

1581-1613

A FAIR AND HAPPY MILKMAID

(From *Characters*, 1614)

A fair and happy milkmaid is a country wench that is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of hers is able to put all *face-physic* out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator, to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel which is herself, is far better than outsides of tissue; for

¹¹ The road from the earth to the stars is not so easy.

though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silk-worm, she is decked in innocency, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoil both her complexion and conditions: nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul; she rises, therefore, with chanticleer, her Dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. The golden ears of corn fall and kiss her feet when she reaps them, as if they wished to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that felled them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new-made haycock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity; and when winters evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair, and in choosing her garments counts no bravery i' the world like decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and chirurgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill because she means none; yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones, yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not palled with ensuing idle cogitations. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the Spring time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding sheet.

Thomas Hobbes

1588-1679

WAR

(From *Leviathan*,¹ 1651)

In the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence;² thirdly, glory. The first maketh men invade for gain, the second for safety, and the third for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other

sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. For "war" consisteth not in battle only, or in the act of fighting; but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of "time" is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain, but in an inclination thereto of many days together; so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is "peace."

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same is consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to some man that has not well weighed these things, that Nature should dissociate and render men apt to invade and destroy one another; and he may therefore, not trusting to this inference, made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house, he locks his chest; and this when he knows there be laws, and public officers, armed to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects when he rides armed; of his fellow-citizens when he locks his doors; and of his children and servants when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires and other passions of man are in themselves no

¹ The *Leviathan* a creature of gigantic size and strength, is used by Hobbes as the type of his ideal of the state. He believed that the state could only be preserved from anarchy and ruin by the exercise of an absolute power over its subjects, hence he makes *Leviathan* the symbol of "that mortal god" the strong state, armed, and dominant over all. So, in the passage given here, he alludes to the evils which follow "when men live without a common power to keep them all in awe."

² Distrust, lack of confidence in others.

sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them; which till laws be made they cannot know, nor can any law be made till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.

It may peradventure be thought there was never such a time ~~nor condition of war as this~~; and I believe it was never generally so over all the world, but there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places in America, except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth upon natural lust, have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be where there were no common power to fear by the manner of life which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, used to degenerate into a civil war.

But though there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another; yet in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbours; which is a posture of war. But because they uphold thereby the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men.

To this war of every man, against every man, this also is consequent—that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his senses and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition, that there be no propriety, no dominion, no "mine" and "thine" distinct; but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it. And thus much for the ill condition which man by mere nature is actually placed in; though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the passions, partly in his reason.

The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope

by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement.

Isaac Walton

1593–1683

HAWKING, HUNTING, AND FISHING¹

(From *The Complete Angler*, fifth ed. 1676)

PISCATOR. You are well overtaken, gentlemen, a good morning to you both; I have stretched my legs up Tottenham Hill to overtake you, hoping your business may occasion you towards Ware, whither I am going this fine, fresh May morning.

VENATOR. Sir, I, for my part, shall almost answer your hopes; for my purpose is to drink my morning's draught at the Thatched House in Hoddesden; and I think not to rest till I come thither, where I have appointed a friend or two to meet me: but for this gentleman that you see with me, I know not how far he intends his journey; he came so lately into my company, that I have scarce had time to ask him the question.

AUCERS. Sir, I shall by your favour, bear you company as far as Theobald's; and there leave you, for then I turn up to a friend's house who mews a hawk for me,² which I now long to see.

VEN. Sir, we are all so happy as to have a fine, fresh, cool morning, and I hope we shall each be the happier in the other's company. And, gentlemen, that I may not lose yours, I shall either abate or amend my pace to enjoy it; knowing that, as the Italians say, "Good company in a journey makes the way to seem the shorter."

AUC. It may do so, Sir, with the help of good discourse, which, methinks we may promise from you that both look and speak so cheerfully; and, for my part, I promise you as an invitation to it, that I will be as free and open-hearted as discretion will allow me to be with strangers.

VEN. And, Sir, I promise the like.

PISC. I am right glad to hear your answers:

¹ This conversation is between *Piscator* (the fisherman), *Venator* (the hunter), and *Aucers* (the fowler, or bird-catcher). These representatives of three kinds of sport, met near Tottenham, a town some five miles north of London. They then appear to have taken the main road toward Ware, a town on the river Lea, some fifteen or twenty miles north of Tottenham. The *Thatched House* on the Ware road, lay directly in their route: *Theobald's* was a magnificent country-seat, about six miles north of Tottenham.

² Takes care of a hawk during the mewing, or moulting season.

and in confidence you speak the truth, I shall put on a boldness to ask you, Sir, whether business or pleasure caused you to be so early up, and walk so fast; for this other gentleman hath declared he is going to see a hawk that a friend mews for him.⁵

VEN. Sir, mine is a mixture of both, a little business and more pleasure: for I intend this day to do all my business, and then bestow another day or two in hunting the otter, which, a friend, that I go to meet, tells me, is much pleasanter than any other chase whatsoever: howsoever I mean to try it; for to-morrow morning we shall meet a pack of otter-dogs of noble Mr. Sadler's,³ upon Amwell Hill,⁴ who will be there so early, that they intend to prevent⁵ the sun rising.

PISC. Sir, my fortune has answered my desires; and my purpose is to bestow a day or two in helping to destroy some of those villainous vermin; for I hate them perfectly, because they love fish so well, or rather, because they destroy so much; indeed, so much, that, in my judgment all men that keep otter-dogs ought to have pensions from the King to encourage them to destroy the very breed of those base otters, they do so much mischief.

VEN. But what say you to the foxes of the nation? Would not you as willingly have them destroyed? for doubtless they do as much mischief as otters do.

PISC. Oh, Sir, if they do, it is not so much to me and my fraternity as those base vermin the otters do.

AUC. Why, Sir, I pray, of what fraternity are you, that you are so angry with the poor otters?

PISC. I am, Sir, a Brother of the Angle, and therefore an enemy to the otter: for you are to note that we Anglers all love one another, and therefore do I hate the otter both for my own and for their sakes who are of my brotherhood.

VEN. And I am a lover of bounds; I have followed many a pack of dogs many a mile, and heard many merry huntsmen make sport and scoff at anglers.

AUC. And I profess myself a Falconer, and have heard many grave, serious men pity them, 'tis such a heavy, contemptible, dull recreation.

PISC. You know, gentlemen 'tis an easy thing to scoff at any art or recreation: a little wit, mixed with ill-nature, confidence, and malice, will do it; but though they often venture boldly, yet they are often caught even in their own trap, according to that of Lucian, the father of the family of scoffers.

"Lucian, well skill'd in scoffing, this hath writ: Friend, that's your folly which you think your wit: This you vent oft, void both of wit and fear, Meaning another, when yourself you jeer."

If to this you add what Solomon says of scoffers, that, "they are an abomination to mankind," (Prov. xxiv. 9), let him that thinks fit, scoff on, and be a scoffer still; but I account them enemies to me, and to all that love virtue and Angling.

And for you that have heard many grave, serious men pity Anglers; let me tell you, Sir, there be many men that are by others taken to be serious and grave men, which we contemn and pity. Men that are taken to be grave, because nature hath made them of a sour complexion, money-getting men, men that spend all their time, first in getting, and next in anxious care to keep it; men that are condemned to be rich, and then always busy or discontented: for these poor-rich-men, we Anglers pity them perfectly, and stand in no need to borrow their thoughts to think ourselves so happy. No, no. Sir, we enjoy a contentedness above the reach of such dispositions, and as the learned and ingenious Montaigne says like himself freely, "When my cat and I entertain each other with mutual apish tricks, as playing with a garter, who knows but that I make my cat more sport than she makes me? Shall I conclude her to be simple, that has her time to begin or refuse to play as freely as I myself have? Nay, who knows but that it is a defect of my not understanding her language (for doubtless cats talk and reason with one another) that we agree no better? And who knows but that she pities me for being no wiser than to play with her, and laughs and censures my folly for making sport for her, when we two play together?"

Thus freely speaks Montaigne concerning cats; and I hope I may take as great a liberty to blame any man, and laugh at him too, let him be never so grave, that hath not heard what Anglers can say in the justification of their art and recreation; which I may again tell you is so full of pleasure, that we need not borrow their thoughts to think ourselves happy.

VEN. Sir, you have almost amased me; for though I am no scoffer, yet I have, I pray let me speak it without offence, always looked upon Anglers as more patient and more simple men than I fear I shall find you to be.

PISC. Sir, I hope you will not judge my earnestness to be impatience: and for my simplicity, if by that you mean a harmlessness, or that simplicity which was usually found in the primitive Christians, who were, as most

³ A well-known sportsman and country-gentleman of the time.

⁴ Amwell is a small village a few miles south of Ware.

⁵ Anticipate the sunrise.

Anglers are, quiet men, and followers of peace, men that were so simply-wise as not to sell their consciences to buy riches, and with them vexation and a fear to die; if you mean such simple men as lived in those times when there were fewer lawyers; when men might have had a lordship safely conveyed to them in a piece of parchment no bigger than your hand, though several sheets will not do it safely in this wiser age; I say, Sir, if you take us Anglers to be such simple men as I have spoken of, then myself and those of my profession will be glad to be so understood: but if by simplicity you meant to express a general defect in those that profess and practise the excellent art of Angling I hope in time to disabuse you, and make the contrary appear so evidently, that, if you will but have patience to hear me, I shall remove all the anticipations that discourse, or time, or prejudice, have possessed you with against that laudable and ancient art; for I know it is worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise man.

But, gentlemen, though I be able to do this, I am not so unmannerly as to engross all the discourse to myself; and therefore, you two having declared yourselves, the one to be a lover of hawks, the other of hounds, I shall be most glad to hear what you can say in the commendation of that recreation which each of you love and practise; and having heard what you can say, I shall be glad to exercise your attention with what I can say concerning my own recreation and art of Angling, and by this means we shall make the way to seem the shorter: and if you like my motion, I would have Mr. Falconer to begin.

AUC. Your motion is consented to with all my heart; and, to testify it, I will begin as you have desired me.

And first for the element that I used to trade in, which is the air, an element of more worth than weight, an element that doubtless exceeds both the earth and water; for though I sometimes deal in both, yet the air is most properly mine, I and my hawks use that most, and it yields us most recreation; it stops not the high soaring of my noble, generous falcon; in it she ascends to such an height, as the dull eyes of beasts and fish are not able to reach to; their bodies are too gross for such high elevations: in the air my troops of hawks soar up on high, and when they are lost in the sight of men, then they attend upon and converse with the gods; therefore I think my eagle is so justly styled *Jove's servant in ordinary*: and that very falcon, that I am now going to see, deserves no meaner a title, for she usually in her flight endangers herself, like the son of Dædalus, to

have her wings scorched by the sun's heat, she flies so near it, but her mettle makes her careless of danger; for she then needs nothing, but makes her nimble pinions cut the fluid air, and so makes her high way over the steepest mountains and deepest rivers, and in her glorious career looks with contempt upon those high steeples and magnificent palaces which we adore and wonder at; from which height I can make her to descend by a word from my mouth (which she both knows and obeys), to accept of meat from my hand, to own me for her master, to go home with me and be willing the next day to afford me the like recreation.

And more; this element of air which I profess to trade in, the worth of it is such, and it is of such necessity, that no creature whatsoever, not only those numerous creatures that feed on the face of the earth, but those various creatures that have their dwelling within the waters,—every creature that hath life in its nostrils stands in need of my element. The waters cannot preserve the fish without air, witness the not breaking of ice in an extreme frost: the reason is, for that if the inspiring and expiring organ of any animal be stopped, it suddenly yields to nature, and dies. Thus necessary is air to the existence both of fish and beasts, nay, even to man himself; that air, or breath of life with which God at first inspired mankind (Gen. ii. 7), he, if he wants it, dies presently, becomes a sad object to all that loved and beheld him, and in an instant turns to putrefaction.

Nay, more, the very birds of the air, those that be not hawks, are both so many and so useful and pleasant to mankind, that I must not let them pass without some observations: they both feed and refresh him: feed him with their choice bodies, and refresh him with their heavenly voices. I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of fowl by which this is done; and his curious palate pleased by day, and which with their very excrements^a afford him a soft lodging at night. These I will pass by, but not those little nimble musicians of the air, that warble forth their curious ditties, with which nature hath furnished them to the shame of art.

As first, the lark, when she means to rejoice, to cheer herself and those that hear her, she then quits the earth, and sings as she ascends higher into the air; and, having ended her heavenly employment, grows then mute and sad to think she must descend to the dull earth, which she would not touch but for necessity.

^a i. e., their feathers; used to stuff beds, pillows, etc.

How do the blackbird and thrassel⁷ with their melodious voices bid welcome to the cheerful spring, and in their fixed mouths warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to!

Nav, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as namely the laverock,⁸ the titlark, the little linnet, and the honest robin, that loves mankind both alive and dead.

But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music on earth!" . . .

VEN. Well, Sir, and I will now take my turn, and will first begin with a commendation of the earth, as you have done most excellently of the air; the earth being that element upon which I drive my pleasant, wholesome, hungry trade. The earth is a solid, settled element; an element most universally beneficial both to man and beast: to men who have their several recreations upon it, as horse-races, hunting, sweet smells, pleasant walks: the earth feeds man, and all those several beasts that both feed him and afford him recreation. What pleasure doth man take in hunting the stately stag, the generous buck, the wild-boar, the cunning otter, the crafty fox, and the fearful hare! And if I may descend to a lower game, what pleasure is it sometimes with gins to betray the very vermin of the earth! as namely, the fitchet,⁹ the fulimart, the ferret, the polecat, the mouldwarp,¹⁰ and the like creatures that live upon the face and within the bowels of the earth! How doth the earth bring forth herbs, flowers, and fruits, both for physic and the pleasure of mankind! and above all, to me at least, the fruitful vine, of which when I drink moderately it clears my brain, cheers my heart, and sharpens my wit. How could Cleopatra have feasted Mark Antony with eight wild-boars roasted whole at one supper, and other meat suitable, if the earth had not been a bountiful mother? But to pass by the mighty elephant, which the earth breeds and

nourisheth, and descend to the least of creatures, how doth the earth afford us a doctrinal example in the little emmet, who in the summer provides and lays up her winter provision, and teaches man to do the like! The earth feeds and carries those horses that carry us. If I would be prodigal of my time and your patience, what might not I say in commendation of the earth? that puts limits to the proud and raging sea, and by that means preserves both man and beast, that it destroys them not, as we see it daily doth those that venture upon the sea, and are there shipwrecked, drowned, and left to feed haddock; when we that are so wise as to keep ourselves on earth, walk, and talk, and live, and eat, and drink, and go a hunting: of which recreation I will say a little, and then leave Mr. Piscator to the commendation of Angling.

Hunting is a game for Princes and noble persons; it hath been highly prized in all ages; it was one of the qualifications that Xenophon bestowed on his Cyrus, that he was a hunter of wild beasts. Hunting trains up the younger nobility to the use of manly exercises in their riper age. What more manly exercise than hunting the wild-boar, the stag, the buck, the fox, or the hare! How doth it preserve health, and increase strength and activity!

And for the dogs that we use, who can commend their excellency to that height which they deserve? How perfect is the hound at smelling, who never leaves or forsakes his first scent, but follows it through so many changes and varieties of other scents, even over and in the water, and into the earth! What music doth a pack of dogs then make to any man, whose heart and ears are so happy as to be set to the tune of such instruments! How will a right greyhound fix his eye on the best buck in a herd, single him out, and follow him, and him only, through a whole herd of rascal¹¹ game, and still know and then kill him! For my hounds, I know the language of them, and they know the language and meaning of one another, as perfectly as we know the voices of those with whom we discourse daily.

I might enlarge myself in the commendation of hunting, and of the noble hound especially, as also of the docibleness of dogs in general; and I might make many observations of land-creatures, that for composition, order, figure, and constitution, approach nearest to the completeness and understanding of man; especially of those creatures which Moses in the law permitted to the Jews, (Lev. ix. 2-8), which have cloven hoofs and chew the cud,

⁷ Thristle, song-thrush.

⁸ Lark, skylark.

⁹ The fitchet, or fitchew, the fulimart (fumart, or foul-mart), and the pole-cat closely resemble each other, all belong to the same family as the martens, weasels, otters, and badgers.

¹⁰ The common mole.

¹¹ "Animals unfit to chase or kill on account of ignoble quality or lean condition."

which I shall forbear to name, because I will not be so uncivil to Mr. Piscator, as not to allow him a time for the commendation of angling, which he calls an art; but doubtless 'tis an easy one: and, Mr. Auceps, I doubt we shall hear a watery discourse of it, but I hope 'twill not be a long one. www.libtool.com.cn

Auc. And I hope so too, though I fear it will.

Pisc. Gentlemen, let not prejudice pre-possess you. I confess my discourse is like to prove suitable to my recreation, calm and quiet; we seldom take the name of God into our mouths, but it is either to praise Him or pray to Him; if others use it vainly in the midst of their recreations, so vainly as if they meant to conjure, I must tell you it is neither our fault nor our custom; we protest against it. But pray remember, I accuse nobody; for as I would not make "a watery discourse," so I would not put too much vinegar into it; nor would I raise the reputation of my own art by the diminution of another's. And so much for the prologue to what I meant to say.

And now for the water, the element that I trade in. The water is the eldest daughter of the creation, the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move (Gen. i. 2), the element which God commanded to bring forth living creatures abundantly; and without which those that inhabit the land, even all creatures that have breath in their nostrils, must suddenly return to putrefaction. Moses, the great law giver, and chief philosopher, skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians, who was called the friend of God, and knew the mind of the Almighty, names this element the first in the creation; this is the element upon which the Spirit of God did first move, and is the chief ingredient in the creation: many philosophers have made it to comprehend all the other elements, and most allow it the chiefest in the mixture¹² of all living creatures.

There be that profess to believe that all bodies are made of water, and may be reduced back again to water only; they endeavour to demonstrate it thus:—

Take a willow, or any like speedy-growing plant, newly rooted in a box or barrel full of earth, weigh them all together exactly when the trees begin to grow, and then weigh all together after the tree is increased from its first rooting to weigh an hundred pound weight more than when it was first rooted and weighed; and you shall find this augment of the tree to be without the diminution of one drachm weight of the earth. Hence they infer this

¹² Mixture.

increase of wood to be from water of rain, or from dew, and not to be from any other element. And they affirm, they can reduce this wood back again to water; and they affirm, also, the same may be done in any animal or vegetable. And this I take to be a fair testimony of the excellency of my element of water.

The water is more productive than the earth. Nay, the earth hath no fruitfulness without showers or dews; for all the herbs, and flowers and fruits, are produced and thrive by the water; and the very minerals are fed by streams that run underground, whose natural course carries them to the tops of many high mountains, as we see by several springs breaking forth on the tops of the highest hills; and this is also witnessed by the daily trial and testimony of several miners.

Nay, the increase of those creatures that are bred and fed in the water are not only more and more miraculous, but more advantageous to man, not only for the lengthening of his life, but for the preventing of sickness; 'tis observed by the most learned physicians, that the casting off of Lent and other fish days, which hath not only given the lie to so many learned, pious, wise founders of colleges, for which we should be ashamed, hath doubtless been the chief cause of those many putrid, shaking, intermitting agues, unto which this nation of ours is now more subject than those wiser countries that feed on herbs, salads, and plenty of fish; of which it is observed in story, that the greatest part of the world now do. And it may be fit to remember that Moses (Lev. xi. 9, Deut. xiv. 9) appointed fish to be the chief diet for the best commonwealth that ever yet was.

And it is observable, not only that there are fish, as namely, the whale, three times as big as the mighty elephant, that is so fierce in battle; but that the mightiest feasts have been of fish. The Romans in the height of their glory have made fish the mistress of all their entertainments; they have had music to usher in their sturgeons, lampreys,¹³ and mullets, which they would purchase at rates rather to be wondered at than believed. He that shall view the writings of Macrobius,¹⁴ or Varro,¹⁵ may be confirmed and informed of this, and of

¹³ The lamprey, when full grown, resembles an eel, and is considered a delicacy.

¹⁴ A Latin writer of the fifth century. In his *Convivia Saturnalia*, he speaks of a certain Roman villa which, although not large, was put up for sale at four million sesterces, because of its fish ponds.

¹⁵ Marcus Terentius Varro Reatinus (116–28 B. C.), a voluminous writer, called "the most learned of the Romans." In his treatise on husbandry he speaks of the fresh and salt water fish ponds of the Romans. (*De Re Rustica*, III. 17, 2).

the incredible value of their fish and fish-ponds.

SELECTION FROM THE LIFE OF HOOKER

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(From Walton's *Lives*, 1665)

I return to Mr. Hooker in his college,¹ where he continued his studies with all quietness, for the space of three years; about which time he entered into sacred orders, being then made deacon and priest, and, not long after, was appointed to preach at St. Paul's Cross.

In order to which Sermon, to London he came, and immediately to the Shunamite's house;² which is a house so called, for that, besides the stipend paid the preacher, there is provision made also for his lodging and diet for two days before, and one day after his sermon. This house was then kept by John Churchman, sometime a draper of good note in Watling Street, upon whom poverty had at last come like an armed man, and brought him into a necessitous condition; which, though it be a punishment, is not always an argument of God's disfavor; for he was a virtuous man. I shall not yet give the like testimony of his wife, but leave the reader to judge by what follows. But to this house Mr. Hooker came so wet, so weary, and weatherbeaten, that he was never known to express more passion, than against a friend that dissuaded him from footing it to London, and for finding him no easier a horse,—supposing the horse trotted when he did not;—and at this time also, such a faintness and fear possessed him, that he would not be persuaded two days' rest and quietness, or any other means could be used to make him preach his Sunday's sermon: but a warm bed, and rest, and drink proper for a cold, given him by Mrs. Churchman, and her diligent attendance added unto it, enabled him to perform the office of the day, which was in or about the year 1581.

And in this first public appearance to the world, he was not so happy as to be free from exceptions against a point of doctrine delivered in his sermon; which was, "That in God there were two wills; an antecedent and a consequent will; his first will that all mankind should be

saved; but his second will was, that those only should be saved that did live answerable to that degree of grace which he had offered or afforded them."

5 But the justifying of this doctrine did not prove of so bad consequence, as the kindness of Mrs. Churchman's curing him of his late distemper and cold; for that was so gratefully apprehended by Mr. Hooker, that he thought himself bound in conscience to believe all that she said: so the good man came to be persuaded by her, "that he was a man of tender constitution; and that it was best for him to have a wife, that might prove a nurse to him; such a one as might both prolong his life, and make it more comfortable; and such a one she could and would provide for him, if he thought fit to marry." And he, not considering that "the children of this world are 15 wiser in their generation than the children of light;" but, like a true Nathanael, fearing no guile, because he meant none, did give her such a power as Eleazar was trusted with,—you may read it in the book of Genesis,—when he was sent to choose a wife for Isaac; for even so he trusted her to choose for him, promising upon a fair summons to return to London, and accept her choice; and he did so in that, or about the year following. Now, the wife provided for him was her daughter Joan, who brought him neither beauty nor portion: and for her conditions, they were too like that wife's, which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house; so that the good man had no reason to 25 "rejoice in the wife of his youth;" but too just cause to say with the holy prophet, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar."

This choice of Mr. Hooker's—if it were his choice—may be wondered at; but let us consider that the Prophet Ezekiel says, "There is a wheel within a wheel;" a secret sacred wheel of Providence,—most visible in marriages,—guided by His hand that "allows not the race to the swift" nor "bread to the wise," nor good wives to good men: and he that can bring good out of evil—for mortals are blind to this reason—only knows why this blessing was denied to patient Job, to meek Moses, and to our as meek and patient Mr. Hooker. But so it was; and let the reader cease to wonder, for affliction is a divine diet; which though it be not pleasing to mankind, yet Almighty God hath often, very often, imposed it as good, though bitter physic to those children whose 55 souls are dearest to him.

And by this marriage the good man was drawn from the tranquility of his college; from the garden of piety, of pleasure, of peace, and

¹ I. e., Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Hooker was sent to Oxford in 1567, when he was in his fifteenth year. He graduated M. A. in 1577, and obtained his Fellowship in the same year. About three years later (having taken holy orders in 1581) he received the appointment to preach in London to which Walton here refers.

² A reference to the woman of Shunem (*Shunamite*) who entertained the prophet Elisha, and "constrained him to eat bread." *II Kings*, iv, 8:11.

a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world; into those corroding cares that attend a married priest, and a country parsonage; which was Drayton-beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, not far from Aylesbury, and in the diocese of Lincoln; to which he was presented by John Cheney, Esq.,—then patron of it—the 9th of December, 1584, where he behaved himself so as to give no occasion of evil, but as St. Paul adviseth a minister of God—"in much patience, in afflictions, in anguishes, in necessities, in poverty" and no doubt "in long suffering;" yet troubling no man with his discontents and wants.

And in this condition he continued about a year; in which time his two pupils, Edwin Sandys³ and George Cranmer, took a journey to see their tutor; where they found him with a book in his hand,—it was the Odes of Horace,—he being then like humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field, which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for his servant was gone home to dine, and assist his wife to do some necessary household business. But when his servant returned and released him, then his two pupils attended him unto his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company, which was presently denied them; for Richard was called to rock the cradle; and the rest of their welcome was so like this, that they stayed but till next morning, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition; and they having in that time rejoiced in the remembrance, and then paraphrased⁴ on the many innocent recreations of their younger days, and other like diversions, and thereby given him as much present comfort as they were able, they were forced to leave him to the company of his wife Joan, and seek themselves a quieter lodging for next night. But at their parting from him, Mr. Cranmer said, "Good tutor, I am sorry your lot is fallen in no better ground, as to your parsonage; and more sorry that your wife proves not a more comfortable companion, after you have wearied yourself in your restless studies." To whom the good man replied, "My dear George, if saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me; but labour—as indeed I do daily—to submit mine to his will, and possess my soul in patience and peace."

³ Sir Edwin Sandys (c. 1561–1629), who assisted the Pilgrims in chartering the Mayflower.

⁴ i. e. repeated their "innocent recreations," with such amplification or difference as there is between a paraphrase and the original text.

John Earle¹

1601?–1665

A CRITIC¹

(From *Microcosmographie*, 1628)

A Critic is one that has spelled over a great many of books, and his observation is the orthography. He is the surgeon of old authors, and heals the wounds of dust and ignorance. He converses much in fragments and *Desunt multa's*,² and if he piece it up with two lines, he is more proud of that book than the author. He runs over all sciences to peruse their syntaxes, and thinks all learning comprised in learning Latin. He tastes styles, as some descreeter palates do wine; and tells you which is genuine, which sophisticated and bastard. His own phrase is a miscellany of old words, deceased long before the Cæsars, and entombed by Varro, and the modernest man he follows is Plautus.³ He writes *omneis* at length, and *quicquid*, and his gerund is most incomfortable.⁴ He is a troublesome vexer of the dead, which after so long sparing must rise up to the judgment of his castigations. He is one that makes all books sell dearer, while he swells them into folios with his comments.

Sir Thomas Browne

1605–1682

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

(From *Hydriotaphia: Urn Burial*, 1658)

Now since these dead bones¹ have already out-lasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums

¹ John Earle, a learned and witty man and a successful writer, was Chaplain to Charles II in exile, and after the Restoration became successively Bishop of Worcester and of Salisbury. The nature of the *Microcosmographie*, his chief work, is suggested in its sub-title—*A Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters*. The numerous character studies of the seventeenth century "form a link between the 'humors' of the old comedy on the one hand and the familiar essay and novel of the eighteenth century on the other." Among these "character-writers," Earle holds a foremost place.

² Many things are lacking i. e. in the text of the work he is editing.

³ Plautus, one of the masters of Latin comedy, died 181 B. C. Hence he lived some time before the learned scholar and writer Varro, who died about 28 B. C. and before the Augustan Age of Latin literature,—the age of Vergil, Horace, and their great contemporaries.

⁴ These are instances of the obsolete or antiquated Latin usage followed by the pedantic critic.

¹ This essay was suggested by the discovery of "between forty and fifty urns" in a field of Old Walsingham, Norfolk, containing human bones, with boxes, combs, and other articles. In a preceding chapter, Browne contends that "these were the urns of Romans."

and tramlings of three conquests:² what prince can promise such diuturnity unto his relicks, or might not gladly say,

*Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim?*³

Time which antiquates antiquities, and bath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments. In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories,⁴ when to be unknown was the means of 10 their continuation, and obscurity their protection. If they died by violent hands, and were thrust into their urns, these bones become considerable, and some old philosophers would honour them, whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their 15 bodies, and to retain a stronger propension unto them;⁵ whereas they weariedly left a languishing corpse, and with faint desires of re-union. If they fell by long and aged decay, 20 yet wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death, our life is a sad composition; we live with death, 25 and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah, were work for Archimedes: common counters sum up the life of Moses his man.⁶ Our days become considerable, like petty sums, by minute accumu- 30 lations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our days of a span long, make not one little finger.⁷

If the nearness of our last necessity brought a nearer conformity into it, there was a happi- 35 ness in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; when avarice makes us the sport of death, when even David grew politically cruel, and Solomon could hardly be 40 said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our days, misery makes Alcmena's nights,⁸ and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that 45 which can unwish itself, content to be nothing or never to have been, which was beyond the

mal-content of Job, who cursed not the day of his life, but his nativity; content to have so far been, as to have a title to future being, although he had lived here but in an hidden 5 state of life, and as it were, an abortion.

What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the per- 10 sons of these ossuaries⁹ entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a ques- 15 tion above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians,¹⁰ or tutelary observers. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their 20 relicks, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found 25 unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices. Pagan vain-glories which thought the world might last forever, had encouragement for ambition; and finding 30 no *atropos*¹¹ unto the immortality of their names, were never damp't with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the prob- 35 able meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already out-last'd their monuments, and mechanical preservations. 40 But in this latter scene of time, we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias,¹² and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.

⁹ i. e., those whose bones were deposited in these urns (or ossuaries).

¹⁰ The guardian spirits of a particular place; *tutelary observers*, guardian angels of the persons buried there.

¹¹ The Fate who cuts the thread of life.

¹² i. e., of the prophet *Elijah*, called *Elias* in the *New Testament*. The prophecy was, that the world was to last but six thousand years. The world would thus come to an end in 2000 A. D. Should this prophecy be fulfilled, Charles V., who died in 1558, could not possibly be remembered more than 442 years, while Hector (assuming his death to have taken place about 1100 or 1200 B. C.) had been already remembered some 2700 or 2800 years when Browne wrote. Therefore in 1658, the date of Browne's essay, Hector's fame had already exceeded the greatest possible duration of that of Charles V. by over two thousand years, or by more than double the length of Methuselah's life (*two Methuselahs*), which would be only 1938 years. According to a passage in the *Talmud*, the tradition of this prophecy was handed down "by the house" (i. e. the disciples or school) of *Elijah*.

² English, Danish, and Roman.

³ Thus I wish to be buried when I am turned into bones.

⁴ Means of preservation.

⁵ Inclination towards them.

⁶ i. e., Moses's man. The average length of man's life as estimated by Moses (*Palm. xc. 10*) is but seventy or eighty years, hence while it would take a great mathematician (an *Archimedes*) to calculate the number of *pulses*, or heart-beats in the life of Methuselah, ordinary reckoners can readily *sum up* the short span of man's life according to Moses's computation.

⁷ i. e., not one hundred years. According to an ancient method of counting on the fingers, the crooking of the little finger of the right hand signified a hundred.

⁸ In the story of Alcmena, Jupiter delays the rising of Phœbus, and makes one night as long as three.

And therefore, restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons. One face of Janus¹³ holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations; and, being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right lined circle¹⁴ must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things: our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Grave-stones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare inscriptions like many in Gruter,¹⁵ to hope for eternity by enigmatical epithets or first letters of our names, to be studied by antiquaries, who we were, and have new names given us like many of the mummies, are cold consolations unto the students of perpetuity, even by everlasting languages.

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they know more of him, was a frigid ambition in Cardan;¹⁶ disparaging his horoscopol inclina-

¹³ Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, and hence especially associated with gates and other places of entrance. He was represented with two faces, looking in different directions, possibly because at the moment of beginning we naturally look backward to what is ended and forward to what is to come. Browne (adopting this interpretation) declares that the face of Janus which looks forward to the future, is out of all proportion to the face which looks towards the past; i. e. that the world's past will greatly exceed its future, the larger part of the six thousand years being already spent.

¹⁴ I. e., the Greek letter *theta*, Θ, the symbol of death. Among the Greeks, when a man's fate was decided by vote, those in favor of his death marked their ballots with the letter Θ, that being the first letter of the word Θάνατος, or death. The fatal letter thus came to be a sign of death, and as such is found on Roman grave-stones.

¹⁵ Jan Gruter, a Dutch scholar, whose principal work was a book of Roman inscriptions.

¹⁶ A famous Italian mathematician and scientist of

tion and judgment of himself. Who cares to subsist like Hippocrates's patients, or Achilles's horses in Homer, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories, the *entelechia*¹⁷ and soul of our subsistences? To be nameless in worthy deeds, exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name, than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse,¹⁸ confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations, and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methusaleh's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names wake up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetick, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the *Lucina*¹⁹ of life, and even Pagans could doubt,

the 16th century. The reference is to a sentence in his autobiography, which may be translated as follows: "I wish to be known because I am, I do not require that I should be known as I am."

¹⁷ *Entelechy*, the complete realization, or full expression of a thing. Here, our noble acts are regarded as the *entelechia*, the perfect, or essential, part of our subsistence, or remembrance upon earth.

¹⁸ The historian Dion Cassius, after commenting on the delight which the Emperor Hadrian (Adrian) took in hunting, adds: "What he [Hadrian] did for a horse called Barithene, which he commonly used for hunting, may let us see how far the excess of this passion carried him, since when he died he raised him a monument in the form of a pillar, on which he engraved his epitaph." Hadrian was buried in a splendid mausoleum on the bank of the Tiber. There is an inscription to him in the interior of the tomb, which was not explored until 1825, so that his epitaph was not eventually *confounded* by time, as was the case when Browne wrote.

¹⁹ The Roman goddess of birth. Death is the *Lucina* (Lat. *lux*, light, *Lucina*, light-bringing), or heavenly power that presides over our birth unto a true life.

whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions,²⁰ and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes;²¹ since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementos, and time that grows old in itself, bids us hope no long duration;—diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls,—a good way to continue their memories, while, having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies,²² to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyzes or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise,²³ Misraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations

below the moon: men have been deceived even in their flatteries, above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osyris in the dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth;—durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts; whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives²⁴ begin to tell tales, and the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaeton's favour would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning, may be confident of no end;—which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself;—and the highest strain of omnipotency to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infancy²⁵ of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus; but the wisdom of funeral laws found the folly of prodigal blazes, and reduced undoing fires unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an urn.

Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus.²⁶ The man of God²⁷ lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing human discovery. Enoch and Elias, without

²⁰ A technical term in the old astronomy, indicating the early setting of the sun, which, during these short days, makes but winter arches, that is does not pass through the Zenith at noon, but describes an arc, or arch, nearer to the horizon. The sense is: since our day of life, even when it is longest, is but as a short day in winter.

²¹ An allusion to the Jewish custom of placing a lighted candle in a pot of ashes by the corpse.

²² The sense appears to be "planning [to preserve] their bodies in sweet consistencies," i. e. in gums or spices which enable them to resist decay.

²³ Mummy, or Mummia, a substance made (or supposed to be made) from mummies, was regularly used in medicine as late as the early 18th century.

²⁴ Telescopes.

²⁵ Southey suggests that Browne wrote *infamy* (i. e., lowliness, inferiority) not *infamy*, which has a more opprobrious meaning.

²⁶ Marcus Antonius Gordianus, the third of the Roman Emperors of that name. He was murdered while conducting an expedition against the Persians (244 A. D.) and a monument erected to his memory bore an inscription in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Egyptian, and Arabic.

²⁷ Moses.

either tomb or burial, in an anomalous state of being, are the great examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all die but be changed, according to received translation, "the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepultures. Some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus be no wonder. When many that fear to die, shall groan that they can die but once, the dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilation shall be courted.

While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them, and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus²⁰ seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next; who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of Isaiah.²¹ Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.²²

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of pre-ordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution,²³ liquefaction,

transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names²⁴ and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's churchyard,²⁵ as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be any thing, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the moles of Adrianus.²⁶

. . . *labesne cadavera solvat,*
*An rogos, haud refert.*²⁷ LUCAN.

FAITH

(From *Religio Medici*, 1642)

As for those wingy mysteries in divinity, and airy subtleties in religion, which have unhinged the brains of better heads, they never stretched the *pia mater* of mine. Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith: the deepest mysteries ours contains have not only been illustrated, but maintained, by syllogism and the rule of reason. I love to lose myself in a mystery; to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo!*¹ 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity—incarnation and resurrection. I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est.*² I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for, to credit ordinary and visible objects, is not faith, but persuasion.

²⁰ Alaric, the Goth, who, according to legend, was buried with great treasure in the bed of the river Busento to protect his body from the Romans.

²¹ Isa. xiv., 16, etc.

²² The angle of contingency is the smallest of angles.

²³ *Exolution* (Lat. *ex-solvo*, to unloose, liberate, etc.) seems to suggest a state in which the soul is released, or purified; the gross and earthly elements which clog it being melted or dissolved. The word *liquefaction* follows up this thought. The word *transformation* apparently indicates that the preliminary stages of aspiration and purification have done their work, as it is followed by expressions depicting the active joys of the liberated soul. The order of all the words in the series is not fortuitous, but . . .

ates a spiritual progress.

²⁴ I. e., to live in the mere memory of their names on earth (whether on monuments, or kept alive through their productions), to live, if only in the predicament, or state, of those impossible monsters (*chimeras*) who exist but as fables, this was a *large satisfaction*, etc.

²⁵ "In Paris, where bodies soon consume."

²⁶ The tomb of Hadrian.

²⁷ "It matters not at all whether corruption dissolves dead bodies, or the funeral pile."

¹ *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei. (Vulg. Rom., 11, 33):—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"*

² It is certain because it is impossible.

GOD'S WISDOM AND ETERNITY

(From the same)

In my solitary and retired imagination (*neque enim cum porticus aut me lectulus accepit, desum mihi*)¹ I remember I am not alone; and therefore forget not to contemplate him and his attributes, who is ever with me, especially those two mighty ones, his wisdom and eternity. With the one I recreate, with the other I confound, my understanding: for who can speak of eternity without a solecism, or think thereof without an ecstasy?

Time we may comprehend; 'tis but five days older than ourselves, and hath the same horizon with the world; but to retire so far back as to apprehend a beginning,—to give such an infinite start forwards as to conceive an end,—in an essence that we affirm hath neither the one nor the other, it puts my reason to St. Paul's sanctuary; my philosophy dares not say the angels can do it. God hath not made a creature that can comprehend him; 'tis a privilege of his nature: "I am that I am" was his own definition unto Moses;² and 'twas a short one to confound mortality, that durst question God, or ask him what he was. Indeed, he only is; all others have and shall be; but, in eternity, there is no distinction of tenses; and therefore that terrible term, predestination, which hath troubled so many weak heads to conceive, and the wisest to explain, is in respect to God no prescious determination of our estates to come, but a definitive blast of his will already fulfilled, and at the instant that he first decreed it; for, to his eternity, which is indivisible, and altogether, the last trump is already sounded, the reprobates in the flame, and the blessed in Abraham's bosom. St. Peter speaks modestly when he saith, "A thousand years to God are but as one day:"³ for, to speak like a philosopher, those continued instances of time, which flow into a thousand years, make not to him one moment. What to us is to come, to his eternity is present; his whole duration being but one permanent point, without succession, parts, flux, or division.

THE DIVINITY IN MAN

(From the same, Part II)

Now for my life, it is a miracle for thirty years, which to relate, were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to com-

mon ears like a fable. For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas's shoulders. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the ark do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as scripture. He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man. Let me not injure the felicity of others, if I say I am as happy as any. *Ruat coelum, fiat voluntas tua*,¹ salveth all; so that, whatsoever happens, it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content; and what should providence add more? Surely this is it we call happiness, and this do I enjoy; with this I am, happy in a dream, and as content to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and reality. There is surely a nearer apprehension of anything that delights us, in our dreams, than in our waked senses. Without this I were unhappy; for my awaked judgment discontents me, ever whispering unto me that I am from my friend, but my friendly dreams in the night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my happy dreams, as I do for my good rest; for there is a satisfaction in them unto reasonable desires, and such as can be content with a fit of happiness. And surely it is not a melancholy conceit to think we are all asleep in this world, and that the conceits of this life are as mere dreams, to those of the next, as the phantasms of the night, to the conceit of the day. There is an equal delusion in both; and the one doth but seem to be the emblem or picture of the other. We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleeps; and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking of the soul. It is the ligation of sense, but the liberty of reason; and our waking conceptions do not match the fancies of our sleeps.

¹ For when neither the portico nor the bed has accepted me, I am insufficient for myself.

² Exod. iii, 14.

³ II Pet. iii, 8.

¹ Let the heavens perish, so thy will be done.

Thomas Fuller

1608-1661

THE GOOD SCHOOLMASTER

(From *The Holy State*, 1642)

There is scarce any profession in the commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed. The reasons whereof I conceive to be these: First, young scholars make this calling their refuge, yea, perchance before they have taken any degree in the university, commence schoolmasters in the country, as if nothing else were required to set up this profession but only a rod and a ferula. Secondly, others, who are able, use it only as a passage to better preferment, to patch the rents in their present fortune till they can provide a new one, and betake themselves to some more gainful calling. Thirdly, they are disheartened from doing their best with the miserable reward which in some places they receive, being masters to the children and slaves to their parents. Fourthly, being grown rich, they grow negligent, and scorn to touch the school by the proxy of an usher.¹ But, see how well our schoolmaster behaves himself.

His genius inclines him with delight to his profession. Some men had as lief be schoolboys as schoolmasters, to be tied to the school, as Cooper's "Dictionary" and Scapula's "Lexicon" are chained to the desks therein; and though great scholars, and skilful in other arts, are bunglers in this: but God of His goodness hath fitted several men for several callings, that the necessity of Church and State in all conditions may be provided for. So that he who beholds the fabric thereof may say, "God hewed out this stone, and appointed it to lie in this very place, for it would fit none other so well, and here it doth most excellent." And thus God mouldeth some for a schoolmaster's life, undertaking it with desire and delight, and discharging it with dexterity and happy success.

He studieth his scholars' natures as carefully as they their books, and ranks their dispositions into several forms.² And though it may seem difficult for him in a great school to descend to all particulars, yet experienced schoolmasters may quickly make a grammar of boys' natures, and reduce them all, saving some few exceptions to, these general rules:

1. Those that are ingenious and industrious. The conjunction of two such planets in a youth

¹ They made it possible for themselves to neglect the school by employing an usher as their proxy.

² Groups, or classes, as those given in the succeeding page.

presages much good unto him. To such a lad a frown may be a whipping, and a whipping a death; yea, where their master whips them once, shame whips them all the week after. Such natures he useth with all gentleness.

2. Those that are ingenious³ and idle. These think, with the hare in the fable, that running with snails (so they count the rest of their schoolfellows) they shall come soon enough to the post, though sleeping a good while before their starting. Oh, a good rod would finely take them napping.

3. Those that are dull and diligent. Wines, the stronger they be, the more lees they have when they are new. Many boys are muddy-headed till they be clarified with age, and such afterwards prove the best. Bristol diamonds⁴ are both bright and squared and pointed by nature, and yet are soft and worthless; whereas, Orient ones in India are rough and rugged, naturally. Hard, and dull natures of youth acquit themselves afterwards the jewels of the country, and therefore their dulness at first is to be borne with, if they be diligent. That schoolmaster deserves to be beaten himself who beats nature in a boy for a fault. And I question whether all the whipping in the world can make their parts, which are naturally sluggish, rise one minute before the hour nature hath appointed.

4. Those that are invincibly dull, and negligent also. Correction may reform the latter, not amend the former. All the whetting in the world can never set a razor's edge on that which hath no steel in it. Such boys he consigneth over to other professions. Shipwrights and boatmakers will choose those crooked pieces of timber which other carpenters refuse. Those may make excellent merchants and mechanics which will not serve for scholars.

He is able, diligent, and methodical in his teaching; not leading them rather in a circle than forwards. He minces his precepts for children to swallow, hanging clogs on the nimbleness of his own soul, that his scholars may go along with him. He is, and will be known to be, an absolute monarch in his school. If cockering mothers proffer him money to purchase their sons an exemption from his rod (to live as it were in a peculiar, out of their master's jurisdiction), with disdain he refuseth it, and scorns the late custom in some places of commuting whipping into money, and ransoming boys from the rod at a set price. If he hath a stubborn youth, correction-proof, he debaseth not his authority by contesting with

³ Naturally bright or clever.

⁴ Small quartz crystals found near the city of Bristol.

him, but fairly, if he can, puts him away before his obstinacy hath infected others.

He is moderate in inflicting deserved correction. Many a schoolmaster better answereth the name *ταδορσιβης*⁵ than *ταδαγυγης*,⁶ rather tearing his scholars' flesh with whipping than giving them good education. No wonder if his scholars hate the Muses, being presented unto them in the shapes of fiends and furies. Junius complains *de insolento carnificina*⁷ of his schoolmaster, by whom *conscindebatur flagris septies aut octies in dies singulos*.⁸ Yea, hear the lamentable verses of poor Tusser⁹ in his own life:

"From Paul's I went, to Eton sent,
To learn straightways the Latin phrase,
Where fifty-three stripes, given to me
At once I had.

"For fault but small, or none at all,
It came to pass thus beat I was;
See Udall,¹⁰ see, the mercy of thee,
To me, poor lad."

Such an Orbilius¹¹ mars more scholars than 25 he makes: their tyranny hath caused many tongues to stammer, which spake plain by nature, and whose stuttering at first was nothing else but fears quavering on their speech at their master's presence; and whose mauling 30 them about their heads hath dulled those who, in quickness, exceeded their master.

He makes his school free to him who sues to him in *forma pauperis*. And surely learning is the greatest alms that can be given. But he 35 is a beast who, because the poor scholar cannot pay him his wages, pays the scholar in his whipping. Rather are diligent lads to be encouraged with all excitements to learning. This minds me of what I have heard concerning Mr. Bust, that worthy late schoolmaster of Eton, who would never suffer any wandering begging scholar (such as justly the statute hath ranked in the forefront of rogues) to come into his school, but would thrust him out 45 with earnestness (however privately charitable unto him), lest his schoolboys should be disheartened from their books by seeing some

scholars, after their studying in the university, preferred to beggary.

He spoils not a good school to make thereof a bad college, therein to teach his scholars 5 logic. For, besides that logic may have an action of trespass against grammar for encroaching on her liberties, syllogisms are solecisms taught in the school, and oftentimes they are forced afterwards in the university to un- 10 learn the fumbling skill they had before.

Out of his school he is no whit pedantical in carriage or discourse; contenting himself to be rich in Latin, though he doth not jingle with it in every company wherein he comes.

15 To conclude, let this amongst other motives make schoolmasters careful in their place, that the eminencies of their scholars have commended the memories of their schoolmasters to posterity, who otherwise in obscurity had 20 altogether been forgotten. Who had ever heard of R. Bond, in Lancashire, but for the breeding of learned Ascham,¹² his scholar? or of Hartgrave, in Brundly school, in the same county, but because he was the first did teach 25 worthy Dr. Whitaker?¹³ Nor do I honour the memory of Mulcaster for anything so much as for his scholar, that gulf of learning, Bishop Andrews.¹⁴ This made the Athenians, the day before the great feast of Theseus, their founder, to sacrifice a ram to the memory of Conidas, his schoolmaster that first instructed him.

OF SELF-PRAISING

(From the same)

He whose own worth doth speak, need not speak his own worth. Such boasting sounds proceed from emptiness of desert: whereas the conquerors in the Olympian games did not put 40 on the laurels on their own heads, but waited till some other did it. Only anchorites¹ that want company may crown themselves with their own commendations.

It showeth more wit but no less vanity to commend one's self not in a straight line but by reflection. Some sail to the port of their own praise by a side-wind; as when they dispraise themselves, stripping themselves naked 45 of what is their due, that the modesty of the beholders may clothe them with it again; or when they flatter another to his face, tossing the ball to him that he may throw it back again to them; or when they commend that quality,

⁵ *Paidotribes*, one who teaches boys wrestling, or 50 gymnastics.

⁶ A pedagogue, a teacher.

⁷ About the excessive chastisement.

⁸ He was torn to pieces by scourges seven or eight times daily.

⁹ Thomas Tusser (1524?–1580), chiefly remembered by his rugged but shrewd and entertaining rhymes the *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*.

¹⁰ Nicholas Udall (1505–1556), headmaster of Eton in 1534, and author of the early comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*.

¹¹ *Orbilius Pupillus*, a Roman schoolmaster noted for his severity. Horace, one of his pupils, calls him *plagiosus Orbilius*, Orbilius fond of flogging.

¹² Roger Ascham, v. p. 133.

¹³ William Whitaker (1547–1595), a learned theologian, professor of divinity, and master of St. John's college, Cambridge.

¹⁴ Lancelot Andrews (1555–1626), successively Bishop of Chichester and of Winchester.

¹ Anchorites.

wherein themselves excel, in another man (though absent) whom all know far their inferior in that faculty; or, lastly, (to omit other ambushes men set to surprise praise), when they send the children of their own brain to be nursed by another man, and commend their own works in a third person, but if challenged by the company that they were authors of it themselves, with their tongues they faintly deny it, and with their faces strongly affirm it.

Self-praising comes most naturally from a man when it comes most violently from him in his own defence. For though modesty binds a man's tongue to the peace in this point, yet, being assaulted in his credit, he may stand upon his guard, and then he doth not so much praise as purge himself. One braved a gentleman to his face that in skill and valour he came far behind him. "'Tis true," said the other, "for when I fought with you, you ran away before me." In such a case it was well returned, and without any just aspersion of pride. He that falls into sin is a man; that grieves at it, is a saint; that boasteth of it, is a devil. Yet some glory in their shame, counting the stains of sin the best complexion for their souls. These men make me believe it may be true what Mandeville writes of the Isle of Soma-barre, in the East Indies, that all the nobility thereof brand their faces with a hot iron in token of honour.

He that boasts of sins never committed is a double devil. . . . Some, who would sooner creep into a scabbard than draw a sword, boast of their robberies, to usurp the esteem of valour; whereas, first let them be well whipped for their lying, and as they like that let them come afterward and entitle themselves to the gallows.

OF BOOKS

(From the same)

Solomon saith truly, "Of making many books there is no end;"¹ so insatiable is the thirst of men therein: as also endless is the desire of many in buying and reading them. But we come to our rules.

1. *It is a vanity to persuade the world one hath much learning by getting a large library.* As soon shall I believe every one is valiant that hath a well furnished armory. I guess good housekeeping by the smoking, not the number of the tunnels, as knowing that many of them (built merely for uniformity) are without chimneys, and more without fires

Once a dunce, void of learning but full of books, flouted a library-less scholar with these words, —*Salve, doctor sine libris*:² but the next day the scholar coming into this jeerer's study crowded with books, —*Salvete, libri*, saith he, *sine doctore*.³

2. *Few books well selected are best.* Yet, as a certain fool bought all the pictures that came out, because he might have his choice; such is the vain humour of many men in gathering of books: yet when they have done all, they miss their end, it being in the editions of authors as in the fashions of clothes, when a man thinks he hath gotten the latest and newest, presently another newer comes out.

3. *Some books are only cursorily to be tasted of.* Namely, first voluminous books, the task of a man's life to read them over; secondly, auxiliary books, only to be repaired to on occasions; thirdly, such as are mere pieces of formality, so that if you look on them you look through them; and he that peeps through the casement of the index sees as much as if he were in the house. But the laziness of those cannot be excused who perfunctorily pass over authors of consequence, and only trade in their tables of contents. These, like city-cheaters,⁴ having gotten the names of all country gentlemen, make silly people believe they have long lived in those places where they never were, and flourish with skill in those authors they never seriously studied.

4. *The genius of the author is commonly discovered in the dedicatory epistle.* Many place the purest grain in the mouth of the sack for chapmen to handle or buy; and from the dedication one may probably guess at the work, saving some rare and peculiar exceptions. Thus, when once a gentleman admired how so pithy, learned, and witty a dedication was matched to a flat, dull, foolish book: "In truth," said another, "they may be well matched together, for I profess they are nothing akin."

5. *Proportion an hour's meditation to an hour's reading of a staple author.* This makes a man master of his learning, and dispirits⁵ the book into the scholar. The King of Sweder never filed his men above six deep in one company, because he would not have them lie in useless clusters in his army, but so that every particular soldier might be drawn out into service. Books that stand thin on the shelves, yet so as the owner of them can bring forth every one of them into use, are better than far better libraries.

¹ Good-day, doctor without books.

² Greeting to you, books, without a scholar.

³ Swindlers, "confidence men."

⁴ Breathes the soul of the book from it into the scholar.

¹ Ecc. xii., 12.

6. *Learning hath gained most by those books by which the printer hath lost.* Arias Montanus,⁶ in printing the Hebrew Bible, (commonly called the Bible of the King of Spain) much wasted himself, and was accused in the court of Rome for his good deed, and being cited thither, *pro tantorum laborum premio, viz veniam impetravit.* Likewise, Christopher Plantin,⁷ by printing of his curious interlineary Bible in Antwerp, through the unreasonable actions of the king's officers, sunk and almost ruined his estate. And our worthy English knight, who set forth the golden-mouthed Father⁸ in a silver print, was a loser by it.

7. *Whereas foolish pamphlets prove most beneficial to the printers.* When a French printer complained that he was utterly undone by printing a solid serious book of Rabelais concerning phisic, Rabelais, to make him recompense, made that his jesting, scurrilous work, which repaired the printer's loss with advantage. Such books the world swarms too much with. When one had set out a witless pamphlet, writing *Finis* at the end thereof, another wittily wrote beneath it,

... "Nay, there thou liest, my friend,
In writing foolish books there is no end."

And surely such scurrilous, scandalous papers do more than conceivable mischief. First, their lusciousness puts many palates out of taste, that they can never after relish any solid and wholesome writers; secondly, they cast dirt on the faces of many innocent persons, which, dried on by continuance of time, can never after be washed off; thirdly, the pamphlets of this age may pass for records with the next (because publicly uncontrolled), and what we laugh at, our children may believe; fourthly, grant the things true they jeer at, yet this music is unlawful in any Christian church, to play upon the sins and miseries of others, the fitter object of the elegies and the satires of all truly religious.

But what do I speaking against multiplicity of books in this age, who trespass in this nature myself? What was a learned man's compliment, may serve for my confession and conclusion:—*Multi mei similes hoc morbo laborant, ut cum scribere nesciant, tamen a scribendo temperare non possint.*⁹

⁶ A Spanish oriental scholar of the 16th century.

⁷ A French printer, who became a resident of Antwerp, and established a famous printing-house there about 1555. Here he published a polyglot Bible in 1569-72.

⁸ St. John, a father of the Greek Church, called *Chrysostom*, or "golden-mouthed," on account of his eloquence. A magnificent and costly edition of Chrysostom's works was issued by the great English scholar Sir Henry Savile, between 1610 and 1613.

⁹ Many like myself struggle with this complaint, that while they do not know how to write, they are yet unable to refrain from writing.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon

1608-1674

5 CHARLES I. SETS UP HIS STANDARD AT NOTTINGHAM

(From *The History of the Rebellion*, 1704-7)

10 (His Majesty) forthwith published a declaration, that had been long ready, in which he recapitulated all the insolent and rebellious actions which the two houses had committed against him: and declared them "to be guilty; and forbad all his subjects to yield any obedience to them:" and, at the same time, published his proclamation; by which "he required all men who could bear arms, to repair to him at Nottingham, by the twenty-fifth of August" following; on which day he would set up his royal standard there, which all good subjects were obliged to attend." . . .

The king came to Nottingham two or three days before the day he had appointed to set up the standard; having taken Lincoln in his way, and drawn some arms from the train bands of that country with him to Nottingham; from whence, the next day, he went to take a view of his horse; whereof there were several troops well armed, and under good officers, to the number of seven or eight hundred men; with which, being informed, "that there were some regiments of foot marching towards Coventry, by the Earl of Essex's orders," he made haste thither; making little doubt but that he should be able to get thither before them, and so to possess himself of that city; and he did get thither the day before they came; but found not only the gates shut against him, but some of his servants shot and wounded from the walls: nor could all his messages and summons prevail with the mayor and magistrates, before there was any garrison there, to suffer the king to enter into the city. So great an interest and reputation the parliament had gotten over the affections of the people, whose hearts were alienated from any reverence to the government.

The king could not remedy the affront, but went that night to Stonely, the house then of Sir Thomas Lee; where he was well received; and, the next day, his body of horse, having a clear view, upon an open campania, for five or six miles together, of the enemy's small body of foot, which consisted not of above twelve hundred men, with one troop of horse, which marched with them over that plain, retired before them, without giving them one charge;

¹ In the year 1642,

which was imputed to the lashty of Wilmot, who commanded; and had a colder courage than many who were under him, and who were of opinion, that they might have easily defeated that body of foot; which would have been a very seasonable victory; would have put Coventry unquestionably into the King's hands, and sent him with a good omen to the setting up of his standard. Whereas, that unhappy retreat, which looked like a defeat, and the rebellious behaviour of Coventry, made his majesty's return to Nottingham very melancholy; and he returned thither the very day the standard was appointed to be set up.

According to the proclamation, upon the twenty-fifth day of August, the standard was erected, about six of the clock in the evening of a very stormy and tempestuous day. The king himself, with a small train, rode to the top of the castle-hill, Varney the knight-marshal, who was standard bearer, carrying the standard, which was then erected in that place, with little other ceremony than the sound of drums and trumpets: melancholy men observed many ill presages about that time. There was not one regiment of foot yet levied and brought thither; so that the trained bands, which the sheriff had drawn together, was all the strength the king had for his person, and the guard of the standard. There appeared no conflux of men in obedience to the proclamation; the arms and ammunition were not yet come from York, and a general sadness covered the whole town. And the king himself appeared more melancholic than he used to be. The standard itself was blown down, the same night it had been set up, by a very strong and unruly wind, and could not be fixed again in a day or two, till the tempest was allayed. And within three or four days the news arrived that Portsmouth was given up; which almost struck the king to the heart. Goring,² who had received so much money from the parliament, to mend the fortifications, and so much from the queen, to provide men and victual and ammunition, that he might be able to defend himself when he should be forced to declare, which he expected to be much sooner, and could not expect to be suddenly relieved, had neither mended the fortifications, or provided anything for his defence, but had spent all the money in good fellow-ship, or lost it at play; the temptation of either of which vices, he never could resist. So that when he could no longer defer giving the parliament a direct

answer, he had only the Lord Wentworth and Mr. Thomas Weston, who came to enjoy the delight of his company, which was very attractive, and for whom he had promised to raise troops of horse, and three or four country gentlemen, who repaired thither upon the first news of his declaring with so small a number of men, as was fitter for their equipage and retinue than for the defence of the place, and an addition of twenty or thirty common men to his garrison, which the kindness of some friends had supplied with: and in this state Sir Will. Waller found him and the place, when he came before it, and when he was deprived of all communication by land or sea. He continued in the same jollity from the time he was besieged, and suffered the enemy to approach as he pleased, without disturbing him by any brisk sally or soldierly action, which all men expected from him, who were best acquainted with his other infirmities; and after about the end of three weeks, he delivered the town, upon no other conditions than the liberty for all who had a mind to go away, and his own transportation into Holland. When he recovered, and restored himself to the king and queen's favour and trust, after his foul tergiversation, he had great thoughts in his heat of power and authority; for his ambition was always the first deity he sacrificed to; and it was proposed by him, and consented to, that when the king should find it necessary to put himself into the field, (which was thought would be fit for him to do much sooner), the Queen should retire to Portsmouth: and that was the reason why the queen was so solicitous that it might be put into a good condition; and by this means he should be sure never to be reduced into any straits without a powerful relief, and should always have it in his power to make good conditions for himself, in all events. But when the parliament's power was so much increased and the king's abated, that the queen resolved to transport herself beyond the seas, the edge of his zeal was taken off, and he thought Portsmouth too low a sphere for him to move in; and the keeping a town (which must follow the fate of the kingdom) was not a fit portion for him; and so he cared not to lose what he did not care to keep. And it were to be wished that there might be no more occasion to mention him after this repeated treachery, and that his incomparable dexterity and sagacity had not prevailed so far over those whom he had so often deceived, as to make it absolutely necessary to speak at large of him, more than once, before this discourse comes to an end. And this was the melancholy state of the king's affairs, when the standard was set up.

* ² Col. Goring, the Governor of Portsmouth. According to Clarendon he received £3000, from the Queen to fortify and victual Portsmouth, and accepted at the same time "a good supply from the Parliament" to pay the soldiers of the garrison.

LORD FALKLAND

(From the same)

In this unhappy battle¹ was slain the lord viscount Falkland;² a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing 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.*³

Before this parliament, his condition of life was so happy that it was hardly capable of improvement. Before he came to twenty years of age, he was master of a noble fortune, which descended to him by the gift of a grandfather, without passing through his father or mother, who were then both alive, and not well enough contented to find themselves passed by in the descent. His education for some years had been in Ireland, where his father was lord deputy; so that, when he returned into England, to the possession of his fortune, he was unentangled with any acquaintance or friends, which usually grow up by the custom of conversation; and therefore was to make a pure election of his company; which he chose by other rules than were prescribed to the young nobility of that time. And it cannot be denied, though he admitted some few to his friendship for the agreeableness of their natures, and their undoubted affection to him, that his familiarity and friendship, for the most part, was with men of the most eminent and sublime parts, and of untouched reputation in point of integrity; and such men had a title to his bosom.

He was a great cherisher of wit, and fancy, and good parts in any man; and, if he found them clouded with poverty or want, a most liberal and bountiful patron towards them, even above his fortune; of which, in those administrations, he was such a dispenser, as, if he had been trusted with it to such uses, and if there had been the least of vice in his expense, he might have been thought too prodigal. He was constant and pertinacious in whatsoever he resolved to do, and not to be wearied by any pains that were necessary to that end. And therefore having once resolved

not to see London, which he loved above all places, till he had perfectly learned the Greek tongue, he went to his own house in the country, and pursued it with that indefatigable industry, that it will not be believed in how short a time he was master of it, and accurately read all the Greek historians.

In this time, his house being within ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that university; who found such an immenseness of wit, and such a solidity of judgment in him, so infinite a fancy, bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge, that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility, as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted, and dwelt with him, as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a university in a less volume; whither they came not so much for repose as study; and to examine and refine those grosser propositions, which laziness and consent made current in vulgar conversation.

Many attempts were made upon him, by the instigation of his mother (who was a lady of another persuasion in religion, and of a most masculine understanding, allayed with the passions and infirmities of her own sex) to pervert him in his piety to the church of England, and to reconcile him to that of Rome; which they prosecuted with the more confidence, because he declined no opportunity or occasion of conference with those of that religion, whether priests or laics; having diligently studied the controversies, and exactly read all, or the choicest of the Greek and Latin fathers, and having a memory so stupendous, that he remembered, on all occasions, whatsoever he read. And he was so great an enemy to that passion and uncharitableness, which he saw produced, by difference of opinion, in matters of religion, that in all those disputations with priests, and others of the Roman church, he affected to manifest all possible civility to their persons, and estimation of their parts; which made them retain still some hope of his reduction, even when they had given over offering further reasons to him to that purpose.

He had a courage of the most clear and keen temper, and so far from fear, that he was not without appetite of danger; and therefore, upon any occasion of action, he always engaged his person in those troops, which he thought, by the forwardness of the commanders, to be most like to be furthest engaged, and in all such encounters he had about him a strange cheerfulness and companionableness, without

¹ The first battle of Newbury, Sept. 20th, 1643.

² Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland (1610-1643). While he took the side of the king, he did not share in the blindly partisan spirit of his time. V. Matthew Arnold's essay on him in *Discourses in America*.

³ It could not be only a sorrow, it was a disgrace to die after thee.

at all affecting the execution which was then principally to be attended, in which he took no delight, but took pains to prevent it, where it was not, by resistance, necessary; insomuch that at Edge-hill,⁴ when the enemy was routed, he was like to have incurred great peril by interposing to save those who had thrown away their arms, and against whom, it may be, others were more fierce for their having thrown them away: insomuch as a man might think, he came into the field only out of curiosity to see the face of danger, and charity to prevent the shedding of blood. Yet in his natural inclination he acknowledged he was addicted to the profession of a soldier; and shortly after he came to his fortune, and before he came to age, he went into the Low Countries, with a resolution of procuring command, and to give himself up to it, from which he was converted by the complete inactivity of that summer: and so he returned into England, and shortly after entered upon that vehement course of study we mentioned before, till the first alarm from the north; and then again he made ready for the field, and though he received some repulse in the command of a troop of horse, of which he had a promise, he went a volunteer with the earl of Essex.

From the entrance into this unnatural war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirit stole upon him, which he had never been used to; yet being one of those who believed that one battle would end all differences, and that there would be so great a victory on one side, that the other would be compelled to submit to any conditions from the victor (which supposition and conclusion generally sunk into the minds of most men, and prevented the looking after of many advantages, that might have been laid hold of), he resisted those indispositions, *et in luctu, bellum inter remedia erat*.⁵ But after the king's return from Brentford, and the furious resolution of the two houses not to admit any treaty for peace, those indispositions, which had before touched him, grew into a perfect habit of uncheerfulness; and he, who had been so exactly unreserved and affable to all men, that his face and countenance was always present, and vacant to his company, and held any cloudiness, and less pleasantness of the visage, a kind of rudeness or incivility, became, on a sudden, less communicable; and thence, very sad, pale, and

exceedingly affected with the spleen. In his clothes and habit, which he had minded before always with more neatness, and industry, and expense, than is usual to so great a mind, he was not now only incurious, but too negligent; and in his reception of suitors, and the necessary or casual addresses to his place, so quick, and sharp, and severe, that there wanted not some men (who were strangers to his nature and disposition),⁷ who believed him proud and imperious, from which no mortal man was ever more free.

The truth is, as he was of a most incomparable gentleness, application, and even a demissiveness,⁸ and submission to good, and worthy, and entire men, so he was naturally (which could not but be more evident in his place, which objected him to another conversation and intermixture, than his own election had done) *adversus malos injucundus*⁹ and was so ill a dissembler of his dislike and disinclination to ill men, that it was not possible for such not to discern it. There was once, in the house of Commons, such a declared acceptance of the good service an eminent member had done to them, and, as they said, to the whole kingdom, that it was moved, he being present, "that the speaker might, in the name of the whole house, give him thanks; and then, that every member might, as a testimony of his particular acknowledgement, stir or move his hat towards him;" the which (though not ordered) when very many did, the lord Falkland (who believed the service itself not to be of that moment, and that an honourable and generous person could not have stooped to it for any recompense), instead of moving his hat, stretched both his arms out, and clasped his hands together upon the crown of his hat, and held it close down to his head; that all men might see, how odious that flattery was to him, and the very approbation of the person, though at that time most popular.

When there was any overture or hope of peace, he would be more erect and vigorous, and exceedingly solicitous to press any thing which he thought might promote it; and sitting among his friends, often, after a deep silence and frequent sighs, would, with a shrill and sad accent, ingeminate the word *Peace, Peace*; and would passionately profess, "that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart." This made some think, or pretend to think, "that he was so much enamoured on peace, that he would have been glad the king should have bought it at any

⁴ The battle of Edgehill, Oct. 23rd, 1642, was the first battle of the civil war. The result was indecisive, but the advantage was, on the whole, with the Royalists.

⁵ In misery, war was among the means of healing.

⁶ Disengaged, not preoccupied with his own sad fore-

⁷ Pliancy, adaptability.

⁸ Humility, entire submissiveness.

⁹ Unfriendly towards bad men.

price:" which was a most unreasonable calumny. As if a man, that was himself the most punctual and precise in every circumstance that might reflect upon conscience or honour, could have wished the king to have committed a trespass against either. And yet this senseless scandal made some impression upon him, or at least he used it for an excuse of the daringness of his spirit; for at the leaguer¹⁰ before Gloucester, when his friends passionately reprehended him for exposing his person unnecessarily to danger (as he delighted to visit the trenches, and nearest approaches, and to discover what the enemy did), as being so much beside the duty of his place, that it might be understood against it, he would say merrily, "that his office could not take away the privileges of his age; and that a secretary in war might be present at the greatest secret of danger;" but withal alleged seriously, "that it concerned him to be more active in enterprizes of hazard, than other men; that all might see, that his impatience for peace proceeded not from pusillanimity, or fear to adventure his own person."

In the morning before the battle, as always upon action, he was very cheerful, and put himself into the first rank of the lord Byron's¹¹ regiment, who was then advancing upon the enemy, who had lined the hedges upon both sides with musketeers; from whence he was shot with a musket in the lower part of the belly; and in the instant falling from his horse, his body was not found till the next morning; till when, there was some hope he might have been a prisoner; though his nearest friends, who knew his temper, received small comfort from that imagination. Thus fell that incomparable young man, in the four and thirtieth year of his age, having so much despatched the business of life, that the oldest rarely attain to that immense knowledge, and the youngest enter not into the world with more innocence: whosoever leads such a life, need not care upon how short warning it be taken from him.

Jeremy Taylor

1613-1667

OF CONTENTEDNESS IN ALL ESTATES AND ACCIDENTS

(From *Holy Living*, 1650)

1. Contentedness in all estates is a duty of religion: it is the great reasonableness of complying with the Divine Providence, which

governs all the world, and hath so ordered us in the administration of his great family. He were a strange fool, that should be angry, because dogs and sheep need no shoes, and yet himself is full of care to get some. God hath supplied those needs to them by natural provisions, and to thee by an artificial: for he hath given thee reason to learn a trade, or some means to make or buy them, so that it only differs in the manner of our provision: and which had you rather want, shoes or reason? And my patron that hath given me a farm, is freer to me than if he gives a loaf ready baked. But, however, all these gifts come from him, and therefore it is fit he should dispense them as he pleases; and if we murmur here, we may, at the next melancholy, be troubled that God did not make us to be angels or stars. For if that, which we are or have, do not content us, we may be troubled for everything in the world, which is besides our being or our possessions.

God is the master of the scenes; we must not choose which part we shall act; it concerns us only to be careful that we do it well, always saying, "If this please God, let it be as it is:" and we who pray, that God's will may be done in earth, as it is in heaven, must remember, that the angels do whatsoever is commanded them, and go wherever they are sent, and refuse no circumstances: and if their employment be crossed by a higher degree, they sit down in peace and rejoice in the event; and when the angel of Judea¹ could not prevail in behalf of the people committed to his charge, because the angel of Persia opposed it, he only told the story at the command of God, and was as content, and worshipped with as great an ecstasy in his proportion, as the prevailing spirit. Do thou so likewise: keep the station, where God hath placed you and you shall never long for things without, but sit at home feasting upon the Divine providence and thy own reason by which we are taught, that it is necessary and reasonable to submit to God.

45 For is not all the world God's family? Are not we his creatures? Are we not as clay in the hand of the potter?² Do we not live upon his meat, and move by his strength, and do our work by his light? Are we anything, but what we are from him? And shall there be a mutiny among the flocks and herds, because their Lord or their shepherd chooses their pastures, and suffers them not to wander into deserts and unknown ways? If we choose, we do it so foolishly, that we cannot like it long, and most commonly not at all: but God, who can do what he pleases, is wise to choose safely for us, affectionate to comply with our needs, and

¹⁰ Siege.

¹¹ Sir John Byron, an ancestor of the poet. He was not "Lord Byron" at that time, however, but was made Baron of Rochdale about a month later, so becoming the first peer of the family.

¹ Dan., x., 13.

² Isa., xlv., 8.

powerful to execute all his wise decrees. Here therefore is the wisdom of the contented man, to let God choose for him: for when we have given up our wills to him, and stand in that station of the battle, where our great general hath placed us, our spirits must needs rest, while our conditions have, for their security, the power, the wisdom, and the charity of God.

2. Contentedness, in all accidents, brings great peace of spirit, and is the great and only instrument of temporal felicity. It removes the sting from the accident, and makes a man not to depend upon chance, and the uncertain dispositions of men for his well-being, but only on God and his own spirit. We ourselves make our fortunes good or bad; and when God lets loose a tyrant upon us, or a sickness, or scorn, or a lessened fortune, if we fear to die, or know not to be patient, or are proud, or covetous, then the calamity sits heavy on us. But if we know how to manage a noble principle, and fear not death so much as a dishonest action, and think impatience a worse evil than a fever, and pride to be the biggest disgrace, and poverty to be infinitely desirable before the torments of covetousness; then we, who now think vice to be so easy, and make it so familiar, and think the cure so impossible, shall quickly be of another mind, and reckon these accidents amongst things eligible.

But no man can be happy that hath great hopes and great fears of things without, and events depending upon other men, or upon the chances of fortune. The rewards of virtue are certain, and our provisions for our natural support are certain; or if we want meat till we die, then we die of that disease, and there are many worse than to die with an atrophy or consumption, or unapt and coarser nourishment. But he that suffers a transporting passion concerning things within the power of others, is free from sorrow and amazement no longer than his enemy shall give him leave; and it is ten to one but he shall be smitten then and there, where it shall most trouble him: for so the adder teaches us where to strike, by her curious and fearful defending of her head. The old stoics,³ when you told them of a sad story would still answer, "*What is that to me?*"—Yes, for the tyrant hath sentenced you also to prison.—Well, what is that? He will put a chain upon my leg; but he cannot bind my soul.—No: but he will kill you.—Then I will die. If presently, let me go, that I may presently be freer than himself: but if not till anon or to-morrow, I will dine first, or sleep, or do what reason or nature calls for, as at other

times." This, in Gentile philosophy, is the same with the discourse of St. Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both how to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need."⁴

We are in the world, like men playing at tables;⁵ the chance is not in our power, but to play it is; and when it is fallen, we must manage it as we can; and let nothing trouble us, but when we do a base action, or speak like a fool, or think wickedly: these things God hath put into our powers; but concerning those things, which are wholly in the choice of another, they cannot fall under our deliberation, and therefore neither are they fit for our passions. My fear may make me miserable, but it cannot prevent what another hath in his power and purpose: and prosperities can only be enjoyed by them, who fear not at all to lose them; since the amazement and passion concerning the future takes off all the pleasure of the present possession. Therefore, if thou hast lost thy land, do not also lose thy constancy: and if thou must die a little sooner, yet do not die impatiently. For no chance is evil to him that is content, and to a man nothing is miserable, unless it be unreasonable. No man can make another man to be his slave, unless he hath first enslaved himself to life and death, to pleasure or pain, to hope or fear: command these passions, and you are freer than the Parthian kings.⁶

CONSIDERATION OF THE VANITY AND SHORTNESS OF MAN'S LIFE

(From *Holy Dying*, 1651)

A man is a bubble (said the Greek proverb), which Lucian¹ represents with advantages and its proper circumstances to this purpose: saying, All the world is a storm, and men rise up in their several generations, like bubbles descending *à Jove pluvio*, from God and the dew of heaven, from a tear and drop of rain, from nature and Providence; and some of these instantly sink into the deluge of their first parent, and are hidden in a sheet of water, having had no other business in the world, but

¹ *Epis. Phil. iv.*, 11, 12.

² Backgammon. The chance, here, = the number thrown in a cast of the dice. When it has fallen, i. e., when the cast is made.

³ Apparently taken as examples of the oriental despot. Persian kings would seem to be an exacter illustration.

⁴ A Greek satirist and humorist of the second century. His amplification of the Greek proverb referred to, occurs in his *Charon*, or *the Spectator of the World*. The passage in Taylor is a paraphrase of that in Lucian.

⁵ Taylor seems to have had *Epictetus*, the Roman stoical philosopher especially in mind.

to be born, that they might be able to die: others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others: and they that live longest upon the face of the waters, are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy; and, being crushed with the great drop of a cloud, sink into flatness, and a froth; the change not being great, it being hardly possible it should be more a nothing than it was before. So is every man: he is born in vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness: some of them² without any other interest in the affairs of the world, but that they made their parents a little glad, and very sorrowful; others ride longer in the storm; it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then peradventure the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble, empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colours are fantastical; and so he dances out the gaiety of his youth, and is all the while in a storm, and endures, only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humour:³ and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities, is as great a miracle as to create him; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an almighty power. And therefore the wise men of the world have contended, who shall best fit man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode. Homer calls a man "a leaf,"⁴ the smallest, the weakest piece of a short-lived, unsteady plant. Pindar calls him "the dream of a shadow:" Another, "the dream of the shadow of smoke."⁵ But St. James spake by a more excellent Spirit, saying, "Our life is but a vapour,"⁶ viz. drawn from the earth by a celestial influence; made of

smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, moved by the motion of a superior body, without virtue in itself, lifted upon high, or left below, according as it pleases the sun, its foster-father. But it is lighter yet. It is but appearing; a fantastic vapour, an apparition, nothing real: it is not so much as a mist, not the matter of a shower, nor substantial enough to make a cloud; but it is like Cassiopeia's chair, or Pelops' shoulder,⁷ or the circles of heaven, *φανερμενα*,⁸ for which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing. And yet the expression is one degree more made diminutive: a *vapour*, and *fantastical*, or a *mere appearance*, and this but for a little while neither; the very dream, the fantasm disappears in a small time, "like the shadow that departeth; or like a tale that is told; or as a dream when one waketh." A man is so vain, so unfixed, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy: a man goes off and is forgotten, like the dream of a distracted person. The sum of all is this: that thou art a man, than whom there is not in the world any greater instance of heights and declensions, of lights and shadows, of misery and folly, of laughter and tears, of groans and death.

And because this consideration is of great usefulness and great necessity to many purposes of wisdom and the spirit; all the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man, and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see, how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave, where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world, divides between life and death; and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again: and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun. Then we sleep, and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world: and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but during that state, are as disinterested,

² i. e., of the children of men. The analogy, between man and the morning mushrooms, is not sustained, and the result is an unfortunate confusion.

³ In the old system of medicine there were four cardinal humours (or animal fluids): the blood, *choler* (yellow bile), *phlegm*, and *melancholy* (black bile).

⁴ *Iliad*, vi, 146 and cf. *Iliad*, xxi, 462.

⁵ *Ecclesiastes*.

⁶ *Epist. St. James*, iv, 14.

⁷ The shoulder of ivory supplied by Demeter in the place of the one she had thoughtlessly eaten (v. *Pelops in Class. Dict.*) exists only in fable, and is indeed the shadow of a shade, since this is not even the real shoulder of Pelops, and Pelops himself is a myth.

⁸ *Phenomena*, i. e., the appearance of things, as distinguished from the reality, the things themselves.

as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy; and still every seven years, it is odds, but we shall finish the last scene: and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals, first, in those parts that ministered to vice; and next, in them that served for ornament; and in a short time, even they that served for necessity become useless and entangled like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death: and we have many more of the same signification: gray hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion, which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought, we die; and the clock strikes and reckons on our portion of eternity; we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it: and God, by all the variety of his providence, makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies, and the expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest every year, but death hath two: and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long, men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star^a makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them, eats and surfeits, and dies, and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter, only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings

flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves. Calentures¹⁰ and surfeit,¹¹ cold and agues, are the four quarters of the year, and all minister to death; and you can go no whither but you tread upon a dead man's bones.

The wild fellow in Petronius,¹² that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garment, and carried by his civil enemy, the sea, towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts: that peradventure this man's wife, in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's return; or, it may be, his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss, which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek, ever since he took a kind farewell; and he weeps with joy to think, how blessed he shall be, when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this is the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident, are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. Then looking upon the carcass, he knew it, and found it to be the master of the ship, who, the day before, cast up the accounts of his patrimony and his trade, and named the day when he thought to be at home. See how the man swims, who was so angry two days since; his passions are becalmed with the storm, his accounts cast up, his cares at an end, his voyage done, and his gains are the strange events of death, which whether they be good or evil, the men, that are alive, seldom trouble themselves concerning the interest of the dead.

But seas alone do not break our vessel in pieces; everywhere we may be shipwrecked. A valiant general, when he is to reap the harvest of his crowns and triumphs, fights unprosperously, or falls into a fever with joy and wine, and changes his laurel into cypress, his triumphal chariot to a hearse; dying the

¹⁰ *Calentures*, the name given to delirious fevers occasioned by excessive heat, but here used generally to include all maladies resulting from heat, as sun stroke, etc.

¹¹ *Surfeit*, sicknesses produced by overeating.

¹² *Petronius Arbiter*, a Roman writer of the 1st century. The *wild fellow*, is Encolpius, a character in a work of Petronius known as "The Banquet of Trimalchio." Taylor here paraphrases in part, the story told by Encolpius.

^a The appearance of Sirius, or the dog-star, occurring in the hottest time of the year, or, during July or August, was supposed to be the cause of diseases prevalent in that sultry and often unhealthy season.

night before he was appointed to perish, in the drunkenness of his festival joys. It was a sad arrest of the loosenesses and wilder feasts of the French court, when their king (Henry II.) was killed really by the sportive image of a fight. . . .

There is no state, no accident, no circumstance of our life, but it hath been soured by some sad instance of a dying friend: a friendly meeting often ends in some sad mischance, and makes an eternal parting; and when the poet Æschylus was sitting under the walls of his house, an eagle hovering over his bald head, mistook it for a stone, and let fall his oyster, hoping there to break the shell, but pierced the poor man's skull.

Death meets us everywhere, and is procured by every instrument and in all chances, and enters in at many doors; by violence and secret influence, by the aspect of a star and the stink of a mist, by the emissions of a cloud and the meeting of a vapour, by the fall of a chariot and the stumbling at a stone, by a full meal or an empty stomach, by watching at the wine or by watching at prayers, by the sun or the moon; by a heat or a cold, by sleepless nights or sleeping days; by water frozen into the hardness and sharpness of a dagger; or water thawed into the floods of a river; by a hair or a raisin;¹³ by violent motion or sitting still; by severity or dissolution; by God's mercy or God's anger; by every thing in providence and every thing in manners; by every thing in nature and every thing in chance. *Eripitur persona, manet res*,¹⁴ we take pains to heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; and the person is snatched away, and the goods remain. And all this is the law and constitution of nature; it is a punishment to our sins, the unalterable event of Providence, and the decree of Heaven. The chains that confine us to this condition are strong as destiny and immutable as the eternal laws of God.

I have conversed with some men who rejoiced in the death or calamity of others, and accounted it as a judgment upon them for being on the other side, and against them in the contention; but within the revolution of a few months, the same men met with a more uneasy and unhandsome death: which when I saw, I wept, and was afraid; for I knew that it must be so with all men; for we also shall die, and end our quarrels and contentions by passing to a final sentence.

¹³ The poet Ansercon is said to have met his death by swallowing the stone of a raisin.

¹⁴ The person is snatched away, and the goods remain. These words however are employed in a different sense by Lucretius from whom the passage is taken.

ANGER A HINDERENCE TO PRAYER

(From *Sermons*, 1655)

Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention, which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below: so is the prayer of a good man; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent; and raised a tempest, and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.

John Bunyan

1628-1688

THE FIGHT WITH APOLLYON

(From *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678-1684)

(In the course of his pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to Mount Zion, Christian comes to the House Beautiful. Here Watchful, the Porter, summons Discretion, "a grave and beautiful damsel," who in turn calls Prudence, Piety, and Charity. All these, after some discourse with Christian, receive him kindly and hear his story. Christian sleeps that night in a

"large upper chamber; whose window opened toward the sun-rising;" its name was *Peace*. In the morning Christian's entertainers take him to the armoury, and show him the armour provided for pilgrims. Christian abides there three days, and on the morning of the third day, they take him to the top of the house, and show him afar off *Emmanuel's Land* and the *Delectable Mountains*, telling him that from thence he can see the gate of the *Celestial City*. Christian then determines to leave the *House Beautiful* and continue on his pilgrimage.)

Now Christian bethought himself of setting foward, and they were willing he should. But first, said they, let us go again into the armoury. So they did; and when he came there, they harnessed him from head to foot with what was of proof, lest perhaps he should meet with assaults in the way. He, being therefore thus accoutred, walked out with his friends to the gate; and there he asked the Porter if he saw any pilgrim pass by. Then the Porter answered, Yes.

CHR. Pray did you know him?

PORT. I asked his name and he told me it was Faithful.

O, said Christian, I know him: he is my townsman, my near neighbour; he comes from the place where I was born: how far do you think he may be before?

PORT. He is got by this time below the hill.

Well, said Christian, good Porter, the Lord be with thee, and add to all thy blessings much increase, for the kindness that thou hast showed to me.

Then he began to go forward; but Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence, would accompany him down to the foot of the hill. So they went on together, reiterating their former discourses, till they came to go down the hill. Then said Christian, As it was *difficult* coming up, so, so far as I can see, it is *dangerous* going down. Yes, said Prudence, so it is; for it is an hard matter for a man to go down into the valley of Humiliation, as thou art now, and to catch no slip by the way; therefore, said they, are we come out to accompany thee down the hill. So he began to go down, but very warily; yet he caught a slip or two.

Then I saw in my dream, that these good companions, when Christian was gone down to the bottom of the hill, gave him a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a cluster of raisins; and then he went his way.

But now, in this valley of Humiliation, poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way, before he espied a foul fiend

Apollyon.¹ Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back, or stand his ground. But he considered again, that he had no armour for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his darts; therefore he resolved to venture and stand his ground: for, thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand.

So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold: he was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride); he had wings like a dragon, and feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke; and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.

APOL. Whence come you? and whither are you bound?

CHR. I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion.

APOL. By this I perceive that thou art one of my subjects; for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it then that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not for that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

CHR. I was indeed born in your dominions; but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on; "for the wages of sin is death;" therefore when I was come to years, I did as other considerate persons do, look out, if perhaps I might mend myself.

APOL. There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee; but, since thou complainest of thy service and wages, be content to go back; what our country will afford, I do here promise to give thee.

CHR. But I have let myself to another, even to the King of princes; and how can I with fairness go back with thee?

APOL. Thou hast done in this according to the proverb, "*Changed a bad for a worse*;" but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves his servants, after a while to give him the slip, and return again to me. Do thou so too, and all shall be well.

CHR. I have given him my faith, and sworn my allegiance to him: how then can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a traitor?

APOL. Thou didst the same to me; and yet I

¹ The "Angel of the bottomless pit" mentioned in Rev. ix., 11, the name means, "the Destroyer."

am willing to pass by all, if now thou wilt yet turn again and go back.

CHR. What I promised thee was in my nonage; and besides, I count that the Prince under whose banner I now stand, is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee: and, besides, O thou destroying Apollyon, to speak truth, I like his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company, and country, 10 better than thihe; therefore leave off to persuade me further; I am his servant, and I will follow him.

APOL. Consider again when thou art in cool blood, what thou art likely to meet with in the 15 way that thou goest. Thou knowest that, for the most part, his servants come to an ill end, because they are transgressors against me and my ways. How many of them have been put to shameful deaths! And besides, thou countest his service better than mine; whereas he never came yet from the place where he is, to deliver any that served him out of their hands: but, as for me, how many times, as all the world very well knows, have I delivered, either 25 by power or fraud, those that have faithfully served me, from him and his, though taken by them! And so I will deliver thee.

CHR. His forbearing at present to deliver them is on purpose to try their love, whether 30 they will cleave to him to the end: and, as for the ill end thou sayest they come to, that is most glorious in their account; for, for present deliverance, they do not much expect it; for they stay for their glory, and then they shall have it, when their Prince comes in his and the glory of the angels.

APOL. Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to him; and how dost thou think to receive wages of him?

CHR. Wherein, O Apollyon, have I been unfaithful to him?

APOL. Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the Gulf of Despond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be 45 rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldst have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off: thou didst sinfully sleep, and lose thy choice things: thou wast almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the lions: and when thou talkest 50 of thy journey, and of what thou hast seen and heard, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.

CHR. All this is true and much more which thou hast left out: but the Prince, whom I serve 55 and honour, is merciful and ready to forgive. But besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy country: for there I sucked them in, and I have groaned under them, being sorry

for them, and have obtained pardon of my Prince.

Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate his person, his laws, and people: I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.

CHR. Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the King's high-way, the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.

Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter; prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no farther; here will I spill thy soul.

And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw; for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made Christian give a little back: Apollyon, therefore, followed his work amain, and Christian again took courage and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite 50 spent; for you must know that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now: and with that he had almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of 40 life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise;" and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian, perceiving that, made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more 50 than conquerors, through Him that loved us." And, with that, Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings and sped him away that Christian saw him no more.

In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight; he spake like a dragon:—and on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while

give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived that he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then indeed he did smile and look upward! But it was the dreadfulest fight that ever I saw.

So when the battle was over, Christian said, I will here give thanks to Him that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, to Him that did help me against Apollyon. And so he did, saying,

"Great Beelzebub, the captain of this fiend, Design'd my ruin: therefore to this end He sent him harness'd out; and he with rage That hellish was, did fiercely me engage: But blessed Michael helped me; and I, By dint of sword, did quickly made him fly: Therefore to Him let me give lasting praise And thanks, and bless His holy name always."

Then there came to him an hand with some of the leaves of the tree of life; the which Christian took, and applied to the wounds that he had received in the battle, and was healed immediately. He also sat down in that place to eat bread, and to drink of the bottle that was given to him a little before: so, being refreshed, he addressed himself to his journey, with his sword drawn in his hand; for, he said, I know not but some other enemy may be at hand. But he met with no other affront from Apollyon quite through this valley.

John Milton

1608-1674

TRACTATE ON EDUCATION. LETTER TO HARTLIB

(1644)

MASTER HARTLIB,¹

I am long since persuaded that to say and do aught worth memory and imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us than simply the love of God and of mankind. Nevertheless, to write now the reforming of education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designs that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induced but by your earnest entreaties and serious conjurements; as having my mind for the present half diverted

¹ *Samuel Hartlib* was born in Prussia about the beginning of the 17th century and came to England about 1628. He believed in the new methods of instruction recently advanced by the educational reformer Comenius, and discussed these new views with Milton. Milton's tract on education was the outcome of these discussions, and was written in response to Hartlib's "earnest entreaties."

into the pursuance of some other assertions, the knowledge and the use of which cannot but be a great furtherance both to the enlargement of truth and honest living with much more peace. Nor should the laws of any private friendship have prevailed with me to divide thus, or transpose my former thoughts; but that I see those aims, those actions, which have won you with me² the esteem of a person sent hither by some good providence from a far country to be the occasion and incitement of great good to this island, and as I hear you have obtained the same repute with men of most approved wisdom and some of the highest authority among us, not to mention the learned correspondence which you hold in foreign parts, and the extraordinary pains and diligence which you have used in this matter both here and beyond the seas, either by the definite will of God so ruling, or the peculiar sway of nature, which also is God's working. Neither can I think, that so reputed and so valued as you are, you would, to the forfeit of your own discerning ability, impose upon me an unfit and over-ponderous argument; but that the satisfaction which you profess to have received from those incidental discourses which we have wandered into, hath pressed and almost constrained you into a persuasion, that what you require from me in this point, I neither ought nor can in conscience defer beyond this time both of so much need at once, and so much opportunity to try what God hath determined.

I will not resist, therefore, whatever it is either of divine or human obligation that you lay upon me; but will forthwith set down in writing, as you request me, that voluntary idea, which hath long in silence presented itself to me, of a better education, in extent and comprehension far more large, and yet of time far shorter and of attainment far more certain, than hath been yet in practice. Brief I shall endeavour to be; for that which I have to say, assuredly this nation hath extreme need should be done sooner than spoken. To tell you, therefore, that I have benefited herein among old renowned authors I shall spare; and to search what many modern *Januas* and *Didactics*,³ more than ever I shall read, have projected, my inclination leads me not. But if you can accept of these few observations which have flowered off, and are, as it were, the burnishing of many studious and contemplative years

² i. e., which have made you in my estimation "a person sent hither," etc.

³ *Januas*—either those books which serve as entrances or introductions to a subject (Lat. *Janua*, a door, an entrance) or, more probably, the authors of such books. *Didactics*—either works of a didactic, or teaching, character, or, preferably, the authors of such works.

altogether spent in the search of religious and civil knowledge, and such as pleased you so well in the relating, I here give you them to dispose of.

The end, then, of learning is, to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection. But because our understanding cannot in this body find itself but on sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly coming over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be followed in all discreet teaching. And seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; so that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother-dialect only. Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful. First, we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year. And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in too oft idle vacancies⁴ given both to schools and universities; partly in a preposterous exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment, and the final work of a head filled by long reading and observing, with elegant maxims and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit; besides the ill habit which they get of wretched barbarising against the Latin and Greek idiom with their untutored Anglicisms, odious to be read, yet not to be avoided without a well-continued and judicious conversing among pure authors, digested, which they scarce taste. Whereas, if after some preparatory grounds of speech by their certain forms got into memory, they were led to the praxis⁵ hereof in some

chosen short book lessened thoroughly to them, they might then forthwith proceed to learn the substance of good things and arts in due order, which would bring the whole language quickly into their power. This I take to be the most rational and most profitable way of learning languages, and whereby we may best hope to give account to God of our youth spent herein. And for the usual method of teaching arts, I deem it to be an old error of universities, not yet well recovered from the scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with arts most easy (and those be such as are most obvious to the sense), they present their young unmatriculated novices, at first coming, with the most intellective abstractions of logic and metaphysics; so that they having but newly left those grammatic flats and shallows, where they stuck unreasonably, to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climate, to be tossed and turmoiled with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy, do, for the most part, grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge; till poverty or youthful years call them importunately their several ways, and hasten them, with the sway of friends, either to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly zealous divinity: some allured to the trade of law, grounding their purposes not on the prudent and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity, which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees; others betake them to state affairs, with souls so unprincipled in virtue and true generous breeding, that flattery and court-shifts, and tyrannous aphorisms appear to them the highest points of wisdom; instilling their barren hearts with a conscientious slavery; if, as I rather think, it be not feigned: others, lastly, of a more delicious and airy spirit,⁶ retire themselves, knowing no better, to the enjoyments of ease and luxury, living out their days in feast and jollity; which indeed is the wisest and safest course of all these, unless they were with more integrity undertaken. And these are the errors, and these are the fruits of mispending our prime youth at the schools and universities, as we do, either in learning mere words, or such things chiefly as were better unlearned.

I shall detain you now no longer in the demonstration of what we should not do, but

⁴ Too frequent vacations.

⁵ Use, practice; discipline for some specific end.

⁶ Pleasure-loving and light, or lively.

straight conduct you to a hillside, where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming. I doubt not but ye shall have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubs,⁷ from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, than we have now to hale and drag our choicest and hope-fullest wits to that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles, which is commonly set before them as all the food and entertainment of their tenderest and most docible age. I call, there-fore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war. And how all this may be done between twelve and one-and-²⁰ twenty, less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at grammar and sophistry, is to be thus ordered:—

First, to find out a spacious house and ground about it fit for an academy, and big-²⁵ enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attend-ants, all under the government of one, who shall be thought of desert sufficient, and ability either to do all, or wisely to direct and oversee it ³⁰ done. This place should be at once both school and university, not needing a remove to any other house of scholarship, except it be some peculiar college of law, or physic, where they mean to be practitioners; but as for those ³⁵ general studies which take up all our time from Lilly⁸ to commencing, as they term it, master of art, it should be absolute. After this pattern as many edifices may be converted to this use as shall be needful in every city ⁴⁰ throughout this land, which would tend much to the increase of learning and civility every-where. This number,⁹ less or more, thus col-lected, to the convenience of a foot-company, or interchangeably two troops of cavalry, ⁴⁵ should divide their day's work into three parts as it lies orderly—their studies, their exercise, and their diet.

For their studies: first, they should begin with the chief and necessary rules of some good ⁵⁰

⁷ *Stocks and stubs* are identical, both meaning lifeless, insensible blocks, or trunks. Cf. *stocks and stonens*.

⁸ i. e., from the time when he begins his studies with *Lilly's Latin Grammar* to commencing or Commencement Day, when he completes them as Master of Arts. "To commence M. A." (as Milton tells us) was the regular, or technical equivalent for "to take the degree of M. A."

⁹ i. e., this number of students (150, as above suggested) having been thus collected to about the convenience of a foot-company (the number of a foot-company when convened), or, what is the same thing, to the number of two troops of cavalry. There were about as many men in two cavalry troops as in one company of foot.

grammar, either that now used, or any better; and while this is doing, their speech is to be fashioned to a distinct and clear pronunciation, as near as may be to the Italian, especially in ⁵ the vowels. For we Englishmen, being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air wide enough to grace a southern tongue, but, are observed by all other nations to speak exceeding close and inward; so that to smatter ¹⁰ Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as law French. Next, to make them expert in the usefulest points of grammar, and withal to season them and win them early to the love of virtue and true labour, ere any flattering ¹⁵ seducement or vain principle seize them wandering, some easy and delightful book of education should be read to them, whereof the Greeks have store, as Cebes,¹⁰ Plutarch, and other Socratic discourses; but in Latin we have ²⁰ none of classic authority extant, except the two or three first books of Quintilian¹¹ and some select pieces elsewhere.

But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them such lectures and explana-tions upon every opportunity as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue, stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to ³⁰ God and famous to all ages: that they may despise and scorn all their childish and ill-taught qualities, to delight in manly and liberal exercises; which he who hath the art and proper eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual persuasions, and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example, might in a short space gain them to an incredible diligence and courage, infusing into their young breasts ⁴⁰ such an ingenuous and noble ardour as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men. At the same time, some other hour of the day might be taught them the rules of arithmetic, and, soon after, the elements of geometry, even playing, as the old man-ner was. After evening repast till bed-time their thoughts would be best taken up in the easy grounds of religion and the story of ⁵⁰ Scripture.

The next step would be to the authors of agriculture, Cato, Varro, and Columella,¹² for the matter is most easy; and if the language be difficult, so much the better; it is not a difficulty

¹⁰ A Greek philosopher, author of a dialogue called *The Picture*, which aims to show that happiness is to be found in virtue, and in the cultivation of the mind.

¹¹ The Roman rhetorician and teacher of oratory. The reference is to his treatise on Oratory (*De Institutione Oratoria*).

¹² Marcus Porcius Cato wrote *De Re Rustica*; Varro and Columella were also authors of books on agriculture.

above their years. And here will be an occasion of inciting and enabling them hereafter to improve the tillage of their country, to recover the bad soil, and to remedy the waste that is made of good; for this was one of Hercules' praises. Ere half these authors be read (which will soon be with plying hard and daily) they cannot choose but be masters of any ordinary prose: so that it will be then seasonable for them to learn in any modern author the use of the 10 globes and all the maps, first with the old names and then with the new; or they might then be capable to read any compendious method of natural philosophy; and, at the same time, might be entering into the Greek tongue, 15 after the same manner as was before prescribed in the Latin; whereby the difficulties of grammar being soon overcome, all the historical physiology of Aristotle and Theophrastus¹³ are open before them, and, as I may say, under 20 contribution. The like access will be to Vitruvius, to Seneca's "Natural Questions," to Mela, Celsus, Pliny, or Solinus.¹⁴ And having thus past the principles of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and geography, with a 25 general compact of physics, they may descend in mathematics to the instrumental science of trigonometry, and from thence to fortification, architecture, enginery, or navigation. And in natural philosophy they may proceed leisurely 30 from the history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy. Then also in course might be read to them out of some not tedious writer, the institution of physick; that they may know the tempers, the 35 humours, the seasons, and how to manage a crudity,¹⁵ which he who can wisely and timely do is not only a great physician to himself and to his friends, but also may at some time or other save an army by this frugal and expense- 40 less means only, and not let the healthy and stout bodies of young men rot away under him for want of this discipline, which is a great pity, and no less a shame to the commander. To set forward all these proceedings in nature and 45 mathematics, what hinders but that they may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experience of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries; and in the other sciences, architects, engineers, mariners, 50 anatomists, who, doubtless, would be ready, some for reward and some to favour such a hopeful seminary. And this would give them such a real tincture of natural knowledge as they shall never forget, but daily augment with 55

delight. Then also those poets which are now counted most hard will be both facile and pleasant, Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius; and, in Latin, 5 Lucretius, Manilius, and the rural part of Virgil.

By this time years and good general precepts will have furnished them more distinctly with that act of reason which in ethics is called 10 Proairesis;¹⁶ that they may with some judgment contemplate upon moral good and evil. Then will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply 15 in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice; while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laetius, and those Locrian remnants;¹⁷ but still to be reduced in their nightward studies wherewith they close the day's work under the deter- 20 minate sentence of David or Solomon, or the evangelists and apostolic scriptures. Being perfect in the knowledge of personal duty, they may then begin the study of economics. And either now or before this, they may have easily learned, at any odd hour, the Italian tongue. And soon after, but with wariness and good 25 antidote, it would be wholesome enough to let them taste some choice comedies, Greek, Latin, or Italian; those tragedies also that treat of household matters, as Trachiniae,¹⁸ Alcestitis,¹⁹ and the like.

The next removal must be to the study of 35 politics; to know the beginning, end, and reasons of political societies, that they may not, in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth, be such poor shaken uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience as many of our great 40 councillors have lately shown themselves, but steadfast pillars of the State. After this they are to dive into the grounds of law and legal justice, delivered first and with best warrant by Moses, and, as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian 45 lawgivers, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas; and thence to all the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian; and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England and the 50 statutes.

Sundays also and every evening may be now

¹³ Aristotle uses this word in his *Ethics* to express a deliberate preference for one thing over another, as distinguished from a sudden or unpremeditated action, and declares that the exercise of this deliberate preference is "most intimately connected with virtue."

¹⁴ Probably, as much of the work of the philosopher *Timaeus of Locri*, as has come down to us. A work *On the Soul of the World and of Nature* was formerly attributed to him, but his authorship of it is disputed.

¹⁵ Or, *The Women of Trachis*, a tragedy of Sophocles.

¹⁶ A tragedy by Euripides.

¹³ A Greek philosopher and scientist (b. c. 371 B. C.) who has been called the founder of botany.

¹⁴ Writers of works on architecture, biography, natural history, etc.

¹⁵ An attack of indigestion.

understandingly spent in the highest matters of theology and church history, ancient and modern: and ere this time the Hebrew tongue at a set hour might have been gained, that the Scriptures may be now read in their own original; whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect. When all these employments are well conquered, then will the choice histories, heroic poems, and Attic tragedies of stateliest and most regal argument, with all the famous political orations, offer themselves; which, if they were not only read, but some of them got by memory, and solemnly pronounced with right accent and grace, as might be taught, would endue them even with the spirit and vigour of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides or Sophocles.

And now, lastly, will be the time to read with them those organic arts²⁰ which enable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fittest style of lofty, mean, or lowly. Logic, therefore, so much as is useful, is to be referred to this due place, with all her well-couched heads and topics, until it be time to open her contracted palm into a graceful and ornate rhetoric, taught out of the rule of Plato, Aristotle, Phalereus, Cicero, Hermogenes, Longinus. To which poetry would be made subsequent, or, indeed, rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate. I mean not here the prosody of a verse, which they could not but have hit on before among the rudiments of grammar, but that sublime art which in Aristotle's Poetics, in Horace, and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni,²¹ and others, teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic, what of a lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe. This would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhymers and play-writers be; and show them what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry, both in divine and human things.

From hence, and not till now, will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be thus fraught with an universal insight into things: or whether they be to speak in parliament or council, honour and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in pulpits other visages, other

gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought, than what we now sit under, oft-times to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they preach to us. These are the studies wherein our noble and our gentle youth ought to bestow their time in a disciplinary way from twelve to one-and-twenty, unless they rely more upon their ancestors dead than upon themselves living. In which methodical course it is so supposed they must proceed by the steady pace of learning onward, as at convenient times for memory's sake to retire back into the middle ward, and sometimes into the rear of what they have been taught, until they have confirmed and solidly united the whole body of their perfected knowledge, like the last embattling of a Roman legion.²² Now will be worth the seeing what exercises and recreations may best agree and become these studies.

THEIR EXERCISE

The course of study hitherto briefly described is, what I can guess by reading, likeliest to those ancient and famous schools of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, and such others, out of which were bred such a number of renowned philosophers, orators, historians, poets, and princes all over Greece, Italy, and Asia, besides the flourishing studies of Cyrene and Alexandria. But herein it shall exceed them, and supply a defect as great as that which Plato noted in the commonwealth of Sparta. Whereas that city trained up their youth most for war, and these in their academies and Lyceum all for the gown, this institution of breeding which I here delineate shall be equally good both for peace and war. Therefore, about an hour and a half ere they eat at noon should be allowed them for exercise, and due rest afterwards; but the time for this may be enlarged at pleasure, according as their rising in the morning shall be early. The exercise which I commend first is the exact use of their weapon, to guard, and to strike safely with edge or point. This will keep them healthy, nimble, strong, and well in breath; is also the likeliest means to make them grow large and tall, and to inspire them with a gallant and fearless courage, which being tempered with seasonable lectures and precepts to them of true fortitude and patience, will turn into a native and heroic valour, and make them hate the cow-

²⁰ Arts which are not an end in themselves, but instrumental to the attainment of some further end.

²¹ *Ludovico Castelvetro* (1515-1571), Italian scholar and commentator, translated Aristotle's *Ethics*. *Torquato Tasso* (1541-1595), one of the greater Italian poets, discussed the epic in his *Discourses on the Art of Poetry*. *Giacomo Mazzoni* (1548-1598) was an Italian critic, and a friend of Tasso. He wrote a book on Dante.

²² A reference to the Roman custom in battle, according to which the division in the front rank (*hastati*) would retire through openings left for that purpose, the division immediately in the rear (*principes*) advancing to take their place. If the *principes* had to retire, then, by a similar movement, the third division, originally at the extreme rear, would come to the front. In the last embattling those who had originally been in advance would thus be in the rear.

ardice of doing wrong. They must be also practised in all the locks and gripes of wrestling, wherein Englishmen were wont to excel, as need may often be in fight to tug, to grapple, and to close. And this, perhaps, will be enough wherein to prove ~~and heat their single strength.~~ The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat, may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learned, either whilst the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop, waiting on elegant voices either to religious, martial, or civil ditties, which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over 20 dispositions and manners to smoothe and make them gentle from rustic harshness and dis-tempered passions. The like also would not be unexpedient after meat, to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send their 25 minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction. Where having followed it close under vigilant eyes until about two hours before supper, they are, by a sudden alarum or watchword, to be called out to their military 30 motions, under sky or covert, according to the season, as was the Roman wont; first on foot, then, as their age permits, on horseback, to all the art of cavalry; that having in sport, but with much exactness and daily muster, served 35 out ~~the~~ rudiments of their soldiership in all the skit of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern stratagems, tactics, and warlike maxims, they may, as it 40 were out of a long war, come forth renowned and perfect commanders in the service of their country. They would not then, if they were trusted with fair and hopeful armies, suffer them for want of just and wise discipline to shed 45 away from about them like sick feathers, though they be never so oft supplied; they would not suffer their empty and unrecruitable colonels of twenty men in a company to quaff out or convey into secret hoards the wages of a 50 delusive list and miserable remnant; yet in the meanwhile to be overmastered with a score or two of drunkards, the only soldiery left about them, or else to comply with all rapines and violences. No, certainly, if they knew aught of 55 that knowledge that belongs to good men or good governors they would not suffer these things.

But to return to our own institute. Besides

these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining experience to be won from pleasure itself abroad: in those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is 5 calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth. I should not, therefore, be a persuader to them of studying much then, after two or three years that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride out in companies with prudent and staid guides to all the quarters of the land, learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities of building and of 15 soil for towns and tillage, harbours, and ports for trade. Sometimes taking sea as far as to our navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight. These ways would try all their peculiar gifts of nature, and if there were any secret excellence among them, would fetch it out and give it fair opportunities to advance itself by, which could not but mightily redound to the good of this nation, and bring into fashion again those 25 old admired virtues and excellencies with far more knowledge now in this purity of Christian knowledge. Nor shall we then need the mon-sieurs of Paris to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies, and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes, and kekshose.²² But if they desire to see other countries at three or four and twenty years of age, not to learn principles, but to enlarge experience and make wise observation, they will by that time be such as shall deserve the regard and honour of all men where they pass, and the society and friendship of those in all places who are best and most eminent. And perhaps then other nations will be glad to visit 35 us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own country.

Now, lastly, for their diet there cannot be much to say, save only that it would be best in the same house; for much time else would be 45 lost abroad, and many ill habits got; and that it should be plain, healthful, and moderate, I suppose is out of controversy.

Thus, Mr. Hartlib, you have a general view in writing, as your desire was, of that which at several times I had discoursed with you concerning the best and noblest way of education; not beginning, as some have done, from the cradle, which yet might be worth many considerations, if brevity had not been my scope. 55 Many other circumstances also I could have mentioned, but this, to such as have the worth in them to make trial, for light and

²² i. e., Kickshaws (Fr. *quelque chose*) trifling, fantastic things.

direction may be enough. Only I believe that this is not a bow for every man to shoot in, that counts himself a teacher, but will require sinews almost equal to those which Homer gave Ulysses; yet I am withal persuaded that it may prove much more easy in the assay than it now seems at distance, and much more illustrious: howbeit, not more difficult than I imagine, and that imagination presents me with nothing but very happy and very possible according to best wishes, if God have so decreed, and this age have spirit and capacity enough to apprehend.

AREOPAGITICA¹

(1644)

(Selections)

If ye be thus resolved,² as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to show both that love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourselves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordained³ to regulate Printing: *That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed.* For that part which preserves justly every man's copy to himself, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretences to abuse and persecute honest and painful men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licensing Books, which we thought had died with his brother *quadragesimal*⁴ and *matrimonial* when the prelates expired, I shall now attend with such a homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it, to be those whom ye will be

¹ i. e., address to the Areopagus. By the *Areopagus* Milton means the English Parliament, which he thus likens to the Greek Areopagus, the high council and court of ancient Athens. One of the orations of Isocrates, the Attic orator, is known as *Logos Areopagitikos*, the *Areopagitic Discourse*. As Isocrates appealed to the ancient Areopagus (the high court of Ares, "or Mars," Hill), so Milton appeals to the *modern* Areopagus, "the Lords and Commons of England" assembled in Parliament, and hence he calls his appeal an Areopagitic address.

² i. e., resolved to do what has just been urged by Milton in the preceding passage; viz. to "obey the voice of reason from whatever quarter it be heard speaking," and to repeal any Parliamentary act of your own as willingly as you would one passed by your predecessors in Parliament.

³ The ordinance of 1643, reestablishing a censorship of the press, which had been substantially free since 1640.

⁴ Pertaining to Lent, a season of forty days. Ecclesiastical rules for the observance of Lent, and ecclesiastical views of marriage (which Milton regarded as a civil contract and not as a sacrament) had "died when the prelates expired," but the censorship of the press (which Milton calls their brother) is continued.

loth to own; next what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever sort the books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed. Last, that it will be primarily to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by the disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil Wisdom.

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragon's teeth;⁵ and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye.⁶ Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression,⁷ a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence,⁸ the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life.

⁵ See the stories of Cadmus and of Jason.

⁶ God's image is reflected in a good book as the image of outward objects is on the retina of the eye.

⁷ The whole edition; here, all the copies printed.

⁸ Aristotle holds that there are five elements, earth, water, air, fire, ether; the last is the "*fifth element*," or *quintessence* (fifth essence), which is not subject to change. He who destroys all the copies of a book, does not merely destroy a thing subject to change (like the first four elements), he destroys part of a man's spirit preserved and stored up in a good book beyond the term of mortal life, he slays the "fifth essence," the man's ethereal part, "an immortality rather than a life."

But lest I should be condemned of introducing license, while I oppose licensing, I refuse not the pains to be so much historical, as will serve to show what hath been done by ancient and famous commonwealths, against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licensing crept out of the *Inquisition*, was caught up by our prelates, and hath caught some of our presbyters.

[An historical survey here follows, showing the position of the authorities in Athens, Lacedæmon, and Rome, in regard to the question at issue. Continuing the history through early Christian times, Milton finally contends that the system of press censorship, which he condemned, was "engendered" by the Council of Trent (1546) and the Spanish Inquisition.]

Dionysius Alexandrinus was about the year 240, a person of great name in the Church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against heretics by being conversant in their books; until a certain presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himself among those defiling volumes. The worthy man, loth to give offence, fell into a new debate with himself what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God (it is his own epistle that so avers it) confirmed him in these words: Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter. To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians: Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same author: To the pure, all things are pure; not only meats and drinks, but all kind of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance; and yet God in that unapocryphal vision, said without exception: Rise, Peter, kill and eat, leaving the choice to each man's discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate. Whereof what better witness can ye expect I should produce, than one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief of

learned men reputed in this land, Mr. Selden,* whose volume of natural and national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest. I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, He then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man! yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when He Himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer, which was every man's daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. Solomon informs us, that much reading is a weariness to the flesh; but neither he nor other inspired author tells us that such, or such reading is unlawful: yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful, than what was wearisome. As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. Paul's converts;¹⁰ 'tis replied the books were magic, the Syriac so renders them. It was a private act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the magistrate by this example is not appointed: these men practised the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully. Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused

* John Selden (1584-1654), jurist, antiquary, and author. He was member of the Long Parliament (1640) and one of the Committee which impeached Archbishop Laud. As an author, he is chiefly remembered by his *Table-Talk*. Milton here refers to Selden's treatise *De Jure Naturali et Gentium*, etc., 1640.

¹⁰ *Acts*, xix., 19.

seeds which were imposed on Psyche¹¹ as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil. As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continuance to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness;¹² which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guion,¹³ brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in the world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. . . .

If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of; it will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to

examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on, there are shrewd books, with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads even to the balladry,¹⁴ and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias, and his Monte Mayors.¹⁵ Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, than household gluttony: who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harboured? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober workmasters to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country, who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state. To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian polities,¹⁶ which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. . . .

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of Learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient, and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras, and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old philosophy of this island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola, who governed once here for

¹⁴ Ballads, the popular songs.

¹⁵ *Jorge de Montemayor* (c. 1520-1561), author of the Spanish pastoral drama *Diana*. Sidney's *Arcadia* is a work of the same general character.

¹⁶ To withdraw (*sequester*) ourselves from the actual world, into such ideal and visionary systems of government as those pictured by Bacon in his *New Atlantis*, or More in his *Utopia*, "will not mend" etc.

¹¹ See the familiar story of Cupid and Psyche, told by Apuleius.

¹² i. e., only superficial, only "skin-deep."

¹³ See *Faerie Queene*, Bk. II.

Cæsar, preferred the natural wits of Britain, before the laboured studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian¹⁷ sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia, and beyond the Hercynian wilderness,¹⁸ not their youth, but their staid men, to learn our language, and our theologic arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of Heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of Sion should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe? And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wickliff, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome,¹⁹ no nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin had been ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and backwardest scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself. What does He then but reveal Himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen; I say as His manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of His counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City: a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What

could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks; had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-reputed care of their Religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join, and unite in one general and brotherly search after Truth; could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as Pyrrhus²⁰ did, admiring the Roman docility and courage: If such were my Epirots,²¹ I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy. Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort²² of irrational men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this: that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole

¹⁷ *Transylvania* (the land beyond the Carpathian forests, *trans-sylvia*), since 1808 a part of Hungary, was an independent principality in Milton's time.

¹⁸ The *Hercynia silva* of Pliny was a wild region of undefined limits south of the Caspian (or *Hyrcane*) Sea. But Milton, apparently, is thinking here of a remote district near Transylvania in the neighborhood of the Carpathian mountains.

¹⁹ *Jerome of Prague*, a religious reformer of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, who was a follower of *John Huss*. John Wyclif died in 1384; Huss was burned for heresy in 1415, and Jerome in 1416.

²⁰ *Pyrrhus*, king of Epirus. He is reported to have made a remark similar to the one here attributed to him after his hard-won victory over the Romans in the battle of Heraclea, 280 B. C.

²¹ Men of Epirus.

²² Group, company.

pile and structure. Let us therefore be more considerate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein Moses the great prophet may sit in heaven rejoicing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfilled, when not only our seventy Elders, but all the Lord's people,²² are become prophets. No marvel then though some men, and some good men too, perhaps, but young in goodness, as Joshua then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weakness are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undo us. The adversary again applauds, and waits the hour; when they have branched themselves out, saith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: nor will beware until he see our small divided maniples²⁴ cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects, and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude honest perhaps though over-timorous of them that vex in this belief, but shall laugh in the end, at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to persuade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumoured to be marching up even to her walls, and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues first a singular goodwill, contentedness and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was,²⁵ who when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate, whercon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and those in the

acutest, and the pertest operations of wit and subtlety; it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing²⁶ her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city, should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild, and free, and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the

²² Numb. xi., 29.

²⁴ Small companies of soldiers. The Roman *manipulus* was a subdivision of the cohort.

²⁵ The story is told in Livy's *Rome*, xxvi., 11. The name of the confident purchaser is not given.

²⁶ Renewing: as a moulting bird puts on new plumage.

search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may despatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct,²⁷ and his four nobles of Danegelt. Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

Abraham Cowley

1618-1667

OF MYSELF

(*Essays in Verse and Prose*, 1668)

It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune, allow me any materials for that vanity. It is sufficient for my own contentment that they have preserved me from being scandalous, or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that, I shall here speak of myself only in relation to the subject of these precedent discourses,¹ and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt, than rise up to the estimation of most people.

As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one

²⁷ Not he who takes up arms on account of (i. e. against) illegal taxation, imposed to pay for the clothing (*coat*) and transport (*conduct*) of the king's troops, and not he who refuses to give his four nobles of a ship-money tax. The proceeds of the tax imposed to meet the cost of clothing and transporting new levies was known as *coat and conduct money*. The ship-money tax (which John Hampden and others refused to pay), was called Danegelt, because the king and his party relied on the old Danegelt (originally money given to the Danes to refrain from attacking England) as a precedent.

¹ The essay *Of Myself* is the last of a series entitled *Several Discourses by Way of Essays in Prose and Verse*.

companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone,² because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercises out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which, I confess, I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish, but of this part, which I here set down, if a very little were corrected, I should hardly now be much ashamed.

IX

This only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honour I would have,
Not from great deeds, but good alone:
The unknown are better than ill known.
Rumour can ope the grave.
Acquaintance I would have, but when it depends
Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

X

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturbed as death, thenight.
My house a cottage, more
Than palace, and should fitting be
For all my use, no luxury.
My garden painted o'er
With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures
yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

XI

Thus would I double my life's fading space;
For he that runs it well twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear, nor wish my fate,
But boldly say each night,
To-morrow let my sun his beams display
Or in clouds hide them—I have lived to-day.

You may see by it I was even then acquainted with the poets (for the conclusion is taken out of Horace),³ and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamped first, or rather engraved, these characters in me. They were like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which with the tree still grow proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe, I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse, as have never since left ringing there.

² Excused me alone.

³ *Od. III, xxix, 41 et. seq.*

For I remember, when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus immediately made a poet.

With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university,⁴ but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm⁵ which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars to me, the hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons,⁶ and into the court of one of the best princesses⁷ of the world. Now though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant (for that was the state then of the English and French Courts); yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty, which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well; but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which ride safely and bravely in it. A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere, though

I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I ate at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old schoolboy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect:

Well then; I now do plainly see,
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree, etc.⁸

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from His Majesty's happy Restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country, which I thought in that case I might easily have compassed, as well as some others, with no greater probabilities or pretences have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. But I had before written a shrewd prophecy against myself, and I think Apollo inspired me in the truth, though not in the elegance of it:

Thou, neither great at court nor in the war
Nor at th' exchange shalt be, nor at the wrangling bar;
Content thyself with the small barren praise,
Which neglected verse does raise, etc.

However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on; I cast myself into it *A corps perdu*,⁹ without making capitulations or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who says to his soul, "Take thy ease:" I met presently not only with many little encumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine. Yet I do neither repent nor alter my course. *Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum*.¹⁰ Nothing shall separate me from a mistress which I have loved so long, and have now at last married, though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I hoped from her:

. . . *Nec vos, dulcissima mundi
Nomina, vos Musæ, libertas, otia, libri,
Hortique sylvaque, animâ remanente relinquam.*

Nor by me e'er shall you,
You of all names the sweetest, and the best,
You, Muses, books, and liberty, and rest;
You gardens, fields, and woods, forsaken be,
As long as life itself forsakes not me.

⁴ Cambridge, in 1636.

⁵ The Civil War, in which Cowley took the Royalist side.

⁶ Henry Jermyn (d. 1684), afterwards Earl of St. Albans.

⁷ Henrietta Maria (1609-1669), Queen Consort of Charles I. Cowley followed her to France in 1646, and was employed in various diplomatic matters by the court.

⁸ See *The Wish*, p. 223.

⁹ Equivalent to *head foremost*, or, *head-over-heels*.

¹⁰ I have not sworn a faithless oath.

VI. DRYDEN TO THE DEATH OF JOHNSON

c. 1660-1784

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THE AGE OF DRYDEN

Samuel Butler

1612-1680

THE MERITS OF SIR HUDIBRAS¹

(From *Hudibras*, Part I, Canto I, 1663)

When civil dudgeon first grew high,
And men fell out, they knew not why:
When hard words, jealousies, and fears
Set folks together by the ears,
And made them fight, like mad or drunk,
For dame Religion as for Punk;
Whose honesty they all durst swear for,
Tho' not a man of them knew wherefore:
When Gospel-Trumpeter,² surrounded
With long-ear'd rout, to battle sounded,
And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Was beat with fist, instead of a stick:
Then did Sir Knight³ abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a collonelling.⁴
A wight he was, whose very sight would
Entitle him, Mirror of Knighthood;
That never bow'd his stubborn knee
To anything but chivalry;
Nor put up blow,⁵ but that which laid
Right Worshipful on shoulder-blade:
Chief of domestic Knights, and errant,
Either for chartel⁶ or for warrant:
Great on the bench, great in the saddle,
That could as well bind o'er, as swaddle;⁷
Mighty he was at both of these,
And styl'd of war as well as peace.
(So some rats of amphibious nature,
Are either for the land or water.)
But here our authors make a doubt,
Whether he were more wise or stout.
Some hold the one, and some the other;
But howsoe'er they make a pother,
The difference was so small, his brain
Outweigh'd his rage but half a grain;
Which made some take him for a tool
That knaves do work with, call'd a fool.
For 't has been held by many, that
As Montaigne,⁸ playing with his cat,

Complains she thought him but an ass,
Much more she would Sir Hudibras: 40
For that's the name our valiant knight
To all his challenges did write.
But they're mista'en very much,
'Tis plain enough he was no such;
We grant, altho' he had much wit, 45
H' was very shy of using it;
As being loath to wear it out,
And therefore bore it not about;
Unless on holy-days, or so,
As men their best apparel do. 50
Beside, 'tis known he could speak Greek
As naturally as pigs squeak:
That Latin was no more difficile,
Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle:
Being rich in both, he never scanted 55
His bounty unto such as wanted;
But much of either would afford
To many, that had not one word. . . . 58

He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skill'd in Analytic; 65
He could distinguish, and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute; 70
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a Lord may be an owl; 75
A calf an Alderman, a goose a Justice,
And rocks, Committee-men or Trustees.
He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination. 80
All this by syllogism, true
In mood and figure, he would do.
For Rhetoric, he could not ope
His mouth, but out there flew a trope;⁹
And when he happen'd to break off 85
I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,
H' had hard words ready, to shew why,
And tell what rules he did it by:
Else, when with greatest art he spoke, 90
You'd think he talk'd like other folk.
For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools.
But, when he pleas'd to shew't, his speech
In loftiness of sound was rich;
A Babylonish dialect,
Which learned pedants much affect; 95
It was a party-colour'd dress
Of patch'd and piebald languages:
'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
Like fustian¹⁰ heretofore on satin.
It had an odd promiscuous tone,
As if h' had talk'd three parts in one; 100

¹ *Hudibras* is a long satirical poem, in mock-heroic vein, directed especially against the Puritans and other non-conforming sects, and also ridiculing many follies of the times.

² Referring to Presbyterians who preached rebellion from the pulpit.

³ The original of Sir Hudibras is supposed to have been Sir Samuel Luke, of Bedfordshire, a rigid Puritan, high in Cromwell's favor.

⁴ Acting or playing the colonel.

⁵ He submitted to no blow but that with which the King dubbed him Knight.

⁶ A written challenge.

⁷ Beat, or cudgel.

⁸ Michael de Montaigne the famous French essayist, 1533-1592. V. p. 235, l. 25, etc.

⁹ A figure of rhetoric, i. e. he could not speak without using ornate language.

¹⁰ Sleeves or hose made of coarse fustian were often cut into holes in order to show the satin underneath.

Which made some think, when he did gabble,
 Th' had heard three labourers of Babel;
 Or Cerberus¹¹ himself pronounce
 A leash of languages at once.
 This he as volubly would vent 105
 As if his stock would ne'er be spent;
 And truly, to support that charge,
 He had supplies as vast and large:
 For he could coin or counterfeit
 New words, with little or no wit; 110
 Words so debas'd and hard, no stone¹²
 Was hard enough to touch them on.
 And when with hasty noise he spoke 'em,
 The ignorant for current took 'em;
 That had the orator,¹³ who once 115
 Did fill his mouth with pebble stones
 When he harangu'd, but known his phrase,
 He would have us'd no other ways.
 In Mathematics he was greater
 Than Tycho Brahe,¹⁴ or Erra Pater;¹⁵ 120
 For he, by geometric scale,
 Could take the size of pots of ale;
 Resolve by sines and tangents straight,
 If bread or butter wanted weight;
 And wisely tell what hour o' th' day 125
 The clock does strike, by Algebra.
 Beside, he was a shrewd Philosopher,
 And had read ev'ry text and gloss over:
 Whate'er the crabbed'st author hath,
 He understood b' implicit faith: 130
 Whatever sceptic could enquire for,
 For ev'ry *why*, he had a *wherefore*;
 Knew more than forty of them do,
 As far as words and terms could go.
 All which he understood by rote, 135
 And, as occasion serv'd, would quote:
 No matter whether right or wrong;
 They might be either said or sung.
 His notions fitted things so well,
 That which was which he could not tell; 140
 But oftentimes mistook the one
 For th' other, as great clerks have done.
 He could reduce all things to acts,
 And knew their natures by abstracts;
 Where entity¹⁶ and quiddity,¹⁷ 145
 The ghosts of defunct bodies fly;
 Where Truth in person does appear,
 Like words congeal'd in Northern air.
 He knew what's what, and that's as high
 As metaphysic wit can fly. 150
 In school-divinity as able
 As he that hight Irrefragable;¹⁸
 A second Thomas,¹⁹ or at once
 To name them all, another Duns.²⁰

¹¹ According to Hesiod, Cerberus had fifty heads.

¹² Referring to the testing of precious metals by the use of the touchstone.

¹³ Demosthenes.

¹⁴ A famous Danish astronomer, 1546-1601.

¹⁵ An old astrologer, whose name is here given to William Lilly, a famous astrologer of the time.

¹⁶ A philosophical term for things that exist, as opposed to those things that are only potential.

¹⁷ The real essences of things.

¹⁸ Alexander of Hales, d. 1245, was called *doctor irrefragabilis*.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, d. 1274, a famous scholar.

²⁰ The followers of Duns Scotus (d. 1308), by their opposition to the New Learning, came to be looked upon as "dunce" obstructionists: hence our word *dunce* = Dunsman.

Profound in all the nominal,²¹ 155
 And real ways, beyond them all;
 For he a rope of sand could twist
 As tough as learned Sorbonist;²²
 And weave fine cobwebs fit for skull
 That's empty when the moon²³ is full; 160
 Such as take lodgings in a head
 That's to be let unfurnished.
 He could raise scruples dark and nice,
 And after solve 'em in a trice. . . . 164
 For his Religion, it was fit
 To match his learning and his wit: 190
 'Twas Presbyterian true blue,
 For he was of that stubborn crew
 Of errant saints, whom all men grant
 To be the true Church Militant:
 Such as do build their faith upon 195
 The holy text of Pike and Gun.
 Decide all controversies by
 Infalible artillery;
 And prove their doctrine Orthodox
 By apostolic Blows and Knocks; 200
 Call fire, and sword, and desolation,
 A godly thorough reformation,
 Which always must be carried on,
 And still be doing, never done:
 As if religion were intended 205
 For nothing else but to be mended.
 A sect whose chief devotion lies
 In odd perverse antipathies:
 In falling out with that or this,
 And finding somewhat still amiss: 210
 More peevish, cross, and splenetic,
 Than dog distract, or monkey sick.
 That with more care keep holy-day
 The wrong, than others the right way:
 Compound for sins they are inclined to, 215
 By damning those they have no mind
 to.
 Still so perverse and opposite,
 As if they worshipp'd God for spite.
 The self-same thing they will abhor
 One way, and long another for. 220
 Free-will they one way disavow,
 Another, nothing else allow.
 All piety consists therein
 In them, in other men all sin.
 Rather than fail, they will defy 225
 That which they love most tenderly;
 Quarrel with minc'd-pies, and disparage
 Their best and dearest friend, plum-porridge;
 Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
 And blaspheme custard thro' the nose. 230
 Th' apostles of this fierce religion,
 Like Mahomet's, were ass and widgeon.²⁴

²¹ *Nominal* vs. *real*. The reference is to two philosophical doctrines advocated by the Nominalists and the Realists respectively.

²² A member or Doctor of the College of the Sorbonne in Paris, founded by Robert de Sorbon in 1257.

²³ The old belief that insanity was due to the influence of the moon is reflected in our words *lunatic*, *lunacy*, from Latin *luna*, moon.

²⁴ The ass, according to the Koran, was the beast which Gabriel brought to carry Mahomet to the presence of God. The pigeon (*widgeon*) Mahomet taught to eat out of his ear, that it might be thought to be his means of communication with God.

To whom our Knight, by fast instinct
Of wit and temper, was so linkt,
As if hypocrisy and nonsense 235
Had got th' advowson¹¹ of his conscience.

John Dryden

1631-1700

MAC-FLECKNOE; OR, A SATIRE ON THE
TRUE BLUE PROTESTANT POET, T. S.¹

(1682)

All human things are subject to decay,
And, when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus,
young
Was called to empire, and had governed long;
In prose and verse was owned, without dispute, 5
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state; 10
And, pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried, "Tis resolved! for Nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears, 15
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense; 20
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye, 25
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the
plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology! 30
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich druggut,¹² came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.

¹¹ *Advowson* meant originally the obligation to protect a religious office or institution; hence the passage would seem to mean that hypocrisy and nonsense had come to defend and excuse his conscience.

¹ *Mac-Flecknoe* is a satire directed against Thomas Shadwell, "T. S." (1640-1692), a minor poet and dramatist of the Restoration. Dryden's poem, *The Medal*, drew from Shadwell a venomous counter attack, *The Medal of John Bayes* (i. e. Dryden). This Dryden answered in *Mac-Flecknoe*. Shadwell is represented in the poem as the son or poetic successor of Richard Flecknoe, an Irish poet, wit, and playwright, and the poem opens with the abdication of Flecknoe as absolute monarch of the kingdom of Nonsense, in favor of Shadwell!

¹² "This stuff appears to have been sagred to the poorer votaries of Parnassus; and it is somewhat odd that it seems to have been the dress of our poet himself in the entire stages of his fortune." Scott.

My warbling lute,—the lute I whilom strung, 35
When to King John of Portugal¹³ I sung,—
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-timed oars, before the royal barge,
Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge; 40
And big with hymn, commander of an host,—
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets tost.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpened thumb, from shore to 45
shore,
The trebles squeak for fear, the basses roar; . . .
About thy boat the little fishes throng, 49
As at the morning toast¹⁴ that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing
hand;
St. Andre's¹⁵ feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not even the feet of thy own Psyche's rhyme:
Though they in number as in sense excel; 55
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton¹⁶ forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vowed he ne'er would act Villerius more."
Here stopt the good old sire and wept for 60
joy,
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.
Close to the walls which fair Augusta¹⁷ bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclined), 65
An ancient fabric raised to inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican¹⁸ it hight,¹⁹
A watch-tower once, but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains; . . . 69
Near it a Nursery¹⁰ erects its head, 73
Where queens are formed and future heroes
bred,
Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and 75
cry, . . .
And little Maximins¹¹ the gods defy. 78
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear; 80
But gentle Simkin¹² just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanished minds;
Pure clinches¹³ the suburban muse affords,
And Panton¹⁴ waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well 85
known,
Ambitiously designed his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Decker prophesied long since,

¹³ An allusion to some work of Flecknoe's of which, it seems, nothing is now known.

¹⁴ Apparently the bread and toast thrown into the Thames from the boats in order to attract the fishes.

¹⁵ A fashionable dancing master of the time.

¹⁶ An opera singer and musician. He acted the part of Villerius, in Sir William Davenant's opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*.

¹⁷ The title given by the Romans to London, *Londinium Augusta*.

¹⁸ A round tower near the junction of Barbican and Aldergate Streets.

¹⁹ Was called.

¹⁰ A school of acting established in 1665 by the king.

¹¹ Maximin was the hero of Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*.

¹² A cobbler, in an Interlude of the day.

¹³ Puns.

¹⁴ A noted punster.

That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
 Bora for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense;
 To whom true dulness should some Psyches
 owe, 90
 But worlds of Misers¹⁵ from his pen should
 flow;
 Humorists and Hypocrites, it should pro-
 duce,—

Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.
 Now empress Fame had published the re-
 nown

Of Shadwell's coronation through the town. 95
 Roused by report of fame, the nations meet,
 From near Bunhill,¹⁶ and distant Watling
 Street.¹⁷

No Persian carpets spread the imperial way,
 But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay. . . .
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby¹⁸ there lay, 102
 But loads of Shadwell almost choked the way;
 Bilked¹⁹ stationers for yeomen stood prepared,
 And Herringman²⁰ was captain of the guard. 105
 The hoary prince in majesty appeared,
 High on a throne of his own labours reared.
 At his right hand our young Ascanius sate,
 Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
 And lambent dulness played around his face. 111
 As Hannibal did to the altars come,
 Sworn by his sire, a mortal foe to Rome,
 So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
 That he till death true dulness would main-
 tain; 115

And, in his father's right, and realm's defence,
 Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with
 sense.

The king himself the sacred unction made,
 As king by office, and as priest by trade.
 In his sinister hand, instead of ball, 120
 He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
 "Love's kingdom" to his right he did convey,
 At once his sceptre, and his rule of sway;
 Whose righteous lore the prince had practised
 young,

And from whose loins recorded²¹ Psyche²²
 sprung. 125

His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
 That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.
 Just at the point of time, if fame not lie,
 On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly;
 So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook, 130
 Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
 The admiring throng loud acclamations make,
 And omens of his future empire take.
 The sire then shook the honours of his head,
 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed 135
 Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
 Repelling from his breast the raging god;

¹⁵ The reference here is to *The Miser* and *The Humorists*, plays by Shadwell. *Raymond* is a character in *The Humorists*, while *Bruce* appears in another of Shadwell's plays.

¹⁶ Two sections of London. The sense is that they come from north and south.

¹⁷ John Ogleby, 1600–1676, a Scotch versifier.

¹⁸ Defrauded.

¹⁹ A leading publisher of the day.

²⁰ The opera of *Psyche* which was recorded, i. e., sung.

At length burst out in this prophetic mood:—
 "Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him
 reign,

To far Barbadoes on the western main; 140
 Of his dominion may no end be known,
 And greater than his father's be his throne;
 Beyond love's kingdom let him stretch his
 pen!"

He paused, and all the people cried, "Amen."
 Then thus continued he: "My son, advance 145
 Still in new impudence, new ignorance.

Success let others teach, learn thou from me
 Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.

Let Virtuosos in five years be writ,
 Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit. 150

Let gentle George²³ in triumph tread the stage,
 Make Dormiant betray, and Loveit rage;
 Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,
 And in their folly show the writer's wit;
 Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence, 155
 And justify their author's want of sense.

Let them be all by thy own model made
 Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid,
 That they to future ages may be known,
 Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own: 160

Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
 All full of thee, and differing but in name,
 But let no alien Sedley²⁴ interpose,
 To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.
 And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst
 cull, 165

Trust nature; do not labour to be dull,
 But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,
 Sir Formal's²⁵ oratory will be thine:

Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
 And does thy northern dedications²⁶ fill. 170

Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
 By arrogating Jonson's hostile name;
 Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
 And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.

Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
 What share have we in nature, or in art? 176

Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
 And rail at arts he did not understand?

Where made he love in Prince Nicander's²⁷
 vein,

Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble
 strain? . . . 180

When did his muse from Fletcher scenes pur-
 loin, 183

As thou whole Etherege dost transfuse to thine?
 But so transfused, as oil and waters flow, 185

His always floats above, thine sinks below.
 This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,

New humours to invent for each new play:
 This is that boasted bias of thy mind,

By which one way to dulness 'tis inclined; 190

²³ Sir George Etheridge (c. 1636–1689), a famous wit and comedy writer. Dormiant, Loveit, etc., are characters in his plays.

²⁴ Sir Charles Sedley, 1639–1701, a wit and patron of literature, who assisted Shadwell in his comedy *Epsom Wells*. The insinuation is that Sedley larded its prose with a wit alien to its dulness.

²⁵ A character in Shadwell's *Virtuosos*.

²⁶ Certain dedications of Shadwell's to the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle.

²⁷ A lover in the opera of *Psyche*.

Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
 And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
 Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
 Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.
 A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ, 195
 But sure thou art but a kilderkin² of wit.
 Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
 Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
 With whate'er gall thou setst thyself to write,
 Thy inoffensive satires never bite; 200
 In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
 It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
 Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
 In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
 Leave writing plays, and choose for thy com-
 mand, 205
 Some peaceful province in Acroestic land.
 There thou may'st wings display, and altars
 raise,
 And torture one poor word ten thousand ways;
 Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
 Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
 He said: but his last words were scarcely
 heard; 211
 For Bruce³ and Longvil⁴ had a trap prepared
 And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
 Sinking he left his drugged robe behind,
 Borne upwards by a subterranean wind. 215
 The mantle fell to the young prophet's part;
 With double portion of his father's art.

ACHITOPHEL¹

(From *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681)

Of these the false Achitophel was first; 150
 A name to all succeeding ages curst:
 For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
 In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace; 155
 A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
 Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,
 And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
 A daring pilot in extremity,
 Pleased with the danger, when the waves went
 high, 160
 He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
 Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
 Else, why should he, with wealth and honour
 blest, 165
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
 Punish a body which he could not please;
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
 And all to leave what with his toil he won,
 To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son; 170
 Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
 And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
 In friendship false, implacable in hate;
 Resolved to ruin, or to rule the state.

² A small barrel.

³ Two characters in Shadwell's *Virtuoso*.

¹ The earliest of Dryden's satires. It was directed against the versatile, able, but unscrupulous politician, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, who appears under the name of Achitophel.

To compass this the triple bond² he broke; 175
 The pillars of the public safety shook;
 And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
 Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
 Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
 So easy still it proves in factious times, 180
 With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
 How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
 Where none can sin against the people's will,
 Where crowds can wink, and no offence be
 known,
 Since in another's guilt they find their own? 185
 Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
 The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
 In Israel's courts ne'er sat on Abbethdin³
 With more discerning eyes, or hands more
 clean,
 Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress;
 Swift of despatch, and easy of access. 191
 Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,
 With virtue only proper to the gown;
 Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
 From cockle, that oppressed the noble seed; 195
 David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
 And heaven had wanted one immortal song.
 But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
 And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.
 Achitophel, grown weary to possess 200
 A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
 Disdained the golden fruit to gather free,
 And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S¹ DAY, 22ND NOVEMBER

1687

I

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began:
 When nature underneath a heap
 Of jarring atoms lay,
 And could not heave her head, 5
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,
 "Arise, ye more than dead."
 Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And Music's power obey. 10
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began;
 From harmony to harmony
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in man. 15

II

What passion cannot music raise and quell?
 When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
 His listening brethren stood around,

¹ A "Triple Alliance" between Holland, Sweden, and England in 1668. It was broken by an infamous secret treaty with France. Shaftesbury was one of its signers.

² A Hebrew word meaning "father of the Nation;" i. e., the judges. As Lord Chancellor, Shaftesbury had a well deserved reputation for uprightness and ability.

¹ St. Cecilia, virgin martyr of the third century, became patron saint of music, and was supposed to have invented the organ.

And, wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound: 20
 Less than a God they thought there could not
 dwell
 Within the hollow of that shell,
 That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
 What passion cannot music raise and quell? m.cn

III

The trumpet's loud clangour 25
 Excites us to arms,
 With shrill notes of anger
 And mortal alarms.
 The double, double, double beat
 Of the thundering drum, 30
 Cries, hark! the foes come:
 Charge, charge! 'tis too late to retreat.

IV

The soft complaining flute,
 In dying notes, discovers 35
 The woes of hopeless lovers;
 Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

V

Sharp violins proclaim
 Their jealous pangs and desperation,
 Fury, frantic indignation,
 Depth of pains, and height of passion, 40
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI

But, oh! what art can teach,
 What human voice can reach,
 The sacred organ's praise?
 Notes inspiring holy love, 45
 Notes that wend their heavenly ways
 To mend the choirs above.

VII

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
 And trees unrooted left their place,
 Sequacious of the lyre: 50
 But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
 When to her organ vocal breath was given,
 An angel heard, and straight appeared,
 Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays 55
 The spheres began to move,
 And sung the great Creator's praise
 To all the blessed above;
 So when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour, 60
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And Music shall untune the sky.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST, OR THE POWER OF MUSIC; AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1697

I

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
 By Philip's warlike son:
 Aloft, in awful state,
 The godlike hero sate
 On his imperial throne. 5

His valiant peers were placed around;
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:
 (So should desert in arms be crowned.)
 The lovely Thais, by his side,
 Sate like a blooming eastern bride, 10
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
 Happy, happy, happy pair!
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave deserves the fair. 15

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II

Timotheus, placed on high 20
 Amid the tuneful quire,
 With flying fingers touched the lyre:
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,
 And heavenly joys inspire.
 The song began from Jove, 25
 Who left his blissful seats above,
 (Such is the power of mighty love.)
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
 Sublime on radiant spires¹ he rode;
 When he to fair Olympia pressed, 30
 And while he sought her snowy breast;
 Then, round her slender waist he curled,
 And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign
 of the world.
 The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
 'A present deity! they shout around; 35
 A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
 With ravished ears,
 The monarch hears;
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod, 40
 And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod, 45
And seems to shake the spheres.

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician
 sung;
 Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
 The jolly god in triumph comes;
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums; 50
 Flushed with a purple grace
 He shows his honest face:
 Now, give the hauboy's breath; he comes, he
 comes.
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain; 55
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

¹ Spirals, coils. Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*. ix, 502.

CHORUS

*Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.* 65

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IV

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain:
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he
slew the slain.

The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes; 70
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.

He chose a mournful muse,
Soft pity to infuse, 75
He sung Darius great and good
By too severe a fate,

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood:

Deserted, at his utmost need, 80
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.

With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving, in his altered soul, 85
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,

And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

*Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of chance below; 90
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.*

V

The mighty master smiled, to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move, 95
For pity melts the mind to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures:

War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour, but an empty bubble; 100
Never ending, still beginning,

Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, O think it worth enjoying;
Lovely Thais sits beside thee, 105
Take the good the gods provide thee—

The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the
cause.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair. 110
Who caused his care,

And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;

At length, with love and wine at once op-
pressed

The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 115

CHORUS

*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again; 120
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.*

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder, 125
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.

Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;

As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around. 130

Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise;

See the snakes, that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,

And the sparkles that flash from their eyes! 135
Behold a ghastly band,

Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were
slain,

And, unburied, remain
Inglorious on the plain: 140
Give the vengeance due

To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,

How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.—

The princes applaud, with a furious joy, 145
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;

Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,

And, like another Helen, fired another Troy. 150

CHORUS

*And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to de-
stroy;*

*Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,*

And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

VII

Thus, long ago, 155
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,

While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,

And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft
desire. 160

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;

The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,

And added length to solemn sounds, 165
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown
before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down. 170

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came, btool.com.cn
Inventress of the vocal frame:
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds, 175
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wil, and arts unknown
before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down. 180

UNDER MR. MILTON'S PICTURE

(1688)

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go; 5
To make a third, she joined the former two.

SONG

In "The Indian Emperor"

Ah fading joy! how quickly art thou past!
Yet we thy ruin haste.
As if the cares of human life were few,
We seek out new:
And follow fate, which would too fast pursue: 5
See how on every bough the birds express,
In their sweet notes their happiness.
They all enjoy and nothing spare;
But on their mother Nature lay their care:
Why then should man the lord of all below, 10
Such troubles choose to know,
As none of all his subjects undergo?
Hark, hark, the waters fall, fall, fall,
And with a murmuring sound,
Dash, dash upon the ground, 15
To gentle slumbers call.

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS

(Paraphrased)

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come visit every pious mind;
Come pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.
O source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire; 10
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing.

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sevenfold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty hand, 15
Whose power does heaven and earth command.
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,
Who dost the gift of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gifts with eloquence!
Refine and purge our earthly parts; 20
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay thy hand, and hold 'em down. 25
Chase from our minds the infernal foe;
And peace the fruit of love bestow;
And lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.
Make us eternal truths receive; 30
And practise all that we believe;
Give us thyself, that we may see:
The Father, and the Son, by thee:
Immortal honour, endless fame;
Attend the Almighty Father's name: 35
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

1647-1680

EPITAPH ON CHARLES II

(1685)

Here lies our sovereign lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one.

John Evelyn

1620-1706

THE GREAT FIRE

(From Evelyn's *Diary*, 1641-1697)

Sept. 2, 1666. This fatal night about ten,
began that deplorable fire near Fish street¹ in
London.

3. I had public prayers at home. The fire
5 continuing, after dinner I took coach with my
wife and son and went to the Bankside in
Southwark, where we beheld the dismal
spectacle, the whole City in dreadful flames
near the water side; all the houses from the
10 Bridge, all Thames Street, and upwards
towards Cheapside, down to the Three Cranes,
were now consumed; and so returned exceeding
astonished what would become of the rest.

¹ The fire started in the house of the "King's Baker,"
in Pudding Lane, near New Fish-street-hill. In general
terms, this was not far from the river, and between the
Tower and London Bridge.

The fire having continued all this night (if I may call that night which was light as day for ten miles round about, after a dreadful manner), when conspiring with a fierce eastern wind in a very dry season; I went on foot to the same place, and saw the whole south part of the city burning from Cheapside to the Thames, and all along Cornhill (for it likewise kindled back against the wind as well as forward), Tower Street, Fen-church Street, Gracious Street, and so along to Baynard's Castle, and was now taking hold of St. Paul's Church, to which the scaffolds contributed exceedingly. The conflagration was so universal, and the people so astonished, that from the beginning, I know not by what despondency or fate, they hardly stirred to quench it, so that there was nothing heard or seen but crying out and lamentation, running about like distracted creatures, without at all attempting to save even their goods; such a strange consternation there was upon them, so as it burned both in breadth and length, the churches, public halls, Exchange, hospitals, monuments, and ornaments, leaping after a prodigious manner from house to house and street to street, at great distances one from the other; for the heat with a long set of fair and warm weather had even ignited the air and prepared the materials to conceive the fire, which devoured after an incredible manner houses, furniture, and everything. Here we saw the Thames covered with goods floating, all the barges and boats laden with what some had time and courage to save, as, on the other, the carts, etc., carrying out to the fields, which for many miles were strewed with moveables of all sorts, and tents erecting to shelter both people and what goods they could get away. Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle! such as haply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor be outdone till the universal conflagration of it. All the sky was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seen above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant mine eyes may never behold the like, who now saw above 10,000 houses all in one flame; the noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses and churches, was like an hideous storm, and the air all about so hot and inflamed that at the last one was not able to approach it, so that they were forced to stand still and let the flames burn on, which they did for near two miles in length and one in breadth. The clouds also of smoke were dismal and reached upon computation near fifty-six miles in length. Thus I left it this afternoon burning, a re-

semblance of Sodom, or the last day. It forcibly called to my mind that passage *non enim hic habemus stabilem civitatem*;² the ruins resembling the picture of Troy. London was, but is no more! Thus I returned home.

Sept. 4. The burning still rages, and it was now gotten as far as the Inner Temple; all Fleet Street, the Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill, Warwick Lane, Newgate, Paul's Chain, Watling Street, now flaming, and most of it reduced to ashes; the stones of Paul's flew like granados,³ the melting lead running down the streets in a stream, and the very pavements glowing with fiery redness, so as no horse nor man was able to tread on them, and the demolition had stopped all the passages, so that no help could be applied. The eastern wind still more impetuously driving the flames forward. Nothing but the Almighty power of God was able to stop them, for vain was the help of man.

5. It crossed towards Whitehall; but oh, the confusion there was then at that Court! It pleased his Majesty to command me among the rest to look after the quenching of Fetter Lane end, to preserve if possible that part of Holborn whilst the rest of the gentlemen took their several posts, some at one part, some at another (for now they began to bestir themselves, and not till now, who hitherto had stood as men intoxicated, with their hands across) and began to consider that nothing was likely to put a stop but the blowing up of so many houses as might make a wider gap than any had yet been made by the ordinary method of pulling them down with engines; this some stout seamen proposed early enough to have saved nearly the whole City, but this some tenacious and avaricious men, aldermen &c., would not permit, because their houses must have been of the first. It was therefore now commanded to be practised, and my concern being particularly for the Hospital of St. Bartholomew, near Smithfield, where I had my wounded and sick men, made me the more diligent to promote it; nor was my care for the Savoy less.

It now pleased God by abating the wind, and by the industry of the people, when almost all was lost, infusing a new spirit into them, that the fury of it began sensibly to abate about noon, so as it came no farther than the Temple westward, nor than the entrance of Smithfield north; but continued all this day and night so impetuous toward Cripple-gate and the Tower as made us all despair; it also brake out again in the Temple, but the courage of the multitude persisting, and many houses being blown up,

¹ "For here we have no continuing city." *Heb.*, xiii., 14.

² Grenades; an explosive missile thrown by the hand.

such gaps and desolations were soon made, as with the former three days consumption, the back fire did not so vehemently urge upon the rest as formerly. There was yet no standing near the burning and glowing ruins by near a furlong's space.

The coal and wood wharves and magazines of oil, rosin, &c., did infinite mischief, so as the invective which a little before I had dedicated to his Majesty and published, giving 10 warning what might probably be the issue of suffering those shops to be in the City, was looked on as a prophecy.

The poor inhabitants were dispersed about St. George's Fields, and Moorfields, as far as 15 Highgate, and several miles in circle, some under tents, some under miserable huts and hovels, many without a rag or any necessary utensils, bed or board, who from delicateness, riches, and easy accommodations in stately and 20 well furnished houses, were now reduced to extremest misery and poverty.

In this calamitous condition I returned with a sad heart to my house, blessing and adoring the distinguishing mercy of God to me and mine 25 who in the midst of all this ruin was like Lot, in my little Zoar,⁴ safe and sound.

Sir William Temple

1628-1699

OF HEALTH AND LONG LIFE

(From *Miscellanea*, 1679-1692)

Some writers, in casting up the goods most desirable in life, have given them this rank, health, beauty, and riches. Of the first I find no dispute, but to the two others much may be said: for beauty is a good that makes others happy rather than one's self; and, how riches should claim so high a rank, I cannot tell, when so great, so wise, and so good a part of mankind have in all ages preferred poverty before them. 45 The *Therapeutæ*¹ and *Ebionites*² among the Jews, the primitive monks and modern friars among Christians, so many *Dervishes*³ among the *Mahometans*, the *Brachmans*⁴ among the *Indians*, and all the ancient philosophers; who, whatever else they differed in, agreed in this of despising riches, and at best esteeming them an

⁴ The "little city" which was the refuge of Lot, when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. V. *Gen.*, xix., 19-23.

¹ A sect of Jewish ascetics in pre-Christian and early Christian times. They were established chiefly in Egypt and lived austere and solitary lives.

² An early Christian sect, which became separated from the Church towards the end of the second century.

³ Dervishes.

⁴ Brahmins, members of the sacerdotal caste among the Hindoos.

unnecessary trouble or incumbrance of life: so that whether they are to be reckoned among goods or evils is yet left in doubt.

When I was young and in some idle company, it was proposed that every one should tell what their three wishes should be, if they were sure to be granted; some were very pleasant, and some very extravagant; mine were health, and peace, and fair weather; which, though out of the way among young men, yet perhaps might pass well enough among old: they are all of a strain, for health in the body is like peace in the State and serenity in the air: the sun, in our climate at least, has something 15 so reviving, that a fair day is a kind of a sensual pleasure, and, of all others, the most innocent.

Peace is a public blessing, without which no man is safe in his fortunes, his liberty, or his life: neither innocence or laws are a guard or defence; no possessions are enjoyed but in danger or fear, which equally lose the pleasure and ease of all that fortune can give us. Health is the soul that animates all enjoyments of life, which fade and are tasteless, if not dead, without it: a man starves at the best and the greatest tables, makes faces at the noblest and most delicate wines, is poor and wretched in the midst of the greatest treasures and fortunes: with common diseases strength grows decrepit, 30 youth loses all vigour, and beauty all charms; music grows harsh, and conversation disagreeable; palaces are prisons, or of equal confinement, riches are useless, honour and attendance are cumbersome, and crowns themselves are 35 a burden: but, if diseases are painful and violent, they equal all conditions of life, make no difference between a Prince and a beggar; and a fit of the stone or the colic puts a King to the rack, and makes him as miserable as he can do the meanest, the worst, and most criminal of his subjects.

To know that the passions or distempers of the mind make our lives unhappy, in spite of all accidents and favours of fortune, a man perhaps must be a philosopher; and requires much thought, and study, and deep reflections. To be a *Stoic*, and grow insensible of pain, as well as poverty or disgrace, one must be perhaps something more or less than a man, renounce common nature, oppose common truth and constant experience. But there needs little learning or study, more than common thought and observation, to find out, that ill health loses not only the enjoyments of 55 fortune, but the pleasures of sense, and even of imagination, and hinders the common operations both of body and mind from being easy and free. Let philosophers reason and differ about the chief good or happiness of man; let

them find it where they can, and place it where they please; but there is no mistake so gross, or opinion so impertinent (how common soever) as to think pleasures arise from what is without us, rather than from what is within; from the impression given us of objects, rather than from the disposition of the organs that receive them. The various effects of the same objects upon different persons, or upon the same persons at different times, make the contrary most evident. Some distempers make things look yellow, others double what we see; the commonest alter our tastes and our smells, and the very foulness of ears changes sounds. The difference of tempers, as well as of age, may have the same effect, by the many degrees of perfection or imperfection in our original tempers, as well as of strength or decay, from the differences of health and of years. From all which 'tis easy without being a great naturalist, to conclude, that our perceptions are formed, and our imaginations raised upon them, in a very great measure, by the dispositions of the organs through which the several objects make their impressions; and that these vary according to the different frame and temper of the others; as the sound of the same breath passing through an oaten pipe, a flute, or a trumpet. But to leave philosophy, and return to health. Whatever is true in point of happiness depending upon the temper of the mind, 'tis certain that pleasures depend upon the temper of the body; and that, to enjoy them, a man must be well himself, as the vessel must be sound to have your wine sweet; for otherwise, let it be never so pleasant and so generous, it loses the taste; and pour in never so much, it all turns sour, and were better let alone. Whoever will eat well, must have a stomach; who will relish the pleasure of drinks, must have his mouth in taste; nay, to find any felicity, or take any pleasure in the greatest advantages of honour and fortune, a man must be in health. Who would not be covetous, and with reason, if this could be purchased with gold? who not ambitious, if it were at the command of power, or restored by honour? But alas! a *white staff*^a will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a *blue ribband*^b bind up a wound so well as a fillet: the glitter of gold or of 50 diamonds will but hurt sore eyes, instead of curing them; and an aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown than a common night-cap.

If health be such a blessing, and the very 55 source of all pleasure, it may be worth the

^a The sign of office given by the sovereign in Temple's time to the members of the Privy Council, as the Premier, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Steward, etc.

^b Part of the insignia of the order of the Garter.

pains to discover the regions where it grows, the springs that feed it, the customs and methods by which it is best cultivated and preserved. . . .

5 [Temple here goes on to consider the various practices for the preservation of health, which have obtained in different times and countries, illustrating his remarks by personal anecdotes.] . . .

10 In the course of my life, I have often pleased or entertained myself with observing the various and fantastical changes of the diseases generally complained of, and of the remedies in common vogue, which were like birds of passage, very much seen or heard of at one season, and disappeared at another, and commonly succeeded by some of a very different kind. When I was very young, nothing was so much feared or talked of as rickets among children, 20 and consumptions among young people of both sexes. After these the *spleen*^c came in play, and grew a formal disease: then the scurvy, which was the general complaint, and both were thought to appear in many various guises. 25 After these, and for a time, nothing was so much talked of as the ferment of the blood, which passed for the cause of all sorts of ailments, that neither physicians nor patients knew well what to make of. And to all these succeeded vapours,^d which serve the same turn, and furnish occasion of complaint among persons whose bodies or minds ail something, but they know not what; and among the *Chineses* would pass for mists of the mind or fumes of the 35 brain, rather than indispositions of any other parts. Yet these employ our physicians, perhaps more than other diseases, who are fain to humour such patients in their fancies of being ill, and to prescribe some remedies, for fear of losing their practice to others that pretend more skill in finding out the cause of diseases, or care in advising remedies, which neither they nor their patients find any effect of, besides some gains to one, and amusement to 45 the other. This, I suppose, may have contributed much to the mode of going to the waters either cold or hot upon so many occasions, or else upon none besides that of entertainment, and which commonly may have no

^c Temple, writing at the end of the 17th century, speaks as though this favorite complaint were then less prevalent, or less popular. If this were so its loss of the popular favor was only temporary, as the literature of the early 18th century is full of allusions to it as the fashionable disease. Lady Winchelsea published a Pindaric Ode entitled *The Spleen*, in 1701, and Matthew Green's poem on the same subject appeared in 1737. V. also Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, iv. 15, et seq.

^d Like the spleen, a fashionable malady, real or pretended, of the latter 17th and early 18th centuries. It was associated with nervous depression of spirits and debility, and was apparently similar to what we call "nervous prostration."

other effect. And 'tis well if this be the worst of the frequent use of those waters, which, though commonly innocent, yet are sometimes dangerous, if the temper of the person or cause of the indisposition be unhappily mistaken, especially in people of age.

As diseases have changed vogue, so have remedies in my time and observation. I remember at one time the taking of tobacco, at another the drinking of warm beer, proved for universal remedies; then swallowing of pebble-stones, in imitation of falconers curing hawks. One Doctor pretended to cure all heats and fevers, by drinking as much cold spring water as the patient could bear; at another time, swallowing up a spoonful of powder of seabisket after meals was infallible for all indigestion, and so preventing diseases. Then coffee and tea began their successive reigns. The infusion of powder of steel have had their turns, and certain drops of several names and compositions; but none that I find have established their authority, either long or generally, by any constant and sensible successes of their reign, but have rather passed like a mode, which every one is apt to follow, and finds the most convenient or graceful while it lasts; and begins to dislike in both those respects when it goes out of fashion.

Thus men are apt to play with their healths and their lives, as they do with their clothes; which may be the better excused, since both are so transitory, so subject to be spoiled with common use, to be torn by accidents, and at last to be so soon worn out. . . . I observed a consult of physicians, in a fever of one of my near friends, perplexed to the last degree whether to let him blood or no, and not able to resolve, till the course of the disease had declared itself, and thereby determined them. Another of my friends was so often let blood, by his first physician, that a second, who was sent for, questioned whether he would recover it: the first persisted the blood must be drawn till some good appeared; the other affirmed, that, in such diseases, the whole mass was corrupted, but would purify again when the accident was past, like wine after a fermentation, which makes all in the vessel thick and foul for a season; but when that is past, grows clear again of itself. So much is certain, that it depends a great deal upon the temper of the patient, the nature of the disease in its first causes, upon the skill and care of the physician to decide whether any of these violences upon nature are necessary or no, and whether they are like to do good or harm.

The rest of our common practice consists in various compositions of innocent ingredients,

which feed the hopes of the patient, and the apothecary's gains, but leave nature to her course, who is the sovereign physician in most diseases, and leaves little for others to do, further than to watch accidents; where they know no specific remedies, to prescribe diets; and, above all, to prevent disorders from the stomach, and take care that nature be not employed in the kitchen, when she should be in the field to resist her enemy; and that she should not be weakened in her spirits and strength, when they are most necessary to support and relieve her. 'Tis true, physicians must be in danger of losing their credit with the vulgar, if they should often tell a patient he has no need of physic, and prescribe only rules of diet or common use; most people would think they had lost their fee: but the excellence of a physician's skill and care is discovered by resolving first whether it be best in the case to administer any physic or none, to trust to nature or to art; and the next, to give such prescriptions, as, if they do no good, may be sure to do no harm.

In the midst of such uncertainties of health and of physic, for my own part, I have, in the general course of my life, and of many acute diseases, as well as some habitual, trusted to God Almighty, to nature, to temperance or abstinence, and the use of common remedies, either vulgarly known, and approved like proverbs by long observation and experience, either of my own, or such persons as have fallen in the way of my observation or inquiry. . . .

The two great blessings of life are, in my opinion, *health* and *good humour*; and none contribute more to one another; without *health*, all will allow life to be but a burden; and the several conditions of fortune to be all wearisome, dull, or disagreeable, without *good humour*: nor does any seem to contribute towards the true happiness of life, but as it serves to increase that treasure, or to preserve it. Whatever other differences are commonly apprehended in the several conditions of fortune, none perhaps will be found so true or so great, as what is made by those two circumstances, so little regarded in the common course or pursuits of mortal men.

Whether long life be a blessing or no, God Almighty only can determine, who alone knows what length it is like to run, and how 'tis like to be attended. *Socrates* used to say, that 'twas pleasant to grow old with good health and a good friend; and he might have reason. A man may be content to live while he is no trouble to himself or his friends; but, after that, 'tis hard if he be not content to die. I knew and esteemed a person abroad, who used to say, a

man must be a mean wretch that desired to live after threescore years old. But so much, I doubt, is certain, that, in life, as in wine, he, that will drink it good, must not draw it to the dregs.

Where this happens, one comfort of age may be, that, whereas younger men are usually in pain, when they are not in pleasure, old men find a sort of pleasure, whenever they are out of pain. And, as young men often lose or impair their present enjoyments, by raving after what is to come, by vain hopes, or fruitless fears; so old men relieve the wants of their age, by pleasing reflexions upon what is past. Therefore men, in the health and vigour of their age, should endeavour to fill their lives with reading, with travel, with the best conversation, and the worthiest actions, either in their public or private stations; that they may have something agreeable left to feed on, when they are old, by pleasing remembrances.

But, as they are only the clean beasts which chew the cud, when they have fed enough; so they must be clean and virtuous men that can reflect, with pleasure, upon the past accidents or courses of their lives. Besides, men who grow old with good sense, or good fortunes, and good nature, cannot want the pleasure of pleasing others, by assisting with their gifts, their credit, and their advice, such as deserve it; as well as their care of children, kindness to friends, and bounty to servants.

But there cannot indeed live a more unhappy creature than an ill-natured old man, who is neither capable of receiving pleasures, nor sensible of doing them to others; and, in such a condition, it is time to leave them.

Thus have I traced, in this essay, whatever has fallen in my way or thoughts to observe concerning life and health, and which I conceived might be of any public use to be known or considered: the plainness wherewith it is written easily shews, there could be no other intention: and it may at least pass like a *Derbyshire* charm, which is used among sick cattle, with these words; if it does thee no good, it will do thee no harm.

To sum up all, the first principle of health and long life is derived from the strength of our race or our birth; which gave occasion to that saying, *gaudeant bene nati*: let them rejoice that are happily born. Accidents are not in our power to govern: so that the best cares or provisions for life and health, that are left us, consist in the discreet and temperate government of diet and exercise: in both which all excess is to be avoided, especially in the common use of wine; whereof the first glass may pass for health, the second for good humour, the

third for our friends; but the fourth is for our enemies.

For temperance in other kinds, or in general, I have given its character and virtues in the essay of *moza*, so as to need no more upon that subject here.

When, in default or despite of all these cares, or by effect of ill airs and seasons, acute or strong diseases may arise, recourse must be had to the best physicians that are in reach, whose success will depend upon thought and care, as much as skill. In all diseases of body or mind, it is happy to have an able physician for a friend, or a discreet friend for a physician; which is so great a blessing, that the wise man will have it to proceed only from God, where he says, *A faithful friend is the medicine of life, and he that fears the Lord shall find him.*⁹

John Dryden

1631-1700

FRENCH AND ENGLISH TRAGIC WRITERS¹

(From *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668)

"Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakespeare?"

"If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make every way regular, as easily as they; but whenever they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counterturns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous, why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit; and therefore 'tis a strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French.

⁹ *Eccles.*, vi., 16.

¹ In the prefatory note to this essay, Dryden tells us that its main purpose was "to vindicate the honour of our English writers from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them." The essay is in the form of a conversation between four gentlemen, whom Dryden calls *Eugenius*, *Crites*, *Lisideus*, and *Neander*, who have taken a barge and gone down the Thames towards Greenwich. *Eugenius* is Charles, Lord Buckhurst, *Crites* is Sir Robert Howard, *Lisideus* is Sir Charles Sedley, and *Neander* is Dryden himself. In the passage given above, *Neander* is replying to *Lisideus*, who has been speaking in praise of the French dramatists.

We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakespeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knit of the intrigues we have from Jonson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. Not to name our old comedies before Shakespeare, which were all writ in verse of six feet, or Alexandrines, such as the French now use, I can show in Shakespeare, many scenes of rhyme together, and the like in Ben Jonson's tragedies: in *Catiline* and *Sejanus* sometimes thirty or forty lines, I mean besides the Chorus, or the monologues; which by the way, showed Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you look upon his *Sad Shepherd*, which goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, which is for the most part rhyme, though not refined to that purity to which it hath since been brought. And these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

"But to return from whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama;—First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing, than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Scornful Lady*: but because (generally speaking), Shakespeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of Comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman*; of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe."

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman*, Eugenius, looking earnestly upon him; "I beseech you, Neander," said he, "gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all

writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him."

"I fear," replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw a little envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior."

"To begin then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches;² his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.*³

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eaton⁴ say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem; and in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

"Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study: Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to

¹ Puns.

² As much as the cypresses are wont (to lift their heads) among the plant viburnum. Virg. *Ecl.* i.

³ John Hales (1584-1656), a distinguished English scholar and divine, called the "Ever-memorable." He was a friend of Lord Falkland, Sir Henry Wotton, and Ben Jonson, and was made a fellow of Eton in 1613.

him;⁸ and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster*: for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection: what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's; the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

"As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the Drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law.

⁸ Epigram iv. To Francis Beaumont.

He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his serious plays: Perhaps too he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any where with the French can furnish us."

SHAKESPEARE

(From *Preface to Troilus and Cressida*, 1679)

If Shakespeare be allowed, as I think he must, to have made his characters distinct, it will easily be inferred that he understood the nature of the passions: because it has been proved already that confused passions make undistinguishable characters: yet I cannot deny that he has his failings; but they are not so much in the passions themselves, as in his manner of expression: he often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible. I will not say of so great a poet, that he distinguished not the blown puffy style from true sublimity; but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis.¹ It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks 'em necessary to raise it: but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin. I must be forced to give an example of expressing passion

¹ Here, the misuse of a word by employing it in a sense beyond its legitimate meaning.

figuratively; but that I may do it with respect to Shakespeare, it shall not be taken from anything of his: 'tis an exclamation against Fortune, quoted in his *Hamlet* but written by some other poet—

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! all you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and felleys from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of
Heav'n,
As low as to the fiends.

And immediately after, speaking of Hecuba, when Priam was killed before her eyes—

The mobbled queen
Threatening the flame, ran up and down
With bisson rheum; a clout about that head
Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins, 5
A blanket in th' alarm of fear caught up.
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom 20
steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have
pronounced;
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport 10
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made
(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
Would have made milch the burning eyes of
heaven,
And passion in the gods. 15

What a pudder is here kept in raising the expression of trifling thoughts! Would not a man have thought that the poet had been bound prentice to a wheelwright, for his first rant? and had followed a ragman, for the clout and blanket in the second? Fortune is painted on a wheel, and therefore the writer, in a rage, will have poetical justice done upon every member of that engine: after this execution, he bowls the nave down-hill, from Heaven, to the fiends (an unreasonable long mark, a man would think); 'tis well there are no solid orbs to stop it in the way, or no element of fire to consume it: but when it came to the earth, it must be monstrous heavy, 45 to break grounds as low as the centre. His making milch the burning eyes of heaven was a pretty tolerable flight too: and I think no man ever drew milk out of eyes before him: yet, to make the wonder greater, these eyes 50 were burning. Such a sight indeed were enough to have raised passion in the gods; but to excuse the effects of it, he tells you, perhaps they did not see it. Wise men would be glad to find a little sense couched under 55 all these pompous words; for bombast is commonly the delight of that audience which loves Poetry, but understands it not: and as commonly has been the practice of those

writers, who, not being able to infuse a natural passion into the mind, have made it their business to ply the ears, and to stun their judges by the noise. But Shakespeare does 5 not often thus; for the passions in his scene between Brutus and Cassius are extremely natural, the thoughts are such as arise from the matter, the expression of 'em not viciously figurative. I cannot leave this subject, before I do justice to that divine poet, by giving 10 you one of his passionate descriptions: 'tis of Richard the Second when he was deposed, and led in triumph through the streets of London by Henry of Bullingbrook: the painting 15 of it is so lively, and the words so moving, that I have scarce read anything comparable to it in any other language. Suppose you have seen already the fortunate usurper passing through the crowd, and followed by the shouts and acclamations of the people; and now behold King Richard entering upon the scene: consider the wretchedness of his condition, and his carriage in it; and refrain from pity, if you can—

As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's 5
eyes 30
Did scowl on Richard: no man cried, God save him!
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off, 35
His face still combating with tears and smiles
(The badges of his grief and patience), 11
That had not God (for some strong purpose) 40
steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have
melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him.

To speak justly of this whole matter: 'tis neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetic vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place; but 'tis a false measure of all these, something, which is like them, and is not them; 'tis the Bristol-stone¹ which appears like a diamond; 'tis an extravagant thought, instead of a sublime one; 'tis roaring madness, instead of vehemence; and a sound of words, instead of sense. If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombasts in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot: but I fear (at

¹ Small quartz crystals found near Bristol, and sometimes called "Bristol-diamonds."

least let me fear it for myself) that we, who ape his sounding words, have nothing of his thought but are all outside; there is not so much as a dwarf within our giant's clothes. Therefore, let not Shakespeare suffer for our sakes; 'tis our fault, who succeed him in an age which is more refined, if we imitate him so ill, that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our writings which in his was an imperfection.

For what remains, the excellency of that poet was, as I have said, in the more manly passions; Fletcher's in the softer: Shakespeare writ better betwixt man and man; Fletcher, betwixt man and woman: consequently, the one described friendship better; the other love: yet Shakespeare taught Fletcher to write love: and Juliet and Desdemona are originals. 'Tis true, the scholar had the softer soul; but the master had the kinder. Friendship is both a virtue and a passion essentially; love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by accident: good nature makes friendship; but effeminacy love. Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions; Fletcher a more confined and limited: for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly. To conclude all, he was a limb of Shakespeare.

I had intended to have proceeded to the last property of manners, which is, that they must be constant, and the characters maintained the same from the beginning to the end; and from thence to have proceeded to the thoughts and expressions suitable to a tragedy; but I will first see how this will relish with the age. It is, I confess, but cursorily written; yet the judgment, which is given here, is generally founded upon experience: but because many men are shocked at the name of rules, as if they were a kind of magisterial prescription upon poets, I will conclude with the words of Rapin, in his *Reflections* on Aristotle's work *Of Poetry*: "If the rules be well considered, we shall find them to be made only to reduce Nature into method, to trace her step by step, and not to suffer the least mark of her to escape us: 'tis only by these, that probability in fiction is maintained, which is the soul of poetry. They are founded upon good sense, and sound reason, rather than on authority; for though Aristotle and Horace are produced, yet no man must argue, that what they write is true, because they writ it; but 'tis evident, by the ridiculous mistakes and gross absurdities which have been made by those poets who have taken their fancy only

for their guide, that if this fancy be not regulated, it is a mere caprice, and utterly incapable to produce a reasonable and judicious poem."

POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER

(From Dryden's translation of Virgil, 1697)

10 What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me, by the lying character which has been given them of my morals. Yet steady to my principles, and not dispirited with my afflictions, 20 I have, by the blessing of God on my endeavours, overcome all difficulties, and, in some measure, acquitted myself of the debt which I owed the public when I undertook this work. In the first place, therefore, I thank- 25 fully acknowledge to the Almighty Power the assistance He has given me in the beginning, the prosecution, and conclusion of my present studies, which are more happily performed than I could have promised to myself, when I 30 laboured under such discouragements. For, what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after-ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native 35 country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood. Somewhat (give me leave to say) I have added to both of them in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers, which 40 were wanting, especially the last, in all our poets, even in those who, being endued with genius, yet have not cultivated their mother-tongue with sufficient care; or, relying on the beauty of their thoughts, have judged the 45 ornament of words, and sweetness of sound, unnecessary. One is for raking in Chaucer (our English Ennius¹) for antiquated words, which are never to be revived, but when sound or significancy is wanting in the present language. But many of his deserve not this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could revive them. Others have no ear for 55 verse, nor choice of words, nor distinction of thoughts; but mingle farthings with their gold, to make up the sum. Here is a field of

¹ *Quintus Ennius* (239-169 B. C.) was regarded by the Romans as the father of Latin poetry.

satire opened to me: but, since the Revolution, I have wholly renounced that talent. For who would give physic to the great, when he is uncalled?—to do his patient no good, and endanger himself for his prescription? Neither am I ignorant, but I may justly be condemned for many of those faults of which I have too liberally arraigned others.

. . . *Cynthia aurem*
Vellit, et admonuit . . .³

'Tis enough for me, if the Government will let me pass unquestioned. In the meantime, I am obliged, in gratitude, to return my thanks to many of them, who have not only distinguished me from others of the same party, by a particular exception of grace, but, without considering the man, have been bountiful to the poet: have encouraged Virgil to speak such English as I could teach him, and rewarded his interpreter for the pains he has taken in bringing him over into Britain, by defraying the charges of his voyage. Even Cerberus, when he had received the sop, permitted *Aeneas* to pass freely to Elysium. Had it been offered me, and I had refused it, yet still some gratitude is due to such who were willing to oblige me; but how much more to those from whom I have received the favours which they have offered to one of a different persuasion! Amongst whom I cannot omit naming the Earls of Derby and of Peterborough. To the first of these I have not the honour to be known; and therefore his liberality was as much unexpected as it was undeserved. The present Earl of Peterborough has been pleased long since to accept the tenders of my service: his favours are so frequent to me, that I receive them almost by prescription. No difference of interest or opinion has been able to withdraw his protection from me; and I might justly be condemned for the most unthankful of mankind, if I did not always preserve for him a most profound respect and inviolable gratitude. I must also add, that, if the last *Aeneid* shine amongst its fellows, 'tis owing to the commands of Sir William Trumbull, one of the principal Secretaries of State, who recommended it, as his favourite, to my care; and for his sake particularly, I have made it mine. For who would confess weariness, when he enjoined a fresh labour? I could not but invoke the assistance of a Muse, for this last office.

³ Apollo twitched my ear, and admonished me. Dryden translates the passage (Virg. *Ecl.*, v. 3):

"Apollo checked my pride, and bade me feed
My fattening flocks, nor dare beyond the reed."

Extremum hunc, Arethusa . . .
. . . *Negal quis carmina Gallo?*⁴

Neither am I to forget the noble present which was made me by Gilbert Dolben, Esq., the worthy son of the late Archbishop of York, who, when I began this work, enriched me with all the several editions of Virgil, and all the commentaries of those editions in Latin; amongst which, I could not but prefer the Dauphin's, as the last, the shortest, and the most judicious. Fabrini I had also sent me from Italy; but either he understands Virgil very imperfectly, or I have no knowledge of my author.

Being invited by that worthy gentleman, Sir William Bowyer, to Denham Court, I translated the first *Georgic* at his house, and the greatest part of the last *Aeneid*. A more friendly entertainment no man ever found. No wonder, therefore, if both those versions surpass the rest, and own the satisfaction I received in his converse, with whom I had the honour to be bred in Cambridge, and in the same college. The Seventh *Aeneid* was made English at Burleigh, the magnificent abode of the Earl of Exeter. In a village belonging to his family I was born; and under his roof I endeavoured to make that *Aeneid* appear in English with as much lustre as I could; though my author has not given the finishing strokes either to it, or to the Eleventh, as I perhaps could prove in both, if I durst presume to criticise my master.

By a letter from William Walsh, of Abberley, Esq. (who has so long honoured me with his friendship, and who, without flattery, is the best critic of our nation), I have been informed, that his Grace the Duke of Shrewsbury has procured a printed copy of the *Pastorals*, *Georgics*, and first six *Aeneids*, from my bookseller, and has read them in the country, together with my friend. This noble person having been pleased to give them a commendation, which I presume not to insert, has made me vain enough to boast of so great a favour, and to think I have succeeded beyond my hopes; the character of his excellent judgment, the acuteness of his wit, and his general knowledge of good letters, being known as well to all the world, as the sweetness of his disposition, his humanity, his easiness of access, and desire of obliging those who stand in need of his protection, are known to all who have approached him, and to me in particular, who have

⁴ Grant me this last labor, Arethusa . . . who could refuse songs to Gallus? (Virg. *Ecl.*, x., 1-54).

⁵ William Walsh (1663-1708), a critic and minor poet, is remembered as the friend, early adviser, and correspondent of Pope.

formerly had the honour of his conversation. Whoever has given the world the translation of part of the Third *Georgic*, which he calls *The Power of Love*, has put me to sufficient pains to make my own not inferior to his; as my Lord Roscommon's *Silenus* had formerly given me the same trouble. The most ingenious Mr. Addison of Oxford has also been as troublesome to me as the other two, and on the same account. After his *Bees*, my latter swarm is hardly worth the hiving. Mr. Cowley's *Praise of a Country Life* is excellent, but is rather an imitation of Virgil than a version. That I have recovered, in some measure, the health which I had lost by too much application to this work, is owing, next to God's mercy, to the skill and care of Dr. Guibbons and Dr. Hobbs, the two ornaments of their profession, whom I can only pay by this acknowledgement. The whole Faculty has always been ready to oblige me; and the only one of them, who endeavoured to defame me, had it not in his power. I desire pardon from my readers for saying so much in relation to myself, which concerns not them; and, with my acknowledgements to all my subscribers, have only to add, that the few Notes which follow are *par manière d'acquit*,⁵ because I had obliged myself by articles to do somewhat of that kind. These scattering observations are rather guesses at my author's meaning in some passages, than proofs that so he meant. The unlearned may have recourse to any poetical dictionary in English, for the names of persons, places, or fables, which the learned need not: but that little which I say is either new or necessary; and the first of these qualifications never fails to invite a reader, if not to please him.

Samuel Pepys

1633-1703

THE RETURN OF CHARLES II.

(From *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 1660)

23rd.¹ In the morning come infinity of people on board from the King to go along with him. . . . All day nothing but Lords and persons of honour on board, that we were exceeding full. Dined in a great deal of state,

⁵ By way of discharging (an obligation), or of a formal character.

¹ i. e., May 23, 1660. At this time Pepys was still young, poor, and comparatively unknown. The foundation of his fortune had, however, been laid by the kindness of his patron and kinsman Sir Edward Montague (afterwards Earl of Sandwich), through whose influence he had been made secretary to the generals on the English fleet, in March, 1660. With his patron, and the other members of the delegation, he went to the Hague to bring back Charles II. The passages here given relate to the King's embarkation at the Hague and his landing at Dover.

the Royale company by themselves in the coach,² which was a blessed sight to see. After dinner the King and Duke altered the name of some of the ships,³ viz. the *Nazeby* into *Charles*; the *Richard*, *James*; the *Speaker*, *Mary*; the *Dunbar* (which was not in company with us), the *Henry*; *Winsly*, *Happy Return*; *Wakefield*, *Richmond*; *Lambert*, the *Henrietta*; *Cheriton*, the *Speedwell*; *Bradford*, the *Successee*. That done, the Queen,⁴ *Princesse Royale*,⁵ and *Prince of Orange*, took leave of the King, and the Duke of York⁶ went on board the *London*, and the Duke of Gloucester, the *Swiftsure*. Which done, we weighed anchor, and with a fresh gale and most happy weather we set sail for England. All the afternoon the King walked here and there, up and down (quite contrary to what I thought him to have been) very active and stirring. Upon the quarter-deck he fell into discourse of his escape from Worcester,⁷ where it made me ready to weep to hear the stories that he told of his difficulties that he had passed through, as his travelling four days and three nights on foot, every step up to his knees in dirt, with nothing but a green coat and a pair of country breeches on, and a pair of country shoes that made him so sore all over his feet, that he could scarce stir. Yet he was forced to run away from a miller and other company, that took them for rogues. His sitting at table at one place, where the master of the house, that had not seen him in eight years, did know him, but kept it private; when at the same table there was one that had been of his own regiment at Worcester could not know him, but made him drink the King's health, and said that the King was at least four fingers higher than he. At another place he was by some servants of the house made to drink, that they might know that he was not a Roundhead, which they swore he was. In another place at his inn, the master of the house, as the King was standing with his hands upon the back of a chair by the fire-side, kneeled

² A room beneath the poop-deck in a man of war, usually occupied by the captain.

³ The reason for the change of name is obvious: but this purifying from Puritanic and embarrassing association has an element of humour. *Nazeby* and *Dunbar* were of course reminiscent of Puritan victories, while the *Richard* (presumably named after Cromwell's son), the *Speaker*, the *Lambert*, and the rest, bore names hardly less full of unpleasant suggestion to the ears of the Royalists.

⁴ Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James VI, of Scotland, and First of England, whose husband, Frederick became King of Bohemia. Shortly after, he was forced by reverses to fly with his family to Holland. Elizabeth returned to England after the Restoration of her nephew, where she died in 1662.

⁵ Mary, sister of Charles II, wife of William II, Prince of Orange, and mother of William III, of Orange, who became King of England in 1689.

⁶ Afterwards James II, of England.

⁷ i. e., after the crushing defeat of the Royal forces by Cromwell at the Battle of Worcester, 1651.

down and kissed his hand, privately, saying, that he would not ask him who he was, but bid God bless him whither he was going. Then the difficulties in getting a boat to get into France, where he was fain to plot with the master thereof to keep his design from the foreman and a boy (which was all the ship's company,) and so get to Fecamp in France. At Rouen he looked so poorly, that the people went into the rooms before he went away to see whether he had not stole something or other. . . . So to my cabin again, where the company still was, and were talking more of the King's difficulties; as how he was fain to eat a piece of bread and cheese out of a poor body's pocket; how, at a Catholique house, he was fain to lie in the priest's hole a good while in the house for his privacy. After that our company broke up. We have all the Lord Commissioners on board us, and many others. Under sail all night, and most glorious weather.

24th. Up, and made myself as fine as I could, with the linning stockings on and wide canons^a that I bought the other day at Hague. . . .

25th. By the morning we were come close to the land, and everybody made ready to get on shore. The King and the two Dukes did eat their breakfast before they went, and there being set some ship's diet, they did eat of nothing else but pease and pork, and boiled beef. Dr. Clerke, who eat with me, told me how the King had given 50£ to Mr. Shepley for my Lord's servants, and 500£ among the officers and common men of the ship. I spoke to the Duke of York about business, who called me Pepys by name, and upon my desire did promise me his future favour. Great expectation of the King's making some Knights, but there was none. About noon (though the brigantine that Beale made was there ready to carry him) yet he would go in my Lord's barge with the two Dukes. Our Capt'n. steered, and my Lord went along bare with him. I went, and Mr. Mansell, and one of the King's footmen, and a dog that the king loved, in a boat by ourselves, and so got on shore when the King did, who was received by General Monk with all imaginable love and respect at his entrance upon the land of Dover. Infinite the crowd of people and the horsemen, citizens, and noblemen of all sorts. The Mayor of the town come and give him his white staff, the badge of his place, which the King did give him again. The Mayor also presented him from the town a very rich Bible, which he took, and said it was the thing that he loved above all things in the world. A canopy was provided for him to stand under,

which he did, and talked awhile with General Monk and others, and so into a stately coach there set for him, and so away through the town towards Canterbury, without making any stay at Dover. The shouting and joy expressed by all is past imagination.

THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

(From the same, 1666)

2nd.¹ (Lord's Day). Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the city. So I rose, and slipped on my night-gown, and went to her window; and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest, but being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off: and so went to bed again, and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was, and further off. So to my closet to set things to rights, after yesterday's cleaning. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down with my heart full of trouble to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned down St. Magnes Church² and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat, and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan,³ already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river, or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till

¹ Sept. 2, 1666.

² *St. Magnus the Martyr*. This church was on the corner of Fish Street Hill and was very near to the London Bridge.

³ A well-known tavern not far from Old London Bridge.

^a "Ornamental rolls which terminated the breeches or hose at the knee." *Cent. Dict.*

the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys, till they burned their wings and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard,⁴ and the wind mighty high, and driving it into the city; and everything after so long a drouth proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things, the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs.—— lives, and whereof my old school-fellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned till it fell down: I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me, who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); and there up to the King's closet in the Chapel, where people come about me; and I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and the Duke of York what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down, nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him, that if he would have any more soldiers, he shall; and so did my Lord Arlington afterwards, as a great secret. Here meeting with Captain Cocke, I in his coach, which he lent me, and Creed with me to Paul's, and there walked along Watling-street, as well as I could, every creature coming away loaden with goods to save, and here and there sick people carried away in beds. Extraordinary good goods carried in carts and on backs. At last met by Lord Mayor in Canning-street, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message, he cried like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it." That he needed no more soldiers; and that, for himself, he must go and refresh himself, having been up all night. So he left me, and I him, and walked home; seeing people all almost dis-

tracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses too so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames-street: and warehouses of oil, and wines, and brandy, and other things. . . . Having seen as much as I could now, I away to White Hall by appointment, and there walked to St. James' Park, and there met my wife and Creed and Wood and his wife, and walked to my boat; and there upon the water again, and to the fire up and down, it still encreasing, and the wind great. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's faces in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire-drops. This is very true; so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water, we to a little ale-house on the Bankside,⁵ over against the Three Cranes, and there staid till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow, and as it grew darker, appeared more and more, and in corners and upon steeples, and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the city, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long; it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire, and flaming at once, and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruin. So home with a sad heart, and there find everybody discoursing and lamenting the fire!

THE LAST ENTRY IN PEPYS' DIARY

31st.¹ Up very betimes, and continued all the morning with W. Hewer, upon examining and stating my accounts, in order to the fitting myself to go abroad beyond sea, which the ill condition of my eyes and my neglect for a year or two hath kept me behind-hand in, and so as to render it very difficult now and troublesome to my mind to do it: but I this day made a satisfactory entrance therein. Had another meeting with the Duke of York at White Hall on yesterday's work, and made a good advance: and so being called by my wife, we to the Park, Mary Batelier, and a Dutch gentleman, a friend of hers, being with us. Thence to "The World's End," a drinking-

⁴ Formerly the headquarters in England of the Hanseatic League, and hence called the "Guildhall of the Germans." It was situated on the river-front west of London Bridge: the fire (which had begun east of the bridge, near Billingsgate) was therefore spreading westward.

⁵ On the southern, or Surrey side of the river.

¹ May 31st, 1669.

house by the Park; and there merry, and so home late. And thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my Journall, I being not able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand; and therefore, what ever comes of it, I must forbear: and therefore resolve from this time forward to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know; or if there be anything, I must endeavour to keep a margin in my book open, to add here and there a note in short-hand with my own hand. And so I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave; for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the God prepare me! S. P.

THE AGE OF POPE

Matthew Prior

1664-1721

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY FIVE YEARS OLD. MDCCIV

THE AUTHOR THEN FORTY

(From *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1709)

Lords, knights, and 'squires the numerous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen among the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obeyed.

Nor quality, nor reputation,
Forbid me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five years old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For, while she makes her silk-worm's beds,
With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads,
In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,
For though the strictest prudes should know
it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then, too, alas! when she shall tear
The lines some younger rival sends;
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained, (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love,
When she begins to comprehend it.

A BETTER ANSWER

Dear Chloe, how blubbered is that pretty face!
Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all un-
curled:

10 Pr'ythee quit this caprice; and (as old Falstaff
says),

Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this
world.

How cans't thou presume, thou hast leave
to destroy

The beauties, which Venus but lent to thy
keeping?

Those looks were designed to inspire love and
joy:

20 More ordinary eyes may serve people for
weeping.

To be vexed at a trifle or two that I writ,
Your judgment at once, and my passion you
wrong:

You take that for fact, which will scarce be
found wit:

Odds life! must one swear to the truth of a
song?

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write,
shows

The difference there is betwixt nature and
art:

I court others in verse; but I love thee in prose:
And they have my whimsies; but thou hast
my heart.

The god of us verse-men (you know, Child)
the sun,

How after his journeys he sets up his rest;
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run;
At night he reclines on his Thetis's breast.

20 So when I am wearied with wandering all day;
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way:
They were but my visits, but thou art my
home.

Then finish, dear Chloe, this pastoral war; 25
And let us like Horace and Lydia agree:
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,
As he was a poet sublimer than me.

Jonathan Swift

1667-1745

IN SICKNESS

(Written in Ireland in October, 1714)

'Tis true—then why should I repine
To see my life so fast decline?
But why obscurely here alone,
Where I am neither loved nor known?

My state of health none care to learn, 5
 My life is here no soul's concern;
 And those with whom I now converse
 Without a tear will tend my hearse.
 Removed from kind Arbuthnot's aid,¹
 Who knows his art but not his trade, 10
 Preferring his regard for me
 Before his credit or his fee.
 Some formal visits, looks, and words,
 What mere humanity affords,
 I meet, perhaps, from three or four 15
 From whom I once expected more,
 Which those who tend the sick for pay
 Can act as decently as they;
 But no obliging tender friend
 To help at my approaching end. 20
 My life is now a burden grown
 To others, ere it be my own.

Ye formal weepers for the sick,
 In your last offices be quick,
 And spare my absent friends the grief 25
 To hear, yet give me no relief;
 Expired to-day, intombed tomorrow,
 When known, will save a double sorrow.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

With a whirl of thought oppress'd,
 I sunk from reverie to rest.
 A horrid vision seiz'd my head,
 I saw the graves give up their dead!
 Jove, armed with terrors, bursts the skies, 5
 And thunder roars and lightning flies!
 Amaz'd, confus'd, its fate unknown,
 The world stands trembling at his throne!
 While each pale sinner hung his head,
 Jove, nodding, shook the heavens, and said: 10
 "Offending race of human kind,
 By nature, reason, learning, blind;
 You who, through frailty, stepp'd aside;
 And you, who never fell from pride:
 You who in different sects were sham'd, 15
 And come to see each other damn'd:
 (So some folk told you, but they knew
 No more of Jove's designs than you;)
 —The world's mad business now is o'er,
 And I resent these pranks no more.
 —I to such blockheads set my wit!
 I damn such fools!—Go, go, you're bit."

Joseph Addison

1672–1719

ODE. "THE SPACIOUS FIRMAMENT"

(From the *Spectator*, No. 465, 1712)

The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim:
 The unwearied sun from day to day 5
 Does his Creator's power display,
 And publishes to every land
 The work of an Almighty hand.

¹ A distinguished physician, and friend of Swift, Pope, etc. See Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, p. 304.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale, 10
 And nightly to the listening earth
 Repeats the story of her birth;
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets, in their turn,
 Confirm the tidings as they roll, 15
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in solemn silence, all
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
 What though nor real voice nor sound
 Amid their radiant orbs be found? 20
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing, as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is Divine."

CATO'S SOLILOQUY

(From *Cato*, 1713)

Cato. It must be so—Plato, thou reason'st well!—

Else, whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
 This longing after immortality?
 Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
 Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul 5
 Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
 'Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
 And intimates eternity to man.
 Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought! 10
 Through what variety of untried being,
 Through what new scenes and changes must we
 pass!
 The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before
 me;
 But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
 Here will I hold. If there's a power above us 15
 (And that there is all nature cries aloud
 Through all her works), he must delight in
 virtue;
 And that which he delights in must be happy.
 But when? or where?—This world was made for
 Cæsar. 19

I'm weary of conjectures—This must end 'em.
Laying his hand on his sword.

Thus am I doubly armed: my death and life,
 My bane and antidote are both before me:
 This in a moment brings me to an end;
 But this informs me I shall never die.
 The soul, secured in her existence, smiles 25
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
 Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements, 30
 The wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds.

What means this heaviness that hangs upon
 me?
 This lethargy that creeps through all my senses?
 Nature, oppressed and harassed out with
 care,
 Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour
 her, 35

That my awakened soul may take her flight.
Renewed in all her strength, and fresh with life,
An offering fit for heaven. Let guilt or fear
Disturb man's rest: Cato knows neither of 'em.
Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die. 40

Alexander Pope

1688-1744

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK¹

(Final version published 1717)

CANTO I

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing.—This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due;
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view;
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel

A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord? 10
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms, dwells such mighty rage?
Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,

And op'd those eyes that must eclipse the day;
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake, 15
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,

And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed 21
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head,
A youth more glitt'ring than a birth-night² beau,

(That ev'n in slumber caused her cheek to glow)
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say.

"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!
If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught;
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen, 31
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel-pow'rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flowers; 34

Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.

¹ This poem was written at the request of a Mr. Caryll. One Lord Petre had contrived to abstract a lock of Mistress Arabella Fermor's hair, and as a result, the families of the daring lord and the offended beauty had become estranged. Mr. Caryll, anxious to restore peace, asked Pope to write a poem which should suggest to both sides the absurdity of quarreling over so trifling an affair.

² The dressing at the court balls given to celebrate the birthdays of members of the royal family was unusually splendid.

Some secret truths, from learned pride concealed,
To maids alone and children are revealed.
What though no credit doubting wits may give?

The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40
Know then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:

These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box,³ and hover round the ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air, 45
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,

That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.

Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55
And love of ombre, after death survive.
For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements, their souls retire:
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a salamander's name. 60
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair, 65
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

"Know further yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced:
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please. 70

What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,

The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires, 75

When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though honour is the word with men below.

Some nymphs there are, too conscious of
their face,

For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace. 80
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,

When offers are disdained, and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,

And garters, stars, and coronets appear, 85
And in soft sounds, 'Your Grace' salutes their ear.

'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,

³ "The Box, at the theatre, and the Ring in Hyde Park are frequently mentioned as the two principal places for the display of beauty and fashion." (Elwin).

Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau. 90

"Oft," when the world imagine women stray,
The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way;

Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new. 95
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?

When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,

If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving toypshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive, 101

Beaus banish beaus, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.

"Of these am I, who thy protection claim, 105
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star

I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend. 110
But heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the sylph, oh pious maid, beware!

This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!"

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long, 115

Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.

'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours, were no sooner read,

But all the vision vanished from thy head. 120
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,

Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs.

A heav'nly image in the glass appears, 125
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.

Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear; 130
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box,
The tortoise here and elephant unite, 135
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.

Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billets-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms, 140

Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.

The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,

Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown; 147
And Betty's praised for labors not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fairy nymphs, and well-dressed youths around
her shone, 5

But ev'ry eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those. 10

Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to
hide; 16

If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung
behind 20

In equal curls, and well conspired to deck,
With shining ringlets, the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray, 25
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admired;

He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired. 30
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r adored, 36
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves; 40
With tender billets-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.

Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his
pray'r, 45

The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die; 50
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the sylph—with careful thoughts oppressed,

Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.

He summons strait his denizens of air; 55
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold; 60
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light;

Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies, 65
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes;
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.

Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd; 70
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!

Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned 75

By laws eternal to th' aerial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,

Or roll the planets through the boundless sky; 80
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main, 85
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.

"Our humbler province is to tend the fair, 91
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprisoned essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs, 95
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay, oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow. 100

"This day, black omens threat the brightest fair

That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapped in night.

Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw; 106
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall. 110

Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;

And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite lock; 115
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

"To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops and armed with ribs of whale;

Form a strong line about the silver bound, 121
And guard the wide circumference around.

"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins, 125

Be stopped in vials, or transfix'd with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged, whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or alum styptics with contracting pow'r, 131
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd flower;
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow, 135
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"

He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend:
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear; 140
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flow'rs,

Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,

There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton⁴ takes its name.

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home; 6
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

Higher the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste a while the pleasures of a court; 10
In various talk th' instructive hours they pass'd;
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes; 15
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray; 20
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,

And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites, 25
Burns to encounter two advent'rous knights,

⁴ The Royal palace of Hampton Court.

At ombre^a singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.

Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,

Each band the number of the sacred nine. 30

Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aerial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:

First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,
Then each according to the rank they bore;

For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race, 35
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold four kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;

And four fair queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,

Th' expressive emblem of their softer pow'r; 40
Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band;

Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,

Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skillful nymph reviews her force with care:

Let spades be trumps! she said, and trumps
they were. 46

Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.

Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the

board. 50

As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant field.

Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.

With his broad sabre next, a chief in years, 55
The hoary majesty of spades appears,

Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,
The rest his many coloured robe concealed.

The rebel knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage. 60

Ev'n mighty Pam,^a that kings and queens o'er-
threw,

And mowed down armies in the fights of loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,

Falls undistinguished by the victor spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield; 65

Now to the baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,

Th' imperial consort of the crown of spades.
The club's black tyrant first her victim died,

Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous
pride: 70

What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;

That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?

The baron now his diamonds pours apace! 75
Th' embroidered king who shows but half his

face,
And his refulgent queen, with pow'rs combined,

Of broken troops, an easy conquest find.
Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,

With throngs promiscuous strew the level green.

^a A game of cards of Spanish origin played by three persons, the one naming the trump being opposed to the other two. The names of some of the cards are given in the passage following.

^b The highest card in the game of Loo.

Thus when dispersed a routed army runs, 81
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierced battalions disunited fall, 85
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them

all.
The knave of diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the queen of

hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look; 90

She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.⁷

And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate:

An ace of hearts steps forth: the king unseen 95
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive

queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.

The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply. 100

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.

Sudden these honours shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is
crowned, 105

The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of japan they raise

The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,

While China's earth receives the smoking
tide: 110

At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.

Straight hover round the fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,

Some o'er her lap their careful plumes dis-
played, 115

Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,

And see through all things with his half-shut
eyes)

Sent up in vapours to the baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain. 120

Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate!

Changed to a bird, and sent to fit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!

But when to mischief mortals bend their
will,

How soon they find fit instrument of ill! 126

Just then, Clariissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:

So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight. 130

He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;

This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.

Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair; 135
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the

hair;

⁷ Failure to secure the requisite tricks.

And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;

Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.

Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought; 140

As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind;

Sudden he viewed in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.

Amazed, confused, he found his pow'r expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired. 146

The peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide

T' inclose the lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,

A wretched sylph too fondly interposed; 150
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,

(But airy substance soon unites again.)
The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever

From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes, 155

And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,

When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;

Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust, and painted fragments lie! 160

"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,"

(The victor cried,) "the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,

Or in a coach and six the British fair,
As long as Atalantis⁶ shall be read, 165

Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,

When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,

So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!" 170

What time would spare, from steel receives its date,

And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,

And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,

And hew triumphal arches to the ground. 176
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hair should feel

The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel?

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
And secret passions laboured in her breast.

Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,

Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss, 5
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,

Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,

E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravished hair. 10

⁶ A popular book of the day.

For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew,

And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,

As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene, 15

Repaired to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,

And in a vapour reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,

The dreaded east is all the wind that blows, 20
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,

And screened in shades from day's detested glare,

She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne; alike in place, 25

But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,

Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons,

Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons. 30
There Affection, with a sickly mien,

Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practised to lisp and hang the head aside,

Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe, 35

Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,

When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant vapour o'er the palace flies;

Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise; 40
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,

Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,

Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires;
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes, 45

And crystal domes, and angels in machines.
Unnumbered throngs on ev'ry side are seen,

Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,

One bent; the handle this, and that the spout;
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod walks; 51

Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pye talks;
Men prove with child, as pow'rful fancy works,

And maids turned bottles call aloud for corks.
Safe past the gnome through this fantastic band, 55

A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the pow'r—"Hail, wayward queen!

Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen;
Parent of vapours and of female wit,

Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit, 60
On various tempers act by various ways,

Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,

And send the godly in a pet to pray;
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains, 65

And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But, oh! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace,

Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,

Like citron-waters⁹ matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game; . . .
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude, 73
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease, 75
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could
ease,

Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

The goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his
pray'r. 80

A wond'rous bag with both her hands she
binds,

Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of
tongues,

A phial next she fills with fainting fears, 85
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to
day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he
found,

Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound. 90
Full o'er her heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the furies issued at the vent.

Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.

"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and
cried, 95

(While Hampton's echoes "Wretched maid!"
replied.)

"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with tort'ring irons wreathed around?
For this with filets strained your tender
head,

And bravely bore the double loads of lead? 102
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,

While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine 105

Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,

Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,

And all your honour in a whisper lost! 110
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?

'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,

Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,

On that rapacious hand for ever blaze? 116
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,

And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;¹⁰
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,

Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs, 121

And bids her beau demand the precious hairs:

⁹ A drink composed of wine with the rind of lemons and
citrons in it.

¹⁰ i. e., within the sound of the bells of St. Mary le Bow,
an old and famous church in the heart of London. In
Pope's time the old part of London in the vicinity of this
church was avoided by fashion and the "wits."

(Sir Plume,¹¹ of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case, 126
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what
the devil!

Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be
civil.

Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair!"—he spoke, and rapped his
box. 130

"It grieves me much," replied the peer
again,

"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain,
But by this lock, this sacred lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew, 135
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."

He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph
spread

The long-contended honours of her head. 140
But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;

He breaks the phial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drowned in
tears;

On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said.

"For ever cursed be this detested day, 147
Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl
away!

Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!

Yet am not I the first mistaken maid, 151
By love of courts to num'rous ills betrayed.

Oh had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle, or distant northern land,

Where the gilt chariot never marks the way, 155
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste
bohea!¹²

There kept my charms concealed from mortal
eye,

Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to
roam?

Oh had I stayed, and said my pray'rs at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell,

Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box
fell; 162

The tott'ring china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most un-
kind!

A sylph too warned me of the threats of fate, 165
In mystic visions, now believed too late!

See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine
spares:

These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck; 170

The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellows' fate foresees its own;

¹¹ Sir George Brown.

¹² The name given to the finest tea of that time. Pro-
nounced *Bohay*, as tea was pronounced *tay*.

Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands.
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands,
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize 175
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears,
But fate and Jove had stopped the baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain, 5
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
"Say, why are beauties praised and honoured
most,

The wise man's passion, and the vain man's
toast? 10

Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-
gloved beaux,

Why bows the side-box from¹³ its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains, 15
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains;
That men may say, when we the front box
grace,

Behold the first in virtue as in face!
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age
away; 20

Who would not scorn what housewife's cares
produce,

Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay, 25
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour, still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scold-
ing fail. 32

Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the
soul."

So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude. 36
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones
crack; 40

Heroes' and heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And base and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.

So when bold Homer makes the gods en-
gage, 45

And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:

¹³ In the theatres the gentlemen occupied the side, and the ladies, the front boxes.

Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all
around,

Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps re-
sound: 50

Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground
gives way,

And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clapped his glad wings, and sate to view the
fight.

Propped on their bodkin spears, the sprites
survey 55

The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enraged Thalestris
flies,

And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witting perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song. 60

"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upward cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his
last.

Thus on Meander's flow'ry margin lies 65
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa
down,

Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again. 70

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to
side;

At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

See fierce Belinda on the baron flies, 75
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.

But this bold lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued; 80
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.

Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose. 86

"Now meet thy fate," incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.

(The same, his ancient personage to deck, 89
Her great-great-grand sire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin¹⁴ graced her mother's hairs, 95
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

"Boast not my fall," he cried, "insulting foel
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low:
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind;
All that I dread is leaving you behind! 100
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."

"Restore the lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.

¹⁴ A large ornamental hairpin.

Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain 105
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.

But see how oft' ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
www.libtool.com.cn

In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain: 110
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees: with heav'n who can contest?

Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.

There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases, 115
And beaus' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows, and death-bed alms are found,

And lovers' hearts with ends of ribbon bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs.
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs, 120
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes:
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew, 125

To Proculus alone confessed in view)
A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with disheveled light.
The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies, 131
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,

And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the bless'd lover shall for Venus take, 135
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;¹⁶
This Partridge¹⁶ soon shall view in cloudless skies,

When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall fore-doom

The fate of Louis,¹⁷ and the fall of Rome. 140
Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,

Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye, 145
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,

And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

¹⁶ A "small oblong piece of water near the Pimlico gate of St. James' Park." Croker.

¹⁷ John Partridge, an almanac maker and astrologer, noted for his ridiculous predictions; v. p. 321, and notes 1 and 3.

¹⁸ Louis XIV, King of France, 1643-1715.

ELEGY TO THE MEMORY OF AN UN-FORTUNATE LADY

(1717)

What beck'ning ghost, along the moon-light shade

Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis shel—but why that bleeding bosom gored?
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?

Oh ever beauteous, ever friendly! tell, 5
Is it, in heav'n, a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?

Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die? 10
Why bade ye else, ye pow'rs! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?

Ambition first sprung from your blessed abodes;
The glorious fault of angels and of gods:

Thence to their images on earth it flows, 15
And in the breasts of kings and heroes glows.
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
Dull sullen prisoners in the body's cage:

Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres; 20
Like Eastern kings a lazy state they keep,
And, close confined to their own palace, sleep.

From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)

Fate snatched her early to the pitying sky.
As into air the purer spirits flow, 25

And se'rate from their kindred dregs below;
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou mean deserter of thy brother's blood! 30
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death;
Cold is that breast which warmed the world before,

And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.
Thus, if eternal justice rules the ball, 35
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall:

On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates;
Their passengers shall stand, and pointing say,
(While the long fun'ral blacken all the way) 40
"Lo! these were they, whose souls the furies steeled,

"And cursed with hearts unknowing how to yield."

Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learned to glow
For others' good, or melt at others' woe. 46

What can atone, oh ever-injured shade!
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier. 50

By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned!

What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe 57
To midnight dances, and the public show?

What though no weeping loves thy ashes
grace,

Nor polished marble emulate thy face? 60

What though no sacred earth allow thee room,

Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb?

Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be
dressed,

And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:

There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,

There the first roses of the year shall blow; 66

While angels with their silver wings o'ershade

The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,

What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and
fame. 70

How loved, how honoured once, avails thee not,

To whom related, or by whom begot;

A heap of dust alone remains of thee;

'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!

Poets themselves must fall like those they

sung, 75

Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful
tongue.

Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,

Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;

Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,

And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,

Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er, 81

The muse forgot, and thou beloved no more!

Let not this weak, unknowing hand 25

Presume thy bolts to throw,

And deal damnation round the land

On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart

Still in the right to stay: 30

If I am wrong, oh teach my heart

To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,

Or impious discontent,

At aught thy wisdom has denied, 35

Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,

To hide the fault I see;

That mercy I to others show,

That mercy show to me. 40

Mean though I am, not wholly so,

Since quickened by thy breath:

Oh lead me wheresoe'er I go,

Through this day's life or death.

This day be bread and peace my lot: 45

All else beneath the sun,

Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,

And let thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,

Whose altar, earth, sea, skies, 50

One chorus let all being raise;

All nature's incense rise!

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT¹

BEING THE PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES

(Published 1735)

P. Shut, shut the door, good John!² fatigued I
said:

Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.

The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,

All Bedlam, or Parnassus is let out:

Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand, 5

They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

What walls can guard me, or what shades can
hide?

They pierce my thickets, through my grot³ they
glide,

By land, by water, they renew the charge,

They stop the chariot, and they board the
barge. 10

No place is sacred, not the church is free,

Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:

Then from the Mint⁴ walks forth the man of
rhyme,

Happy! to catch me, just at dinner-time.

¹ A Scotch physician, wit, and author, who had become physician in ordinary to the Queen. He was one of the inner circle of London wits, intimate with Pope, Swift, Gay, and others. As the poem intimates, he was Pope's own physician.

² Pope's faithful servant, John Searle.

³ Pope's famous grotto at Twickenham was really a tunnel, adorned with pieces of spar, mirrors, etc., leading under a public road that intersected the poet's grounds.

⁴ A district in Southwark, so called from a *Mint* established there by Henry VIII. As persons were exempt from arrest within this district, it became a refuge for insolvent debtors, criminals and poor authors.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

(Published 1738)

Father of all! in ev'ry age,

In ev'ry clime adored,

By saint, by savage, and by sage,

Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood! 5

Who all my sense confined

To know but this, that Thou art good,

And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me in this dark estate,

To see the good from ill: 10

And binding nature fast in fate,

Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,

Or warns me not to do,

This teach me more than hell to shun, 15

That, more than heav'n pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives

Let me not cast away;

For God is paid when man receives:

T' enjoy is to obey. 20

Yet not to earth's contracted span

Thy goodness let me bound,

Or think Thee Lord alone of man,

When thousand worlds are round:

Is there a parson, much be-mus'd⁵ in beer,
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer; 16
A clerk, foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza, when he should engross?
Is there, who, locked from ink and paper,
scrawls

With desperate charcoal round his darkened
walls! 20

All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur,⁶ whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damned works the
cause:

Poor Cornus⁷ sees his frantic wife elope, 25
And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.

Friend to my life! (which did not you pro-
long,

The world had wanted many an idle song),
What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love? 30
A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped,⁸
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie:
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace, 35
And to be grave, exceeds all power of face.

I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel—"Keep your piece nine
years." 40

"Nine years!" cried he, who, high in Drury
Lane,⁹

Lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken
pane,

Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term
ends,¹⁰

Obliged by hunger and request of friends:
"The piece you think is incorrect? why take
it; 45

I'm all submission; what you'd have it, make
it."

Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.

Pitholeon¹¹ sends to me: "You know his
grace,

I want a patron; ask him for a place." 50
Pitholeon libelled me—"but here's a letter

Informs you, sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Informs you refuse him? Curl!¹² invites to dine;
He'll write a journal, or he'll turn divine."

Bless me! a packet. "'Tis a stranger sues, 55
A virgin tragedy, an orphan Muse."

⁵ Befogged, muddled.

⁶ Arthur Moore, a prominent man in politics and society. His son was a dissipated fop who had excited Pope's resentment.

⁷ Presumably, Lord Robert Walpole.

⁸ Ruined, undone.

⁹ A fashionable quarter in the days of the Stuarts, it had become the abode of vice, poverty, and poor authors even before Pope's time.

¹⁰ i. e., before the end of the Trinity Term of the London Courts, which about coincided with the end of the London Season.

¹¹ Referred to by Horace as a poet who gloried in mixing Greek and Latin in his epigrams.

¹² A bookseller with whom Pope was on bad terms for twenty years.

If I dislike it, "Furies, death, and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the stage."

There (thank my stars) my whole commission
ends,

The players and I are, luckily, no friends. 60
Fired that the house reject him, "'Sdeath I'll
print it,

And shame the fools—your interest, sir, with
Lintot." 13

Lintot, dull rogue, will think your price too
much:

"Not, sir, if you revise it, and retouch."
All my demurs but double his attacks: 65

At last he whispers, "Do; and we go snacks."
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door: 67

"Sir, let me see your works and you no
more." . . .

One dedicates in high heroic prose, 109
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:

One from all Grub Street!¹⁴ will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.

This prints my letters, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, "Subscribe, subscribe!"

There are who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace, and, though lean, am
short.

Ammon's great son¹⁵ one shoulder had too
high,— 117

Such Ovid's nose,—and, "sir, you have an eye."
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see

All that disgraced my betters met in me. 120
Say, for my comfort, languishing in bed,

"Just so immortal Maro¹⁶ held his head:"
And, when I die, be sure you let me know

Great Homer died three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown

Dipped me in ink, my parents', or my own? 126
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,

I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,

No duty broke, no father disobeyed: 130
The muse but served to ease some friend, not
wife,

To help me through this long disease, my life;
To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care, 133

And teach the being you preserved to
bear. . . .

Soft were my numbers; who could take
offence 147

While pure description held the place of
sense? . . .

Did some more sober critic come abroad— 157
If wrong, I smiled; if right, I kissed the rod.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense. 160

Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite. . . .

Were others angry—I excused them too; 173
Well might they rage, I gave them but their
due.

A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find; 175
But each man's secret standard in his mind,

¹³ Bernard Lintot, a leading bookseller, whom Pope at-
tacks in the *Dunciad*.

¹⁴ A street frequented by obscure authors.

¹⁵ Alexander the Great, who boasted that he was son
of the Egyptian god Ammon.

¹⁶ Virgil.

That casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
 This, who can gratify, for who can guess?
 The bard¹⁷ whom pilfered Pastorals renown,
 Who turns a Persian tale for half-a-crown, 180
 Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
 And strains from hard-bound brains, eight lines
 a-year;

He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
 Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
 And he, who now to sense, now nonsense lean-
 ing, 185

Means not, but blunders round about a mean-
 ing;

And he, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
 It is not poetry but prose run mad:

All these, my modest satire bade translate,
 And owned that nine such poets made a Tate.¹⁸
 How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and
 chafe! 191

And swear, not Addison¹⁹ himself was safe.

Peace to all such! but were there one whose
 fires

True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
 Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
 And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
 Should such a man, too fond to rule alone, 197
 Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
 View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
 And hate for arts that caused himself to rise; 200
 Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
 And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
 Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike,
 Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike, 205
 Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
 A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
 Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
 And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;

Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
 And sit attentive to his own applause; 210
 While wits and templars every sentence raise,
 And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
 Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
 Who would not weep, if Atticus where he?

"IN VAIN, IN VAIN"

(From *The Dunciad*,¹ Bk. IV., 1742)

In vain, in vain, the all-composing Hour
 Resistless falls: the Muse obeys the Pow'r.
 She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
 Of *Night* primaeval and of *Chaos* old! 630
 Before her, *Fancy's* gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying Rain-bows die away.
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.

¹⁷ i. e., Ambrose Philips (1675?–1749), a poet, and one of Pope's many enemies.

¹⁸ Nahum Tate (1652–1715), succeeded Shadwell as poet laureate in 1692.

¹⁹ This concluding passage refers to Addison.

¹ Pope made many enemies, and while the *Dunciad*, or epic of Dunces, is one of the most famous and brilliant of English satires, it is also a malicious and too often unworthy attack upon Pope's literary contemporaries. In the first three books (1728), the prize for dullness is given to Lewis Theobald, an early editor of Shakespeare, but in a fourth book, added in 1742, Pope's anger led him to depose Theobald and put Colley Cibber in his place.

As one by one, at dread Medea's strain, 635
 The sick'ning stars fade off th'ethereal plain;
 As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand oppress,
 Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
 Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
 Art after Art goes out, and all is Night. 640
 See skulking *Truth* to her old cavern fled,
 Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,
 Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of *Metaphysic* begs defense, 645
 And *Metaphysic* calls for aid on *Sense*!
 See *Mystery* to *Mathematics* fly!
 In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares *Morality* expires. 650
 For public Flame, nor *private*, dares to shine;
 Nor *human* Spark is left, nor Glimpse *divine*!
 Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
 Light dies before thy uncreating word;
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall 655
 And universal Darkness buries All!

AN ESSAY ON MAN,¹

IN FOUR EPISTLES

TO

HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE

(Selections)

Written in the Year 1732

EPISTLE I

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things
 To low ambition and the pride of kings.
 Let us, since life can little more supply
 Than just to look about us and to die,
 Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man; 5
 A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
 A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous
 shoot;

Or garden tempting with forbidden fruit.
 Together let us beat this ample field,
 Try what the open, what the covert yield; 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore,
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
 Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
 And catch the manners living as they rise;
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;
 But vindicate the ways of God to man. 16

Say first, of God above or man below,
 What can we reason but from what we know?
 Of man, what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
 Through worlds unnumbered though the God
 be known,

'Tis ours to trace Him only in our own.
 He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,

¹ The *Essay on Man* is a versified treatise in four Epistles, on the moral order of the world. The argument is supposed to have been supplied to Pope by his friend Lord Bolingbroke, to whom the work is addressed.

Observe how system into system runs, 25
 What other planets circle other suns,
 What varied being peoples every star,
 May tell why Heaven has made us as we are.
 But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Looked through, or can a part contain the
 whole?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
 And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst
 thou find, 35

Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
 First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
 Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade! 40
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above
 Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!

Of systems possible, if 'tis confessed
 That wisdom infinite must form the best, 45
 Where all must full or not coherent be,
 And all that rises rise in due degree,
 Then, in the scale of reasoning life, 'tis plain
 There must be somewhere such a rank as man:
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
 Is only this, if God has placed him wrong. 50

Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.

In human works, though labored on with
 pain,
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose
 gain;

In God's, one single can its end produce; 55
 Yet serves to second too some other use.

So man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man
 restrains

His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the
 clod,

Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god;
 Then shall man's pride and dullness compre-
 hend 65

His actions, ' passions', being's, use and end;
 Why doing, suff'ring, checked, impelled; and
 why

This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heaven in
 fault;

Say rather man's as perfect as he ought: 70
 His knowledge measured to his state and place,
 His time a moment, and a point his space.

If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
 The blest to-day is as completely so, 75
 As who began a thousand years ago.

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of
 fate,

All but the page prescribed, their present state;

From brutes what men, from men what spirits
 know;

Or who could suffer being here below? 80

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?

Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.

Oh blindness to the future! kindly given, 85
 That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven:
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,

A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,

And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90
 Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions
 soar;

Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.
 What future bliss He gives not thee to know,

But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast; 95

Man never is, but always to be, blest.
 The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,

Rests and expatiates in a life to come. *Line*
Medium
Page

Lol the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind; 100

His soul proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk or milky way;

Yet simple Nature to his hope has given,
 Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler
 heaven; ✓

Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
 Some happier island in the watery waste. 105

Where slaves once more their native land be-
 hold,

No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for
 gold.

To be, contents his natural desire;
 He asks no angel's wings, no seraph's fire; 110

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
 Weigh thy opinion against Providence;

Call imperfection what thou fanciest such, 115
 Say, Here He gives too little, there too much!
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,

Yet cry, If man's unhappy, God's unjust;
 If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,

Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120
 Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge His justice, be the god of God.

In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
 All quit their sphere and rush into the skies!

Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
 Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
 Aspiring to be gods if angels fell,

Aspiring to be angels men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert the laws

Of order, sins against the Eternal Cause. 130

Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for
 mine!

For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,
 Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;

Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew, 135
 The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;

For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies!" 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep

Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No," 'tis replied, "the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws: 146
The exceptions few; some change since all began;

And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do less? 150
As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires:
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men forever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design, 155

Why then a Borgia² or a Catiline?³
Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,

Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,

Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon⁴ loose to scourge mankind? 160

From pride, from pride our very reasoning springs;

Account for moral, as for natural things:
Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit?

In both to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discomposed the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life. 170
The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,

And little less than angel, would be more!
Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears 175

To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use, all creatures if he call,

Say what their use, had he the powers of all:
Nature to these without profusion kind,

The proper organs, proper powers assigned; 180
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force:

All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate:

Each beast, each insect happy in its own: 185
Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?

Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing, if not blessed with all?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find),

Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
No powers of body or of soul to share,

But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?

For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics given, 195

To inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,

To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,

Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200
If Nature thundered in his opening ears,

And stunned him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heaven had left him still

The whispering zephyr and the purling rill!
Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.

Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass;

What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:

Of smell, the headlong lioness between, 213
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
To that which warbles through the vernal wood!

The spider's touch how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:

In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew?

How instinct varies in the groveling swine, 221
Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with thine!

'Twixt that and reason, what a nice barrier!
Forever separate, yet for ever near!

Remembrance and reflection, how allied; 225
What thin partitions sense from thought divide;

And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass the insuperable line!

Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230

The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one?

See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,

All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high progressive life may go! 235

Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,

Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,

No glass can reach; from infinite to thee, 240
From thee to nothing. On superior powers

Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,

Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:

From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

² Cæsar Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI. He was a monster of wickedness.

³ A well-known conspirator.

⁴ Alexander the Great. Cf. p. 305, n. 15.

And if each system in gradation roll 247
 Alike essential to the amazing whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
 Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
 Heaven's whole foundations to their center nod,
 And Nature tremble to the throne of God! 256
 All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—Oh! madness! pride! impiety!

What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head? 260
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another in this general frame;
 Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains 265
 The great directing Mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
 That, changed through all, and yet in all the
 same,
 Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame, 270
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 276
 As full, as perfect in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
 To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

Cease then, nor Order imperfection name:
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
 Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.

Submit: in this or any other sphere, 285
 Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear;
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 All nature is but art unknown to thee;
 All chance, direction which thou cast not see;
 All discord, harmony not understood; 291
 All partial evil, universal good;
 And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

John Gay

1688–1732

FABLE XVIII

THE PAINTER WHO PLEADED NOBODY AND EVERYBODY

(From *Fables*, 1727)

Lest men suspect your tale untrue,
 Keep probability in view.
 The traveller leaping o'er those bounds,
 The credit of his book confounds.

Who with his tongue hath armies routed, 5
 Makes ev'n his real courage doubted.
 But flattery never seems absurd;
 The flatter'd always take your word:
 Impossibilities seem just:
 They take the strongest praise on trust. 10
 Hyperboles, though ne'er so great,
 Will still come short of self-conceit.

So very like a Painter drew,
 That every eye the picture knew;
 He hit complexion, feature, air, 15
 So just, the life itself was there.
 No flattery with his colours laid,
 To bloom restor'd the faded maid;
 He gave each muscle all its strength;
 The mouth, the chin, the nose's length; 20
 His honest pencil touch'd with truth,
 And mark'd the date of age and youth.

He lost his friends, his practice fail'd;
 Truth should not always be reveal'd;
 In dusty piles his pictures lay, 25
 For no one sent the second pay.
 Two bustos,¹ fraught with every grace,
 A Venus' and Apollo's face,
 He plac'd in view; resolv'd to please,
 Who ever sat he drew from these, 30
 From these corrected every feature,
 And spirited each awkward creature.

All things were set; the hour was come,
 His palette ready o'er his thumb;
 My Lord appear'd; and, seated right, 35
 In proper attitude and light,
 The Painter look'd, he sketch'd the piece,
 Then dipt his pencil, talk'd of Greece,
 Of Titian's tints, of Guido's air;
 "Those eyes, my Lord, the spirit there, 40
 Might well a Raphael's hand require,
 To give them all the native fire;
 The features, fraught with sense and wit,
 You'll grant are very hard to hit:
 But yet with patience you shall view, 45
 As much as paint and art can do."

Observe the work. My Lord replied,
 "Till now I thought my mouth was wide;
 Besides, my nose is somewhat long;
 Dear, sir, for me, 'tis far too young!" 50
 "Oh! pardon me, (the artist cried)
 In this we Painters must decide.
 The piece ev'n common eyes must strike,
 I warrant it extremely like."

My Lord examin'd it a-new; 55
 No looking-glass seem'd half so true.
 A lady came, with borrow'd grace,
 He from his Venus form'd her face.
 Her lover prais'd the Painter's art;
 So like the picture in his heart! 60
 To every age some charm he lent;
 Ev'n beauties were almost content.

Through all the town his art they prais'd;
 His custom grew, his price was rais'd.
 Had he the real likeness shown, 65
 Would any man the picture own?
 But when thus happily he wrought,
 Each found the likeness in his thought.

¹ Busts.

ON A LAP DOG

Shock's fate I mourn; poor Shock is now no more!

Ye Muses! mourn, ye Chambermaids! deplore.
Unhappy Shock! Yet more unhappy fair,
Doom'd to survive thy joy and only care.

Thy wretched fingers now no more shall deck;
And tie the favorite ribband round his neck;
No more thy hand shall smooth his glossy hair,

And comb the wavings of his pendent ear.
Let cease thy flowing grief, forsaken maid!
All mortal pleasures in a moment fade: 10

Our surest hope is in an hour destroy'd,
And love, best gift of Heaven, not long enjoy'd.

Methinks I see her frantic with despair,
Her streaming eyes, wrung hands, and flowing hair;

Her Mechlin pinnars,¹ rent, the floor bestrow, 15
And her torn face gives real signs of woe.

Hence, Superstition! that tormenting guest,
That haunts with fancied fears the coward breast;

No dread events upon this fate attend,
Stream eyes no more, no more thy tresses rend.
Though certain omens oft forwarn a state, 21

And dying lions show the monarch's fate,
Why should such fears bid Celia's sorrow rise?
For when a lap dog falls, no lover dies.

Cease, Celia, cease; restrain thy flowing tears, 25

Some warmer passion will dispel thy cares.
In man you'll find a more substantial bliss,
More grateful toying and a sweeter kiss.

He's dead. Oh! lay him gently in the ground!
And may his tomb be by this verse renown'd. 30
Here Shock, the pride of all his kind, is laid,
Who fawn'd like man, but ne'er like man betray'd.

BLACK EYED SUSAN

All in the Downs the fleet was moored,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When Black-eyed Susan came aboard,

"Oh! where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true, 5
If my sweet William sails among the crew?"

William, who high upon the yard
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard

He sighed and cast his eyes below; 10
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,

And, quick as lightning, on the deck he stands.

So the sweet lark, high poised in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast—
If chance his mate's shrill call he hear— 15

And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lips those kisses sweet.

¹ The long flaps belonging to a lady's headdress of that period. They hung down upon either side of the face.

"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain; 20
Let me kiss off that falling tear;
We only part to meet again.
Change as ye list, ye winds! my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

"Believe not what the landmen say, 25
Who tempt with doubts thy constant mind;
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In every port a mistress find;
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,
For thou art present wheresoe'er I go. 30

"If to fair India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright;
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory so white.
Thus every beautiful object that I view, 35
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

"Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet, safe from harms,
William shall to his dear return. 40
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's eye."

The boatswain gave the dreadful word;
The sails their swelling bosom spread;
No longer must she stay abroad; 45
They kissed—she sighed—he hung his head.
Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land,
"Adieu!" she cries, and waved her lily hand.

TRIVIA, OR THE ART OF WALKING
THE STREETS OF LONDON

Book I. Selections. (1716)

Through winter streets to steer your course aright,

How to walk clean by day, and safe by night,
How jostling crowds, with prudence to decline,
When to assert¹ the wall, and when resign,

I sing: thou, Trivia!² goddess, aid my song, 5
Through spacious streets conduct thy bard along;

By thee transported, I securely stray
Where winding alleys lead the doubtful way,
The silent court and opening square explore,
And long perplexing lanes untrod before. 10
To pave thy realm, and smooth the broken ways,

Earth from her womb a flinty tribute pays;
For thee the sturdy paver thumps the ground,
Whilst every stroke his labouring lungs resound;
For thee the scavenger bids kennels glide 15
Within their bounds, and heaps of dirt subside.
My youthful bosom burns with thirst of fame,
From the great theme to build a glorious name,

¹ To lay claim to; i. e. to take the best part of the walk next to the houses and farthest from the gutter.

² From the Latin *trivium*, crossroads. Gay addresses Trivia as the goddess either of the streets or of trivial things.

To tread in paths to ancient bards unknown,
 And bind my temples with a civic crown; 20
 But more, my country's love demands the
 lays;
 My country's be the profit; mine the praise.

The changing weather certain signs reveal.
 Ere winter sheds her snow, or frosts con-
 geal,

You'll see the coals in brighter flame as-
 pire, 25

And sulphur tinge with blue the rising fire;
 Your tender shines the scorching heat decline,
 And at the dearth of coals the poor repine;
 Before her kitchen hearth the nodding dame,
 In flannel mantle wrapt, enjoys the flame; 30
 Hovering upon her feeble knees she bends,
 And all around the grateful warmth ascends.

Nor do less certain signs the Town advise
 Of milder weather and serener skies.

The ladies, gaily dress'd, the Mall^a adorn 35
 With various dyes, and paint the sunny morn;
 The wanton fawns with frisking pleasure
 range,

And chirping sparrows greet the welcome
 change;

Not that their minds with greater skill are
 fraught,

Endued by instinct, or by reason taught, 40
 The seasons operate on every breast;

'Tis hence that fawns are brisk, and ladies
 drest.

When on his box the nodding coachman snores,
 And dreams of fancied fares; when tavern-
 doors

The chairmen idly crowd, then ne'er refuse 45
 To trust thy busy steps in thinner shoes.

But when the swinging signs your ears offend
 With creaking noise, then rainy floods im-
 pend;

Soon shall the kennels swell with rapid
 streams,

And rush in muddy torrents to the Thames. 50
 The bookseller, whose shop's an open square,
 Foresees the tempest, and with early care
 Of learning stripes the rails: the rowing crew,
 To tempt a fare, clothe all their tilts^b in
 blue.

On hosiers' poles depending stockings tied, 55
 Flag with the slacken'd gale from side to
 side.

Church-monuments foretell the changing air;
 Then Niobe dissolves into a tear,
 And sweats with secret grief. You'll hear the
 sounds

Of whistling winds, ere kennels break their
 bounds; 60

Ungrateful odours common sewers diffuse,
 And dropping vaults distil unwholesome
 dews,

Ere the tiles rattle with the smoking shower,
 And spouts on heedless men their torrents
 pour.

BOOK II. Selections

Thus far the Muse has trac'd, in useful lays, 65
 The proper implements for wintry ways;
 Has taught the walker, with judicious eyes
 To read the various warnings of the skies.

Now, venture, Muse! from home to range the
 town,

And for the public safety risk thine own. 70

For ease and for despatch the morning's
 best;

No tides of passengers the street molest:
 You'll see a draggled damsel here and there,
 From Billingsgate^c her fishy traffic bear:

On doors the sallow milkmaid chalks her
 gains;

Ah! how unlike the milkmaid of the plains! 75

Before proud gates attending asses^d bray,

Or arrogate with solemn pace the way;

These grave physicians, with their milky cheer,

The love-sick maid and dwindling beau re-
 pair. 80

Here rows of drummers stand in martial
 file,

And with their vellum thunder shake the
 pile,

To greet the new-made bride. Are sounds like
 these

The proper prelude to a state of peace?

Now industry awakes her busy sons; 85

Full charg'd with news the breathless hawker
 runs;

Shops open, coaches roll, carts shake the
 ground,

And all the streets with passing cries resound.

If cloth'd in black you tread the busy
 town,

Or if distinguished by the reverend gown, 90

Three trades avoid. Oft in the mingling press
 The barber's apron soils the sable dress:

Shun the perfumer's touch with cautious eye;

Nor let the baker's step advance too high.

Ye walkers too, that youthful colours wear, 95

Three sullyng trades avoid with equal care,

The little chimney-sweeper skulks along,

And marks with sooty stains the heedless
 throng;

When small-coal murmurs in the hoarser throat,

From smutty dangers guard thy threaten'd
 coat; 100

The dust-man's cart offends thy clothes and
 eyes,

When through the street a cloud of ashes
 flies;

But whether black or lighter dyes are worn,

The chandler's basket, on his shoulder borne,

With tallow spots thy coat; resign the way, 105

To shun the surly butcher's greasy tray;

Butchers! whose hands are dy'd with blood's
 foul stain,

And always foremost in the hangman's train.

Let due civilities be strictly paid;

The wall surrender to the hooded maid; 110

^a A district in London along the Thames, which was the
 centre of the fish trade.

^d Asses' milk was in great demand in the early 18th cen-
 tury.

^a An Avenue on the north of St. James' Park, London.

^b Awnings or covers which the watermen placed over
 their boats on the Thames.

Nor let thy sturdy elbow's hasty rage
Jostle the feeble steps of trembling age:
And when the porter bends beneath his load,
And pants for breath, clear thou the crowded
road:

But, above all, the groping blind direct, 115
And from the pressing ~~through the lame protect.~~
You'll sometimes meet a fop, of nicest tread,
Whose mantling peruke veils his empty head:
At every step he dreads the wall to lose,
And risks, to save a coach, his red-heel'd 10
shoes; 120

Him, like the miller, pass with caution by,
Lest from his shoulder clouds of powder fly:
But when the bully, with assuming pace,
Cocks his broad hat, edg'd round with tarnished
lace, 15

Yield not the way; defy his strutting pride, 125
And thrust him to the muddy kennel's^s side:
He never turns again, nor dares oppose,
But mutters coward curses as he goes.

When waggish boys the stunted besom ply
To rid the slabby pavement, pass not by 130
Ere thou hast held their hands; some heedless
flirt

Will overspread thy calves with spattering dirt.
Where porters hogsheads roll from carts aslope, 25
Or brewers down steep cellars stretch the rope,
Where counted billets are by carmen tosst, 135
Stay thy rash step, and walk without the post.

What though the gathering mire thy feet
besmear?

The voice of industry is always near.
Hark! the boy calls thee to his destin'd stand,
And the shoe shines beneath his oily hand. 140

Now, heav'n-born Charity! thy blessing shed,
Bid meagre Want uprear her sickly head:
Bid shivering limbs be warm; let Plenty's
bowl

In humble roofs make glad the needy soul.
See, see! the heav'n-born maid her blessings
shed; 145

Lo! meagre Want uprears her sickly head; 40
Cloth'd are the naked, and the needy glad,
While selfish Avarice alone is sad.

Proud coaches pass, regardless of the moan
Of infant orphans, and the widow's groan, 150
While charity still moves the walker's mind,
His liberal purse relieves the lame and blind.
Judiciously thy halfpence are bestow'd, 45
Where the laborious beggar sweeps the road.
Whate'er you give, give ever at demand, 155
Nor let old age long stretch his palsied hand.
Those who give late are importun'd each day, 50
And still are teas'd because they still delay.
If e'er the miser durst his farthings spare,
He thinly spreads them through the public
square, 160

Where, all beside the rail, rang'd beggars lie, 55
And from each other catch the doleful cry;
With Heav'n, for two-pence, cheaply wipes
his score,
Lifts up his eyes, and hastes to beggar more.

⁷ Gutter.

Daniel Defoe

1659 (?)–1731

A TRUE RELATION OF THE APPARI- TION OF MRS. VEAL,

THE NEXT DAY AFTER HER DEATH, TO MRS.
BARGRAVE, AT CANTERBURY, THE EIGHTH
OF SEPTEMBER, 1705, WHICH APPARITION
RECOMMENDS THE PERUSAL OF DRELIN-
COURT'S BOOK OF CONSOLATIONS AGAINST
THE FEARS OF DEATH.

THE PREFACE

This relation is matter of fact, and attended
with such circumstances as may induce any
reasonable man to believe it. It was sent by
a gentleman, a justice of peace at Maidstone,
20 in Kent, and a very intelligent person, to his
friend in London, as it is here worded; which
discourse is attested by a very sober and
understanding gentleman, who had it from
his kinswoman, who lives in Canterbury,
within a few doors of the house in which the
within-named Mrs. Bargrave lived; and who
he believes to be of so discerning a spirit, as
not to be put upon by any fallacy, and who
positively assured him that the whole matter
30 as it is related and laid down is really true, and
what she herself had in the same words, as
near as may be, from Mrs. Bargrave's own
mouth, who, she knows, had no reason to
invent and publish such a story, or any design
35 to forge and tell a lie, being a woman of much
honesty and virtue, and her whole life a course,
as it were, of piety. The use which we ought
to make of it is to consider that there is a life
to come after this, and a just God who will
retribute to every one according to the deeds
done in the body, and therefore to reflect
upon our past course of life we have led in
the world; that our time is short and uncer-
tain; and that if we would escape the punish-
45 ment of the ungodly and receive the reward of
the righteous, which is the laying hold of eter-
nal life, we ought, for the time to come to re-
turn to God by a speedy repentance, ceasing
to do evil, and learning to do well; to seek after
God early, if haply He may be found of us,
and lead such lives for the future as may be
well pleasing in His sight.

A RELATION, & C

This thing is so rare in all its circumstances,
and on so good authority, that my reading
and conversation have not given me anything
like it. It is fit to gratify the most ingenious
and serious inquirer. Mrs. Bargrave is the

person to whom Mrs. Veal appeared after her death; she is my intimate friend, and I can avouch for her reputation for these last fifteen or sixteen years, on my own knowledge; and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth to the time of my acquaintance; though since this relation she is calumniated by some people that are friends to the brother of Mrs. Veal who appeared, who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavour what they can to blast Mrs. Bargrave's reputation, and to laugh the story out of countenance. But by the circumstances thereof, and the cheerful disposition of Mrs. Bargrave, notwithstanding the ill-usage of a very wicked husband, there is not the least sign of dejection in her face; nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression; nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity, which I have been witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

Now you must know Mrs. Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on by her going off from her discourses very abruptly to some impertinence. She was maintained by an only brother, and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her brother a very sober man, to all appearance; but now he does all he can to null or quash the story. Mrs. Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Bargrave from her childhood. Mrs. Veal's circumstances were then mean; her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships; and Mrs. Bargrave in those days had as unkind a father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing, whilst Mrs. Veal wanted for both, inasmuch that she would often say, "Mrs. Bargrave, you are not only the best, but the only friend I have in the world; and no circumstance in life shall ever dissolve my friendship." They would often console each other's adverse fortunes, and read together, "Drelincourt upon Death,"¹ and other good books; and so, like two Christian friends, they comforted each other under their sorrow.

Some time after Mr. Veal's friends got him a place in the custom-house at Dover, which occasioned Mrs. Veal, by little and little, to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs. Bargrave, though there never was any such thing as a quarrel; but an indifferency came on by de-

grees, till at last Mrs. Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a half; though about a twelvemonth of the time Mrs. Bargrave had been absent from Dover, and this last half-year had been in Canterbury about two months of the time, dwelling in a house of her own.

In this house, on the 8th of September, 1705, she was sitting alone, in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life, and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard. "And," said she, "I have been provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still; and am well satisfied that my afflictions shall end when it is most fit for me;" and then took up her sewing-work, which she had no sooner done but she hears a knocking at the door. She went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs. Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding-habit; at that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"Madam," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am surprised to see you, you have been so long a stranger;" but told her she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her, which Mrs. Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched; and then Mrs. Veal drew her hand across her own eyes and said, "I am not very well," and so waived it. She told Mrs. Bargrave she was going a journey, and had a great mind to see her first. "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "how came you to take a journey alone? I am amazed at it, because I know you have a good brother." "Oh," says Mrs. Veal, "I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had so great a desire to see you before I took my journey." So Mrs. Bargrave went in with her into another room within the first, and Mrs. Veal set her down in an elbow-chair, in which Mrs. Bargrave was sitting when she heard Mrs. Veal knock. Then says Mrs. Veal, "My dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and beg your pardon for my breach of it; and if you can forgive me, you are the best of women." "Oh," says Mrs. Bargrave, "do not mention such a thing. I have not had an uneasy thought about it; I can easily forgive it." "What did you think of me?" said Mrs. Veal. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I thought you were like the rest of the world, and that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me." Then Mrs. Veal reminded Mrs. Bargrave of the many friendly offices she did in her former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the times of their adversity; what books they read, and what comfort in particular they received from "Drelincourt's

¹ *Consolations against the Fear of Death*, an English translation of a work by Charles Drelincourt, a French clergyman.

Book of Death," which was the best, she said, on that subject ever written. She also mentioned Dr. Sherlock,³ the two Dutch books which were translated, written upon Death, and several others; but Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death and of the future state of any who had handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs. Bargrave whether she had Drelincourt. She said, "Yes." Says Mrs. Veal, "Fetch it." And so Mrs. Bargrave goes up stairs and brings it down. Says Mrs. Veal, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard. The notions we have of heaven now are nothing like to what it is, as Drelincourt says. Therefore be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard to you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favour; and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you. An believe me, my dear friend, believe what I say to you, one minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all your sufferings; for I can never believe" (and claps her hands upon her knees with great earnestness, which indeed ran through most of her discourse) "that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state; but be assured that your afflictions shall leave you, or you them, in a short time." She spake in that pathetic and heavenly manner that Mrs. Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it.

Then Mrs. Veal mentioned Dr. Horneck's "Ascetic,"⁴ at the end of which he gives an account of the lives of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said, "Their conversation was not like this of our age; for now," says she, "there is nothing but frothy, vain discourse, which is far different from theirs. Theirs was to edification, and to build one another up in faith; so that they were not as we are, nor are we as they were; but," said she, "we ought to do as they did. There was a hearty friendship among them; but where is it now to be found?" Says Mrs. Bargrave, "It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days." Says Mrs. Veal, "Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses, called 'Friendship in Perfection,' which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?" says Mrs. Veal. "No," says

Mrs. Bargrave, "but I have the verses of my own writing out." "Have you?" says Mrs. Veal; "then fetch them." Which she did from above-stairs, and offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused, and waived the thing, saying holding down her head would make it ache; and then desired Mrs. Bargrave to read them to her, which she did. As they were admiring "Friendship" Mrs. Veal said, "Dear Mrs. Bargrave, I shall love you for ever." In these verses there is twice used the word Elysian. "Ah!" says Mrs. Veal, "these poets have such names for heaven!" She would often draw her hand across her own eyes and say, "Mrs. Bargrave, do not you think I am mightily impaired by my fits?" "No," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I think you look as well as ever I knew you."

After all this discourse, which the apparition put in much finer words than Mrs. Bargrave said she could pretend to, and as much more than she can remember, for it cannot be thought that an hour and three-quarters' conversation could be retained, though the main of it she thinks she does, she said to Mrs. Bargrave she would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him she would have him give rings to such and such, and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson.

Talking at this rate, Mrs. Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself in a chair just before her knees, to keep her from falling to the ground, if her fits should occasion it (for the elbow-chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side); and to divert Mrs. Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown-sleeve several times and commended it. Mrs. Veal told her it was a scoured silk, and newly made up. But for all this, Mrs. Veal persisted in her request, and told Mrs. Bargrave that she must not deny her, and she would have her tell her brother all their conversation when she had an opportunity. "Dear Mrs. Veal," said Mrs. Bargrave, "this seems so impertinent that I cannot tell how to comply with it; and what a mortifying story will our conversation be to a young gentleman? Why," says Mrs. Bargrave, "it is much better, methinks, to do it yourself." "No," says Mrs. Veal, "though it seems impertinent to you now, you will see more reason for it hereafter." Mrs. Bargrave then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink, but Mrs. Veal said, "Let it alone now, but do it when I am gone; but you must be sure to do it;" which was one of the last things she enjoined her at parting. So she promised her.

³ William Sherlock, D.D. (1641-1707), author of numerous works on theological and political questions, wrote *A Practical Discourse Concerning Death; A Discourse of the Immortality of the Soul and Future State* (1705), and some other works on life after death.

⁴ *The Happy Ascetic*, by Anthony Horneck, D. D., Lond. 1681.

Then Mrs. Veal asked for Mrs. Bargrave's daughter. She said she was not at home, "but if you have a mind to see her," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll send for her." "Do," says Mrs. Veal. On which she left her, and went to a neighbour's to see for her; and by the time Mrs. Bargrave was returning, Mrs. Veal was got without the door into the street, in the face of the beast-market, on a Saturday (which is market-day), and stood ready to 10 part. As soon as Mrs. Bargrave came to her, she asked her why she was in such haste. She said she must be going, though perhaps she might not go her journey until Monday; and told Mrs. Bargrave she hoped she should see 15 her again at her cousin Watson's before she went whither she was going. Then she said she would take her leave of her, and walked from Mrs. Bargrave in her view, till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three- 20 quarters after one in the afternoon.

Mrs. Veal died the 7th of September, at twelve o'clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours' sense before death, in which time she received the sacrament. The 25 next day after Mrs. Veal's appearing, being Sunday, Mrs. Bargrave was so mightily indisposed with a cold and a sore throat, that she could not go out that day; but on Monday morning she sent a person to Captain Watson's 30 to know if Mrs. Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs. Bargrave's inquiry, and sent her word that she was not there, nor was expected. At this answer, Mrs. Bargrave told the maid she had certainly mistook the name or made 35 some blunder. And though she was ill, she put on her hood, and went herself to Captain Watson's, though she knew none of the family, to see if Mrs. Veal was there or not. They said they wondered at her asking, for that she 40 had not been in town; they were sure, if she had, she would have been there. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am sure she was with me on Saturday almost two hours." They said it was impossible; for they must have seen her, 45 if she had. In comes Captain Watson while they are in dispute, and said that Mrs. Veal was certainly dead, and her escutcheons⁴ were making. This strangely surprised Mrs. Bargrave, when she sent to the person immediately 50 who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Captain Watson's family, and what gown she had on, and how striped, and that Mrs. Veal told

her it was scoured. Then Mrs. Watson cried out, "You have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself that the gown was scoured." And Mrs. Watson owned that she 5 described the gown exactly; "for," said she, "I helped her to make it up." This Mrs. Watson blazed all about the town, and avouched the demonstration of the truth of Mrs. Bargrave's seeing Mrs. Veal's apparition; and 10 Captain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs. Bargrave's house to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and sceptical part 15 of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task that she was forced to go out of the way; for they were in general extremely well satisfied of the truth of the thing, and plainly saw that Mrs. Bargrave was no hy- 20 pochondriac, for she always appears with such a cheerful air and pleasing mien, that she has gained the favour and esteem of all the gentry, and it is thought a great favour if they can but get the relation from her own mouth. I should have told you before that Mrs. Veal told Mrs. Bargrave that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "How came you to order matters so strangely?" "It could not be 25 helped," said Mrs. Veal. And her brother and sister did come to see her, and entered the town of Dover just as Mrs. Veal was expiring. Mrs. Bargrave asked her whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs. Veal, "I do not 35 care if I do; but I'll warrant you this mad fellow" (meaning Mrs. Bargrave's husband) "has broken all your trinkets." "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll get something to drink in for all that." But Mrs. Veal waived it, 40 and said, "It is no matter; let it alone;" and so it passed.

All the time I sat with Mrs. Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs. Veal. And one material thing more 45 she told Mrs. Bargrave—that old Mr. Breton allowed Mrs. Veal ten pounds a year, which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs. Bargrave till Mrs. Veal told it her. Mrs. Bargrave never varies in her story, which puzzles those 50 who doubt of the truth or are unwilling to believe it. A servant in the neighbour's yard adjoining to Mrs. Bargrave's house heard her talking to somebody an hour of the time Mrs. Veal was with her. Mrs. Bargrave went out 55 to her next neighbour's the very moment she parted with Mrs. Veal, and told her what ravishing conversation she had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. Drelincourt's "Book of Death" is, since this happened,

⁴ An *escutcheon* or *hatchment*, (see *Cent. Dict.*), "an armorial shield granted in recognition of some distinguished achievement." . . . "A square tablet, set diagonally and bearing the arms of a deceased person, placed over a tomb, or upon the exterior of the house in which the person dwelt."

bought up strangely. And it is to be observed that, notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs. Bargrave has undergone upon this account, she never took the value of a farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take anything of anybody, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story.

But Mr. Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said he would see Mrs. Bargrave; but yet it is certain matter of fact that he has been at Captain Watson's since the death of his sister, and yet never went near Mrs. Bargrave; and some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr. Breton's ten pounds a year. But the person who pretends to say so has the reputation of a notorious liar among persons whom I know to be of undoubted credit. Now, Mr. Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies, but says a bad husband has crazed her. But she needs only present herself and it will effectually confute that pretence. Mr. Veal says he asked his sister on her death-bed whether she had a mind to dispose of anything, and she said no. Now, the things that Mrs. Veal's apparition would have disposed of were so trifling, and nothing of justice aimed at in their disposal, that the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs. Bargrave so to demonstrate the truth of her appearance, as to satisfy the world of the reality thereof as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation among the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then again Mr. Veal owns that there was a purse of gold; but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb-box. This looks improbable; for that Mrs. Watson owned that Mrs. Veal was so very careful of the key of the cabinet that she would trust nobody with it; and if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs. Veal's often drawing her hand over her eyes, and asking Mrs. Bargrave whether her fits had not impaired her, looks to me as if she did it on purpose to remind Mrs. Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange that she should put her upon writing to her brother to dispose of rings and gold, which looks so much like a dying person's request; and it took accordingly with Mrs. Bargrave, as the effects of her fits coming upon her; and was one of the many instances of her wonderful love to her and care of her that she should not be affrighted, which indeed appears in her whole management, particularly in her coming to her in the daytime, waiving the salutation, and when she was alone, and then the manner of her parting to prevent a second attempt to salute her.

Now, why Mr. Veal should think this relation a reflection, as it is plain he does by his endeavouring to stifle it, I cannot imagine, because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were to comfort Mrs. Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for the breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her. So that after all to suppose that Mrs. Bargrave could hatch such an invention as this from Friday noon to Saturday noon, supposing that she knew of Mrs. Veal's death the very first moment, without jumbling circumstances, and without any interest too, she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked too than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs. Bargrave several times if she was sure she felt the gown. She answered modestly, "If my senses are to be relied on, I am sure of it." I asked her if she heard a sound when she clapped her hands upon her knees. She said she did not remember she did, but said she appeared to be as much a substance as I did, who talked with her. "And I may," said she, "be as soon persuaded that your apparition is talking to me now as that I did not really see her; for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend, and parted with her as such. I would not," says she, "give one farthing to make any one believe it; I have no interest in it. Nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time, for aught I know; and had it not come to light by accident, it would never have been made public." But now she says she will make her own private use of it, and keep herself out of the way as much as she can; and so she has done since. She says she had a gentleman who came thirty miles to her to hear the relation, and that she told it to a room full of people at a time. Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth.

This thing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best grounded matter of fact. And why we should dispute matter of fact because we cannot solve things of which we have no certain or demonstrative notions, seems strange to me. Mrs. Bargrave's authority and sincerity alone would have been undoubted in any other case.

THE PLAGUE IN LONDON

(From *A Journal of the Plague Year*,¹ 1722)

But now the fury of the distemper increased to such a degree, that even the markets were but very thinly furnished with provisions, or

¹ The full title of De Foo's "*History of the Plague*," as

frequented with buyers, compared to what they were before; and the Lord mayor caused the country people who brought provisions, to be stopped in the streets leading into the town, and to sit down there with their goods, where they sold what they brought, and went immediately away; and this encouraged the country people greatly to do so, for they sold their provisions at the very entrances into the town, and even in the fields; as, particularly in the fields beyond Whitechapel, in Spital-fields. Note, those streets, now called Spital-fields, were then, indeed, open fields; also, in St. George's Fields, in Southwark; in Bunhill Fields, and in a great field, called Wood's Close, near Islington; thither the lord mayor, aldermen, and magistrates, sent their officers and servants to buy for their families, themselves keeping within doors as much as possible, and the like did many other people; and after this method was taken, the country people came with great cheerfulness, and brought provisions of all sorts and very seldom got any harm; which I suppose added also to that report of their being miraculously preserved.

As for my little family, having thus, as I have said, laid in a store of bread, butter, cheese, and beer, I took my friend and physician's advice, and locked myself up, and my family, and resolved to suffer the hardship of living a few months without fresh meat, rather than purchase it by the hazard of our lives.

But, though I confined my family, I could not prevail upon my unsatisfied curiosity to stay within entirely myself; and, though I generally came frightened and terrified home, yet I could not restrain; only, that indeed I did not do it so frequently as at first.

I had some little obligations indeed upon me, to go to my brother's house, which was in Coleman Street parish, and which he had left to my care; and I went at first every day, but afterwards only once or twice a week.

In these walks I had many dismal scenes before my eyes; as, particularly, of persons falling dead in the streets, terrible shrieks and screechings of women, who, in their agonies, would throw open their chamber windows, and cry out in a dismal surprising manner. It

is often called, will help to explain its general character. *A Journal of the Plague Year, being observations or memorials of the most remarkable occurrences, as well Public as Private, which happened in London during the last Great Visitation in 1665—Written by a citizen who continued all the while in London. Never made public before.*

The Plague began in the autumn of 1664 (De Foe begins his journal in September of that year), and while it had begun to abate by the middle of September, 1665, after a year of terrible suffering and mortality, it still lingered on until the Great Fire of Sept. 1666. By the Plague nearly one hundred thousand persons are said to have perished, or about one-fifth of the entire population of London.

is impossible to describe the variety of postures in which the passions of the poor people would express themselves.

Passing through Token House Yard, in 5 Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, "Oh! death, death, death!" in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror, and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another; so I went on to pass into Bell 10 Alley. . . . As this puts me upon mentioning my walking the streets and fields, I cannot omit taking notice what a desolate place the city was at that time. The great street I lived in, which is known to be one of the broadest of all the streets of London, I mean of the suburbs as well as the liberties,² all the side where the butchers lived, especially without the bars, was more like a green field than a paved street, and the people generally went in the middle 25 with the horses and carts. It is true, that the farthest end, towards Whitechapel church, was not all paved, but even the part that was paved was full of grass also; but this need not seem strange, since the great streets within the city, such as Leadenhall Street, Bishopsgate Street, Cornhill, and even the Exchange itself had grass growing in them in several places; neither cart nor coach was seen in the streets from morning till evening, except some country carts to bring roots and beans, or peas, hay, and straw, to the market, and those but very few compared to what was usual. As for coaches, they were scarce used but to carry people to the pest house and to other hospitals, and some few to carry physicians to such places as they thought fit to venture to visit; for really coaches were dangerous things, and people did not care to venture into them, because they did not know who might have been carried in them last; and sick infected people were, as I have said, ordinarily carried in them to the pest houses, and sometimes people expired in them as they went along. . . . As the desolation was greater during those terrible times, so the amazement of the people increased; and a thousand unaccountable things they would do in the violence of their fright, as others did the same in the agonies of their distemper; and this part was very affecting. Some went roaring, and crying, and wringing their hands along the street; some would go praying and lifting up their hands to heaven, calling upon God for mercy. I

² i. e., within the limits of the city itself.

cannot say, indeed, whether this was not in their distraction; but, be it so, it was still an indication of a more serious mind, when they had the use of their senses, and was much better, even as it was, than the frightful yellings and cryings that every day, and especially in the evenings, were heard in some streets. I suppose the world has heard of the famous Solomon Eagle, an enthusiast; he, though not infected at all, but in his head, went about, denouncing of judgment upon the city in a frightful manner; sometimes quite naked, and with a pan of burning charcoal on his head. What he said or pretended, indeed, I could not learn.

I will not say whether the clergyman was distracted or not, or whether he did it out of pure zeal for the poor people, who went every evening through the streets of Whitechapel, and, with his hands lifted up, repeated that part of the liturgy of the church, continually, "Spare us, good Lord; spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood;" I say, I cannot speak positively of these things, because these were only the dismal objects which represented themselves to me as I looked through my chamber windows, for I seldom opened the casements, while I confined myself within doors during that most violent raging of the pestilence, when, indeed, many began to think, and even to say, that there would none escape; and, indeed, I began to think so too, and, therefore kept within doors for about a fortnight, and never stirred out. But I could not hold it. Besides, there were some people, who, notwithstanding the danger, did not omit publicly to attend the worship of God, even in the most dangerous times. And, though it is true that a great many of the clergy did shut up their churches and fled, as other people did, for the safety of their lives, yet all did not do so; some ventured to officiate, and keep up the assemblies of the people by constant prayers, and sometimes sermons or brief exhortations to repentance and reformation; and this as long as they would hear them. And dissenters did the like also, and even in the very churches where the parish ministers were either dead or fled; nor was there any room for making any difference at such a time as this was.

It pleased God that I was still spared, and very hearty and sound in health, but very impatient of being pent up within doors without air, as I had been for fourteen days or thereabouts; and I could not restrain myself, but I would go and carry a letter for my brother to the post-house; then it was, indeed, that I observed a profound silence in the streets.

When I came to the post-house, as I went to put in my letter, I saw a man stand in one corner of the yard and talking to another at a window, and a third had opened a door belonging to the office. In the middle of the yard lay a small leather purse, with two keys hanging at it, with money in it, but nobody would meddle with it. I asked how long it had lain there; the man at the window said it had lain almost an hour, but they had not meddled with it, because they did not know but the person who dropt it might come back to look for it. I had no such need of money, nor was the sum so big, that I had any inclination to meddle with it, or to get the money at the hazard it might be attended with; so I seemed to go away,¹ when the man who had opened the door said he would take it up; but so that if the right owner came for it he should be sure to have it. So he went in and fetched a pail of water, and set it down hard by the purse, then went again and fetched some gunpowder, and cast a good deal of powder upon the purse, and then made a train from that which he had thrown loose upon the purse; the train reached about two yards; after this he goes in a third time, and fetches out a pair of tongs red-hot, and which he had prepared, I suppose, on purpose; and first setting fire to the train of powder, that singed the purse and also smoked the air sufficiently. But he was not content with that, but he then takes up the purse with the tongs, holding it so long till the tongs burnt through the purse, and then he shook the money out into the pail of water, so he carried it in. The money, as I remember, was about thirteen shillings, and some smooth groats and brass farthings.

Much about the same time, I walked out into the fields towards Bow; for I had a great mind to see how things were managed in the river and among the ships; and as I had some concern in shipping, I had a notion that it had been one of the best ways of securing one's self from the infection to have retired into a ship; and, musing how to satisfy my curiosity in that point, I turned away over the fields, from Bow to Bromley and down to Blackwall, to the stairs that are there for landing or taking water.

Here I saw a poor man walking on the bank or sea-wall, as they call it, by himself. I walked awhile also about, seeing the houses all shut up; at last I fell into some talk, at a distance, with this poor man. First I asked how people did thereabouts? "Alas! sir," says he, "almost desolate, all dead or sick: here are very few families in this part, or in that

¹ Pretended to go away.

village," pointing at Poplar, "where half of them are not dead already, and the rest sick." Then he, pointing to one house, "They are all dead," said he, "and the house stands open; nobody dares go into it. A poor thief," says he, "ventured in to steal something, but he paid dear for his theft, for he was carried to the churchyard too, last night." Then he pointed to several other houses. "There," says he, "they are all dead, the man and his wife and five children. There," says he, "they are shut up; you see a watchman at the door;" and so, of other houses. "Why," says I, "what do you here all alone?" "Why," says he, "I am a poor desolate man; it hath pleased God I am not yet visited, though my family is, and one of my children dead." "How do you mean then," said I "that you are not visited?" "Why," says he "that is my house," pointing to a very little, low, boarded house, "and there my poor wife and two children live," said he, "if they may be said to live; for my wife and one of the children are visited, but I do not come at them." And with that word I saw the tears run very plentifully down his face; and so they did down mine too, I assure you.

"But," said I, "why do you not come at them? How can you abandon your own flesh and blood?" "Oh, sir," says he, "the Lord forbid; I do not abandon them; I work for them as much as I am able; and, blessed be the Lord, I keep them from want." And with that I observed he lifted up his eyes to heaven with a countenance that presently told me I had happened on a man that was no hypocrite, but a serious, religious, good man; and his ejaculation was an expression of thankfulness, that in such a condition as he was in, he should be able to say his family did not want. "Well," says I, "honest man, that is a great mercy, as things go now with the poor. But how do you live then, and how are you kept from the dreadful calamity that is now upon us all?" "Why, sir," says he, "I am a waterman, and there is my boat," says he, "and the boat serves me for a house; I work in it in the day, and I sleep in it in the night, and what I get I lay it down upon that stone," says he, showing me a broad stone on the other side of the street, a good way from his house; "and then," says he, "I halloo and call to them till I make them hear, and they come and fetch it."

"Well, friend," says I, "but how can you get money as a waterman? Does anybody go by water these times?" "Yes, sir," says he, "in the way I am employed there does. Do you see there," says he, "five ships lie at

anchor," pointing down the river a good way below the town; "and do you see," says he, "eight or ten ships lie at the chain there, and at anchor yonder," pointing above the town. "All those ships have families on board, of their merchants and owners, and such-like, who have locked themselves up, and live on board, close shut in, for fear of the infection; and I tend on them to fetch things for them, and carry letters, and do what is absolutely necessary, that they may not be obliged to come on shore; and every night I fasten my boat on board one of the ship's boats, and there I sleep by myself, and, blessed be God, I am preserved hitherto."

"Well," said I, "friend, will they let you come on board after you have been on shore here, when this has been such a terrible place, and so infected as it is?"

"Why, as to that," said he, "I very seldom go up the ship side, but deliver what I bring to their boat, or lie by the side and they hoist it on board: if I did I think they are in no danger from me, for I never go into any house on shore, or touch anybody, no, not of my own family; but I fetch provisions for them."

"Nay," says I, "but that may be worse, for you must have those provisions of somebody or other; and since all this part of the town is so infected, it is dangerous so much as to speak with anybody; for the village," said I, "is as it were the beginning of London, though it be at some distance from it."

"That is true," added he, "but you do not understand me right. I do not buy provisions for them here; I row up to Greenwich, and buy fresh meat there, and sometimes I row down the river to Woolwich and buy there; then I go to single farm houses on the Kentish side, where I am known, and buy fowls, and eggs and butter, and bring to the ships as they direct me, sometimes one, sometimes the other. I seldom come on shore here; and I came only now to call my wife and hear how my little family do, and give them a little money which I received last night."

"Poor man," said I, "and how much hast thou gotten for them?"

"I have gotten four shillings," said he, "which is a great sum, as things go now with poor men; but they have given me a bag of bread, too, and a salt fish, and some flesh; so all helps out."

"Well," said I, "and have you given it them yet?"

"No," said he, "but I have called, and my wife has answered that she cannot come out yet, but in half an hour she hopes to come, and I am waiting for her. Poor woman!"

says he, "she is brought sadly down; she has had a swelling, and it is broke, and I hope she will recover, but I fear the child will die; but it is the Lord!" Here he stopt, and wept very much.

"Well, honest friend," said I, "thou hast a sure comforter, if thou hast brought thyself to be resigned to the will of God; he is dealing with us all in judgment."

"Oh, sir," says he, "it is infinite mercy if 10 any of us are spared; and who am I to repine!"

"Say'st thou so," said I, "and how much less is my faith than thine?" And here my heart smote me, suggesting how much better this poor man's foundation was, on which he 15 stayed in the danger, than mine; that he had nowhere to fly; that he had a family to bind him to attendance, which I had not; and mine was mere presumption, his a true dependance, and a courage resting on God; and yet, that 20 he used all possible caution for his safety.

I turned a little way from the man, while these thoughts engaged me; for, indeed, I could no more refrain from tears than he.

At length, after some further talk, the poor 25 woman opened the door, and called, "Robert, Robert;" he answered and bid her stay a few moments, and he would come; so he ran down the common stairs to his boat, and fetched up a sack in which was the provisions he had 30 brought from the ships; and when he returned, he hallooed again; then he went to the great stone which he showed me, and emptied the sack, and laid all out, everything by themselves, and then retired; and his wife came 35 with a little boy to fetch them away; and he called, and said such a captain had sent such a thing, and such a captain such a thing, and at the end adds, "God has sent it all, give thanks to Him." When the poor woman had 40 taken up all, she was so weak she could not carry it at once in, though the weight was not much neither; so she left the biscuit, which was in a little bag, and left a little boy to watch it, till she came again.

"Well, but," says I to him, "did you leave her four shillings, too, which you said was your week's pay?"

"Yes, yes," says he, "you shall hear her own it." So he calls again, "Rachel, Rachel," 50 which, it seems was her name, "did you take up the money?" "Yes," said she. "How much was it?" said he. "Four shillings and a groat," said she. "Well, well," says he, "the Lord keep you all;" and so he turned to 55 go away.

As I could not refrain from contributing tears to this man's story, so neither could I refrain my charity for his assistance; so I

called him; "Hark thee, friend," said I, "come hither, for I believe thou art in health, that I may venture thee;" so I pulled out my hand, which was in my pocket before. "Here,"

says I, "go and call thy Rachel once more, and give her a little more comfort from me. God will never forsake a family that trusts in him as thou dost;" so I gave him four other shillings, and bid him go lay them on the stone, and call his wife.

I have not words to express the poor man's thankfulness, neither could he express it himself but by tears running down his face. He called his wife, and told her God had moved the 15 heart of a stranger, upon hearing their condition, to give them all that money, and a great deal more such as that he said to her. The woman, too, made signs of the like thankfulness, as well to heaven as to me, and joyfully picked it up; and I parted with no money all that year that I thought better bestowed.

Jonathan Swift

1667-1745

MEDITATION UPON A BROOMSTICK (1704)

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest; it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs; but now, in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk; it is now, at best, but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now, handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean, and be nasty itself; at length, worn to the stumps in the service of the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, 45 or condemned to the last use, of kindling a fire. When I beheld this, I sighed, and said within myself, Surely mortal Man is a Broomstick! Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk; he then flies to art, and puts on a perriwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs (all covered with powder) that never grew on his head; but now, should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though

the sweepings of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellencies, and other men's defaults!

But a broomstick, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray what is a man but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth! And yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruptions to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before; sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away: his last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till worn to the stumps, like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by.

PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1708:

Wherein The Month, And The Day Of The Month, Are Set Down, The Persons Named, And The Great Actions And Events Of Next Year Particularly Related, As They Will Come To Pass.

Written to Prevent The People Of England From Being Further Imposed On By Vulgar Almanac-Makers.

By ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.¹

I have considered the gross abuse of astrology in this kingdom, and upon debating the matter with myself, I could not possibly lay the fault upon the art, but upon those gross impostors who set up to be the artists. I know several learned men have contended that the whole is a cheat; that it is absurd and ridiculous to imagine the stars can have any influence at all upon human actions, thoughts, or inclinations; and whoever has not bent his studies

that way may be excused for thinking so, when he sees in how wretched a manner that noble art is treated by a few mean, illiterate traders between us and the stars, who import a yearly stock of nonsense, lies, folly, and impertinence, which they offer to the world as genuine from the planets, though they descend from no greater a height than their own brains.

I intend in a short time to publish a large and rational defence of this art, and therefore shall say no more in its justification at present than that it has been in all ages defended by many learned men, and among the rest by Socrates himself, whom I look upon as undoubtedly the wisest of uninspired mortals; to which if we add that those who have condemned this art, though otherwise learned, having been such as either did not apply their studies this way, or at least did not succeed in their applications, their testimony will not be of much weight to its disadvantage, since they are liable to the common objection of condemning what they did not understand.

Nor am I at all offended, or do I think it an injury to the art, when I see the common dealers in it, the students in astrology, the Philomaths,² and the rest of that tribe, treated by wise men with the utmost scorn and contempt, but rather wonder, when I observe gentlemen in the country, rich enough to serve the nation in Parliament, poring in Partridge's Almanac³ to find out the events of the year at home and abroad, not daring to propose a hunting-match till Gadbury⁴ or he have fixed the weather.

I will allow either of the two I have mentioned, or any other of the fraternity, to be not only astrologers, but conjurers too, if I do not produce a hundred instances in all their almanacs to convince any reasonable man that they do not so much as understand common grammar and syntax; that they are not able to spell any word out of the usual road, nor, even in their prefaces to write common sense or intelligible English. Then for their observations and predictions, they are such as will equally suit any age or country in the world. "This month a certain great person will be threatened with death or sickness." This the newspapers will tell them; for there we find at the end of the year that no month passes without the death of some person of

¹ Lovers of learning, philosophers.

¹ When Swift wrote these predictions the belief in fortune-tellers and astrologers was very general, and numbers of impostors took advantage of the popular credulity. Not content with the patronage of those who consulted them personally, some of these astrologers published their "predictions" in almanacs, which were bought by people of the poorer classes, or circulated outside of London. Swift's attention having been attracted by one of these prophetic almanacs (the *Merlinus Literatus* for 1707, published by John Partridge), he wrote his *Predictions*, humorously exposing the folly of the prevalent superstition, as well as holding up poor Partridge to ridicule. After writing his *Predictions*, Swift, casting about for a pseudonym, happened to see the name Bickerstaff on a locksmith's sign. The name appealed to him, and he made his prophecies as Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq. The success of Swift's pamphlet made the name of Bickerstaff familiar to the world of London, and Steele, taking advantage of its popularity, assumed it when he began the publication of *The Tatler* in 1709.

² "Doctor" John Partridge (1644-1715), now remembered chiefly through Swift's satires, abandoned his occupation of cobbler to become an astrologer and almanac-maker. Swift ridiculed Partridge in a series of papers (of which the above is one), besides writing a *Grub Street Elegy on the Supposed Death of Partridge*.

³ John Gadbury, an almanac-maker and fortune-teller of the latter 17th century. An almanac bearing his name was published for some years after his death.

note; and it would be hard if it should be otherwise, when there are at least two thousand persons of note in this kingdom, many of them old, and the almanac-maker has the liberty of choosing the sickliest season of the year where he may fix his prediction. Again, "This month an eminent clergyman will be preferred;" of which there may be many hundreds, half of them with one foot in the grave. Then "Such a planet in such a house shows great machinations, plots, and conspiracies, that may in time be brought to light;" after which, if we hear of any discovery, the astrologer gets the honour; if not, his predictions still stand good. And at last, "God preserve King William from all his open and secret enemies, Amen;" when if the King should happen to have died, the astrologer plainly foretold it; otherwise it passes but for the pious ejaculation of a loyal subject; though it unluckily happened in some of their almanacs that poor King William was prayed for many months after he was dead, because it fell out that he died about the beginning of the year.

To mention no more of their impertinent predictions, what have we to do with their advertisements about "pills and drinks for disease," or their mutual quarrels in verse and prose of Whig and Tory, wherewith the stars have little to do?

Having long observed and lamented these, and a hundred other abuses of this art, too tedious to repeat, I resolved to proceed in a new way, which I doubt not will be to the general satisfaction of the kingdom. I can this year produce but a specimen of what I design for the future, having employed most part of my time in adjusting and correcting the calculations I made for some years past, because I would offer nothing to the world of which I am not as fully satisfied as that I am now alive. For these two last years I have not failed in above one or two particulars, and those of no very great moment. I exactly foretold the miscarriage at Toulon, with all its particulars, and the loss of Admiral Shovel,* though I was mistaken as to the day, placing that article about thirty-six hours sooner than it happened; but upon reviewing my schemes, I quickly found the cause of that error. I likewise foretold the Battle of Almanza† to the very day and hour, with the loss on both sides, and the consequences thereof, all which I showed to some friends many months before

they happened—that is, I gave them papers sealed up, to open at such a time, after which they were at liberty to read them; and there they found my predictions true in every article, except one or two very minute.

As for the few following predictions I now offer the world, I forbore to publish them till I had perused the several almanacs for the year we are now entered upon. I found them all in the usual strain, and I beg the reader will compare their manner with mine. And here I make bold to tell the world that I lay the whole credit of my art upon the truth of these predictions; and I will be content that Partridge, and the rest of his clan, may hoot me for a cheat and impostor if I fail in any single particular of moment. I believe any man who reads this paper will look upon me to be at least a person of as much honesty and understanding as a common maker of almanacs. I do not lurk in the dark; I am not wholly unknown in the world; I have set my name at length, to be a mark of infamy to mankind, if they shall find I deceive them.

In one thing I must desire to be forgiven, that I talk more sparingly of home affairs; as it will be imprudence to discover secrets of State, so it might be dangerous to my person; but in smaller matters, and such as are not of public consequence, I shall be very free; and the truth of my conjectures will as much appear from these as the other. As for the most signal events abroad, in France, Flanders, Italy, and Spain, I shall make no scruple to predict them in plain terms: some of them are of importance, and I hope I shall seldom mistake the day they will happen; therefore I think good to inform the reader that I shall all along make use of the Old Style observed in England,‡ which I desire he will compare with that of the newspapers at the time they relate the actions I mention.

I must add one word more. I know it has been the opinion of several learned persons, who think well enough of the true art of astrology, that the stars do only incline, and not force the actions or wills of men; and therefore, however I may proceed by right rules, yet I cannot in prudence so confidently assure the events will follow exactly as I predict them.

I hope I have maturely considered this objection, which in some cases is of no little weight. For example: a man may, by the influence of an overruling planet, be disposed or inclined to lust, rage, or avarice, and yet by the force of reason overcome that evil influence; and this was the case of Socrates: but as

* Sir Cloudeley Shovel, a gallant English admiral. He was ship-wrecked and drowned off the Scilly Islands in 1707, after an unsuccessful expedition against Toulon.

† A victory of the French and Spanish over the British and their allies, April 25, 1707, in the "War of the Spanish Succession."

‡ The New Style (or new system of chronology) was not adopted in England until 1751.

the great events of the world usually depend upon numbers of men, it cannot be expected they should all unite to cross their inclinations for pursuing a general design wherein they unanimously agree. Besides, the influence of the stars reaches to many actions and events which are not any way in the power of reason, as sickness, death, and what we commonly call accidents, with many more, needless to repeat.

But now it is time to proceed to my predictions, which I have begun to calculate from the time that the sun enters into Aries; and this I take to be properly the beginning of the natural year. I pursue them to the time that he enters Libra, or somewhat more, which is the busy period of the year. The remainder I have not yet adjusted, upon account of several impediments needless here to mention; besides, I must remind the reader again that this is but a specimen of what I design in succeeding years to treat more at large, if I may have liberty and encouragement.

My first prediction is but a trifle, yet I will mention it, to show how ignorant those sottish pretenders to astrology are in their own concerns. It relates to Partridge, the almanac-maker. I have consulted the star of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of *March* next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time.

The month of *April* will be observable for the death of many great persons. On the 4th will die the Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris; on the 11th, the young Prince of Asturias, son to the Duke of Anjou; on the 14th, a great peer of this realm will die at his country house; on the 19th, an old layman of great fame for learning; and on the 23rd, an eminent goldsmith in Lombard Street. I could mention others, both at home and abroad, if I did not consider such events of very little use or instruction to the reader, or to the world.

As to public affairs: On the 7th of this month there will be an insurrection in Dauphiné, occasioned by the oppressions of the people, which will not be quieted in some months.

On the 15th will be a violent storm on the south-east coast of France, which will destroy many of their ships, and some in the very harbour.

The 19th will be famous for the revolt of a whole province or kingdom, excepting one city, by which the affairs of a certain prince in the Alliance will take a better face.

May, against common conjectures, will be

no very busy month in Europe, but very signal for the death of the Dauphin, which will happen on the 7th, after a short fit of sickness, and grievous torments with the strangury. He dies less lamented by the Court than the kingdom. . . .

I shall add but one prediction more, and that in mystical terms, which shall be included in a verse out of Virgil—

¹⁰ *"Alter erit jam Tethys, et altera quæ vehat Argo
Delectos Heroas."*¹¹

Upon the 25th day of this month, the fulfilling of this prediction will be manifest to everybody.

This is the furthest I have proceeded in my calculations for the present year. I do not pretend that these are all the great events which will happen in this period, but that those I have set down will infallibly come to pass. It will perhaps still be objected why I have not spoke more particularly of affairs at home, or of the success of our armies abroad, which I might, and could very largely have done; but those in power have wisely discouraged men from meddling in public concerns, and I was resolved by no means to give the least offence. This I will venture to say, that it will be a glorious campaign for the Allies, wherein the English forces, both by sea and land, will have their full share of honour; that Her Majesty Queen Anne will continue in health and prosperity; and that no ill accident will arrive to any in the chief Ministry.

As to the particular events I have mentioned, the reader may judge by the fulfilling of them, whether I am on the level with common astrologers, who, with an old paltry cant, and a few pothooks for planets, to amuse the vulgar, have, in my opinion, too long been suffered to abuse the world; but an honest physician ought not to be despised because there are such things as mountebanks. I hope I have some share of reputation, which I would not willingly forfeit for a frolic or humour, and I believe no gentleman who reads this paper will look upon it to be of the same cast or mould with the common scribbles that are every day hawked about. My fortune has placed me above the little regard of writing for a few pence, which I neither value nor want; therefore, let not wise men too hastily condemn this essay, intended for a good design, to cultivate and improve an ancient art, long in disgrace, by having fallen into mean, unskilful hands. A little time will determine whether I have deceived others or myself; and

¹¹ Then there will be another Tethys and another Argo which shall carry chosen heroes. *Ecl. iv., 34.*

I think it is no very unreasonable request that men would please to suspend their judgments till then. I was once of the opinion with those who despise all predictions from the stars, till the year 1686 a man of quality showed me, written in his album, that the most learned astronomer, Captain Halley,⁹ assured him, he would never believe anything of the stars' influence if there were not a great revolution in England in the year 1688. Since that time I began to have other thoughts, and after eighteen years' diligent study and application, I think I have no reason to repent of my pains. I shall detain the reader no longer than to let him know that the account I design to give of next year's events shall take in the principal affairs that happened in Europe; and if I be denied the liberty of offering it to my own country, I shall appeal to the learned world, by publishing it in Latin, and giving order to have it printed in Holland.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE FIRST OF MR. BICKERSTAFF'S PREDICTIONS:

Being an Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge the Almanac-Maker, upon the 29th instant

In a Letter to a Person of Honour, Written in the Year 1708

My Lord,—In obedience to your lordship's commands, as well as to satisfy my own curiosity, I have for some days past inquired constantly after Partridge the almanac-maker, of whom it was foretold in Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions, published about a month ago, that he should die the 29th instant, about eleven at night, of a raging fever. I had some sort of knowledge of him when I was employed in the Revenue, because he used every year to present me with his almanac, as he did other gentlemen, upon the score of some little gratuity we gave him. I saw him accidentally once or twice about ten days before he died, and observed he began very much to droop and languish, though I hear his friends did not seem to apprehend him in any danger. About two or three days ago he grew ill, was confined first to his chamber, and in a few hours after to his bed, where Dr. Case¹ and Mrs. Kirleus² were sent for, to visit and to prescribe to him. Upon this intelligence I

sent thrice every day one servant or other to inquire after his health, and yesterday, about four in the afternoon, word was brought me "that he was past hopes;" upon which, I prevailed with myself to go and see him, partly out of commiseration, and I confess, partly out of curiosity. He knew me very well, seemed surprised at my condescension, and made me compliments upon it as well as he could in the condition he was. The people about him said he had been for some time delirious; but when I saw him, he had his understanding as well as ever I knew, and spoke strong and hearty, without any seeming uneasiness or constraint. After I had told him how sorry I was to see him in those melancholy circumstances, and said some other civilities suitable to the occasion, I desired him to tell me freely and ingenuously, whether the predictions Mr. Bickerstaff had published relating to his death had not too much affected and worked on his imagination. He confessed he had often had it in his head, but never with much apprehension, till about a fortnight before; since which time it had the perpetual possession of his mind and thoughts, and he did verily believe was the true natural cause of his present distemper: "For," said he, "I am thoroughly persuaded, and I think I have very good reasons, that Mr. Bickerstaff spoke altogether by guess, and knew no more what will happen this year than I did myself."

I told him his discourse surprised me, and I would be glad he were in a state of health to be able to tell me what reason he had to be convinced of Mr. Bickerstaff's ignorance. He replied, "I am a poor, ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, yet I have sense enough to know that all pretences of foretelling by astrology are deceits, for this manifest reason, because the wise and the learned, who can only judge whether there be any truth in this science, do all unanimously agree to laugh at and despise it; and none but the poor ignorant vulgar give it any credit, and that only upon the word of such silly wretches as I and my fellows, who can hardly write or read." I then asked him why he had not calculated his own nativity, to see whether it agreed with Bickerstaff's prediction, at which he shook his head and said, "Oh, sir, this is no time for jesting, but for repenting those fooleries, as I do now from the very bottom of my heart." "By what I can gather from you," said I, "the observations and predictions you printed with your almanacs were mere impositions on the people." He replied, "If it were otherwise, I should have the less to answer for. We have a common form for all those things; as to fore-

⁹ Edmund Halley (1656–1742), a celebrated astronomer, fellow of the Royal Society and friend of Sir Isaac Newton. His prediction of the return of a certain comet (now known as "Halley's comet") in 1758, was exactly fulfilled.

¹ A famous astrologer and quack practitioner of Queen Anne's time.

² The widow of a son of Dr. Thomas Kirleus, a London physician.

telling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanac as he thinks fit; the rest was my own invention, to make my almanac sell, having a wife to maintain, and no other way to get my bread; for mending old shoes is a poor livelihood," and," added he, sighing, "I wish I may not have done more mischief by my physic than my astrology; though I had some good receipts from my grandmother, and my own compositions were such as I thought could at least do no hurt."

I had some other discourse with him, which now I cannot call to mind; and I fear I have already tired your lordship. I shall only add one circumstance, that on his death-bed he declared himself a Nonconformist, and had a fanatic preacher to be his spiritual guide. After half an hour's conversation I took my leave, being almost stifled by the closeness of the room. I imagined he could not hold out long, and therefore withdrew to a little coffee-house hard by, leaving a servant at the house with orders to come immediately and tell me, as near as he could, the minute when Partridge should expire, which was not above two hours after, when, looking upon my watch, I found it to be above five minutes after seven; by which it is clear that Mr. Bickerstaff was mistaken almost four hours in his calculation. In the other circumstances he was exact enough. But whether he has not been the cause of this poor man's death, as well as the predictor, may be very reasonably disputed. However, it must be confessed the matter is odd enough, whether we should endeavor to account for it by chance, or the effect of imagination. For my own part, though I believe no man has less faith in these matters, yet I shall wait with some impatience, and not without some expectation, the fulfilling of Mr. Bickerstaff's second prediction, that the Cardinal de Noailles is to die upon the 4th of April, and if that should be verified as exactly as this of poor Partridge, I must own I should be wholly surprised, and at a loss, and should infallibly expect the accomplishment of all the rest.

GULLIVER AMONG THE LILLIPUTIANS¹

(From *The Travels of Lemuel Gulliver*, 1726)

My gentleness and good behavior had gained so far on the emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general,

¹Lemuel Gulliver, the honest, matter-of-fact, and typically middle-class hero of Swift's story, after taking several voyages as ship's surgeon, sailed from Bristol, May 4, 1699, on a voyage to the South Seas. Six

that I began to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favorable disposition. The natives came, by degrees, to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand; and at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide-and-seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favor at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the emperor to entertain his majesty and the court with a dance on the rope; and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap, the treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together, upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common pack-thread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal secretary for private affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured

months later he was shipwrecked on the way to the East Indies, and found himself in the country of Lilliput, which was inhabited by a diminutive race of men, not more than six inches high. After various adventures he met the Emperor of Lilliput, and went to the Court.

that, a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck if one of the king's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the emperor and empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The emperor lays on a table three fine silken threads of six inches long; one is blue, the other 10 red, and the third green. These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favor. The ceremony is performed in his majesty's great chamber of 15 state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity, very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The emperor holds 20 a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing, one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it, backward and forward, several times, according as the stick is advanced 25 or depressed. Sometimes the emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leap- 30 ing and creeping, is rewarded with the blue colored silk; and red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court who are 35 not adorned with one of these girdles.

The horses of the army, and those of the royal stables, having been daily led before me, were no longer shy, but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders 40 would leap them over my hand, as I held it on the ground; and one of the emperor's huntmen, upon a large courser, took my foot, shoe and all, which was indeed a prodigious leap. I had the good fortune to divert the emperor 45 one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two foot high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; whereupon his majesty commanded the master of his woods to 50 give directions accordingly; and the next morning six woodmen arrived with as many carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, and fixing them firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, 55 two foot and a half square, I took four other sticks, and tied them parallel at each corner, about two foot from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that

stood erect, and extended it on all sides, till it was as tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks, rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief, served as ledges 5 on each side. When I had finished my work, I desired the emperor to let a troop of his best horse, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His majesty approved of the proposal, and I took them up, one by one, 10 in my hands, ready mounted and armed, with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got into order they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked, and retired, and, in short, discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and 15 their horses from falling over the stage; and the emperor was so much delighted that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up and give the word of command; and with great difficulty persuaded even the empress herself to let me hold her in her close chair 20 within two yards of the stage, from whence she was able to take a full view of the whole performance. It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments; only once a fiery horse, that belonged to one of the captains, pawing with his hoof, struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand, I set down the troop 25 with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt; and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could: however, I would not trust to the strength of it any more in such dangerous enterprises.

HOW GULLIVER CONQUERED THE FLEET OF THE BLEFUSCUDIANS

The empire of Blefuscu is an island, situated to the northeast of Lilliput, from which it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me; 5 all intercourse between the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to his majesty a project I had

formed, of seizing the enemy's whole fleet; which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbor, ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen upon the depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed; who told me that in the middle, at high-water, it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six foot of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at most. I walked toward the northeast coast, over against Blefuscu, and, lying down behind a hillock, took out my small pocket perspective glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty-men-of-war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as pack-thread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and for the same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, bending the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the northeast coast, and, putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea, in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high-water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards, till I felt ground. I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frightened when they saw me that they leaped out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls: I then took my tackling, and, fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and, besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for mine eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept, among other little necessities, a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had escaped the emperor's searchers. These I took out, and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and, thus armed, went on boldly with my work, in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect further than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and, taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the bold part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go

the cord, and, leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving about two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables, to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run adrift, or fall foul on each other; but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. When I had got out of danger I stopped a while to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face; and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me at my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and, waiting about an hour, till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.

The emperor and his whole court stood on the shore, expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced to the middle of the channel they were yet more in pain, because I was under water to my neck. The emperor concluded me to be drowned, and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner; but he was soon eased of his fears: for, the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and, holding up the end of the cable by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, "Long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!" This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and created me a *nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honor among them.

A VOYAGE TO BROBDIGNAG¹

On the 16th day of June, 1703, a boy on the topmast discovered land. On the 17th we came in full view of a great island, or continent

¹ Gulliver returned safely from Lilliput, but after being home for two months grew restless and left England in a merchant-ship bound for Surat. They encountered a violent gale south of the island of Madagascar and were driven eastward for such a distance "that the oldest sailor on board could not tell in what part of the world" they were. We are then told how Gulliver came to Brobdignag—the land of the giants.

(for we knew not whether), on the south side whereof was a small neck of land jutting out into the sea, and a creek too shallow to hold a ship of above one hundred tons. We cast anchor within a league of this creek, and our captain sent a dozen of his men well armed in the long-boat, with vessels for water, if any could be found. I desired his leave to go with them, that I might see the country, and make what discoveries I could. When we came to land we saw no river or spring, nor any sign of inhabitants. Our men therefore wandered on the shore to find out some fresh water near the sea, and I walked alone about a mile on the other side, where I observed the country all barren and rocky. I now began to be weary, and, seeing nothing to entertain my curiosity, I returned gently down toward the creek; and the sea being full in my view, I saw our men already got into the boat, and rowing for life to the ship. I was going to halloo after them, although it had been to little purpose, when I observed a huge creature walking after them in the sea, as fast as he could; he waded not much deeper than his knees, and took prodigious strides; but our men had got the start of him half a league, and the sea thereabouts being full of sharp pointed rocks, the monster was not able to overtake the boat. This I was afterward told, for I durst not stay to see the issue of that adventure; but ran as fast as I could the way I first went, and then climbed up a steep hill, which gave me some prospect of the country. I found it fully cultivated; but that which first surprised me was the length of the grass, which in those grounds that seemed to be kept for hay was above twenty foot high.

I fell into a highroad, for so I took it to be, though it served to the inhabitants only as a footpath through a field of barley. Here I walked on for some time, but could see little on either side, it being now near harvest, and the corn rising at least forty foot. I was an hour walking to the end of this field, which was fenced in with a hedge of at least one hundred and twenty foot high, and the trees so lofty that I could make no computation of their altitude. There was a stile to pass from this field into the next. It had four steps, and a stone to cross over when you came to the uppermost. It was impossible for me to climb this stile, because every step was six foot high, and the upper stone above twenty. I was endeavoring to find some gap in the hedge, when I discovered one of the inhabitants in the next field, advancing toward the stile, of the same size with him whom I saw in the sea pursuing our boat. He appeared as tall as an

ordinary spire steeple, and took about ten yards at every stride, as near as I could guess. I was struck with the utmost fear and astonishment, and ran to hide myself in the corn, from whence I saw him at the top of the stile, looking back into the next field on the right hand, and heard him call in a voice many degrees louder than a speaking-trumpet; but the noise was so high in the air that at first I certainly thought it was thunder. Whereupon seven monsters, like himself, came toward him with reaping hooks in their hands, each hook about the largeness of six scythes. These people were not so well clad as the first, whose servants or laborers they seemed to be; for, upon some words he spoke, they went to reap the corn in the field where I lay. I kept from them at as great a distance as I could, but was forced to move with extreme difficulty, for the stalks of the corn were sometimes not above a foot distant, so that I could hardly squeeze my body betwixt them. However, I made a shift to go forward till I came to a part of the field where the corn had been laid by the rain and wind. Here it was impossible for me to advance a step; for the stalks were so interwoven that I could not creep through, and the beards of the fallen ears so strong and pointed that they pierced through my clothes into my flesh. At the same time I heard the reapers not above an hundred yards behind me. Being quite dispirited with toil, and wholly overcome by grief and despair, I lay down between two ridges, and heartily wished I might there end my days. I bemoaned my desolate widow and fatherless children. I lamented my own folly and willfulness in attempting a second voyage, against the advice of all my friends and relations. In this terrible agitation of mind I could not forbear thinking of Lilliput, whose inhabitants looked upon me as the greatest prodigy that ever appeared in the world; where I was able to draw an imperial fleet in my hand, and perform those other actions which will be recorded forever in the chronicles of that empire, while posterity shall hardly believe them, although attested by millions. I reflected what a mortification it must prove to me to appear as inconsiderable in this nation as one single Lilliputian would be among us. But this I conceived was to be the least of my misfortunes; for, as human creatures are observed to be more savage and cruel in proportion to their bulk, what could I expect but to be a morsel in the mouth of the first among these enormous barbarians that should happen to seize me? Undoubtedly philosophers are in the right when they tell us that nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison.

It might have pleased fortune to let the Lilliputians find some nation, where the people were as diminutive with respect to them as they were to me. And who knows but that even this prodigious race of mortals might be equally overmatched in some distant part of the world, whereof we have yet no discovery.

Scared and confounded as I was, I could not forbear going on with these reflections, when one of the reapers, approaching within ten yards of the ridge where I lay, made me apprehend that with the next step I should be squashed to death under his foot, or cut in two with his reaping-hook. And therefore when he was again about to move, I screamed as loud as fear could make me; whereupon the huge creature trod short, and, looking round about under him for some time, at last espied me as I lay on the ground. He considered awhile, with the caution of one who endeavors to lay hold on a small dangerous animal in such a manner that it may not be able either to scratch or to bite him, as I myself have sometimes done with a weasel in England. At length he ventured to take me up behind, by the middle, between his forefinger and thumb, and brought me within three yards of his eyes, that he might behold my shape more perfectly. I guessed his meaning, and my good fortune gave me so much presence of mind that I resolved not to struggle in the least as he held me in the air above sixty foot from the ground, although he grievously pinched my sides, for fear I should slip through his fingers. All I ventured was to raise mine eyes toward the sun, and place my hands together in a supplicating posture, and to speak some words in an humble, melancholy tone, suitable to the condition I then was in; for I apprehended every moment that he would dash me against the ground, as we usually do any little hateful animal which we have a mind to destroy. But my good star would have it that he appeared pleased with my voice and gestures, and began to look upon me as a curiosity, much wondering to hear me pronounce articulate words, although he could not understand them. In the meantime I was not able to forbear groaning and shedding tears, and turning my head toward my sides; letting him know as well as I could how cruelly I was hurt by the pressure of his thumb and finger. He seemed to apprehend my meaning; for, lifting up the lappet of his coat, he put me gently into it, and immediately ran along with me to his master, who was a substantial farmer, and the same person I had first seen in the field.

The farmer having (as I supposed by their talk) received such an account of me as his

servant could give him, took a piece of a small straw, about the size of a walking-staff, and therewith lifted up the lappets of my coat; which, it seems, he thought to be some kind of covering that nature had given me. He blew my hairs aside to take a better view of my face. He called his hinds about him, and asked them, as I afterward learned, whether they had ever seen in the fields any little creature that resembled me? He then placed me softly on the ground upon all four, but I got immediately up and walked slowly backward and forward, to let those people see I had no intent to run away. They all sat down in a circle about me, the better to observe my motions. I pulled off my hat, and made a low bow toward the farmer. I fell on my knees, and lifted up my hands and eyes, and spoke several words as loud as I could; I took a purse of gold out of my pocket, and humbly presented it to him. He received it on the palm of his hand, then applied it close to his eye to see what it was, and afterward turned it several times with the point of a pin (which he took out of his sleeve), but could make nothing of it. Whereupon I made a sign that he should place his hand on the ground. I then took the purse, and opening it, poured all the gold into his palm. There were six Spanish pieces of four pistoles each, besides twenty or thirty smaller coins. I saw him wet the tip of his little finger upon his tongue, and take up one of my largest pieces, and then another; but he seemed to be wholly ignorant what they were. He made me a sign to put them again into my purse, and the purse again into my pocket, which, after offering to him several times, I thought it best to do.

The farmer, by this time, was convinced I must be a rational creature. He spoke often to me; but the sound of his voice pierced my ears like that of a water-mill, yet his words were articulate enough. I answered as loud as I could in several languages, and he often laid his ear within two yards of me; but all in vain, for we were wholly unintelligible to each other. He then sent his servants to their work, and taking his handkerchief out of his pocket, he doubled, and spread it on his left hand, which he placed flat on the ground, with the palm upward, making me a sign to step into it, as I could easily do, for it was not above a foot in thickness. I thought it my part to obey; and for fear of falling laid myself at full length upon the handkerchief, with the remainder of which he lapped me up to the head for further security, and in this manner carried me home to his house. There he called his wife, and showed me to her; but she screamed and ran

back, as women in England do at the sight of a toad or spider. However, when she had awhile seen my behavior, and how well I observed the signs her husband made, she was soon reconciled, and by degrees grew extremely tender of me. . . .

The king, who, www.libertyclassics.org was a prince of excellent understanding, would frequently order that I should be brought in my box, and set upon the table in his closet: he would then command me to bring one of my chairs out of the box, and sit down within three yards' distance upon the top of the cabinet, which brought me almost to a level with his face. In this manner I had several conversations with him. I one day took the freedom to tell his majesty that the contempt he discovered toward Europe, and the rest of the world, did not seem answerable to those excellent qualities of mind that he was master of; that reason did not extend itself with the bulk of the body; on the contrary, we observed in our country that the tallest persons were usually least provided with it; that among other animals, bees and ants had the reputation of more industry, art, and sagacity, than many of the larger kinds; and that, as inconsiderable as he took me to be, I hoped I might live to do his majesty some signal service. The king heard me with attention, and began to conceive a much better opinion of me than he had ever before. He desired I would give him as exact an account of the government of England as I possibly could; because, as fond as princes commonly are of their own customs (for so he conjectured of other monarchs by my former discourses), he should be glad to hear of anything that might deserve imitation.

Imagine with thyself, courteous reader, how often I then wished for the tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero, that might have enabled me to celebrate the praise of my own dear native country in a style equal to its merits and felicity.

I began my discourse by informing his majesty that our dominions consisted of two islands, which composed three mighty kingdoms, under one sovereign, besides our plantations in America. I dwelt long upon the fertility of our soil, and the temperature of our climate. I then spoke at large upon the constitution of an English parliament; partly made up of an illustrious body, called the House of Peers; persons of the noblest blood, and of the most ancient and ample patrimonies. I described that extraordinary care always taken of their education in arts and arms, to qualify them for being counselors both to the king and kingdom; to have a share in the legis-

lature; to be members of the highest court of judicature, from whence there can be no appeal; and to be champions always ready for the defence of their prince and country, by their valor, conduct, and fidelity. That these were the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom, worthy followers of their most renowned ancestors, whose honor have been the reward of their virtue, from which their posterity were never once known to degenerate. To these were joined several holy persons, as part of that assembly, under the title of bishops; whose peculiar business it is to take care of religion, and of those who instruct the people therein. These were searched and sought out through the whole nation, by the prince and his wisest counselors, among such of the priesthood as were most deservedly distinguished by the sanctity of their lives and the depth of their erudition; who were indeed the spiritual fathers of the clergy and the people.

That the other part of the parliament consisted of an assembly called the House of Commons, who were all principal gentlemen, freely picked and culled out by the people themselves, for their great abilities and love of their country, to represent the wisdom of the whole nation. And that these two bodies made up the most august assembly in Europe; to whom, in conjunction with the prince, the whole legislature is committed.

I then descended to the courts of justice; over which the judges, those venerable sages and interpreters of the law, presided, for determining the disputed rights and properties of men, as well as for the punishment of vice and protection of innocence. I mentioned the prudent management of our treasury; the valor and achievements of our forces, by sea and land. I computed the number of our people by reckoning how many millions there might be of each religious sect, or political party, among us. I did not omit even our sports and pastimes, or any other particular which I thought might redound to the honor of my country. And I finished all with a brief historical account of affairs and events in England for about an hundred years past.

This conversation was not ended under five audiences, each of several hours; and the king heard the whole with great attention, frequently taking notes of what I spoke, as well as memorandums of all questions he intended to ask me.

When I had put an end to these long discourses, his majesty, in a sixth audience, consulting his notes, proposed many doubts, queries, and objections upon every article. He asked what methods were used to culti-

vate the minds and bodies of our young nobility, and in what kind of business they commonly spent the first and teachable part of their lives? What course was taken to supply that assembly, when any noble family became extinct? What qualifications were necessary in those who are to be created new lords; whether the humor of the prince, a sum of money to a court lady or a prime minister, or a design of strengthening a party opposite to the public interest, ever happened to be motives in those advancements? What share of knowledge these lords had in the laws of their country, and how they came by it, so as to enable them to decide the properties of their fellow-subjects in the last resort? Whether they were always so free from avarice, partialities, or want, that a bribe, or some other sinister view, could have no place among them? Whether those holy lords I spoke of were always promoted to that rank upon account of their knowledge in religious matters, and the sanctity of their lives; had never been compliers with the times, while they were common priests; or slavish prostitute chaplains to some nobleman, whose opinions they continued servilely to follow, after they were admitted into that assembly?

He then desired to know what arts were practiced in electing those whom I called commoners; whether a stranger, with a strong purse, might not influence the vulgar voters to choose him before their own landlord, or the most considerable gentleman in the neighborhood? How it came to pass that people were so violently bent upon getting into this assembly, which I allowed to be a great trouble and expense, often to the ruin of their families, without any salary or pension; because this appeared such an exalted strain of virtue and public spirit, that his majesty seemed to doubt it might possibly not be always sincere. And he desired to know whether such zealous gentlemen could have any views of refunding themselves for the charges and trouble they were at, by sacrificing the public good to the designs of a weak and vicious prince, in conjunction with a corrupted ministry. He multiplied his questions, and sifted me thoroughly upon every part of this head, proposing numberless inquiries and objections, which I think it not prudent or convenient to repeat.

Upon what I said in relation to our courts of justice, his majesty desired to be satisfied in several points: and this I was the better able to do, having been formerly almost ruined by a long suit in the Chancery, which was decreed for me, with costs. He asked what time was usually spent in determining between right

and wrong, and what degree of expense? Whether advocates and orators had liberty to plead in causes manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious, or oppressive? Whether party, in religion or politics, were observed to be of any weight in the scale of justice? Whether those pleading orators were persons educated in the general knowledge of equity, or only in provincial, national, and other local customs? Whether they or their judges had any part in penning those laws, which they assumed the liberty of interpreting and glossing upon at their pleasure? Whether they had ever, at different times, pleaded for and against the same cause, and cited precedents to prove contrary opinions? Whether they were a rich or a poor corporation? Whether they received any pecuniary reward for pleading or delivering their opinions? And particularly, whether they were ever admitted as members in the lower senate?

He fell next upon the management of our treasury; and said he thought my memory had failed me, because I computed our taxes at about five or six millions a year, and when I came to mention the issues, he found they sometimes amounted to more than double; for the notes he had taken were very particular in this point, because he hoped, as he told me, that the knowledge of our conduct might be useful to him, and he could not be deceived in his calculations. But, if what I told him were true, he was still at a loss how a kingdom could run out of its estate, like a private person. He asked me who were our creditors, and where we found money to pay them? He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and expensive wars. That certainly we must be a quarrelsome people, or live among very bad neighbors, and that our generals must needs be richer than our kings. He asked what business we had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade, or treaty, or to defend the coasts with our fleet? Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing army in the midst of peace and among a free people. He said if we were governed by our own consent, in the persons of our representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid, or against whom we were to fight; and would hear my opinion, whether a private man's house might not better be defended by himself, his children and family, than by half a dozen rascals, picked up at a venture in the streets for small wages, who might get an hundred times more by cutting their throats.

He laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic, as he was pleased to call it, in reckoning the numbers of our people, by a computation

drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said he knew no reason why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public should be obliged to change, or should not be obliged to conceal them. And, as it was tyranny in any government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second; for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials.

He observed, that, among the diversions of our nobility and gentry, I had mentioned gaming; he desired to know at what age this entertainment was usually taken up, and when it was laid down; how much of their time it employed; whether it ever went so high as to affect their fortunes; whether mean, vicious people, by their dexterity in that art, might not arrive at great riches, and sometimes keep our very nobles in dependence, as well as to habituate them to vile companions; wholly take them from the improvement of their minds, and force them, by the losses they have received, to learn and practice that infamous dexterity upon others?

He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century; protesting, it was only a heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments—the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition could produce.

His majesty, in another audience, was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken; compared the questions he made with the answers I had given; then, taking me into his hands, and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words, which I shall never forget, nor the manner he spoke them in: "My little friend Gildrig, you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator; the laws are best explained, interpreted and applied, by those whose interests and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution, which, in its original, might have been tolerable, but these half-erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It doth not appear from all you have said how any one perfection is required, toward the procurement of any one station among you; much less, that men are ennobled on account of their virtue; that priests are advanced for their piety or learning; soldiers, for their conduct or valor; judges, for their integrity; senators, for the love of their coun-

try; or counselors, for their wisdom. As for yourself," continued the king, "who have spent the greatest part of your life in travelling, I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country. But, by what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

Joseph Addison

1672-1719

NED SOFTLY, THE POET

(*The Teller*, No. 163, 1709-1711)

*Idem inficelo est inficetior rure,
Simul poemata attingit; neque idem unquam
Æque est beatus, ac poema quum scribit:
Tam gaudet in se, tamque se ipse miratur.*

*Nimirum idem omnes fallimur: neque est quisquam
Quem non in aliqua re videre Suffnum
Possis—*

Catul. de Suffeno, xx, 14.

(*Suffenus has no more wit than a mere clown when he attempts to write verses; and yet he is never happier than when he is scribbling: so much does he admire himself and his compositions. And, indeed, this is the foible of every one of us; for there is no man living who is not a Suffenus in one thing or other.*)

Will's Coffee-house, April 24.

I yesterday came hither¹ about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over all the newspapers; but upon my sitting down, I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. "Mr. Bickerstaff,"² says he, "I observe by a late paper of yours, that you and I are just of a humour; for you must know, of all impertinences, there is nothing which I so much hate as news. I never read a gazette in my life; and never trouble my head about our armies, whether they win or lose; or in what part of the world they lie encamped." Without giv-

¹ Since the days of Dryden (who patronized it regularly) *Will's Coffee-House*, on the north side of Russell Street near Covent Garden, was a famous resort for the critics and the wits of the town.

² The name which Steele adopted as the pseudonym of the Editor of the *Teller*. V. note on *Bickerstaff*, p. 321, and n. 2. *supra*.

ing me time to reply, he drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me, "That he had something which would entertain me more agreeably; and that he would desire my judgment upon every line, for that we had time enough before us until the company came in."

Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller is his favourite; and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book; which he repeats upon occasion, to show his reading, and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art; but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns, points, and quibbles, which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets, and practised by those who want genius and strength to represent, after the manner of the ancients, simplicity in its natural beauty and perfection.

Finding myself unavoidably engaged in such a conversation, I was resolved to turn my pain into a pleasure, and to divert myself as well as I could with so very odd a fellow. "You must understand," says Ned, "that the sonnet⁴ I am going to read to you was written upon a lady who showed me some verses of her own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it."

Upon which he began to read as follows:

TO MIRA, ON HER INCOMPARABLE POEMS

1

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine,
And tune your soft melodious notes,
You seem a sister of the Nine,
Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

2

I fancy, when your song you sing,
Your song you sing with so much art,
Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing;
For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Why," says I, "this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt: every verse hath something in it that piques; and then the dart in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram (for so I think you critics call it) as ever entered into the thought of a poet." "Dear Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, 55

³ Edmund Waller (1605-1687), was looked up to as a great refiner of language and style, and as a master of English versification.

⁴ In Addison's time the sonnet form was neglected, and the word *Sonnet* was applied loosely to any short poem.

shaking me by the hand, "everybody knows you to be a judge of these things; and, to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's⁵ translation of Horace's 'Art of Poetry' three several times before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it, for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine.

"This is," says he, "when you have your garland on; when you are writing verses." To which I replied, "I know your meaning: 15 a metaphor!" "The same," said he, and went on.

And tune your soft melodious notes.

"Pray observe the gliding of that verse; there is scarce a consonant in it: I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it." "Truly," said I, "I think it as good as the former." "I am very glad to hear you say so," says he; "but mind the next

You seem a sister of the Nine.

"That is," says he, "you seem a sister of the Muses; for, if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their opinion, that there were nine of them." "I remember it very well," said I; "but pray proceed."

Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

"Phœbus," says he, "was the god of Poetry. 35 These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then to take off from the air of learning, which Phœbus and the Muses have given to this first stanza, you may observe, how it falls all of a sudden into the 40 familiar—'in petticoats!'"

Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

"Let us now," says I, "enter upon the second stanza; I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor.

I fancy when your song you sing.

"It is very right," says he; "but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still a doubt upon me whether, in the second line it should be—'Your song you sing; or, You sing your song?' You shall hear them both:—

⁵ Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, nephew of the famous Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and a contemporary of Waller. Besides his translation of the *Art Poetica* (1680), he wrote an essay *On Translated Verse*, which influenced Dryden, and which teaches the importance of following set rules in poetical composition.

I fancy, when your song you sing.
(Your song you sing with so much art);

or,

I fancy, when your song you sing,
(You sing your song with so much art).

"Truly," said I, "the turn is so natural either way, that you have made me almost giddy with it." "Dear sir," said he, grasping me by the hand, "you have a great deal of patience; but pray what do you think of the next verse?"

Your pen was pluck'd from Cupid's wing.

"Think!" says I; "I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose." "That was my meaning," says he: "I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we come now to the last, which sums up the whole matter.

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Pray how do you like that *Ah!* doth it not make a pretty figure in that place? *Ah!*—it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out at being pricked with it.

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"My friend Dick Easy," continued he, "assured me he would rather have written that *Ah!* than to have been the author of the *Æneid*. He indeed objected, that I made Mira's pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that—" "Oh! as to that," says I, "it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing." He was going to embrace me for the hint; but half a dozen critics coming into the room, whose faces he did not like, he conveyed the sonnet into his pocket; and whispered me in the ear, he would show it me again as soon as his man had written it over fair.

THE OBJECT OF THE SPECTATOR

(*The Spectator*, No. 10, 1711-1714)

*Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigis subigit: si brachia forte remisit,
Atque illum in præceps pronò rapit aëvis amni.* 50
VIRG.

*So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And, slow advancing, struggle with the stream:
But if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.*

DRYDEN.

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these

my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day; so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster,¹ who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day.² And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses.³

I would, therefore, in a very particular manner, recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good, to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea-equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes,⁴ that a well written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think, that where the *Spectator* appears, the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my reader's consideration, whether it is

¹ Addison's "London" is the modern "City," the part of London lying to the East of the Temple and comprising the commercial and money-making part of the metropolis. "Westminster" corresponds to the modern "West End," the quarter west of the Temple "which spends money, makes laws, and regulates fashion." (V. Baedeker's *London*, pp. 93-94).

² i. e., shall find something to interest them in the discussion, etc.

³ Cf. what Macaulay says of his *History of England*: "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies."

⁴ *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. II, *Intro.*, § 14.

not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy⁹ or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds, and make enmities irreconcilable.

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies, I mean the fraternity of spectators, who live in the world without having anything to do in it; and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians,¹⁰ Fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious,⁷ and statesmen that are out of business; in short, every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas, till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring, and, by that means, gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of till about twelve o'clock in the morning; for, by that time, they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail⁸ be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instil into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I

have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's⁹ or a toy-shop,¹⁰ so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after.¹¹ Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweet-meats. This I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavour to make an innocent, if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavour to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day: but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be a matter of great raillery to the small wits; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being

⁹ Russia.

¹⁰ i. e., physicians with a title but no practice.

¹¹ i. e., lawyers without much practice. Lawyers were called "Templars" because they lived in the "Temple," originally a lodge of the Knights Templar.

⁸ In the spring of 1711 Marlborough had been sent to Flanders, and at the time this paper was written Englishmen were looking for news of a decisive victory over the French.

⁹ A dealer in silks, or small wares.

¹⁰ A shop for the sale of millinery "ribbons, brocades, embroidery," etc.

¹¹ All the rest of the day.

witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat¹² against this piece of raillery.

THOUGHTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(*The Spectator*, No. 26, March 30, 1711)

Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres. O beate seculi,
Vitæ summa brevis spem nos velat inchoare
longam.

Jam le premet nox, fabulæque manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia—

HOR.

With equal foot, rich friend, impartial fate
Knocks at the cottage, and the palace gate:
Life's span forbids thee to extend thy cares,
And stretch thy hopes beyond thy years:
Night soon will seize, and you must quickly go
To story'd ghosts, and Pluto's house below.

CREECH.

When I am in a serious humour, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another: the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances, that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head. The life of these men is finely described in holy writ by "the path of an arrow,"¹³ which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw

¹² Warning. In law a "caveat" is a notice filed in a public office, which prevents proceedings being instituted in a given case, without warning to the filer of the caveat.

¹ *Wisdom of Solomon*, v. 12.

in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries,¹⁴ were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month. In the poetical quarter,¹⁵ I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed indeed, that the present war¹⁶ had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim,¹⁷ or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or the politeness of a nation, from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesly Shovel's¹⁸ monument has very often given me great offence: instead

¹⁴ A prebend is one who receives an allotted stipend (or income) from the revenues of a cathedral or collegiate church for the performance of certain ecclesiastical duties.

¹⁵ The "poets' corner" in the south transept of the Abbey, where Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson, and other great poets are buried.

¹⁶ The "War of the Spanish Succession," which was begun in the year of Queen Anne's accession (1702) and lasted practically through the whole of her reign.

¹⁷ A little village in Bavaria, near which Marlborough won the most famous of his series of victories in 1704.

¹⁸ V. note on *Admiral Shovel*, p. 322.

of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for, instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honour. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness¹ in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns² and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates on the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall

¹ i. e., culture, good taste, elegance. Cf. the expression "polite learning."

² i. e., crowns adorned with figures of prows of ships (Lat. *rostrum*, a beak, a prow), like those conferred by the Romans for a naval victory. (V. Stanley's *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, II. 108, for comment on this "plaintive wish" of Addison's.

all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

THE FINE LADY'S JOURNAL

(*The Spectator*, No. 322, March 11, 1712)

. . . *Modo vir, modo femina.*

VIRG.

Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman.

The journal with which I presented my reader on Tuesday last,¹ has brought me in several letters, with accounts of many private lives cast into that form. I have the *Rake's Journal*, the *Sot's Journal*, and among several others a very curious piece, entitled—"The Journal of a Mohock."² By these instances I find that the intention of my last Tuesday's paper has been mistaken by many of my readers. I did not design so much to expose vice as idleness, and aimed at those persons who pass away their time rather in trifle and impertinence, than in crimes and immoralities. Offences of this latter kind are not to be dallied with, or treated in so ludicrous a manner. In short, my journal only holds up folly to the light, and shews the disagreeableness of such actions as are indifferent in themselves, and blamable only as they proceed from creatures endowed with reason.

My following correspondent, who calls herself *Clarinda*, is such a journalist as I require: she seems by her letter to be placed in a modish state of indifference between vice and virtue, and to be susceptible of either, were there proper pains taken with her. Had her journal been filled with gallantries, or such occurrences as had shewn her wholly divested of her natural innocence, notwithstanding it might have been more pleasing to the generality of readers, I should not have published it; but as it is only the picture of a life filled with a fashionable kind of gaiety and laziness, I shall set down five days of it, as I have received it from the hand of my fair correspondent.

Dear Mr. Spectator,

You having set your readers an exercise in one of your last week's papers, I have performed mine according to your orders, and herewith send it you enclosed. You must know, Mr. Spectator, that I am a maiden lady of a

¹ The paper referred to (No. 317) contains some specimen passages from the Journal of a typical man-about-town. "of greater consequence in his own eyes than in the eyes of the world."

² The Mohocks were bands of aristocratic ruffians, who called themselves after the Mohawk tribe of Indians. They infested the streets of London after nightfall, and played cruel and barbarous tricks upon the passers by.

good fortune, who have had several matches offered me for these ten years last past, and have at present warm applications made to me by a very pretty fellow. As I am at my own disposal, I come up to town every winter, and pass my time in it, after the manner you will find in the following *Journal*, which I begun to write upon the very day after your Spectator upon that subject.

Tuesday night. Could not go to sleep till 10 one in the morning for thinking of my journal.

Wednesday. From eight till ten. Drank two dishes of chocolate in bed, and fell asleep after them.

From ten to eleven. Eat a slice of bread and butter, drank a dish of bohea,² read the Spectator.

From eleven to one. At my toilette, tried a new head.⁴ Gave orders for Veny⁵ to be 20 combed and washed. *Mem.* I look best in blue.

From one till half an hour after two. Drove to the Change. Cheapened⁶ a couple of fans.

Till four. At dinner. *Mem.* Mr. Froth 25 passed by in his new liveries.

From four to six. Dressed, paid a visit to old Lady Blithe and her sister, having before heard they were gone out of town that day.

From six to eleven. At Basset.⁷ *Mem.* Never set again upon the ace of diamonds.

Thursday. From eleven at night to eight in the morning. Dreamed that I punted⁸ to Mr. Froth.

From eight to ten. Chocolate. Read two acts in Aurengzebe⁹ a-bed.

From ten to eleven. Tea-table. Read the playbills. Received a letter from Mr. Froth. *Mem.* Locked it up in my strong box.

Rest of the morning. Fontange, the tire-woman, her account of my Lady Blithe's wash. Broke a tooth in my little tortoise shell comb. Sent Frank to know how my Lady Heetic rested after her monkey's leaping out at window. Looked pale. Fontagne tells me my glass is not true. Dressed by three.

From three to four. Dinner cold before I sat down.

From four to eleven. Saw company. Mr. 50 Froth's opinion of Milton. His account of the Mohocks. His fancy for a pin-cushion. Picture in the lid of his snuff-box. Old Lady

Faddle promises me her woman to cut my hair. Lost five guineas at crimp.¹⁰

Twelve o'clock at night. Went to bed.

Friday. Eight in the morning. A-bed. Read 5 over all Mr. Froth's letters.

Ten o'clock. Staid within all day, not at home.

From ten to twelve. In conference with my mantua-maker. Sorted a suit of ribbons. Broke my blue china cup.

From twelve to one. Shut myself up in my chamber, practised Lady Betty Modely's skuttle.¹¹

One in the afternoon. Called for my flowered handkerchief. Worked half a violet-leaf in it. Eyes ached and head out of order. Threw by my work, and read over the remaining part of Aurengzebe.

From three to four. Dined.

From four to twelve. Changed my mind, dressed, went abroad, and played at crimp till midnight. Found Mrs. Spiteley at home. Conversation: Mrs. Brilliant's necklace false stones. Old Lady Loveday going to be married to a young fellow that is not worth a groat.¹² Miss Prue gone into the country. Tom Townley has red hair. *Mem.* Mrs. Spiteley whispered in my ear that she had something to tell me about Mr. Froth, I am sure it is not 30 true.

Between twelve and one. Dreamed that Mr. Froth lay at my feet, and called me Indamora.¹³

Saturday. Rose at eight o'clock in the 35 morning. Sat down to my toilette.

From eight to nine. Shifted a patch for half an hour before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left eyebrow.

From nine to twelve. Drank my tea, and 40 dressed.

From twelve to two. At chapel. A great deal of good company. *Mem.* The third air in the new opera. Lady Blithe dressed frightfully.

From three to four. Dined. Miss Kitty, 45 called upon me to go to the opera, before I was risen from table.

From dinner to six. Drank tea. Turned off a footman for being rude to Veny.

Six o'clock. Went to the opera. I did not see Mr. Froth till the beginning of the second act. Mr. Froth talked to a gentleman in a black wig. Bowed to a lady in the front box. Mr. Froth and his friend clapped Nicolini¹⁴

² Tea. Bohea is the name (slightly modified) of certain hill-ranges in China on which the tea-shrub is largely 55 grown.

⁴ Head-dress. ⁵ Clarinda's lap-dog. ⁶ Bought.

⁷ A game of cards very popular in England in Addison's time.

⁸ To punt, to play at basset, or ombre.

⁹ A play by Dryden.

¹⁰ A game of cards.

¹¹ A spelling of *skuttle*; applied to a mincing gait affected by ladies of fashion. "She quitted the shop with an easy *skuttle*." *Spectator*, No. 536.

¹² A silver coin of small value.

¹³ The heroine of *Aurengzebe*.

¹⁴ A famous Neapolitan actor and singer. (*V. Spectator*, No. 13.)

in the third act. Mr. Froth cried out *Ancora*.¹⁵ Mr. Froth led me to my chair. I think he squeezed my hand.

Eleven at night. Went to bed. Melancholy dreams. Methought Nicolini said he was Mr. Froth.

Sunday. Indisposed.

Monday. Eight o'clock. Waked by Miss Kitty. Aurengzebe lay upon the chair by me. Kitty repeated without book the eight best lines in the play. Went in our mobs¹⁶ to the dumb man¹⁷ according to appointment. Told me that my lover's name began with a G. *Mem.* The conjurer was within a letter of Mr. Froth's name, &c.

Upon looking back into this my journal, I find that I am at a loss to know whether I pass my time well or ill; and indeed never thought of considering how I did it before I perused your speculation upon that subject. I scarce find a single action in these five days that I can thoroughly approve of, except the working upon the violet-leaf, which I am resolved to finish the first day I am at leisure. As for Mr. Froth and Veny, I did not think they took up so much of my time and thoughts as I find they do upon my journal. The latter of them I will turn off, if you insist upon it; and if Mr. Froth does not bring matters to a conclusion very suddenly, I will not let my life run away in a dream. Your humble servant,

CLARINDA.

To resume one of the morals of my first paper, and to confirm Clarinda in her good inclinations, I would have her consider what a pretty figure she would make among posterity, were the history of her whole life published like these five days of it. I shall conclude my paper with an epitaph written by an uncertain author¹⁸ on Sir Philip Sidney's sister, a lady who seems to have been of a temper very much different from that of Clarinda. The last thought of it is so very noble, that I dare say my reader will pardon me the quotation.

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE

*Underneath this marble hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast kill'd another,
Fair and learned and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.*

¹⁵ The Italian form of "*Encore*."

¹⁶ A mob was a kind of cap, or hood.

¹⁷ Duncan Campbell, a fortune-teller, said to be deaf and dumb, and supposed to have the gift of second sight.

¹⁸ This epitaph, formerly ascribed to Ben Jonson, is now believed to have been written by William Browne. (V. Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, note, p. 294).

SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

(*The Spectator*, No. 112, Monday, July 9, 1711)

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing; he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer book: and at the same time employed an itinerant singing master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his

devotion, he pronounces "Amen" three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is 10 remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a 15 very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character, makes his friends observe these little singularities as 20 foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his 25 seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is 30 understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechizing day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has 35 ordered a bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a fitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may en- 40 courage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger 45 and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the Squire, who live in a per- 50 petual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the Squire, and the Squire to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The Squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs 55 them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity,

that the Squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the 5 whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hun- dred a year who do not believe it.

Sir Richard Steele

1671-1729

ON TRUE DISTINCTION

(*The Taller*, No. 69, September 17, 1709)

*... Quid oportet
Nos facere, a vulgo lateque remotos?
HOR. 1 Sat. vi, 17.*

*But how shall we, who differ far and wide,
From the mere vulgar, this great point decide.*
FRANCIS.

It is, as far as it relates to our present being, the great end of education to raise ourselves above the vulgar; but what is intended by the vulgar, is not, methinks, enough understood. In me, indeed, that word raises a quite different idea from what it usually does in others; but perhaps that proceeds from my being old, and beginning to want the relish of such satis- factions as are the ordinary entertainment of men. However, such as my opinion is in this case, I will speak it; because it is possible that turn of thought may be received by others, who may reap as much satisfaction from it as I do myself.

It is to me a very great meanness, and something much below a philosopher, which is what I mean by a gentleman, to rank a man among the vulgar for the condition of life he is in, and not according to his behaviour, his thoughts, and sentiments, in that condition. For if a man be loaded with riches and honours, and in that state of life has thoughts and inclinations below the meanest artificer; is not such an artificer, who, within his power, is good to his friends, moderate in his demands for his labour, and cheerful in his occupation, very much superior to him who lives for no other end but to serve himself, and assumes a

preference in all his words and actions to those who act their part with much more grace than himself? Epictetus has made use of the similitude of a stage-play to human life with much spirit. "It is not," says he, "to be considered among the actors, who is prince, or who is beggar, but who acts prince or beggar best."¹ The circumstance of life should not be that which gives us place, but our behaviour in that circumstance is what should be our solid distinction. Thus a wise man should think no man above him or below him, any further than it regards the outward order or discipline of the world: for, if we conceive too great an idea of the eminence of our superiors, or subordination of our inferiors, it will have an ill effect upon our behaviour to both. He who thinks no man above him but for his virtue, none below him but for his vice, can never be obsequious or assuming in a wrong place; but will frequently emulate men in rank below him, and pity those above him.

This sense of mankind² is so far from a leveling principle, that it only sets us upon a true basis of distinction, and doubles the merit of such as become their condition. A man in power, who can, without the ordinary prepossessions which stop the way to the true knowledge and service of mankind, overlook the little distinctions of fortune, raise obscure merit, and discountenance successful indolence, has, in the minds of knowing men, the figure of an angel rather than a man; and is above the rest of men in the highest character he can be, even that of their benefactor.

ON THE FUNERAL OF BETTERTON

(*The Teller*, No. 167, May 4, 1710)

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis submissa fidelibus.*

HOR.

... What we hear,
With weaker passion will affect the heart,
Than when the faithful eye beholds the part.

FRANCIS.

Having received notice, that the famous actor, Mr. Betterton,¹ was to be interred this evening in the cloisters near Westminster-abbey, I was resolved to walk thither; and see

¹ V. Epictetus' *Enchiridion*, Cap. XVII., and cf. Pope, *Essay on Man*, iv., 193.

"Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

² This estimate of mankind.

¹ Thomas Betterton, the foremost actor on the English stage from the Restoration until his retirement in 1710. He was a friend of Dryden, and Pepys. Pope and Steele agree in their admiration of his acting.

the last office done to a man whom I had always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature, than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I had ever read. As the rude and untaught multitude are no way wrought upon more effectually, than by seeing public punishments and executions; so men of letters and education feel their humanity most forcibly exercised, when they attend the obsequies of men who had arrived at any perfection in liberal accomplishments. Theatrical action is to be esteemed as such, except it be objected that we cannot call that an art which cannot be attained by art. Voice, stature, motion, and other gifts, must be very bountifully bestowed by nature, or labour and industry will but push the unhappy endeavourer in that way the further off his wishes.

Such an actor as Mr. Betterton ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius² among the Romans. The greatest orator³ has thought fit to quote his judgment, and celebrate his life. Roscius was the example to all that would form themselves into proper and winning behaviour. His action was so well adapted to the sentiments he expressed, that the youth of Rome thought they wanted⁴ only to be virtuous, to be as graceful in their appearance as Roscius. The imagination took a lovely impression of what was great and good; and they, who never thought of setting up for the art of imitation, became themselves imitable characters.

There is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming a freeborn people as that of a theater. Tully⁵ reports, that the celebrated player of whom I am speaking, used frequently to say, "The perfection of an actor is only to become what he is doing." Young men, who are too unattentive to receive lectures, are irresistibly taken with performances. Hence it is, that I extremely lament the little relish the gentry of this nation have, at present, for the just and noble representations in some of our tragedies. The operas, which are of late introduced,⁶ can leave no trace behind them that can be of service beyond the

² Quintus Roscius Gallus, a famous Roman actor. A life of Betterton was published in 1708 entitled *Roscius Anglicanus*.

³ Cicero, who defended Roscius in an oration *Pro Quinto Roscio Comedo*.

⁴ i. e., needed, required.

⁵ i. e., Cicero.

⁶ The modern opera originated in Italy toward the close of the sixteenth century. It began to be cultivated in France and Germany about 1650, and was introduced into England toward the end of the century. Steele's sympathies are with the old traditions of the English stage, and he regrets the popularity of the lighter opera, with its singing and dancing.

present moment. To sing and to dance, are accomplishments very few have any thoughts of practising; but to speak justly, and move gracefully, is what every man thinks he does perform, or wishes he did.

I have hardly a notion, that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in, when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in Othello; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind, upon the innocent answers Desdemona makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart; and perfectly convince him, that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene, will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakespeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent, and broken sentences: but a reader that has seen Betterton act it, observes, there could not be a word added; that longer speeches had been unnatural, nay, impossible, in Othello's circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that, while I walked in the cloisters, I thought of him with the same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had in real life done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in; and I began to be extremely afflicted that Brutus and Cassius had any difference;⁷ that Hotspur's gallantry⁸ was so unfortunate; and that the mirth and good humour of Falstaff could not exempt him from the grave. Nay, this occasion, in me who look upon the distinctions amongst men to be merely scenical, raised reflections upon the emptiness of all human perfection and greatness in general; and I could not but regret, that the sacred heads which lie buried in the neighbourhood of this little portion of earth, in which my poor old friend is deposited, are returned to dust as well as he, and that there is no difference in the grave between the imaginary and the real monarch. This made me say of human life itself, with Macbeth,

To-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in a stealing pace from day to day
To the last moment of recorded time!
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools,

⁷ *Julius Caesar*, IV., iii.

⁸ *I K. Hen. IV.*, V., iv.

To their eternal night! Out, out, short candle,
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more.⁹

RECOLLECTIONS

(*The Teller*, No. 181, June 6, 1710)

*Dies, ni fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum
Semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis, habeo.*
VIRG. *Æn.* v. 49.

*And now the rising day renews the year,
A day for ever sad, for ever dear.*

DRYDEN.

There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think everything lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good-will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the *manes*¹ of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with, that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those, with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the

⁵⁵ ¹ A misquotation of the immortal passage in Act V., v. Steele lived in an age that produced and tolerated "versions" of Shakespeare. Steele here quotes from Davenant's "version," but not with absolute accuracy.

² The shades, or spirits, of the dead, which were honored by the Romans as the tutelary divinities of their families.

violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience² of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, "Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again." She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport; which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since

² Endurance.

insnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softness of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We, that are very old, are better able to remember things which befel us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is, that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widow on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel? Oh Death! thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week, I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifer? I still behold the smiling earth—A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my

servant knocked at my closet-door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house.² Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicksome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it until two of the clock this morning; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

THE SPECTATOR CLUB

(From *The Spectator*, 1711-12)

*At Alii sex
Et plures uno conclamant ore.*¹

JUV.

Friday, March 2, 1711.

The first of our society is a gentlemen of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho Square. It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etheridge,³ so

fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson⁴ in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterward. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. 'Tis said Sir Roger grew humble in his desires after he had forgot this cruel beauty. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house, he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way up-stairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum⁵ that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the game act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple,⁶ a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke.⁷ The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage articles, leases, and tenures in the neighbourhood, all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the

¹ A noted sharper, and a contemporary of Rochester and Etheridge.

² Sir Roger was not only a justice of the peace, or local magistrate, for his county, but he was one of those specially named in the commission authorizing the holding of the court. Magistrates so specially commissioned were called "justices of the quorum" from the words of the writ: *Quorum aliquem vestrum unum esse volumus*, etc.

³ i. e., a London barrister. The Inner Temple was one of the four legal societies which possessed the right of admitting applicants to the bar.

⁴ Two celebrated judges and legal writers. Littleton's important work on *Tenures* (i. e. the law of real estate) was translated and edited by Coke, and this book, familiarly known as "Coke upon Littleton," became a standard legal text-book.

² So called from the name of the original proprietor Thomas Garraway. It was one of the famous and fashionable coffee-houses of the day.

¹ But six others and more call out with one voice. *Sat.*, vii., 166.

² John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-1680), a witty but shameless courtier and versifier at the court of Charles II. He died at thirty-one, exhausted by his wild and reckless life. V. his *Epitaph on Charles II.*, p. 280, *supra*. Sir George Etheridge (1635?-1691), a dramatist of the Restoration period, like his friend Rochester, had many of the worst traits of the "fine gentleman" of that time.

orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends, know that he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable; as few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn,⁷ crosses through Russell Court, and takes a turn at Will's⁸ till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his perriwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose.⁹ It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London, a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting which would make no great figure were he not a rich man), he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by power and industry. He will often argue that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, among which the greatest favourite is, "A penny saved is a penny got." A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself, and says that England may

be richer than other kingdoms by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room, sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward in putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements and at several sieges; but, having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he had talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess he had left the world because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty, and an even, regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will, however, in his way of talk excuse generals for not disposing according to men's desert or inquiring into it; "for," says he "that great man who has a mind to help me has as many to break through to come at me as I have to come at him." Therefore he will conclude that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from a habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humourists unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have among us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life; but, having been very careful

⁷ One of the less important Inns of the court, originally a hostelry. Sir Thomas More studied law for a time in this Inn.

⁸ *Will's Coffee-House*. There were two coffee-houses of this name, one frequented by members of the legal profession, the other (and the more celebrated one) the resort of the wits, on Russell Street. The Templar, who is represented as preferring literature to law, appears (from the hint Steele gives us of the locality) to have chosen the latter.

⁹ A tavern near Drury Lane Theatre.

of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead or traces in his brain. His person is well turned and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, and that way of placing their hoods, whose frailty was covered by such a sort of petticoat, and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such an occasion, he will tell you, when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations he has ever about the same time received a kind glance or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such-a-one. If you speak of a young commoner that said a lively thing in the House, he starts up: "He has good blood in his veins; Tom Mirabell begot him; the rogue cheated me in that affair; that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to." This way of talking of his, very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn, and I find that there is not one of the company but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man who is usually called a well-bred, fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest, worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of as one of our company, for he visits us but seldom; but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferences in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind and the integrity of his life create him followers as being eloquent or laud¹⁰ ad-

¹⁰ i. e., as others are advanced by their eloquence or by the praise of those about them.

vances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years that he observes, when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

ON TESTIMONIALS

(*The Spectator*, No. 493, September 25, 1712)

*Qualem commendes etiam atque etiam adspice, ne
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem.*

HOR.

*Commend not, 'till a man is thoroughly known;
A rascal prais'd, you make his faults your own.*

ANON.

It is no unpleasant matter of speculation to consider the recommendatory epistles that pass round this town from hand to hand, and the abuse people put upon one another in that kind. It is indeed come to that pass, that, instead of being the testimony of merit in the person recommended, the true reading of a letter of this sort is, "The bearer hereof is so uneasy to me, that it will be an act of charity in you to take him off my hands; whether you prefer him or not, it is all one; for I have no manner of kindness for him, or obligation to him or his; and do what you please as to that." As negligent as men are in this respect, a point of honour is concerned in it; and there is nothing a man should be more ashamed of, than passing a worthless creature into the service or interests of a man who has never injured you. The women indeed are a little too keen in their resentments to trespass often this way; but you shall sometimes know, that the mistress and the maid shall quarrel, and give each other very free language, and at last the lady shall be pacified to turn her out of doors, and give her a very good word to any body else. Hence it is that you see, in a year and a half's time, the same face a domestic in all parts of the town. Good-breeding and good-nature lead people in a great measure to this injustice: when suitors of no consideration will have confidence enough to press upon their superiors, those in power are tender of speaking the exceptions they have against them, and are mortgaged into promises out of their impatience of importunity. In this latter case, it would be a very useful inquiry to know the

history of recommendations. There are, you must know, certain abettors of this way of torment, who make it a profession to manage the affairs of candidates. These gentlemen let out their impudence to their clients, and supply any defective recommendation, by informing how such and such a man is to be attacked. They will tell you, get the least scrap from Mr. Such-a-one, and leave the rest to them. When one of these undertakers has your business in hand, you may be sick, absent in town or country, and the patron shall be worried, or you prevail. I remember to have been shown a gentleman some years ago, who punished a whole people for their facility in giving their credentials. This person had belonged to a regiment which did duty in the West Indies, and, by the mortality of the place, happened to be commanding-officer in the colony. He oppressed his subjects with great frankness, till he became sensible that he was heartily hated by every man under his command. When he had carried his point to be thus detestable, in a pretended fit of dis-humour, and feigned uneasiness of living where he found he was so universally unacceptable, he communicated to the chief inhabitants a design he had to return for England, provided they would give him ample testimonials of their approbation. The planters came into it to a man, and, in proportion to his deserving the quite contrary, the words justice, generosity, and courage, were inserted in his commission, not omitting the general good-liking of people of all conditions in the colony. The gentleman returns for England, and within a few months after came back to them their governor, on the strength of their own testimonials.

Such a rebuke as this cannot indeed happen to easy recommenders, in the ordinary course of things, from one hand to another; but how would a man bear to have it said to him, "The person I took into confidence on the credit you gave him, has proved false, unjust, and has not answered any way, the character you gave me of him?"

I cannot but conceive very good hopes of that rake Jack Toper of the Temple, for an honest scrupulousness in this point. A friend of his meeting with a servant that had formerly lived with Jack, and having a mind to take him, sent to him to know what faults the fellow had, since he could not please such a careless fellow as he was. His answer was as follows:—

"Sir,

"Thomas that lived with me was turned away because he was too good for me. You

know I live in taverns; he is an orderly sober rascal, and thinks much to sleep in an entry until two in the morning. He told me one day, when he was dressing me, that he wondered I was not dead before now, since I went to dinner in the evening, and went to supper at two in the morning. We were coming down Essex-street one night a little flustered,¹ and I was giving him the word to alarm the watch;² he had the impudence to tell me it was against the law. You that are married, and live one day after another the same way, and so on the whole week, I dare say will like him, and he will be glad to have his meat in due season. The fellow is certainly very honest. My service to your lady. Yours,

"J. T."

Now this was very fair dealing. Jack knew very well, that though the love of order made a man very awkward in his equipage, it was a valuable quality among the queer people who live by rule; and had too much good sense and good-nature to let the fellow starve, because he was not fit to attend his vivacities.

I shall end this discourse with a letter of recommendation from Horace to Claudius Nero.³ You will see in that letter a slowness to ask a favour, a strong reason for being unable to deny his good word any longer, and that it is a service to the person to whom he recommends, to comply with what is asked: all which are necessary circumstances both in justice and good-breeding, if a man would ask so as to have reason to complain of a denial; and indeed a man should not in strictness ask otherwise. In hopes the authority of Horace, who perfectly understood how to live with great men, may have a good effect towards amending this facility in people of condition, and the confidence of those who apply to them without merit, I have translated the epistle.

TO CLAUDIUS NERO

"Sir,

"Septimius, who waits upon you with this, is very well acquainted with the place you are pleased to allow me in your friendship. For when he beseeches me to recommend him to your notice, in such a manner as to be received by you, who are delicate in the choice of your friends and domestics, he knows our intimacy, and understands my ability to serve him better than I do myself. I have defended

¹ Confused with drink.

² i. e., telling him to create a disturbance, or play some mad prank, that would call out the watch; the police.

³ *Tiberius Claudius Nero*, a step-son of Augustus; a Hor., *Epist.*, I, ix.

myself against his ambition to be yours, as long as I possibly could; but fearing the imputation of hiding my power in you out of mean and selfish considerations, I am at last prevailed upon to give you this trouble. Thus to avoid the appearance of a greater fault, I have put on this confidence. If you can forgive this transgression of modesty in behalf of a friend, receive this gentleman into your interests and friendship, and take it from me that he is an honest and a brave man."

Henry St. John, Viscount
Bolingbroke¹

1678-1751

FROM REFLECTIONS UPON EXILE

(1716)

Dissipation of mind, and length of time, are the remedies to which the greatest part of mankind trust in their afflictions. But the first of these works a temporary, the second a slow, effect: and both are unworthy of a wise man. Are we to fly from ourselves that we may fly from our misfortunes, and fondly to imagine that the disease is cured, because we find means to get some moments of respite from pain? Or shall we expect from time, the physician of brutes, a lingering and uncertain deliverance? Shall we wait to be happy till we can forget that we are miserable, and owe to the weakness of our faculties a tranquillity which ought to be the effect of their strength? Far otherwise. Let us set all our past and our present afflictions at once before our eyes. Let us resolve to overcome them, instead of flying from them, or wearing out the sense of them by long and ignominious patience. Instead of palliating remedies, let us use the incision-knife and the caustic, search the wound to the bottom, and work an immediate and radical cure.

The recalling of former misfortunes serves to fortify the mind against latter. He must blush to sink under the anguish of one wound, who surveys a body seamed over with the scars of many, and who has come victorious out of

all the conflicts wherein he received them. Let sighs and tears, and fainting under the lightest strokes of adverse fortune, be the portion of those unhappy people whose tender minds a long course of felicity has enervated: while such, as have passed through years of calamity, bear up, with a noble and immovable constancy, against the heaviest. Uninterrupted misery has this good effect, as it continually torments, it finally hardens.

Such is the language of philosophy: and happy is the man who acquires the right of holding it. But this right is not to be acquired by pathetic discourse. Our conduct can alone give it us; and therefore, instead of presuming on our strength, the surest method is to confess our weakness, and, without loss of time, to apply ourselves to the study of wisdom. This was the advice which the oracle gave to 20 Zeno,² and there is no other way of securing our tranquillity amidst all the accidents to which human life is exposed. Philosophy has, I know, her *Thrasos*,³ as well as war: and among her sons many there have been, who, while they aimed at being more than men, became something less. The means of preventing this danger are easy and sure. It is a good rule to examine well before we addict ourselves to any sect: but I think it is a better rule, to addict ourselves to none. Let us hear them all, with a perfect indifferency, on which side the truth lies: and, when we come to determine, let nothing appear so venerable to us as our own understandings. Let us gratefully accept the help of every one who has endeavoured to correct the vices, and strengthen the minds of men; but let us choose for ourselves, and yield universal assent to none. Thus, that I may instance the sect already mentioned, 40 when we have laid aside the wonderful and surprising sentences, and all the paradoxes of the Portique,⁴ we shall find in that school such doctrines as our unprejudiced reason submits to with pleasure, as nature dictates, and as 45 experience confirms. Without this precaution, we run the risk of becoming imaginary kings,

² A Greek stoic philosopher of the third century. Upon Zeno's consulting the oracle, what course was fittest for a man to take that intended to regulate and govern his life after the best manner? The Deity returned for answer that he should keep consorship with the dead. Upon which he fell to reading the lives of the ancients. "*Life of Zeno*," in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers*.

³ i. e., her men like *Thrasos*, a blustering, braggart, captain in one of Terence's comedies. Cf. *thrasonical*, boasting, vain-glorious.

⁴ i. e., the *Portico*, or the *Porch*. The school of philosophy founded by Zeno of Cyprus, was called *Stoic*, from the Greek word *Stoa*, a porch, because Zeno taught in a famous portico in Athens, known as the "*Painted Porch*," or "*the Porch*." Hence *paradoxes of the Portique* = paradoxes of the stoics, or of the philosophers of the Porch.

¹ Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, wit, politician, and philosopher, the friend of Pope, the political ally of Swift, and the political antagonist of Walpole, was one of the most brilliant figures in the England of Queen Anne. Shortly before the Queen's death, he was prominent in an intrigue to secure the succession of the Stuarts, and after the triumph of the house of Hanover, in 1715, he was compelled to take refuge in France. It was during this enforced residence abroad, after the collapse of his political schemes that, endeavoring, or perhaps affecting to console himself with philosophy, he wrote his *Reflections Upon Exile*.

and real slaves. With it we may learn to assert our native freedom, and live independent on fortune.

In order to which great end, it is necessary that we stand watchful, as sentinels, to discover the secret wiles and open attacks of this capricious goddess, before they reach us. Where she falls upon us unexpected, it is hard to resist; but those who wait for her, will repel her with ease. The sudden invasion of an enemy overthrows such as are not on their guard; but they who foresee the war, and prepare themselves for it before it breaks out, stand, without difficulty, the first and the fiercest onset. I learned this important lesson long ago, and never trusted to fortune even while she seemed to be at peace with me. The riches, the honours, the reputation, all the advantages which her treacherous indulgence poured upon me, I placed so, that she might snatch them away without giving me any disturbance. I kept a great interval between me and them. She took them, but she could not tear them from me. No man suffers by bad fortune, but he who has been deceived by good. If we grow fond of her gifts, fancy that they belong to us, and are perpetually to remain with us, if we lean upon them, and expect to be considered for them; we shall sink into all the bitterness of grief, as soon as these false and transitory benefits pass away, as soon as our vain and childish minds, unfraught with solid pleasures, become destitute even of those which are imaginary. But if we do not suffer ourselves to be transported by prosperity, neither shall we be reduced by adversity. Our souls will be of proof against the dangers of both these states: and, having explored our strength, we shall be sure of it; for in the midst of felicity, we shall have tried how we can bear misfortune.

It is much harder to examine and judge, than to take up opinions on trust; and therefore the far greatest part of the world borrow, from others, those which they entertain concerning all the affairs of life and death. Hence it proceeds that men are so unanimously eager in the pursuit of things, which, far from having any inherent real good, are varnished over with a specious and deceitful gloss, and contain nothing answerable to their appearances. Hence it proceeds, on the other hand, that, in those things which are called evils, there is nothing so hard and terrible as the general cry of the world threatens. The word *exile* comes indeed harsh to the ear, and strikes us like a melancholy and execrable sound, through a certain persuasion which men have habitually concurred in. Thus the multitude has or-

dained. But the greatest part of their ordinances are abrogated by the wise.

Rejecting therefore the judgment of those who determine according to popular opinions, or the first appearances of things, let us examine what exile really is. It is then, a change of place; and, lest you should say that I diminish the object, and conceal the most shocking parts of it, I add, that this change of place is frequently accompanied by some or all of the following inconveniences: by the loss of the estate which we enjoyed, and the rank which we held; by the loss of that consideration and power which we were in possession of; by a separation from our family and our friends; by the contempt which we may fall into; by the ignominy with which those who have driven us abroad, will endeavour to sully the innocence of our characters, and to justify the injustice of their own conduct. . . .

Banishment, with all its train of evils, is so far from being the cause of contempt, that he who bears up with an undaunted spirit against them, while so many are dejected by them, erects on his very misfortunes a trophy to his honour: for such is the frame and temper of our minds, that nothing strikes us with greater admiration than a man intrepid in the midst of misfortunes. Of all ignominies an ignominious death must be allowed to be the greatest; and yet where is the blasphemer who will presume to defame the death of *Socrates*? This saint entered the prison with the same countenance with which he reduced thirty tyrants, and he took off ignominy from the place: for how could it be deemed a prison when *Socrates* was there? *Phocion*⁵ was led to execution in the same city. All those who met the sad procession, cast their eyes to the ground, and with throbbing hearts bewailed, not the innocent man, but Justice herself, who was in him condemned. Yet there was a wretch found, for monsters are sometimes produced in contradiction to the ordinary rules of nature, who spit in his face as he passed along. *Phocion* wiped his cheek, smiled, turned to the magistrate, and said, "Admonish this man not to be so nasty for the future."

Ignominy then can take no hold on virtue; for virtue is in every condition the same, and challenges the same respect. We applaud the world when she prospers; and when she falls into adversity we applaud her. Like the temples of the gods, she is venerable even in her ruins. After this must it not appear a

⁵ An Athenian statesman and soldier, who helped to defeat the Spartans in a sea-fight off Naxos, and who repulsed on land the army of Philip of Macedon. Coming, later, into opposition to Demosthenes, he was falsely accused of treason and executed at Athens, B. C. 317.

degree of madness to defer one moment acquiring the only arms capable of defending us against attacks which at every moment we are exposed to? Our being miserable, or not miserable, when we fall into misfortunes, depends on the manner in which we have enjoyed prosperity. If we have applied ourselves betimes to the study of wisdom, and to the practice of virtue, these evils become indifferent; but if we have neglected to do so, they become necessary. In one case they are evils, in the other they are remedies for greater evils than themselves. *Zeno*⁶ rejoiced that a shipwreck had thrown him on the Athenian coast; and he owed to the loss of his fortune the acquisition which he made of virtue, of wisdom, of immortality. There are good and bad airs for the mind, as well as for the body. Prosperity often irritates our chonical distempers, and leaves no hopes of finding any specific but in adversity. In such cases banishment is like change of air, and the evils we suffer are like rough medicines applied to inveterate diseases. What *Anacharsis*⁷ said of the vine, may aptly enough be said of prosperity. She bears the three grapes of drunkenness, of pleasure, and of sorrow: and happy it is if the last can cure the mischief which the former work. When afflictions fail to have their due effect, the case is desperate. They are the last remedy which indulgent Providence uses: and if they fail, we must languish and die in misery and contempt. Vain men! how seldom do we know what to wish or to pray for? When we pray against misfortunes, and when we fear them most, we want them most. It was for this reason that *Pythagoras* forbid his disciples to ask anything in particular of God. The shortest and the best prayer which we can address to him, who knows our wants, and our ignorance in asking,⁸ is this: "Thy will be done."

*Tully*⁹ says, in some part of his works, that as happiness is the object of all philosophy, so the disputes among philosophers arise from their different notions of the sovereign good. Reconcile them in that point, you reconcile them in the rest. The school of *Zeno* placed this sovereign good in naked virtue, and wound the principle up to an extreme beyond the

pitch of nature and truth. A spirit of opposition to another doctrine, which grew into great vogue while *Zeno* flourished, might occasion this excess. *Epicurus*¹⁰ placed the sovereign good in pleasure. His terms were wilfully, or accidentally mistaken. His scholars might help to pervert his doctrine, but rivalry enflamed the dispute; for in truth there is not so much difference between stoicism reduced to reasonable intelligible terms, and genuine orthodox epicurism, as is imagined. The *felicitas animi immola tranquillitas*,¹¹ and the *voluptas* of the latter, are near enough a-kin: and I much doubt whether the firmest hero of the Portique would have borne a fit of the stone, on the principles of *Zeno*, with greater magnanimity and patience than *Epicurus* did on those of his own philosophy. However, *Aristotle* took a middle way, or explained himself better, and placed happiness in the joint advantages of the mind, of the body, and of fortune. They are reasonably joined; but certain it is, that they must not be placed on an equal foot. We can much better bear the privation of the last, than of the others; and poverty itself, which mankind is so afraid of, *per mare pauperiem fugiens, per saxa, per ignes*,¹² is surely preferable to madness, or the stone, though *Chrysippus*¹³ thought it better to live mad, than not to live! If banishment therefore, by taking from us the advantages of fortune, cannot take from us the more valuable advantages of the mind and the body, when we have them; and if the same accident is able to restore them to us, when we have lost them, banishment is a very slight misfortune to those who are already under the dominion of reason, and a very great blessing to those who are still plunged in vices which ruin the health both of body and mind. It is to be wished for, in favour of such as these, and to be feared by none. If we are in this case, let us second the designs of Providence in our favour, and make some amends for neglecting former opportunities by not letting slip the last. *Si nolis sanus, curres hydropticus*.¹⁴ We may shorten the evils which we might have prevented, and as we get the better of our dis-

⁶ *Zeno of Cyprus*, the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy.

⁷ A Scythian philosopher, who resided for some time in Athens. Diogenes Laertius reports him as saying "That the vine bears three sorts of clusters: the first, of pleasure, the second, of debauchery, and the third, of discontent and repentance."

⁸ This expression occurs in a prayer in the church of England service: "Almighty God, . . . who knoweth our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking," etc.

⁹ Cicero, whose full name was *Marcus Tullius Cicero*.

¹⁰ *Epicurus* (342-270 B. C.) was the founder of the "Epicurean School" of philosophy. His teachings were almost directly opposed to those of *Zeno* and other Stoic philosophers.

¹¹ "The immovable serenity of the happy soul." Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Seneca, and the other Stoic philosophers, laid great stress on the attainment of a lofty tranquility of mind, which all earthly shocks or accidents would be powerless to disturb.

¹² "Flying poverty through the sea, through the rocks, through the flames."

¹³ A Stoic philosopher who resided in Athens, and lived about 200 B. C.

¹⁴ "If you are unwilling when well, you shall run when you are dropsical."

orderly passions, and vicious habits, we shall feel our anxiety diminish in proportion. All the approaches to virtue are comfortable. With how much joy will the man, who improves his misfortunes in this manner, discover that those evils, which he attributed to his exile, sprung from his vanity and folly, and vanish with them! He will see that, in his former temper of mind, he resembled the effeminate prince¹⁵ who could drink no water but that of the river Choaspes; or the simple queen,¹⁶ in one of the tragedies of *Euripides*, who complained bitterly, that she had not lighted the nuptial torch, and that the river Ismenus had not furnished the water at her son's wedding. Seeing his former state in this ridiculous light, he will labour on with pleasure towards another as contrary as possible to it; and when he arrives there, he will be convinced by the strongest of all proofs, his own experience, that he was unfortunate because he was vicious, not because he was banished.

If I was not afraid of being thought to refine too much, I would venture to put some advantages of fortune, which are due to exile,²⁵ into the scale against those which we lose by exile. If you are wise, your leisure will be worthily employed, and your retreat will add new lustre to your character. Imitate *Thucydides* in Thracia, or *Xenophon* in his little farm at Scillus. In such a retreat you may sit down, like one of the inhabitants of Elis, who judged of the Olympic games, without taking any part in them. Far from the hurry of the world, and almost an unconcerned spectator³⁵ of what passes in it, having paid in a public life what you owed to the present age, pay in a private life what you owe to posterity. Write as you live, without passion; and build your reputation, as you build your happiness, on the foundations of truth. If you want the talents, the inclination, or the necessary materials for such a work, fall not however into sloth. Endeavour to copy after the example of *Scipio*¹⁷ at Linternum. Be able to say to⁴⁵ yourself,

*Innocuas amo delicias doctamque quietem.*¹⁸

¹⁵ The water of the Choaspes "was so pure that the Persian kings used to carry it, with them in silver vessels when on foreign expeditions." The allusion in the text seems to have been suggested by a passage in Plutarch's *Morals*, in which, after declaring that we should be thankful for those restrictions which we impose on ourselves, Plutarch adds—"yet we mock the Persian Kings, for that (if it be true which is reported of them) they drink of all the water only of the river Choaspes," etc.

¹⁶ Jocaste, in *The Phœnician Virgins* of Euripides.

¹⁷ Publius Cornelius Scipio, the conqueror of Hannibal, who gained the name of *Africanus*. In spite of his great services, he lost the popular favor, and was forced to retire to his country place at Linternum.

¹⁸ "I love harmless pleasures and learned quiet."

Rural amusements, and philosophical meditations, will make your hours glide smoothly on; and if the indulgence of Heaven has given you a friend like *Lælius*,¹⁹ nothing is wanting to make you completely happy.

These are some of those reflections which may serve to fortify the mind under banishment, and under the other misfortunes of life, which it is every man's interest to prepare for, because they are common to all men: I say, they are common to all men; because even they who escape them are equally exposed to them. The darts of adverse fortune are always levelled at our heads. Some reach us, some graze against us, and fly to wound our neighbours. Let us therefore impose an equal temper on our minds, and pay without murmuring the tribute which we owe to humanity. The winter brings cold, and we must freeze. The summer returns with heat, and we must melt. The inclemency of the air disorders our health, and we must be sick. Here we are exposed to wild beasts, and there to men more savage than the beasts; and if we escape the inconveniencies and dangers of the air and the earth, there are perils by water and perils by fire. This established course of things it is not in our power to change; but it is in our power to assume such a greatness of mind as becomes wise and virtuous men; as may enable us to encounter the accidents of life with fortitude, and to conform ourselves to the order of nature, who governs her great kingdom, the world, by continual mutations. Let us submit to this order, let us be persuaded that whatever does happen ought to happen, and never be so foolish as to expostulate with nature. The best resolution we can take is to suffer what we cannot alter, and to pursue, without repining, the road which Providence, who directs everything, has marked out to us: for it is not enough to follow; and he is but a bad soldier who sighs, and marches on with reluctance. We must receive the orders with spirit and cheerfulness, and not endeavour to sink out of the post which is assigned us in this beautiful disposition of things, whereof even our sufferings make a necessary part. Let us address ourselves to God, who governs all, as *Cleanthes*²⁰ did in those admirable verses, which are going to lose part of their grace and energy in my translation of them.

¹⁹ *Gaius Lælius*, whose wisdom gained for him the name of *Sapius*, a philosopher, orator, and lover of country life, and a close friend of *Scipio Africanus*, the younger. *Lælius* is given a prominent part in Cicero's dialogue on *Friendship* (*De Amicitia*).

²⁰ A Stoic philosopher; disciple and successor of Zeno. His *Hymn to Jupiter* is all that remains of his numerous works.

Parent of nature! master of the world!
Where'er thy Providence directs, behold
My steps with cheerful resignation turn.
Fate leads the willing, drags the backward on.
Why should I grieve, when grieving I must
bear?

Or take with guilt, what guiltless I might share?

Thus let us speak, and thus let us act. Resignation to the will of God is true magnanimity. But the sure mark of a pusillanimous and base spirit, is to struggle against, to censure the order of Providence, and instead of mending our own conduct, to set up for correcting that of our Maker.

THE FORERUNNERS OF THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL

Thomas Parnell
1679-1718

A NIGHT-PIECE ON DEATH (Published, 1721)

By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:
Their books from wisdom widely stray, 5
Or point at best the longest way.
I'll seek a readier path; and go
Where wisdom's surely taught below.

How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie, 10
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide!
The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show 15
Descends to meet our eyes below.

The grounds which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire:
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves, 20
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread 25
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like thee they life possess,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest."

Those graves, with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground, 30
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,
Where toil and poverty repose.
The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
The chisel's slender help to fame,
(Which ere our set of friends decay 35
Their frequent steps may wear away),
A middle race of mortals own,
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.

The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie, 40
Whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones.
These, all the poor remains of state,
Adorn the rich, or praise the great;
Who while on earth in fame they live, 45
Are senseless of the fame they give.

Hah! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow, and wan, and wrapp'd with shrouds, 50
They rise in visionary crowds,
And all with sober accent cry,
"Think, mortal, what it is to die."

Now from yon black and funeral yew,
That bathes the charnel-house with dew, 55
Methinks I hear a voice begin;
(Ye ravens, cease your croaking din,
Ye tolling clocks, no time resound
O'er the long lake and midnight ground!)
It sends a peal of hollow groans, 60
Thus speaking from among the bones.

"When men my scythe and darts supply,
How great a king of fears am I!
They view me like the last of things:
They make, and then they dread, my stings.
Fools! If you less provok'd your fears, 65
No more my spectre form appears.
Death's but a path that must be trod,
If man would ever pass to God;
A port of calms, a state of ease 70
From the rough rage of swelling seas.

"Why then thy flowing sable stoles,
Deep pendant cypress, mourning poles,
Loose scarfs to fall athwart thy weeds,
Long palls, drawn hearses, cover'd steeds, 75
And plumes of black, that, as they tread,
Nod o'er the scutcheons of the dead?

"Nor can the parted body know,
Nor wants the soul, these forms of woe.
As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glimmer round the cell, 80
Whene'er their suffering years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glittering sun:
Such joy, though far transcending sense,
Have pious souls at parting hence.
On earth, and in the body plac'd, 85
A few and evil years they waste;
But when their chains are cast aside,
See the glad scene unfolding wide,
Clap the glad wing, and tower away, 90
And mingle with the blaze of day."

A HYMN TO CONTENTMENT (Published, 1721)

Lovely, lasting peace of mind!
Sweet delight of human kind!
Heavenly-born, and bred on high,
To crown the favorites of the sky

With more of happiness below, 5
Than victors in a triumph know!
Whither, O whither art thou fled,
To lay thy meek, contented head;
What happy region dost thou please
To make the seat of calms and ease! 10

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Ambition searches all its sphere
Of pomp and state, to meet thee there.
Encreasing Avarice would find
Thy presence in its gold enshrin'd.
The bold adventurer ploughs his way 15
Through rocks amidst the foaming sea,
To gain thy love; and then perceives
Thou wert not in the rocks and waves.
The silent heart, which grief assails,
Treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales, 20
Sees daisies open, rivers run,
And seeks, as I have vainly done,
Amusing thought; but learns to know
That solitude's the nurse of woe.
No real happiness is found
In trailing purple o'er the ground;
Or in a soul exalted high,
To range the circuit of the sky,
Converse with stars above, and know
All nature in its forms below; 30
The rest it seeks, in seeking dies,
And doubts at last, for knowledge, rise.

Lovely, lasting peace, appear!
This world itself, if thou art here,
Is once again with Eden blest, 35
And man contains it in his breast.

'Twas thus, as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
The branches whisper as they wav'd: 40
It seem'd, as all the quiet place
Confess'd the presence of the Grace.
When thus she spoke—"Go rule thy will,
Bid thy wild passions all be still,
Know God—and bring thy heart to know 45
The joys which flow from religion flow:
Then every Grace shall prove its guest,
And I'll be there to crown the rest."

Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
In my hours of sweet retreat, 50
Might I thus my soul employ,
With sense of gratitude and joy!
Rais'd as ancient prophets were,
In heavenly vision, praise, and prayer;
Pleasing all men, hurting none,
Pleas'd and bless'd with God alone:
Then while the gardens take my sight,
With all the colours of delight;
While silver waters glide along,
To please my ear, and court my song; 60
I'll lift my voice, and tune my string,
And thee, great source of nature, sing.

The sun that walks his airy way,
To light the world, and give the day;
The moon that shines with borrow'd light; 65
The stars that gild the gloomy night;
The seas that roll unnumber'd waves;
The wood that spreads its shady leaves;
The field whose ears conceal the grain,
The yellow treasure of the plain; 70
All of these, and all I see,
Should be sung, and sung by me:
They speak their maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.

Go search among your idle dreams, 75
Your busy or your vain extremes;
And find a life of equal bliss,
Or own the next begun in this.

A HYMN FOR MORNING

See, the star that leads the day,
Rising shoots a golden ray,
To make the shades of darkness go
From Heaven above and earth below, 5
And warn us early with the sight
To leave the beds of silent night,
From an heart sincere and sound,
From its very deepest ground,
Send devotion up on high, 10
Wing'd with heat, to reach the sky.
See the time for sleep has run,
Rise before or with the sun,
Lift thine hands, and humble pray
The Fountain of eternal day, 15
That as the light serenely fair
Illustrates all the tracts of air,
The sacred Spirit so may rest
With quickening beams upon thy breast,
And kindly clean it all within 20
From darker blemishes of sin,
And shine with grace, until we view
The realm it gilds with glory too.
See the day that dawns in air,
Brings along its toil and care, 25
From the lap of Night it springs
With heaps of business on its wings;
Prepare to meet them in a mind
That bows submissively resign'd,
That would to works appointed fall,
And knows that God has order'd all. 30
And whether with a small repast
We break the sober morning fast,
Or in our thoughts and houses lay
The future methods of the day,
Or early walk abroad to meet 35
Our business, with industrious feet,
Whate'er we think, whate'er we do,
His glory still be kept in view.
O Giver of eternal bliss!
Heavenly Father! grant me this, 40
Grant it all as well as me,
All whose hearts are fix'd on Thee,
Who rever'thy Son above,
Who thy sacred Spirit love.

Edward Young

1681-1765

ON LIFE, DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

(From *The Complaint; or Night Thoughts*,
1742-1745)

Tir'd Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes:

Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsully'd with a tear. . . . 5

Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world.
Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!

Nor eye, nor list'ning ear, an object finds; 10
Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the gen'ral pulse
Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause;
An awful pause! prophetic of her end.
And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd:
Fate! drop the curtain; I can lose no more. 15

Silence and Darkness! solemn sisters! twins
From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought

To reason, and on reason build resolve,
(That column of true majesty in man),
Assist me: I will thank you in the grave; 20
The grave, your kingdom: there this frame shall fall

A victim sacred to your dreary shrine.
But what are ye?—

Thou who didst put to flight
Primeval silence, when the morning stars, 25
Exulting, shouted o'er the rising ball;
O Thou! whose word from solid darkness struck

That spark, the sun; strike wisdom from my soul;

My soul, which flies to Thee, her trust, her treasure,

As misers to their gold, while others rest. 30

Through this opaque of nature, and of soul,
This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
To lighten and to cheer. O lead my mind,
(A mind that fain would wander from its woe),
Lead it through various scenes of life and death; 35

And from each scene, the noblest truths inspire.

Nor less inspire my conduct, than my song:
Teach my best reason, reason; my best will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrears; 40
Nor let the phial of thy veng'ance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.

The bell strikes one. We take no note of time,
But from its loss. To give it then a tongue,
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke, 45
Hear the solemn sound. If heard aright,

It is the knell of my departed hours:
Where are they; with the years beyond the flood.

It is the signal that demands dispatch.
How much is to be done? my hopes and fears 50
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss;
A dread eternity! how surely mine!
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour? 55

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder HE, who made him such!
Who center'd in our make such strange extremes!

From diff'rent natures marvellously mix'd, 60
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!

A beam ethereal, sully'd, and absorpt!
Tho' sully'd and dishonour'd, still divine! 65
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!

A worm! a god!—I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost! At home a stranger, 70
Thought wanders up and down, surpriz'd, aghast,

And wonder'ing at her own: how reason reels!
O what a miracle to man is man!
Triumphantly distress'd! what joy, what dread!

Alternately transported, and alarm'd! 75
What can preserve my life? or what destroy?

An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;

Legions of angels can't confine me there. . . .

War, famine, pest, volcano, storm, and fire,
Intestine broils, oppression, with her heart 80
Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind.
God's image, disinherited of day,
Here, plung'd in mines, forgets a sun was made;

There, beings deathless as their haughty lord,
Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life; 85
And plough the winter's wave, and reap despair;
Some, for hard masters, broken under arms,
In battle lopt away with half their limbs,
Beg bitter bread through realms their valour sav'd,

If so the tyrant, or his minion, doom. 90
Want, and incurable disease (fell pair!)

On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize
At once, and make a refuge of the grave.
How groaning hospitals eject their dead!
What numbers groan for sad admission there! 95
What numbers, once in Fortune's lap high-fed,
Solicit the cold hand of charity!

To shock us more, solicit it in vain!
Ye silken sons of pleasure! since in pains
You rue more modish visits, visit here, 100
And breathe from your debauch: give, and reduce

Surfeit's dominion o'er you: but, so great
Your impudence, you blush at what is right. . . .

By Nature's law, what may be, may be now;
 There's no prerogative in human hours. 105
 In human hearts what bolder thought can rise
 Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
 Where is to-morrow? In another world.
 For numbers this is certain; the reverse
 Is sure to none: and yet on this *perhaps*, 110
 This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,
 As on a rock of adamant, we build
 Our mountain hopes; spin our eternal schemes,
 As we the fatal sisters could out-spin,
 And, big with life's futurities, expire. 115

Not ev'n Philander had bespoke his shroud.
 Nor had he cause; a warning was deny'd,
 How many fall as sudden, not as safe!
 As sudden, though for years admonish'd, home.
 Of human ills, the last extreme beware; 120
 Beware, Lorenzo! a slow sudden death.
 How dreadful that deliberate surprise!
 Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer;
 Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
 Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life. 125
 Procrastination is the thief of time;
 Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
 And to the mercies of a moment leaves
 The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
 If not so frequent, would not this be strange? 130
 That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.

Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
 The palm, "That all men are about to live,"
 For ever on the brink of being born.
 All pay themselves the compliment to think 135
 They, one day, shall not drivel; and their pride
 On this reversion takes up ready praise;
 At least, their own, their future selves ap-
 plauds.
 How excellent that life they ne'er will lead!
 Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's
 vails; 140
 That lodg'd in Fate's, to wisdom they consign;
 The thing they can't but purpose, they post-
 pone;
 'Tis not in Folly, not to scorn a fool;
 And scarce in human wisdom to do more.
 All promise is poor dilatory man, 145
 And that thro' every stage; when young, in-
 deed,
 In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
 Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish
 As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise:
 At thirty, man suspects himself a fool; 150
 Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
 At fifty, chides his infamous delay,
 Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
 In all the magnanimity of thought
 Resolves, and re-resolves; then dies the same.

And why? because he thinks himself im-
 mortal. 156
 All men think all men mortal, but themselves;
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of Fate
 Strikes through their wounded hearts the
 sudden dread;

But their hearts wounded, like the wounded
 air, 160
 Soon close; where pass'd the shaft, no trace is
 found.
 As from the wing no scar the sky retains;
 The parted wave no furrow from the keel;
 So dies in human hearts the thought of death.
 Ev'n with the tender tear which Nature sheds
 O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave. 166

George Berkeley

1685-1753

VERSES ON THE PROSPECT OF PLANT- ING ARTS AND LEARNING IN AMERICA

The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime,
 Barren of every glorious theme,
 In distant lands now waits a better time,
 Producing subjects worthy fame:

In happy climes, where from the genial sun 5
 And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
 The force of art by nature seems outdone,
 And fancied beauties by the true:

In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
 Where nature guides, and virtue rules, 10
 Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
 The pedantry of courts and schools:

There shall be sung another golden age,
 The rise of empire and of arts,
 The good and great inspiring epic rage, 15
 The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Egypt breeds in her decay;
 Such as she bred when fresh and young,
 When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
 By future poets shall be sung. 20

Westward the course of empire takes its way;
 The four first acts already past,
 A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
 Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Allan Ramsay

1686-1758

AN ODE TO PH—¹

(1721)

Look up to Pentland's tow'ring top,
 Buried beneath great wreaths of snow,
 O'er ilka cleugh,² ilk scar,³ and slap,⁴
 As high as any Roman wa'.⁵

¹ Evidently a reminiscence of Horace, *Odes*, Book I, 9.
² Gorge, or ravine. ³ A cliff.
⁴ A narrow pass between hills. ⁵ Wall.

Driving their baws⁶ frae whins⁷ or tee, 5
 There's no nae gowfers⁸ to be seen,
 Nor douffer fowk wysing a-jee⁹
 The byast bouls¹⁰ on Tamson's green.

Then fling on coals, and ripe the ribs,¹¹
 And beek¹² the house baith but and ben; 10
 That mutchkin¹³ stoup it hauds but dribs,¹⁴ 11
 Then let's get in the tappit hen.¹⁵

Good claret best keeps out the cauld,
 And drives away the winter soon;
 It makes a man baith gash¹⁶ and bauld, 15
 And heaves his saul beyond the moon. . . .

Be sure ye dinna quat¹⁷ the grip
 Of ilka joy when ye are young,
 Before auld age your vitals nip,
 And lay ye twafold o'er a rung.¹⁸ 20

SONG "MY PEGGY IS A YOUNG THING"

(From *The Gentle Shepherd*, 1725)

My Peggy is a young thing,
 Just enter'd in her teens,
 Fair as the day and sweet as May,
 Fair as the day and always gay.
 My Peggy is a young thing, 5
 And I'm nae very auld,
 Yet well I like to meet her at
 The wauking of the fauld.¹

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
 Whene'er we meet alane, 10
 I wish nae mair to lay my care,—
 I wish nae mair o' a' that's rare.
 My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
 To a' the lave² I'm cauld,
 But she gars³ a' my spirits glow,
 At wauking o' the fauld. 15

My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
 Whene'er I whisper love,
 That I look down on a' the town,—
 That I look down upon a crown. 20
 My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
 It makes me blithe and bauld,
 And naething gies me sic delyte,
 As wauking o' the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae saftly,
 When on my pipe I play,
 By a' the rest it is confest,—
 By a' the rest that she sings best.
 My Peggy sings sae saftly, 25
 And in her sangs are tauld,
 Wi' innocence, the wale⁴ o' sense,
 At wauking o' the fauld. 30

⁶ Balls. ⁷ Furze bushes. ⁸ Golfers.
⁹ More sober or sedate folk, directing or sending to one side.

¹⁰ The bowls or balls, used in the game of bowling.

¹¹ Poke the grate.

¹² Warm the house, both outer and inner room.

¹³ Pint.

¹⁴ Drops. ¹⁵ Quart measure.

¹⁶ Sagacious.

¹⁷ Quit. ¹⁸ Doubled over a staff.

¹ Watching of the fold.

² Makes. ³ The rest, the others.

⁴ Pick, i. e. the best.

William Somerville

1692-1742

FIELD-SPORTS

(From *The Chase*, Pub. 1742)

'Tis instinct that directs the jealous hare
 To choose her soft abode: With step revers'd
 She forms the doubling maze: then, ere the
 morn

Peeps through the clouds, leaps to her close
 recess.

As wandering shepherds on th' Arabian
 plains 5

No settled residence observe, but shift
 Their moving camp, now on some cooler hill

With cedars crown'd, court the refreshing
 breeze;

And then, below, where trickling streams distil
 From some penurious source, their thirst
 allay, 10

And feed their fainting flocks: so the wise hares
 Oft quit their seats, lest some more curious eye
 Should mark their haunts, and by dark treach-
 erous wiles,

Plot their destruction; or perchance in hopes
 Of plenteous forage, near the ranker mead, 15
 Or matted blade, wary and close they sit.

When spring shines forth, season of love and
 joy,

In the moist marsh, 'mong beds of rushes hid,
 They cool their boiling blood: When summer
 suns

Bake the cleft earth, to thick wide waving
 fields 20
 Of corn full grown they lead their helpless
 young:

But when autumnal torrents and fierce rains
 Deluge the vale, in the dry crumbling bank

Their-forms they delve, and cautiously avoid
 The dripping covert: Yet when winter's cold 25
 Their limbs benumbs, thither with speed re-
 turn'd

In the long grass they skulk, or shrinking creep
 Among the wither'd leaves; thus changing still,
 As fancy prompts them, or as food invites.

But every season carefully observ'd, 30
 Th' inconstant winds, the fickle element,
 The wise experienc'd huntsman soon may find

His subtle, various game, nor waste in vain
 His tedious hours, till his impatient hounds,
 With disappointment vex'd, each springing
 lark 35

Babbling pursue, far scatter'd o'er the fields.
 Now golden Autumn from her open lap
 Her fragrant bounties showers; the fields are
 shorn;

Inwardly smiling, the proud farmer views
 The rising pyramids that grace his yard, 40
 And counts his large increase; his barns are
 stor'd

And groaning staddles¹ bend beneath their load.
 All now is free as air, and the gay pack
 In the rough bristly stubbles range unblam'd;

1 Prope.

No widow's tears o'erflow, no secret curse 45
 Swells in the farmer's breast, which his pale lips
 Trembling conceal, by his fierce landlord aw'd:
 But courteous now he levels every fence,
 Joins in the common cry, and halloos loud,
 Charm'd with the rattling thunder of the
 field. *www.libtool.com* 50

Oh bear me, some kind power invisible!
 To that extended lawn, where the gay court
 View the swift racers, stretching to the goal;
 Games more renown'd, and a far nobler train,
 Than proud Elean fields² could boast of old. 55
 Oh! were a Theban lyre not wanting here,
 And Pindar's voice, to do their merit right!
 Or to those spacious plains, where the strain'd
 eye

In the wide prospect lost, beholds at last
 Sarum's³ proud spire, that o'er the hills as-
 cends, 60
 And pierces through the clouds. Or to thy
 downs,
 Fair Cotswold, where the well-breath'd beagle
 climbs
 With matchless speed, thy green aspiring brow,
 And leaves the lagging multitude behind.

ADDRESS TO THE AUTHOR'S ELBOW CHAIR NEW-CLOTHED

My dear companion, and my faithful friend!
 If Orpheus taught the listening oaks to bend;
 If stones and rubbish, at Amphion's call,
 Dan'd into form, and built the Theban wall;
 Why shouldst not *thou* attend my humble
 lays, 5
 And hear my grateful harp resound thy praise?
 True, thou art spruce and fine, a very beau;
 But what are trappings and external show?
 To real worth alone I make my court,
 Knaves are my scorn, and coxcombs are my
 sport. 10

Once I beheld thee far less trim and gay;
 Ragged, disjointed, and to worms a prey;
 The safe retreat of every lurking mouse;
 Derided, shunn'd; the lumber of my house!
 Thy robe how chang'd from what it was be-
 fore! 15

Thy velvet robe, which pleas'd my sires of yore!
 'Tis thus capricious fortune wheels us round;
 Aloft we mount—then tumble to the ground.
 Yet grateful *then*, my constancy I prov'd;
 I knew thy worth; my friend in rags I lov'd; 20
 I lov'd thee *more*; nor like a courtier, spurn'd
 My benefactor, when the tide was turn'd.
 With conscious shame, yet frankly, I confess,
 That in my youthful days—I lov'd thee less.
 Where vanity, where pleasure call'd, I stray'd;
 And every wayward appetite obey'd. 25
 But sage experience taught me how to prize
 Myself; and how, this world; she bade me rise
 To nobler flights regardless of a race
 Of factious emmets; pointed where to place 30

My bliss, and lodg'd me in thy soft embrace.
 Here on thy yielding down I sit secure;
 And, patiently, what Heaven has sent endure;
 From all the futile cares of business free;
 Not fond of life, but yet content to be: 35
 Here mark the fleeting hours; regret the past;
 And seriously prepare to meet the last.

So safe on shore the pension'd sailor lies;
 And all the malice of the storm defies:
 With ease of body blest, and peace of mind,
 Pities the restless crew he left behind; 41
 Whilst, in his cell, he meditates alone
 On his great voyage, to the world unknown.

John Dyer

c. 1698–1758

GRONGAR HILL *shire*

(1727)

Silent Nymph, with curious eye!
 Who, the purple ev'ning, lie
 On the mountain's lonely van,
 Beyond the noise of busy man,
 Painting fair the form of things, 5
 While the yellow linnet sings,
 Or the tuneful nightingale
 Charms the forest with her tale;
 Come, with all thy various dues,
 Come, and aid thy sister Muse; 10
 Now while Phœbus, riding high,
 Gives lustre to the land and sky,
 Grongar Hill invites my song;
 Draw the landscape bright and strong;
 Grongar, in whose mossy cells, 15
 Sweetly musing Quiet dwells;
 Grongar, in whose silent shade,
 For the modest Muses made,
 So oft I have, the ev'ning still,
 At the fountain of a rill 20
 Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
 With my hand beneath my head,
 While stray'd my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
 Over mead and over wood,
 From house to house, from hill to hill, 25
 Till Contemplation had her fill.

About his chequer'd sides I wind,
 And leave his brooks and meads behind,
 And groves and grottoes where I lay,
 And vistles shooting beams of day. 30
 Wide and wider spreads the vale,
 As circles on a smooth canal:
 The mountains round, unhappy fate!
 Sooner or later, of all height,
 Withdraw their summits from the skies, 35
 And lessen as the others rise:
 Still the prospect wider spreads,
 Adds a thousand woods and meads;
 Still it widens, widens still,
 And sinks the newly-risen hill. 40

Now I gain the mountain's brow,
 What a landscape lies below!
 No clouds, no vapours intervene;
 But the gay, the open scene,

¹ Dyer was born at the foot of Grongar Hill, Carmarthenshire, South Wales.

² The Olympic games were held on a site which had belonged to the Eleans, the inhabitants of Elis, Greece.

³ The old name for Salisbury; its "spire" is one of the beauties of Salisbury Cathedral.

Does the face of Nature show,
In all the hues of heaven's bow,
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.

Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly tow'ring in the skies;
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires;
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads,
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks.

Below me trees unnumber'd rise,
Beautiful in various dyes;
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable-yew,
The slender fir, that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs,
And beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phyllis, queen of love!
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wand'ring eye:
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an awful look below;
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps;
So both a safety from the wind
On mutual dependence find.

'Tis now the raven's bleak abode; -
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds,
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
Conceal'd in ruins, moss, and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary moulder'd walls.
Yet Time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile compleat,
Big with the vanity of state:
But transient is the smile of Fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sunbeam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.

And see the rivers how they run
Thro' woods and meads, in shade and sun!
Sometimes swift and sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave, they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life, to endless sleep:
Thus is Nature's vesture wrought,
To instruct our wand'ring thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.

Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view!
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky!
The pleasant seat, the ruin'd tow'r,
The naked rock, the shady bow'r;

45 The town and village, dome and farm,
Each gives each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.

See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide, 115
Where the ev'ning gilds the tide,
How close and small the hedges lie!
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!
A step, methinks, may pass the stream,
So little distant dangers seem; 120
So we mistake the future's face,
Ey'd through Hope's deluding glass;
As yon summits soft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which, to those who journey near, 125
Barren, brown, and rough appear.
Still we tread the same coarse way;
The present's still a cloudy day.

O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see; 130
Content me with an humble shade,
My passions tam'd, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul;
'Tis thus the busy beat the air, 135
And misers gather wealth and care.

Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,
As on the mountain-turf I lie;
While the wanton Zephyr sings,
And in the vale perfumes his wings; 140
While the waters murmur deep;
While the shepherd charms his sheep;
While the birds unbanded fly,
And with music fill the sky,
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high. 145

Be full, ye courts; be great who will;
Search for peace with all your skill;
Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor. 150
In vain you search, she is not there;
In vain ye search the domes of care!
Grass and flowers quiet treads,
On the meads and mountain-heads,
Along with pleasure, close ally'd, 155
Ever by each other's side;
And often, by the murmuring rill,
Hears the thrush, while all is still,
Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

AN EPISTLE

TO A FRIEND IN TOWN

100 Have my friends in the town, in the gay busy
town,
Forgot such a man as John Dyer?
Or heedless despise they, or pity the clown,
Whose bosom no pageantries fire? 4

105 No matter, no matter—content in the shades—
(Contented!—why everything charms me)
Fall in tunes all adown the great steep, ye
cascades!
110 Till hence rigid virtue alarms me:

Till outrage arises, or misery needs
 The swift, the intrepid avenger; 10
 Till sacred religion or liberty bleeds,
 Then mine be the deed and the danger.

Alas! what a folly, that wealth and domain
 We heap up in sin and in sorrow!
 Immense is the toil, yet the labour how vain! 15
 Is not life to be over to-morrow?

Then glide on my moments, the few that I have,
 Smooth-shaded, and quiet, and even,
 While gently the body descends to the grave,
 And the spirit arises to heaven. 20

THE FLEECE

(1757)

(Selections, from Book I)

Ah! gentle Shepherd! thine the lot to tend,
 Of all that feel distress, the most assail'd,
 Feeble, defenceless: lenient be thy care;
 But spread around thy tend'rest diligence
 In flow'ry spring-time, when the new-dropp'd
 lamb, 5
 Tott'ring with weakness by his mother's side,
 Feels the fresh world about him; and each
 thorn,
 Hillock, or furrow, trips his feeble feet:
 O! guard his meek sweet innocence from all
 Th' innumerable ills that rush around his life; 10
 Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons
 prone,
 Circling the skies to snatch him from the plain;
 Observe the lurking crows; beware the brake,
 There the sly fox the careless minute waits;
 Nor trust thy neighbour's dog, nor earth, nor
 sky: 15

Thy bosom to a thousand cares divide.
 Eurus oft slings his hail; the tardy fields
 Pay not their promis'd food; and oft the dam
 O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,
 Or fails to guard when the bold bird of prey 20
 Alights, and hops in many turns around,
 And tires her, also turning: to her aid
 Be nimble, and the weakest, in thine arms,
 Gently convey to the warm cot, and oft,
 Between the lark's note and the nightingale's, 25
 His hungry bleating still with tepid milk:
 In this soft office may thy children join,
 And charitable habits learn in sport:
 Nor yield him to himself ere vernal airs
 Sprinkle thy little croft with daisy flowers: 30
 Nor yet forget him; life has rising ills:
 Various as ether is the past'ral care:
 Thro' slow experience, by a patient breast,
 The whole long lesson gradual is attain'd,
 By precept after precept, oft receiv'd 35
 With deep attention; such as Nuceus¹ sings
 To the full vale near Soar's² enamour'd brook,
 While all is silence: sweet Hinclean swain!
 Whom rude obscurity severely claps:

¹ Mr. Joseph Nutt, an apothecary at Hinckley. *Lat.*
nuceus, of a nut tree.

² A river in Leicestershire.

The Muse, howe'er, will deck thy simple cell 40
 With purple violets and primrose flowers,
 Well-pleas'd thy faithful lessons to repay. . . .

Could I recall those notes which once the
 Muse
 Heard at a shearing near the woody sides
 Of Blue-topp'd Wreakin!³ Yet the carols
 sweet 45

Thro' the deep maze of the memorial cell
 Faintly remurmur. First arose in song
 Hoar-headed Damon, venerable swain!
 The sootiest shepherd of the flow'ry vale,
 "This is no vulgar scene; no palace roof 50
 Was e'er so lofty, nor so nobly rise
 Their polish'd pillars as these aged oaks,
 Which o'er our Fleecy wealth and harmless
 sports

Thus have expanded wide their shelt'ring
 arms,
 Thrice told an hundred summers. Sweet
 Content, 55

Ye gentle shepherds! pillow us at night."
 "Yes, tuneful Damon, for our cares are short,
 Rising and falling with the cheerful day,"
 Colin reply'd; "and pleasing weariness
 Soon our unaching heads to sleep inclines. 60
 Is it in cities so? where, poets tell,
 The cries of Sorrow sadden all the streets,
 And the diseases of intemp'rate wealth.
 Alas! that any ills from wealth should rise!

"May the sweet nightingale on yonder
 spray, 65
 May this clear stream, these lawns, those snow-
 white lambs,

Which, with a pretty innocence of look,
 Skip on the green, and race in little troops;
 May that great lamp which sinks behind the
 hills,

And streams around variety of lights, 70
 Recall them erring! this is Damon's wish."

"Huge Bredon's⁴ stony summit once I
 climb'd

After a kidling: Damon, what a scene!
 What various views unnumber'd spread be-
 neath!

Woods, tow'rs, vales, caves, dells, cliffs, and
 torrent floods, 75

And here and there, between the spiry rocks,
 The broad flat sea. Far nobler prospects these
 Than gardens black with smoke in dusty
 towns,

Where stenchy vapours often blot the sun:
 Yet, flying from his quiet, thither crowds 80
 Each greedy wretch for tardy-rising wealth,
 Which comes too late; that courts the taste in
 vain,

Or nauseates with distempers. Yes, ye Rich!
 Still, still be rich, if thus ye fashion life;
 And piping, careless, silly shepherds we, 85
 We silly shepherds, all intent to feed
 Our snowy flocks, and wind the silky Fleece!"

"Deem not, however, our occupation mean,"
 Damon reply'd, "while the Supreme accounts

³ A high hill in Shropshire.

⁴ A hill on the borders of Montgomeryshire.

Well of the faithful shepherd, rank'd alike 90
 With king and priest: they also shepherds are;
 For so th' all-Seeing styles them, to remind
 Elated man, forgetful of his charge."

TO AURELIA

See, the flowery Spring is blown,
 Let us leave the smoky Town:
 From the Mall, and from the Ring,¹
 Every one has taken wing;
 Cloe, Strephon, Corydon, 5
 To the meadows all are gone;
 What is left you worth your stay?
 Come, Aurelia, come away.

Come, Aurelia, come and see 10
 What a lodge I've dress'd for thee,
 But the seat you cannot see,
 'Tis so hid with jessamy,
 With the vine that o'er the walls,
 And in every window, crawls;
 Let us there be blithe and gay! 15
 Come, Aurelia, come away.

Come with all thy sweetest wiles,
 With thy graces and thy smiles;
 Come, and we will merry be,
 Who shall be so blest as we? 20
 We will frolic all the day,
 Haste, Aurelia, while we may:
 Ay! and should not life be gay?
 Yes, Aurelia, come away.

James Thomson

1700-1748

SPRING

(1728)

(From *The Seasons*)

Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
 And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
 While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
 Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend. . . .
 And see where surly Winter passes off, 11
 Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
 His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
 The shatter'd forest, and the ravag'd vale;
 While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
 Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost, 16
 The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.
 As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
 And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
 Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
 Deform the day delightless; so that scarce 21
 The bittern knows his time, with bill engul'd
 To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
 The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
 And sing their wild notes to the listening
 waste. 25

¹ The Mall, a shady walk in St. James's Park, and the Ring, in Hyde Park, London, were places of fashionable resort.

At last from Aries¹ rolls the bounteous Sun,
 And the bright Bull² receives him. Then no
 more

Th' expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with
 cold;

But, full of life and vivifying soul,
 Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them
 thin, 30

Fleecy and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.
 Forth fly the tepid airs; and unconfin'd,
 Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
 Joyous, the impatient husbandman perceives
 Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers 35
 Drives from their stalls, to where the well-us'd
 plough

Lies in the furrow, loosen'd from the frost.
 There, unrefusing, to the harness'd yoke
 They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
 Cheer'd by the simple song and soaring lark. 40
 Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
 The master leans, removes th' obstructing clay,
 Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the
 glebe. 45

While thro' the neighb'ring fields the sower
 stalks,
 With measur'd step; and liberal throws the
 grain 46

Into the faithful bosom of the ground:
 The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious Man
 Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
 Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
 And temper all, thou world-reviving sun, 51
 Into the perfect year! Nor ye who live
 In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
 Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
 Such themes as these the rural Maro³ sung 55
 To wide imperial Rome, in the full height
 Of elegance and taste, by Greece refin'd.
 In ancient times, the sacred plough employ'd
 The kings and awful fathers of mankind:
 And some, with whom compar'd your insect-
 tribes 60

Are but the beings of a summer's day,
 Have held the scale of empire, rul'd the storm
 Of mighty war; then, with victorious hand,
 Disdaining little delicacies, seiz'd
 The plough, and greatly independent, scorn'd 65
 All the vile stores Corruption can bestow.

Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough;
 And o'er your hills, and long-withdrawing vales,
 Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
 Luxuriant and unbounded: as the Sea, 70
 Far thro' his azure turbulent domain,
 Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
 Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports;
 So with superior boon may your rich soil,
 Exuberant, Nature's better blessings pour 75
 O'er every land, the naked nations clothe,
 And be th' exhaustless granary of a world! . . .

From the moist meadow to the wither'd hill,
 Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs 88

¹⁻² Aries, the Ram, is the first of the Zodiac Signs, and Taurus, the Bull, the second. The date the poet indicates is the latter part of April.

³ Vergil, whose full name was Publius Vergilius Maro.

And swells, and deepens, to the cherish'd eye.
The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves 90
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy forest stands display'd,
In full luxuriance to the sighing gales;
Where the deer rustle through the twining
brake,

And the birds sing conoeal'd. At once array'd 95
In all the colours of the flushing year,
By Nature's swift and secret-working hand,
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance; while the promis'd fruit
Lies yet a little embryo, unperceiv'd, 100
Within its crimson fold. Now from the town,
Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome
damps,

Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freshness breathes, and dash the trem-
bling drops

From the bent bush, as thro' the verdant maze
Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk; 108
Or taste the smell of dairy, or ascend
Some eminence, AUGUSTA,* in thy plains,
And see the country, far diffused around,
One boundless blush, one white empurpled
shower 110

Of mingled blossoms; where the raptur'd eye
Hurries from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.

SUMMER

(1727)

From brightening fields of ether fair disclos'd,
Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's
depth:

He comes attended by the sultry Hours,
And ever-fanning breezes, on his way; 5
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring,
Averts her blusful face; and earth, and skies,
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.

Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders thro' the
gloom; 10

And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year. . . . 14

Now swarms the village o'er the joyful
mead: 352

The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong; full as the summer rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid, 355
Half naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
E'en stooping age is here; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharg'd, amid the kind oppression roll. 360
Wide flies the tedded grain;¹ all in a row
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,

* London. (See Dryden's *Mac-Flecknoe*, p. 275, and n. 7). In Thomson's time many elevations on the outskirts of London afforded a good view of the fields.

¹ I. e., grain which is spread to dry.

They spread their breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell.
Or, as they take the green-appearing ground, 365
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
In order gay: While, heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee. 370

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool: this bank abrupt and high,
And that fair spreading in a pebbled shore. 375
Urg'd to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much, of men, and boys, and
dogs,

Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in: 380
Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And, panting, labour to the farther shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-wash'd fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banish'd by the sordid stream; 385
Heavy, and dripping to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race; where, as they
spread

Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wond'ring what this wild 390
Outrageous tumult means, their loud com-
plaints

The country fill; and, tost from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gather'd flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerable press'd, 395
Head above head: and, rang'd in lusty rows,
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding
shears.

The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthron'd, 400
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and
rays

Her smiles, sweet beaming, on her shepherd
king;
While the glad circle round them yield their
souls

To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.

AUTUMN

(1730)

Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed¹ once more,
Well pleas'd, I tune. Whate'er the Wint'ry
frost

Nitrous prepar'd, the various-blossom'd Spring
Put in white promise forth; and Summer's
suns 6

Concocted strong; rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious
theme. . . . 8

¹ The pipe, or oaten reed, of the poet.

But see, the fading many-colour'd woods, 949
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk, and
dun,

Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low-whispering, lead into their leaf-strown
walks,

And give the season in its latest view. 955

Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether;¹ whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current; while, illum'd wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun, 960
And thro' their lucid veil his soften'd force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the
time,

For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature
charm,

To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things; 965
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their
feet;

To soothe the throbbing passions into peace,
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead, 970
And thro' the sadden'd grove, where scarce is
heard

One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply some widow'd songster pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, thro' the tawny copse;
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks, 975
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so
late

Swell'd all the music of the swarming shades,
Robb'd of their tuneful souls, now shivering
sit

On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock;
With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,
And nought save chattering discord in their
note. 981

Oh, let not, aim'd from some inhuman eye,
The gun the music of the coming year
Destroy; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey, 985
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground!

The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below, 990
And slowly circles thro' the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams;
Till chok'd, and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest-walks, at every rising gale, 995
Roll wide the wither'd waste, and whistle
bleak.

Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields:
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. Even what remain'd
Of stronger fruits fall from the naked tree; 1000
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

¹ The calm spreads over the atmosphere as soft as a
fleece of wool.

WINTER

(1726)

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train—
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my
theme;

These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred
glooms! 5

Congential horrors, hail! With frequent foot,
Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nurs'd by careless Solitude I liv'd,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,—
Pleas'd have I wander'd through your rough
domain; 10

Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd,
In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the
time,

Till through the lucid chambers of the South
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and
smil'd. . . . 16

The keener tempests come: and fuming'dun
From all the livid East, or piercing North, 224
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,
And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm.
Thro' the hush'd air the whitening shower de-
scends,

At first thin-wavering; till at last the flakes 230
Fall broad and wide, and fast, dimming the
day

With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow
melts

Along the mazy current. Low the woods 235
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid Sun
Faint from the West emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of Man. Drooping, the labourer-ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then de-
mands 241

The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tam'd by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone, 245
The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first 250
Against the window beats; then, briak, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the
floor,

Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is:
Till, more familiar grown, the table-crums 255
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset

¹ The dark colored clouds fume or swirl from the East.

By death in various forms—dark snares, and
dogs,
And more unpitied men—the garden seeks, 260
Urg'd on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening
earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad-dispers'd
Dig for the wither'd herb thro' heaps of
snow. . . . 264

Ah! little think the gay licentious proud, 322
Whom pleasure, pow'r, and affluence surround;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy
mirth

And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;— 325
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death
And all the sad variety of pain.

How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame; how many bleed, 330
By shameful variance betwixt man and man:
How many pine in want and dungeon glooms,
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs: How many drink the
cup

Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread 335
Of misery: sore pierc'd by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty: how many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,—
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of
life, 341

They furnish matter for the tragic Muse:
Ev'n in the vale where wisdom loves to dwell,
With Friendship, Peace, and Contemplation
join'd,

How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
In deep-retir'd distress: how many stand 346
Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought fond
man

Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life, 350
One scene of toil, of suff'ring, and of fate;
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think;
The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wish Benevolence dilate; 355
The social tear would rise, the social sigh;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.
And here can I forget the generous band,³
Who, touch'd with human woe, redressive
search'd 360

Into the horrors of the gloomy jail?
Unpitied and unheard, where misery moans;
Where Sickness pines; where Thirst and Hun-
ger burn,

And poor Misfortune feels the lash of Vice.
While in the land of liberty—the land 365
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom—little tyrants rag'd;

³ A Parliamentary Committee, appointed at the instance of Oglethorpe to investigate the condition of the Fleet and Marshalsea prisons, 1729.

Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving
mouth;

Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed;
Even robb'd them of the last of comforts,
sleep; 370

The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes;
And crush'd out lives, by secret barbarous
ways,

That for their country would have toil'd, or
bled. 375

Oh great design! if executed well,
With patient care and wisdom-temper'd zeal.

Ye sons of mercy! yet resume the search;
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands Oppression's iron
rod, 380

And bid the cruel feel the pangs they give.
Much still untouch'd remains; in this rank
age,

Much is the patriot's weeding hand requir'd.
The toils of law,—what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added, to perplex the truth, 385
And lengthen simple justice into trade,—
How glorious were the day that saw these
broke,

And every man within the reach of right!

RULE BRITANNIA

(1740)

When Britain first at Heaven's command
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of her land,
And guardian angels sung the strain:
Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves! 5
Britons never shall be slaves.

The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turn to tyrants fall,
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all. 10

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame; 15
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
And work their woe and thy renown.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine; 20
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine!

The Muses, still with Freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest Isle, with matchless beauty crown'd 25
And manly hearts to guard the fair:—
Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!
Britons never shall be slaves!

THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE

(1748)

(Selections)

*The castle hight¹ of indolence,
And its false luxury;
Where for a little time, alas!
We liv'd right jollily.*

I

O mortal man, who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;
And, certes, there is for it reason great; 5
For, though sometimes it makes thee weep
and wail,
And curse thy star, and early drudge and
late,
Withouten that would come an heavier bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

II

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side, 10
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
A most enchanting wizard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere
found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween *June* and *May*, 15
Half pranked with spring, with summer half
imbrown'd,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared even for
play.

III

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns
between; 20
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence
kest,²
From poppies breath'd; and beds of pleasant
green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime, unnumber'd glittering streamlets
play'd,
And hurl'd everywhere their waters sheen; 25
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny
glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling
murmur made.

IV

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud-bleating from the distant
hills, 30
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
And now and then sweet Philomel would wail
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep; 35
Yet all these sounds yblent inclin'd all to sleep.

¹ Called.² Cast.

V

Full in the passage of the vale above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen
to move,
As *Idless* fancy'd in her dreaming mood: 40
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely
heard, to flow. 45

VI

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut
eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer-sky:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly so
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hover'd nigh;
But whate'er smack'd of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

VII

The landscape such, inspiring perfect ease, 55
Where INDOLENCE (for so the wizard hight)
Close-hid his castle mid embowering trees,
That half shut out the beams of Phoebus
bright,
And made a kind of checker'd day and night;
Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate, 60
Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
Was plac'd; and to his lute, of cruel fate,
And labour harsh, complain'd, lamenting man's
estate.

VIII

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,
From all the roads of earth that pass there
by: 65
For, as they chanc'd to breathe on neigh-
bouring hill,
The freshness of this valley smote their eye,
And drew them ever and anon more nigh;
'Till clustering round th' enchanter false
they hung,
Ymolten with his syren melody; 70
While o'er th' enfeebling lute his hand he
flung,
And to the trembling chords these tempting
verses sung:

IX

"Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!
See all but man with unearn'd pleasure gay:
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold, 75
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May!
What youthful bride can equal her array?
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to
stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly, so
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

X

"Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,
 The swarming songsters of the careless grove,
 Ten thousand throats! that, from the flower-
 ing thorn,
 Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of
 love; 85
 Such grateful kindly raptures them emove:
 They neither plough, nor sow; ne, fit for
 flail,
 E'er to the barn the nodding sheaves they
 drove;
 Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,
 Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the
 vale. 90

XI

"Outcast of nature, man! the wretched thrall
 Of bitter-dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,
 Of cares that eat away thy heart with gall,
 And of the vices, an inhuman train,
 That all proceed from savage thirst of gain: 95
 For when hard-hearted *Interest* first began
 To poison earth, *Astræa* left the plain;
 Guile, violence, and murder seiz'd on man,
 And, for soft milky streams, with blood the
 rivers ran.

XII

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load of
 life 100
 Push hard up hill; but, as the farthest steep
 You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
 Down thunders back the stone with mighty
 sweep,
 And hurls your labours to the valley deep,
 For ever vain: come, and withouten fee 105
 I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
 Your cares, your toils, will steep you in a sea
 Of full delight: O come, ye weary wights, to
 me!

XIII

"With me, you need not rise at early dawn,
 To pass the joyless day in various stounds;¹
 Or, louting low, on upstart fortune fawn, 111
 And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds;
 Or through the city take your dirty rounds,
 To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay;
 Now flattering base, now giving secret
 wounds; 115
 Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,
 In venal senate thief, or rob on broad high-
 way.

XIV

"No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,
 From village on to village sounding clear;
 To tardy swain no shrill-voic'd matrons
 squall; 120
 No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear;
 No hammers thump; no horrid blacksmith
 sear,

¹ Troubles, efforts.

Ne noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers
 start,
 With sounds that are a misery to hear:
 But all is calm, as would delight the heart 125
 Of *Sybaris*⁴ of old, all nature, and all art. . . .

XIX

"O grievous folly! to heap up estate, 163
 Losing the days you see beneath the sun;
 When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting fate,
 And gives th' untasted portion you have
 won 166
 With ruthless toil, and many a wretch un-
 done
 To those who mock you, gone to *Pluto's*
 reign,
 There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows
 dun:
 But sure it is of vanities most vain, 170
 To toil for what you here untoiling may ob-
 tain."

XX

He ceas'd. But still their trembling ears
 retain'd
 The deep vibrations of his witching song:
 That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd
 To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
 Heaps pour'd on heaps, and yet they slept
 along, 177
 In silent ease: as when beneath the beam
 Of summer-moons, the distant woods among,
 Or by some flood all silver'd with the gleam,
 The soft-embodied Fays through airy portal
 stream.

XXI

By the smooth demon so it order'd was, 182
 And here his baneful bounty first began:
 Though some there were who would not
 further pass,
 And his alluring baits suspected had.⁵ 185
 The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man.
 Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye
 Not to move on, perdie,⁶ is all they can;
 For do their very best they cannot fly, 189
 But often each way look, and often sorely sigh.

XXII

When this the watchful wizard saw,
 With sudden spring he leaped upon them
 straight;
 And soon as touch'd by his unhallow'd paw,
 They found themselves within the cursed
 gate; 195
 Full hard to be repass'd, like that of fate.
 Not stronger were of old the giant-crew,
 Who sought to pull high Jove from regal
 state;
 Though feeble wretch he seem'd, of sallow
 hue: 200
 Certes, who bides his grasp, will that encounter
 rue. . . .

⁴ Inhabitants of Sybaris, a Greek city in southern Italy, were proverbial for their luxurious living.

⁵ Have.

⁶ Truly.

XXVI

Mean time the master-porter wide display'd
Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns;
Wherewith he those who enter'd in, ar-
ray'd 231
Loose, as the breeze that plays along the
downs,
And waves the summer-woods when evening
frowns.
O fair undress, best dress! it checks no vein,
But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns,
And heightens ease with grace. This done,
right fain, 236
Sir porter set him down, and turned to sleep
again. . . .

XXVIII

This rite perform'd, all inly pleas'd and still,
Withouten tramp,⁷ was proclamation made.
"Ye sons of INDOLENCE, do what you
will; 258
"And wander where you list, thro' hall or
glade!
"Be no man's pleasure for another staid;
"Let each as likes him best his hours employ,
"And curs'd be he who minds his neighbour's
trade!
"Here dwells kind ease and unrepining joy:
"He little merits bliss who others can annoy."

XXIX

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming
round, 265
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,
But every man stroll'd off his own glad way,
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertain'd, 270
No living creature could be seen to stray;
While solitude, and perfect silence reign'd:
So that to think you dreamt you almost was
constrain'd.

XXX

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid Isles,
Plac'd far amid the melancholy main, 275
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles;
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phoebus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro: 281
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous
show.

XXXI

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound!
Whose soft dominion o'er this castle sways,
And all the widely-silent places round, 285
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.
But how shall I attempt such arduous string,
I who have spent my nights, and nightly
days, 289
In this soul-deadening place, loose-loitering?
Ah! how shall I for this uprear my moulting
wing?

⁷ Trump, trumpet.

XXXII

Come on, my muse, nor stoop to low despair,
Thou imp of Jove, touch'd by celestial fire!
Which yet shall sing of war, and actions
fair, 294
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire;
Of ancient bards thou yet shalt sweep the lyre;
Thou yet shall tread in tragic pall the stage,
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,
The sage's calm, the patriot's noble rage, 299
Dashing corruption down through every worth-
less age.

AGE OF JOHNSON

Samuel Johnson

1709-1784

LONDON: A POEM

(1738)

IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE
OF JUVENAL

—*Quis iniquae*

Tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se?
Juv. l. 30, 1.

(Who so patient of the unjust town, so unfeeling
as to restrain himself?)

Though grief and fondness in my breast rebel,
When injured Thales¹ bids the town farewell,
Yet still my calmer thoughts his choice com-
mend,

(I praise the hermit, but regret the friend,)
Who now resolves, from vice and London far, 5
To breathe in distant fields a purer air;
And, fix'd on Cambria's² solitary shore,
Give to St. David's³ one true Briton more.

For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's
land,⁴

Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?⁵
There none are swept by sudden fate away, 11
But all, whom hunger spares, with age decay:
Here malice, rapine, accident, conspire,
And now a rabble rages, now a fire;
Their ambush here relentless ruffians lay, 15
And here the fell attorney prowls for prey;
Here falling houses thunder on your head,
And here a female atheist talks you dead.

While Thales waits the wherry that contains
Of dissipated wealth the small remains, 20
On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood;
Struck with the seat that gave Eliza's birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth;
In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew, 25
And call Britannia's glories back to view;
Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
The guard of Commerce and the dread of Spain,

¹ Presumably Johnson's unfortunate friend Richard Savage, the poet, who was forced to retire from London to Swansea in Wales.

² Ancient name of Wales.

³ Patron saint of Wales.

⁴ Ireland.

⁵ In Johnson's time, one of the most fashionable streets of London.

⁶ Queen Elisabeth was born at Greenwich, 1533.

Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,⁷
Or English honour grew a standing jest. 3)

A transient calm the happy scenes bestow,
And for a moment lull the sense of woe.

At length awaking, with contemptuous frown
Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town.

"Since worth," he cries, "in these degenerate
days, 35

Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise;
In those curs'd walls, devote to vice and gain,
Since unrewarded science⁸ toils in vain;
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,
And ev'ry moment leaves my little less; 40
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,
And life still vig'rous revels in my veins,
Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier
place,

Where honesty and sense are no disgrace;
Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers
play, 45

Some peaceful vale with Nature's paintings
gay,

Where once the harass'd Briton found repose,
And safe in poverty defy'd his foes;
Some secret cell, ye Pow'rs indulgent give.

Let — live here, for — has learn'd to live. 50
Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;

Explain their country's dear-bought rights
away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day;

With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth, 55
And lend a lie the confidence of truth.
Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
Collect a tax, or farm a lottery;⁹

With warbling eunuchs fill our licens'd stage,¹⁰
And all to servitude a thoughtless age. 60
"Heroes, proceed! what bounds your pride
shall hold?

What check restrain your thirst of pow'r and
gold?
Behold rebellious Virtue quite o'erthrown,
Behold our fame, our wealth, our lives your
own.

To such the plunder of a land is giv'n, 65
When public crimes inflame the wrath of
Heav'n;

But what, my friend, what hope remains for me,
Who start at theft, and blush at perjury?
Who scarce forbear, though Britain's court he
sing,

To pluck a titled poet's borrow'd wing; 70
A statesman's logic unconvinc'd can hear,
And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;¹¹

And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;¹¹

And dare to slumber o'er the Gazetteer;¹¹

Despise a fool in half his pension dress'd,
And strive in vain to laugh at Clodio's jest.¹²

"Others, with softer smiles and subtler art, 75
Can sap the principles, or taint the heart;
With more address a lover's note convey,
Or bribe a virgin's innocence away.

Well may they rise, while I, whose rustic
tongue

Ne'er knew to puzzle right, or varnish wrong, 80
Spurn'd as a beggar, dreaded as a spy,
Live unregarded, unlamented die.

"For what but social guilt the friend endears?
Who shares Orgilio's¹³ crimes, his fortune
shares.

But thou, should tempting villany present 85
All Marlborough¹⁴ hoarded, or all Villiers¹⁵
spent,

Turn from the glitt'ring bribe thy scornful eye,
Nor sell for gold what gold could never buy,
The peaceful slumber, self-approving day,
Unsullied fame, and conscience ever gay. 90

"The cheated nation's happy fav'rites, see!
Mark whom the great caress, who frown on me!
LONDON! the needy villain's gen'ral home,
The common sewer of Paris and of Rome;

With eager thirst, by folly or by fate, 95
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.
Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a French metropolis.

"Illustrious EDWARD!¹⁶ from the realms of
day,

The land of heroes and of saints survey; 100
Nor hope the British lineaments to trace,
The rustic grandeur, or the surly grace;
But, lost in thoughtless ease and empty show,
Behold the warrior dwindled to a beau;

Sense, freedom, piety, refin'd away, 105
Of France the mimic, and of Spain the prey.
"All that at home no more can beg or steal,
Or like a gibbet" better than a wheel;¹⁷

Hiss'd from the stage, or hooted from the court,
Their air, their dress, their politics import; 110
Obsequious, artful, voluble, and gay,
On Britain's fond credulity they prey.

No gainful trade their industry can 'scape,
They sing, they dance, clean shoes, their
fiddles scrape:

All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows, 115
And, bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.
"Ah! what avails it that, from slavery far,
I draw the breath of life in English air;

Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lip the tale of Henry's victories;¹⁸ 120

Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,
And lip the tale of Henry's victories;¹⁸

And lip the tale of Henry's victories;¹⁸

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⁷ Excise duties, which began in the reign of Charles I., were very unpopular in England, and in 1733 Walpole's Excise Bill was withdrawn in consequence of general opposition.

⁸ Learning, knowledge.

⁹ To take the profits or proceeds by a lottery, on payment of a fixed sum. Lotteries were most popular at the time and even came to be established by acts of Parliament.

¹⁰ The famous *Playhouse Bill* had recently been enacted, declaring that "every actor without a legal settlement or license from the Lord Chamberlain should be deemed a rogue and a vagabond."

¹¹ The official newspaper, containing announcements of pensions, promotions, etc.

¹² There is a bragging character of this name, given to strange oaths, in Cibber's play, *Love makes a Man*. Johnson may, however, have had one of his own contemporaries in mind.

¹³ A personification of the pride of wealth.

¹⁴ The Duke of Marlborough (d. 1722), who has been called "the greatest and meanest of mankind."

¹⁵ George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (d. 1687) was one of the most extravagant and profligate of the courtiers of Charles II.

¹⁶ Edward III., illustrious because of his exploits in France.

¹⁷ The *Gibbet* was an English, the *wheel* a French mode of execution.

¹⁸ Henry V.'s victories in France, especially at Agincourt.

If the gull'd conqueror receives the chain,
And flattery prevails when arms are vain?

"Studios to please, and ready to submit,

The supple Gaul was born a parasite:

Still to his int'rest true, where'er he goes, 125

Wit, brav'ry, worth, his lavish tongue bestows;

In ev'ry face a thousand graces shine,

From ev'ry tongue flows harmony divine.

These arts in vain our rugged natives try,

Strain out with falt'ring diffidence a lie, 130

And gain a kick for awkward flattery.

"Besides, with justice, this discerning age

Admires their wondrous talents for the stage:

Well may they venture on the mimic's art,

Who play from morn till night a borrow'd

part; 135

Practis'd their master's notions to embrace,

Repeat his maxims, and reflect his face;

With ev'ry wild absurdity comply,

And view each object with another's eye;

To shake with laughter ere the jest they hear,

To pour at will the counterfeited tear; 141

And, as their patron hints the cold or heat,

To shake in dog days, in December sweat.

"How, when competitors like these contend,

Can surly Virtue hope to fix a friend? 145

Slaves that with serious impudence beguile,

And lie without a blush, without a smile; . . .

Can Balbo's²⁰ eloquence applaud, and swear 150

He gropes²¹ his breeches with a monarch's air!

"For arts like these prefer'd, admir'd,

caress'd,

They first invade your table, then your breast;

Explore your secrets with insidious art,

Watch the weak hour, and ransack all the

heart; 155

Then soon your ill-placed confidence repay,

Commence your lords, and govern or betray.

"By numbers here from shame or censure free,

All crimes are safe but hated poverty:

This, only this, the rigid law pursues, 160

This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse.

The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak

Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke;

With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,

And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways. 165

Of all the griefs that harass the distress'd,

Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;

Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous

heart,

Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart,

"Has Heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor, 170

No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?

No secret island in the boundless main?

No peaceful desert yet unclaim'd by Spain?

Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore,

And bear Oppression's insolence no more. 175

This mournful truth is everywhere confess'd,

SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPRESS'D:

But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,

Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are

sold:

Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd, 180

The groom retails the favors of his lord.

"But hark! th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous
cries

Roll through the streets, and thunder to the
skies:

Rais'd from some pleasing dream of wealth and
pow'r,

Some pompous palace, or some blissful bow'r,
Aghast you start, and scarce with aching

sight 186

Sustain th' approaching fire's tremendous
light;

Swift from pursuing horrors take your way,

And leave your little ALL to flames a prey;

Then through the world a wretched vagrant

roam, 190

For where can starving Merit find a home?

In vain your mournful narrative disclose,

While all neglect, and most insult your woes.

"Should Heaven's just bolts Orgilio's wealth
confound,

And spread his flaming palace on the ground, 195

Swift o'er the land the dismal rumour flies,

And public mournings pacify the skies;

The laureat tribe²² in venal verse relate,

How Virtue wars with persecuting fate;

With well-feign'd gratitude the pension'd

band 200

Refund the plunder of the beggar'd land.

See! while he builds, the gaudy vassals come,

And crowd with sudden wealth the rising dome;

The price of boroughs and of souls restore,

And raise his treasures higher than before: 205

Now blessed with all the baubles of the great,

The polish'd marble and the shining plate,

Orgilio sees the golden pile aspire,

And hopes from angry Heaven another fire.

"Could'st thou resign the park and play con-

tent, 210

For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;

There might'st thou find some elegant retreat,

Some hireling senator's deserted seat;

And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling

land,

For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand; ²²

There prune thy walks, support thy drooping

flow'rs, 216

Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bow'rs;

And, while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,

Despise the dainties of a venal lord:

There ev'ry bush with Nature's music rings, 220

There ev'ry breeze bears health upon its wings;

On all thy hours security shall smile,

And bless thine evening walk and morning toil.

"Prepare for death, if here at night you

room,

And sign your will before you sup from home.

Some fiery fop, with new commission vain, 226

Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;

Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,

Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.

Yet ev'n these heroes, mischievously gay, 230

Lords of the street, and terrors of the way;

²² The crowd of poetasters who sought favor by flatter-
ing the great in verse.

²³ The mansions and palaces of the wealthy on the
Strand.

²⁰ Lat. *balbus*, stammering, stuttering.

²¹ Takes hold of. Examines by touch.

Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
 Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
 Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
 And shun the shining train and golden coach. 235
 "In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
 And hope the balmy blessings of repose;
 Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
 The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar;
 Invades the sacred hour of silent rest, 240
 And plants, unseen, a dagger in your breast.
 "Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn" die,
 With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.
 Propose your schemes, ye senatorian band,
 Whose ways and means support the sinking land: 245
 Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
 To rig another convoy for the king.²⁸
 "A single gaol, in ALFRED's golden reign,
 Could half the nation's criminals contain;
 Fair Justice, then, without constraint ador'd,
 Held high the steady scale, but sheath'd the sword; 251
 No spies were paid, no special juries known;
 Blest age! but ah, how different from our own!
 "Much could I add, but see the boat at hand,
 The tide retiring calls me from the land: 255
 Farewell!—When youth, and health, and fortune spent,
 Thou fly'st for refuge to the wilds of Kent
 And, tir'd like me with follies and with crimes,
 In angry numbers warn'st succeeding times;
 Then shall thy friend, nor thou refuse his aid,
 Still foe to vice, forsake his Cambrian shade;
 In Virtue's cause once more exert his rage, 262
 Thy satire point, and animate thy page."

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. GARRICK AT THE OPENING OF
 THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE, 1747

When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
 First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose;
 Each change of many-color'd life he drew,
 Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new:
 Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign, 5
 And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.
 His pow'ful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,
 And unresisted Passion storm'd the breast.
 Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
 To please in method, and invent by rule; 10
 His studious patience and laborious art,
 By regular approach, assail'd the heart:
 Cold Approbation gave the ling'ring bays,
 For those, who durst not censure, scarce could praise.

²⁸ The chief place of execution in London.

²⁹ A reference to the frequent and unpopular visits of George II. to his continental possessions.

A mortal born, he met the gen'ral doom, 15
 But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.
 The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
 Nor wish'd for Jonson's art, or Shakespeare's flame.
 Themselves they studied; as they felt, they writ;
 Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit. 20
 Vice always found a sympathetic friend;
 They pleas'd their age, and did not aim to mend.
 Yet bards like these aspir'd to lasting praise,
 And proudly hoped to pimp in future days.
 Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong, 25
 Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long:
 Till Shame regain'd the post that Sense betray'd,
 And Virtue call'd Oblivion to her aid.

Then, crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refin'd,
 For years the power of Tragedy declin'd; 30
 From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
 Till Declamation roar'd whilst Passion slept;
 Yet still did Virtue deign the state to tread,
 Philosophy remain'd, though Nature fled,
 But forc'd, at length, her ancient reign to quit, 35
 She saw great Faustus¹ lay the ghost of Wit;
 Exulting Folly hail'd the joyful day,
 And Pantomime and Song confirm'd her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,
 And mark the future periods of the Stage? 40
 Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
 New Behns,² new Durfey's,³ yet remain in store;
 Perhaps where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet died,

On flying cars new sorcerers may ride:
 Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance?)
 Here Hunt⁴ may box, or Mahomet⁵ may dance.

Hard is his lot that here by Fortune plac'd
 Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
 With ev'ry meteor of caprice must play,
 And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day. 50
 Ah! let not Censure term our fate our choice,
 The stage but echoes back the public voice;
 The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
 For we that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry, 55
 As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;

¹ The story of Dr. Faustus was made the subject of a farcical pantomime by Thurmond, produced at Drury Lane in 1724. Similar farces were much in vogue for several seasons in London, and were satirized by Pope in the *Dunciad*, III, ll. 233, ff.

² Aphra Behn (1640-1689), a novelist and playwright. Her plays were noted for their low moral tone.

³ Thomas Durfey (1653-1723) a minor poet, and a writer of comedies and songs.

⁴ Hunt was a famous boxer on the stage.

⁵ Mahomet, a famous rope-dancer.

'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
 Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense;
 To chase the charms of Sound, the pomp of Show,
 For useful Mirth and salutary Woe; 60
 Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
 And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

John Armstrong

1709-1779

THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH (1744)

Ye, who amid this feverish world would wear
 A body free of pain, of cares a mind;
 Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air;
 Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
 And volatile corruption, from the dead, 5
 The dying, sick'ning and the living world
 Exhal'd, to sully Heaven's transparent dome
 With dim mortality. It is not air
 That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
 Sated with exhalations rank and fell, 10
 The spoils of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
 Of nature; when from shape and texture she
 Relapses into fighting elements:
 It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
 Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things. 15
 Much moisture hurts; but here a sordid bath,
 With oily rancour fraught, relaxes more
 The solid frame, than simple moisture can.
 Besides, immur'd in many a sullen bay
 That never felt the freshness of the breeze, 20
 This slumb'ring deep remains, and ranker
 grows
 With sickly rest; and (though the lungs abhor
 To drink the dun fuliginous abyss)¹
 Did not the acid vigor of the mine,
 Roll'd from so many thundering chimneys,
 tame 25
 The putrid steams that overswarm the sky;
 This caustic venom would perhaps corrode
 Those tender cells that draw the vital air,
 In vain with all their unctuous rills bedew'd. . . .
 While yet you breathe, away; the rural wilds
 Invite; the mountains call you, and the vales; 35
 The woods, the streams, and each ambrosial
 breeze
 That fans the ever undulating sky;
 A kindly sky! whose foet'ring pow'r regales
 Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign. . . . 39
 Behold the laborer of the glebe, who toils
 In dust, in rain, in cold and sultry skies!
 Save but the grain from mildews and the flood,
 Nought anxious he what sickly stars ascend. 45
 He knows no laws by Esculapius² given;
 He studies none. Yet him nor midnight fogs
 Infest, nor those envenom'd shafts that fly
 When rabid Sirius³ fires th' autumnal noon.

His habit pure with plain and temperate meals,
 Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd 51
 To every casualty of varied life;
 Serene he bears the peevish eastern blast,
 And uninfected breathes the mortal south.

Such the reward of rude and sober life; 55
 Of labor such. By health the peasant's toil
 Is well repaid: if exercise were pain
 Indeed, and temperance pain. By arts like
 these

Laconia⁴ nurs'd of old her hardy sons;
 And Rome's unconquer'd legions urg'd their
 way 60

Unhurt, through every toil, in every clime.
 Toil, and be strong. By toil the flaccid
 nerves

Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone;
 The greener juices, are by toil subdu'd,
 Mellow'd and subtiliz'd, the vapid old 65
 Expell'd, and all the rancor of the blood.

Come, my companions, ye who feel the charms
 Of Nature and the year; come, let us stray
 Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk.
 Come, while the soft voluptuous breezes fan 70
 The fleecy heavens, enwrap the limbs in balm,
 And shed a charming langour o'er the soul.
 Nor when bright Winter sows with prickly
 frost

The vigorous ether, in unmanly warmth
 Indulge at home; nor even when Eurus' blasts 75
 This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.
 My liberal walks, save when the skies in rain
 Or fogs relent, no season should confine
 Or to the cloister'd gallery or arcade.
 Go, climb the mountain; from th' ethereal
 source 80

Imbibe the recent gale. The cheerful morn
 Beams o'er the hills; go, mount th' exulting
 steed.

Already, see, the deep-mouth'd beagles catch
 The tainted mazes; and, on eager sport
 Intent, with emulous impatience try 85
 Each doubtful trace. Or, if a nobler prey
 Delight you more, go chase the desperate deer;
 And through its deepest solitude awake
 The vocal forest with the jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale 90
 Exceed your strength, a sport of less fatigue,
 Not less delightful, the prolific stream
 Affords. The crystal rivulet, that o'er
 A stony channel rolls its rapid mase,
 Swarms with the silver fry. Such, through the
 bounds 95

Of pastoral Stafford,⁵ runs the brawling Trent;
 Such Eden,⁶ sprung from Cumbrian mountains;
 such

The Esk, o'erhung with woods; and such the
 stream

On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,
 Liddel;⁷ till now, except in Doric lays 100
 Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,
 Unknown in song; though not a purer stream,

¹ Dark, sooty abyss.

² A physician mentioned by Homer, afterwards considered to be the god of medicine.

³ The dog-star.

⁴ Sparta.

⁵ A small river in Cumberland.

⁶ A small river in Roxburghshire. Armstrong was born at Castleton in that shire.

⁷ Used for Staffordshire.

Through meads more flowery, or more romantic
groves,
Rolls toward the western main. Hail, sacred
flood!
May still thy hospitable swains be blest 105
In rural innocence; thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish; and thy vales look gay
With painted meadows, and the golden grain!
Oft, with thy blooming sons, when life was new,
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd: 112
Oft trac'd with patient steps thy fairy banks,
With the well-imitated fly to hook
The eager trout, and with the slender line 115
And yielding rod solicit to the shore
The struggling, panting prey: while vernal
clouds
And tepid gales' obscur'd the ruffled pool,
And from the deeps called forth the wanton
swarms.
Form'd on the Samian school,* or those of
Ind, 120
There are who think these pastimes scarce
humane:
Yet in my mind (and not relentless)
His life is pure that wears no fouler stains. . . .
Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd!
What slight neglects, what trivial faults
destroy 125
The hardest frame! of indolence, of toil,
We die; of want, of superfluity:
The all-surrounding Heaven, the vital air,
Is big with death. And, though the putrid
South
Be shut: though no convulsive agony 130
Shake, from the deep foundations of the world,
Th' imprisoned plagues; a secret venom oft
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land.
What livid deaths has sad Bysantium seen!
How oft has Cairo, with a mother's woe, 135
Wept o'er her slaughter'd sons, and lonely
streets!
Even Albion, girt with less malignant skies,
Albion the poison of the gods has drunk,
And felt the sting of monsters all her own.

William Shenstone

1714-1763

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

(From *The Schoolmistress*, 1742)

Ah me! full sorely is my heart forlorn,
To think how modest worth neglected lies!
While partial fame doth with her blast adorn
Such deeds alone, as pride and pomp dis-
guise;
Deeds of ill sort, and mischievous emprise! 5
Lend me thy clarion, goddess! let me try
To sound the praise of merit, ere it dies;
Such as I oft have chanced to epy,
Lost in the dreary shades of dull obscurity.

* The school of Pythagoras, who prescribed abstinence from animal food, as did many of the Hindus and Bud-
dhists.

In ev'ry village mark'd with little spire, 10
Embower'd in trees, and hardly known to
fame,
There dwells, in lowly shed, and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we school-mistress name;
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame;
They griev'd sore, in piteous durance pent, 15
Aw'd by the pow'r of this relentless dame;
And oft times, on vag'ries idly bent,
For unkempt hair, or task unconn'd, are sorely
shent.¹

And all in sight doth rise a birchen tree,
Which learning near her little dome² did
stowe; 20
Whilom a twig of small regard to see,
Though now so wide its waving branches
flow;
And work the simple vassal mickle woe;
For not a wind might curl the leaves that
blew,
But their limbs shudder'd, and their pulse
beat low; 25
And, as they look'd, they found their horror
grew,
And shap'd it into rods, and tingled at the view.

So have I seen (who has not, may conceive),
A lifeless phantom near a garden plac'd;
So doth it wanton birds of peace bereave, 30
Of sport, of song, of pleasure, of repast;
They start, they stare, they wheel, they look
aghast;
Sad servitude! such comfortless annoy
May no bold *Briton's* riper age e'er taste!
Ne superstition clog his dance of joy, 35
Ne vision empty, vain, his native bliss destroy.

Near to his dome is found a patch so green,
On which the tribe their gambols do display;
And at the door impris'ning board is seen,
Lest weakly wights of smaller size should
stray; 40
Eager, perdie,* to bask in sunny day!
The noises intermix'd, which thence resound,
Do learning's little tenement betray:
Where sits the dame, disguis'd in look pro-
found,
And eyes her fairy throng, and turns her wheel 45
around.

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,
Emblem right meet of decency does yield:
Her apron dy'd in grain, as blue, I trow,
As is the hare-bell that adorns the field:
And in her hand, for sceptre, she does wield 50
Tway⁴ birchen sprays; with anxious fear en-
twain'd;
With dark distrust, and sad repentance
fill'd;
And stedfast hate, and sharp affliction
join'd,
And fury uncontroll'd, and chastisement un-
kind. . . .

¹ Disgraced.
² Forsooth.

³ Home.
⁴ Two.

A russet stole was o'er her shoulders thrown;
 A russet kirtle fenc'd the nipping air; 65
 'Twas simple russet, but it was her own;
 'Twas her own country bred the flock so fair;
 'Twas her own labour did the fleece prepare;
 And, sooth to say, her pupils, rang'd around,
 Through pious awe, did term it passing rare!
 For they in gaping wonderment abound, 71
 And think, no doubt, she been the greatest
 wight⁶ on ground.

Albeit ne flatt'ry did corrupt her truth,
 Ne pompous title did debauch her ear;
 Goody,⁷ good-woman, gossip, n'aunt, for-
 sooth, 75
 Or dame, the sole additions she did hear;
 Yet these she challeng'd, these she held right
 dear!
 Ne would esteem him act as mought behove,
 Who should not honour'd eld with these
 revere;⁸
 For never title yet so mean could prove,
 But there was eke a mind which did that title
 love. 81

One ancient hen she took delight to feed,
 The plodding pattern of the busy dame;
 Which ever and anon, impell'd by need, 84
 Into her school, begirt with chickens, came!
 Such favour did her past deportment claim:
 And, if neglect had lavish'd on the ground
 Fragment of bread, she would collect the
 same;
 For well she knew, and quaintly could ex-
 pound,
 What sin it were to waste the smallest crumb
 she found. 90

Herbs too she knew, and well of each could
 speak
 That in her garden sipt the silv'ry dew;
 Where no vain flow'r disclos'd a gaudy streak;
 But herbs for use, and physic, not a few, 94
 Of grey renown, within those borders grew:
 The tufted basil, pun-provoking thyme,
 Fresh balm, and marygold of cheerful hue;
 The lowly gill, that never dars to climb;
 And more I fain would sing, disdaining here to
 rhyme. . . . 99

In elbow-chair, like that of Scottish stem,⁹
 By the sharp tooth of cank'ring eld defac'd,
 In which, when he receives his diadem,
 Our sov'reign prince and liefest liege is plac'd,
 The matron sat; and some with rank she
 grac'd, 140
 (The source of children's and of courtier's
 pride!)
 Redress'd affronts, for vile affronts there
 pass'd;
 And warn'd them not the fretful to deride,
 But love each other dear, whatever them betide

⁶ Person.

⁷ Goodwife: *gossip* = godmother, also a term of respect.

⁸ Have revered honored old age with these.

⁹ In a chair like that in which the English Kings are crowned, containing the Stone of Scone. It was the stone, however, not the chair which was of Scottish origin or stem.

Right well she knew each temper to descry;
 To thwart the proud, and the submit to
 raise; 146
 Some with vile copper prize exalt on high,
 And some entice with pittance small of
 praise!
 And other some with baleful sprig she
 'frays;⁹
 Ev'n absent, she the reins of pow'r doth hold,
 While with quaint arts the giddy crowd she
 sways; 151
 Forewarn'd, if little bird their pranks behold,
 'Twill whisper in her ear, and all the scene
 unfold.

Lo now with state she utters the command!
 Eftsoons the urchins to their tasks repair; 155
 Their books of stature small they take in
 hand,
 Which with pellucid horn¹⁰ secur'd are;
 So save from finger wet the letters fair:
 The work so gay, that on their back is seen,
 St. George's high achievements does declare;
 On which thilk wight¹¹ that has y-gazing
 been, 161
 Kens the forth-coming rod, unpleasing sight, I
 ween!

Ah luckless he, and born beneath the beam
 Of evil star! it irks me whilst I write!
 As erst the bard¹² by *Mulla's* silver stream,
 Oft, as he told of deadly dolourous plight, 166
 Sigh'd as he sung, and did in tears indite.
 For brandishing the rod, she doth begin
 To loose the brogues,¹³ the stripling's late
 delight!
 And down they drop; appears his dainty
 skin, 170
 Fair as the furry coat of whitest ermin.¹⁴

O ruthless scene! when from a nook obscure,
 His little sister doth his peril see:
 All playful as she sat, she grows demure;
 She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee; 175
 She meditates a pray'r to set him free:
 Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny,
 (If gentle pardon could with dames agree),
 To her sad grief that dwells in either eye,
 And wrings her so that all for pity she could
 die. 180

No longer can she now her shrieks command;
 And hardly she forbears, thro' awful fear,
 To rushen forth, and, with presumptuous
 hand,
 To stay harsh justice in its mid career.
 On thee she calls, on thee her parent dear! 185
 (Ah! too remote to ward the shameful blow!)
 She sees no kind domestic visage near,
 And soon a flood of tears begins to flow;
 And gives a loose at last to unavailing woe.

⁹ Terrifies.

¹⁰ School books were generally protected by a covering of transparent horn.

¹¹ Each one, ¹² Spenser, ¹³ Trousers. ¹⁴ Ermine.

But ah! what pen his piteous plight may
trace?¹⁹³
Or what device his loud laments explain?
The form uncouth of his disguised face?
The pallid hue that dyes his looks amain?
The plenteous show'r that does his cheek dis-
tain?¹⁹⁵
When he, in abject wise, implores the dame,
Ne hopeth aught of sweet reprieve to gain;
Or when from high she levels well her aim,
And, thro' the thatch, his cries each falling
stroke proclaim.

The other tribe, aghast, with sore dismay,
Attend, and conn their tasks with mickle
care:²⁰¹
By turns, astony'd, ev'ry twig survey,
And, from their fellow's hateful wounds,
beware;
Knowing, I wist, how each the same may
share;
Till fear has taught them a performance
meet,
And to the well-known chest the dame re-
pair;²⁰⁶
Whence oft with sugar'd cates¹⁶ she doth 'em
greet,
And ginger-bread y-rare; now, certes, doubly
sweet! . . .

His face besprent¹⁷ with liquid crystal shines,
His blooming face that seems a purple
flow'r,
Which low to earth its drooping head de-
clines,²²⁰
All smeared and sully'd by a vernal show'r.
O the hard bosoms of despotic pow'r!
All, all, but she, the author of his shame,
All, all, but she, regret this mournful hour:
Yet hence the youth, and hence the flow'r,
shall claim,²²⁵
If so I deem aright, transcending worth and
fame.

Behind some door, in melancholy thought,
Mindless of food, he, dreary catiff! pines;
Ne for his fellow's joyance careth aught,
But to the wind all merriment resigns;²³⁰
And deems it shame, if he to peace inclines;
And many a sullen look askance is sent,
Which for his dame's annoyance he designs;
And still the more to pleasure him she's bent,
The more doth he, perverse, her haviour past
resent.²³⁵

Ah me! how much I fear lest pride it be!
But if that pride it be, which thus inspires,
Beware, ye dames, with nice discernment see,
Ye quench not too the sparks of nobler fires:
Ah! better far than all the muses' lyres,²⁴⁰
All coward arts, is valour's gen'rous heat;
The firm fix'd breast which fit and right re-
quires,

Like *Vernon's*¹⁸ patriot soul; more justly
great
Than craft that pimps for ill, or flow'ry false
deceit.

Yet nurs'd with skill, what dassing fruits
appear!²⁴⁵
Ev'n now sagacious foresight points to show
A little bench of heedless bishops here,
And there a chancellor in embryo,
Or bard sublime, if bard may e'er be so,
As *Milton*, *Shakespeare*, names that ne'er
shall die!²⁵⁰
Tho' now he crawl along the ground so low,
Nor weeting¹⁹ how the muse should soar on
high,
Wisheth, poor starv'ling elf! his paper-kite may
fly.

And this perhaps, who, cens'ring the design,
Low lays the house which that of cards doth
build,²⁵⁵
Shall *Dennis*²⁰ be! if rigid fates incline,
And many an epic to his rage shall yield;
And many a poet quit th' Aonian field;²¹
And, sour'd by age, profound he shall ap-
pear,
As he who now with 'sdainful fury thrill'd²⁶⁰
Surveys mine work; and levels many a sneer,
And furls his wrinkly front, and cries, "What
stuff is here?"

But now *Dan Phœbus*²² gains the middle sky,
And liberty unbars her prison-door;
And like a rushing torrent out they fly,²⁶⁵
And now the grassy cirque han²³ cover'd o'er
With boistrous revel-rout and wild uproar;
A thousand ways in wanton rings they run,
Heav'n shield their short-liv'd pastimes, I im-
plore!
For well may freedom, erst so dearly won,²⁷⁰
Appear to *British* elf more gladsome than the
sun.

Enjoy, poor imps! enjoy your sportive trade;
And chase gay flies, and cull the fairest
flow'rs;
For when my bones in grass-green sods are
laid;
For never may ye taste more careless hours
In knightly castles, or in ladies bow'rs.²⁷⁶
O vain to seek delight in earthly thing!
But most in courts where proud ambition
tow'rs;
Deluded wight! who weens fair peace can
spring
Beneath the pompous dome of kesar²⁴ or of
king.²⁸⁰

¹⁸ Edward Vernon (1684-1757) an English naval com-
mander and member of Parliament. He gained distinc-
tion by the capture of Porto Bello in 1759, and of Carta-
gena in 1740; he was made an Admiral in 1745.

¹⁹ Knowing.
²⁰ John Dennis, whom Pope had satirised in the *Dun-*
ciad.

²¹ The field of poetry.
²² The sun; *Dan*, an abbreviation of *dominus*, =master.
or sir; Cf. *Dan* Chaucer, and the Spanish *don*.

²³ Have.

²⁴ Kaiser, Cæsar.

¹⁶ Discolor.

¹⁷ Dainties.

¹⁸ Besprinkled.

WRITTEN AT AN INN AT HENLEY

To thee, fair Freedom! I retire
 From flatt'ry, cards, and dice, and din;
 Nor art thou found in mansions higher
 Than the low cot, or humble inn.
 'Tis here with boundless pow'r I reign; 5
 And ev'ry health which I begin,
 Converts dull port to bright champagne;
 Such freedom crowns it, at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
 I fly from falsehood's specious grin! 10
 Freedom I love, and form I hate,
 And choose my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter, take my sordid ore,
 Which lacqueys else might hope to win;
 It buys what courts have not in store; 15
 It buys me freedom, at an inn.

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
 Where'er his stages may have been,
 May sigh to think he still has found 20
 The warmest welcome, at an inn.

Oliver Goldsmith

1728-1774

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

(1770)

Sweet Auburn! lovelyest village of the plain,
 Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring
 swain,

Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
 And parting summer's lingering blooms de-
 lay'd:

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could
 please,

How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
 How often have I paus'd on every charm,
 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm, 10

The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
 The decent church that topt the neighbouring
 hill,

The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the
 shade,

For talking age and whispering lovers made!
 How often have I blest the coming day 15
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,

And all the village train from labour free,
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading
 tree;

While many a pastime circled in the shade,
 The young contending as the old survey'd, 20
 And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went
 round!

And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25
 By holding out to tire each other down,
 The swain mistrustless of his smutt'd face,
 While secret laughter titter'd round the place,
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks 30

reprove.
 These were thy charms, sweet village! sports
 like these,
 With sweet succession, taught even toil to
 please;

These round thy bowers their cheerful influence
 shed;

These were thy charms—but all these charms
 are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms with-
 drawn;

Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green:

One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40

No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way;
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,

The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45

And tires their echoes with unvaried cries:

Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's
 hand,

Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates and men decay;
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
 A breath can make them, as a breath has
 made—

But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man:
 For him light labour spread her wholesome
 store,

Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no
 more;

His best companions, innocence and health, 61
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
 Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain:

Along the lawn where scatter'd hamlets rose, 65
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,

And every want to opulence allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.

Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70

¹ Some of the details of the poem are thought to have been suggested by the village of Lissoy in Ireland, where Goldsmith's childhood was spent; but in his account of the desertion of the village, the poet is true to conditions that actually prevailed in England at that time. Throughout the land a new aristocracy of wealth was pushing aside the small farmer (ll. 270-280); the harvests were correspondingly diminished; and even the commons, formerly opened to the poor, were shut off, or "denied" (l. 307). Luxury, which Goldsmith regards as the source of national corruption, was also increasing in consequence of a rapid growth in material prosperity.

Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look and brighten'd all the green—

These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour, 175
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—

I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,

And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
Nor surly porter stands, in guilty state, 105
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend,
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way, 110
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close

Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below: 116

The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind, 121

And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind—

These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail, 125
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,

No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled—
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring; 130
She, wretched matron—forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—
She only left of all the harmless train, 135
The sad historian of the pensive plain!

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,

There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,

The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.

Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change his place;

Unpractic'd he to fawn, or seek for power 145
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain; 150

The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won.

Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,

And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call, 165
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood: at his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175

And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man, 181
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;

Even children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's
smile:

His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest, 185
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares dis-
trest.

To them his heart, his love, his griefs were
given,

But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven:
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the
storm, 190

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are
spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the
way,

With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule, 195
The village master taught his little school.

A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:

Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face; 200

Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;

Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd;

Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205
The love he bore to learning was in fault.

The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too,

Lands he could measure, terms and tides
presage,

And even the story ran that he could gauge. 210
In arguing too the parson own'd his skill,

For even though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering
sound

Atnas'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew

That one small head could carry all he knew. 215
But past is all his fame: the very spot,

Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,

Where once the sign-post caught the passing
eye, 220

Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts
inspir'd,

Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks pro-

found,

And news much older than their ale went
round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225
The parlour splendours of that festive place:

The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the

door;

The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230

The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules,² the royal game of
goose;

² Twelve rules of conduct, ascribed to Charles I and frequently displayed in public houses and inns.

The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel
gay,

While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show, 235
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?

Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.

Thither no more the peasant shall repair 241
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;

No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to
hear; 246

The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bias go round;

Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;

To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;

Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born
sway; 256

Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,

In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain, 261
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;

And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,

'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand 267
Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;

Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around;

Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.

Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied— 276

Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:

The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their
growth; 280

His seat, where solitary spots are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;

Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies.

While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all 285
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,

Slight's every borrow'd charm that dress sup-
plies,

Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; 290
But when those charms are past, for charms are
frail,

When time advances, and when lovers fail,

She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
 In all the glaring impotence of dress:
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd; 295
 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
 While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling
 land,

The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
 And while he sinks, without one arm to
 save, 301

The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd 305
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—what waits him there?
 To see profusion that he must not share; 310
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
 To see each joy the sons of pleasure know,
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.

Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
 Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps
 display,

There, the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight
 reign,

Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous
 train; 320

Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing
 square,

The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
 Sure these denote one universal joy!
 Are these thy serious thoughts? Ah, turn thine
 eyes 325

Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distress;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
 Now lost to all—her friends, her virtue fled—331
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
 And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the
 shower,

With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
 When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335
 She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest
 train,

Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
 Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread. 340

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they
 go,

Where wild Altama^a murmurs to their woe.
 Far different there from all that charm'd
 before, 345

The various terrors of that horrid shore:

^a The river *Altamaha*, or *Alabamha*, in Georgia.

Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
 But silent bats in drowy clusters cling; 350
 Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance
 crown'd,

Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
 And savage men more murderous still than
 they; 356

While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
 Far different these from every former scene,
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that
 parting day,

That call'd them from their native walks away;
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365
 Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd
 their last,

And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
 For seats like these beyond the western main;
 And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
 The good old sire the first prepar'd to go 371
 To new-found worlds, and wept for other's woe;
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375
 The fond companion of his helpless years,
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.

With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
 And blest the cot where every pleasure rose, 380
 And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a
 tear,

And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385
 How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own: 390
 At every draught more large and large they
 grow,

A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe;
 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part un-
 sound,

Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
 Even now the devastation is begun, 395
 And half the business of destruction done;
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
 I see the rural Virtues leave the land.

Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the
 sail

That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
 Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,
 And kind connubial Tenderness are there:

And Piety with wishes placed above, 405
 And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame 409
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
 Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
 Thou found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me 80;
 Thou guide by which the noble arts excel, 415
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
 Farewell! and O where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's⁴ cliffs or Pambamarca's⁴ side,
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
 Teach him, that states of native strength 425
 possess,
 Though very poor, may still be very blest;
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift
 decay,
 As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
 While self-dependent power can time defy,
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

THE HERMIT

A BALLAD

(1766)

"Turn, gentle Hermit of the dale,
 And guide my lonely way,
 To where yon taper cheers the vale
 With hospitable ray.
 "For here forlorn and lost I tread, 5
 With fainting steps and slow;
 Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
 Seem length'ning as I go."
 "Forbear, my son," the Hermit cries,
 "To tempt the dangerous gloom; 10
 For yonder faithless phantom flies
 To lure thee to thy doom."
 "Here to the houseless child of want
 My door is open still;
 And though my portion is but scant, 15
 I give it with good will.
 "Then turn to-night, and freely share
 Whate'er my cell bestows,
 My rushy couch and frugal fare,
 My blessing and repose. 20
 "No flocks that range the valley free
 To slaughter I condemn;
 Taught by that Power that pities me,
 I learn to pity them.

⁴ Possibly the river Torno, flowing into the Gulf of Bothnia; or Lake Torno in Northern Sweden.

⁵ Said to be a mountain near Quito, Ecuador.

"But from the mountain's grassy side 25
 A guiltless feast I bring;
 A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
 And water from the spring.

"Then pilgrim, turn; thy cares forego;
 All earth-born cares are wrong; 30
 Man wants but little here below,
 Nor wants that little long."

Soft as the dew from heaven descends,
 His gentle accents fell:
 The modest stranger lowly bends, 35
 And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure
 The lonely mansion lay,
 A refuge to the neighb'ring poor 40
 And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
 Required a master's care;
 The wicket, opening with a latch,
 Received the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire 45
 To take their evening rest,
 The Hermit trimm'd his little fire,
 And cheer'd his pensive guest:

And spread his vegetable store,
 And gaily pressed, and smiled; 50
 And, skill'd in legendary lore,
 The lingering hours beguiled.

Around in sympathetic mirth
 Its tricks the kitten tries;
 The cricket chirrups in the hearth, 55
 The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart
 To soothe the stranger's woe;
 For grief was heavy at his heart, 60
 And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the Hermit spied,
 With answering care oppress;
 "And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
 "The sorrows of thy breast?"

"From better habitations spurn'd, 65
 Reluctant dost thou rove?
 Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd
 Or unregarded love?"

"Alas! the joys that Fortune brings
 Are trifling, and decay; 70
 And those who prize the paltry things,
 More trifling still than they.

"And what is friendship but a name,
 A charm that lulls to sleep;
 A shade that follows wealth or fame, 75
 But leaves the wretch to weep?"

"And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair-one's jest;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest. 80

"For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex," he said;
But while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surprised he sees new beauties rise, 85
Swift mantling to the view:
Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms; 90
The lovely stranger stands confest
A maid in all her charms.

"And ah! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn," she cried;
"Whose feet unhallow'd thus intrude 95
Where heaven and you reside.

"But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair 100
Companion of her way.

"My father lived beside the Tyne;
A wealthy lord was he;
And all his wealth was mark'd as mine,—
He had but only me.

"To win me from his tender arms, 105
Unnumber'd suitors came;
Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt or feign'd a flame.

"Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove; 110
Amongst the rest young Edwin bow'd
But never talk'd of love.

"In humble, simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he; 115
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

"And when beside me in the dale
He carroll'd lays of love,
His breath lent fragrance to the gale, 120
And music to the grove.

"The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

"The dew, the blossom on the tree, 125
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me!
Their constancy was mine.

"For still I tried each fickle art, 130
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain:

"Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride; 135
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

"But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay. 140

"And there forlorn, despairing hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I."

"Forbid it, Heaven!" the Hermit cried, 145
And clasp'd her to his breast:
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide,—
'Twas Edwin's self that press'd.

"Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see 150
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

"Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign; 155
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that's mine?

"No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true,
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too." 160

Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield¹

1694–1773

MANNERS MAKYTH MAN

(Letter LXXIV., from *Letters to His Son*, 1774)

Spa, 25th July, 1741.

Dear Boy—I have often told you in my former letters (and it is most certainly true) that the strictest and most scrupulous honour and virtue can alone make you esteemed and valued by mankind; that parts and learning can alone make you admired and celebrated by them; but that the possession of lesser talents was most absolutely necessary towards making you liked, beloved, and sought after in private life. Of these lesser talents good breeding is the principal and most necessary one, not only as it is very important in itself,

¹ A well known wit, politician, orator, and "fine-gentleman," in the age of Pope and of Johnson. He was a typical product of early 18th century England, in which essential coarseness and materialism were too often covered with a superficial veneer of polish and refinement. His early repulse of Dr. Johnson, and belated offer of patronage occasioned Johnson's famous letter of rebuke, which is given on p. 385. His *Letters*, which were not written for publication but intended to serve as a practical guide to his son in conduct and manners, reflect with a terrible truthfulness the views and standards of their author.

but as it adds lustre to the more solid advantages both of the heart and mind. I have often touched upon good breeding to you before; so that this letter shall be upon the next necessary qualification to it, which is a genteel, easy manner, and carriage, wholly free from those odd tricks, ill habits, and awkwardnesses, which even many very worthy and sensible people have in their behaviour. However trifling a genteel manner may sound, it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women; which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing; and I have known many a man from his awkwardness, give people such a dislike of him at first, that all his merit could not get the better of it afterwards. Whereas a genteel manner prepossesses people in your favour, bends them towards you, and makes them wish to like you. Awkwardness can proceed from two causes; either from not having kept good company, or from not having attended to it. As for your keeping good company, I will take care of that; do you take care to observe their ways and manners, and to form your own upon them. Attention is absolutely necessary to this, as indeed it is for everything else; and a man without attention is not fit to live in the world. When an awkward fellow first comes into the room, it is highly probable, that his sword gets between his legs, and throws him down, or makes him stumble at least; when he has recovered this accident, he goes and places himself in the very place of the whole room where he should not; then he soon lets his hat fall down, and, in taking it up again, throws down his cane; in recovering his cane, his hat falls down a second time; so that he is a quarter of an hour before he is in order again. If he drinks tea or coffee, he certainly scalds his mouth, and lets either the cup or the saucer fall, and spills the tea or coffee in his breeches. At dinner, his awkwardness distinguishes itself particularly as he has more to do: there he holds his knife, fork, and spoon differently from other people; eats with his knife to the great danger of his mouth, picks his teeth with his fork, and puts his spoon which has been in his throat twenty times, into the dishes again. If he is to carve, he can never hit the joint; but, in his vain efforts to cut through the bone, scatters the sauce in everybody's face. He generally daubs himself with soup and grease, though his napkin is commonly stuck through a button-hole and tickles his chin. . . . All this, I own, is not in any degree criminal; but it is highly disagreeable and ridiculous in company, and ought most carefully to be avoided by whoever desires to please.

From this account of what you should not do, you may easily judge of what you should do; and a due attention to the manners of people of fashion, and who have seen the world, will make it habitual and familiar to you.

There is likewise an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings, and common proverbs; which are so many proofs of having kept bad and low company. For example; if, instead of saying that tastes are different, and that every man has his own peculiar one, you should let off a proverb, and say, That what is one man's meat is another man's poison; or else, Everyone as they like, as the good man said when he kissed his cow; everybody would be persuaded that you had never kept company with anybody above footmen and housemaids.

Attention will do all this; and without attention, nothing is to be done; want of attention, which is really want of thought, is either folly or madness. You should not only have attention to everything, but a quickness of attention, so as to observe, at once, all the people in the room; their motions, their looks, and their words, and yet without staring at them, and seeming to be an observer, this quick and unobserved observation is of infinite advantage in life, and is to be acquired with care; and, on the contrary, what is called absence, which is a thoughtlessness, and want of attention about what is doing, makes a man so like either a fool or a madman, that, for my part, I see no real difference. A fool never has thought; a madman has lost it; and an absent man is, for the time, without it.

Adieu! Direct your next to me, *Chez Monsieur Chabert, Banquier, à Paris*; and take care I find the improvements I expect, at my return.

STYLE

(From Letter CCIII)

I have written to you so often of late upon good breeding, address, *les manières liantes*,¹ the graces, etc. that I shall confine this letter to another subject, pretty near akin to them, and which, I am sure, you are full as deficient in; I mean, style.

Style is the dress of thoughts; and let them be ever so just, if your style is homely, coarse, and vulgar, they will appear to as much disadvantage, and be as ill received as your person, though ever so well proportioned, would, if dressed in rags, dirt, and tatters. It is not every understanding that can judge of matter; but every ear can and does judge more or less

¹ Pleasing manners.

of style; and were I either to speak or write to the public, I should prefer moderate matter, adorned with all the beauties and elegancies of style, to the strongest matter in the world, ill-worded and ill-delivered. Your business is Negotiation abroad, and Oratory in the House of Commons at home. What figure can you make in either case if your style be inelegant, I do not say bad? Imagine yourself writing an office-letter to a Secretary of State, which letter is to be read by the whole Cabinet Council, and very possibly afterwards laid before Parliament; any one barbarism, solecism, or vulgarity in it would, in a very few days, circulate through the whole kingdom to your disgrace and ridicule. For instance; I will suppose you had written the following letter from the Hague; to the Secretary of State at London; and leave you to suppose the consequences of it.

My Lord—I had last night, the honour of your Lordship's letter of the 24th; and will set about doing the orders contained therein; and if so be that I can get that affair done by the next post, I will not fail for to give your Lordship an account of it by next post. I have told the French Minister, as how, that if that affair be not soon concluded, your Lordship would think it all long of him; and that he must have neglected for to have wrote to his Court about it. I must beg leave to put your Lordship in mind, as how, that I am now full three quarters in arrear; and if so be that I do not very soon receive at least one half year, I shall cut a very bad figure; for this here place is very dear. I shall be vastly beholden to your Lordship for that there mark of your favour; and so I rest, or remain, Your, etc.

You will tell me, possibly that this is a caricature of an illiberal and inelegant style; I will admit it: but I assure you, at the same time, that a despatch with less than half these faults would blow you up forever. It is by no means sufficient to be free from faults in speaking and writing; you must do both correctly and elegantly. In faults of this kind it is not *ille optimus qui minimis urgetur*; but he is unpardonable that has any at all, because it is his own fault: he need only attend to, observe, and imitate the best authors.

It is a very true saying, that a man must be born a poet, but that he may make himself an orator; and the very first principle of an orator is, to speak his own language, particularly, with the utmost purity and elegance. A man will be forgiven, even great errors, in a foreign language; but in his own even the least slips are justly laid hold of and ridiculed.

* He is the best who is the least burdened.

A person of the House of Commons, speaking two years ago upon naval affairs, asserted that we had then the finest navy upon the face of the yearth. This happy mixture of blunder and vulgarity, you may easily imagine, was matter of immediate ridicule; but I can assure you that it continues so still, and will be remembered as long as he lives and speaks. Another, speaking in defence of a gentleman upon whom a censure was moved, happily said that he thought that gentleman was more *liable* to be thanked and rewarded, than censured. You know, I presume, that *liable* can never be used in a good sense.

You have with you three or four of the best English authors, Dryden, Atterbury,³ and Swift; read them with the utmost care, and with a particular care to their language, and they may possibly correct that curious infelicity of diction, which you acquired at Westminster. Mr. Harte⁴ excepted, I will admit that you have met with very few English authors who could improve your style; and with many, I dare say, who speak as ill as yourself, and it may be worse; you must therefore take the more pains, and consult your authors and Mr. Harte the more. I need not tell you how attentive the Romans and Greeks, particularly the Athenians were to this object. It is also a study among the Italians and the French, witness their respective Academies and Dictionaries, for improving and fixing their languages. To our shame be it spoken, it is less attended to here than in any polite country; but that is no reason why you should not attend to it; on the contrary it will distinguish you the more. Cicero says, very truly, that it is glorious to excel other men in that very article, in which men excel brutes, speech.

Constant experience has shown me, that great purity and elegance of style, with a graceful elocution, cover a multitude of faults in either a speaker or a writer. For my own part, I confess (and I believe most people are of my mind) that if a speaker should ungracefully mutter or stammer out to me the sense of an angel, deformed by barbarisms and solecisms, or larded with vulgarisms, he should never speak to me a second time, if I could help it. Gain the heart, or you gain nothing; the eyes and the ears are only the road to the heart. Merit and knowledge will not gain hearts though they will secure them when

³ Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), a prominent preacher, and clever writer and controversialist. He was the friend of Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke, and other distinguished men of his time.

⁴ Walter Harte (c. 1707-1774), who was tutor to Chesterfield's son. He wrote various poems and essays, and a *History of Gustavus Adolphus*.

gained. Pray have that truth ever in your mind. Engage the eyes by your address, air, and motions; soothe the ears by the elegance and harmony of your diction; the heart will certainly follow, and the whole man or woman will as certainly follow the heart. I must repeat it to you over and over again, that with all the knowledge which you may have at present or hereafter acquire, and with all the merit that ever man had, if you have not a graceful address, liberal and engaging manners, a prepossessing air, and a good degree of eloquence in speaking and writing, you will be nobody; but will have the daily mortification of seeing people, with not one-tenth part of your merit or knowledge, get the start of you and disgrace you both in company and in business.

Henry Fielding

1707-1754

PARTRIDGE AT THE PLAY

(From *Tom Jones*, 1749)

Mr. Jones having spent three hours in reading and kissing the aforesaid letter,¹ and being at last, in a state of good spirits, from the last-mentioned considerations, he agreed to carry an appointment, which he had before made, into execution. This was, to attend Mrs. 30 Miller, and her younger daughter, into the gallery at the playhouse and to admit Mr. Partridge² as one of the company. For as Jones had really that taste for humour which many affect, he expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge, from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved, indeed, but likewise unadulterated, by art.

In the first row then of the first gallery did 40 Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge, take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played he said, "It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out." While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs. Miller, "Look, look, Madam, the very picture of the man in the end of the common-prayer book before the gunpowder-treason 50 service." Nor could he help observing with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, "That here were candles enow burnt in one night, to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelve-month."

¹ i. e., a letter from Sophia Western, with whom Tom Jones, the hero of the story, is in love.

² A country barber and schoolmaster, who has become the follower and companion of Tom Jones.

As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked 5 Jones, "What man was that in the strange dress; something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied, with a smile, "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, 15 neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and *Hamlet*, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick,³ which he had 20 denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything; for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only 30 person." "Why, who," cries Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me coward, if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay: go along with you! Ay, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such foolhardiness!—What-ever happens, it is good enough for you.—Follow you? I'd follow the devil as soon. 40 Nay, perhaps it is the devil—for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases.—Oh! here he is again.—No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried, "Hush, hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes partly fixed on the ghost and partly on *Hamlet*, and with his mouth open; the same passions 50 which succeeded each other in *Hamlet*, succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible."

³ David Garrick (1717-79), the friend of Johnson, Reynolds, and Goldsmith, and the greatest English actor of his time. Garrick began his career on the stage in 1741, his *Richard III.* produced in that year, was immediately successful; he played many and varied parts, and retired from the stage in 1776.

"Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but to be sure, it is natural to be surprised at such things, thought I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the ghost that surprised me, neither; for I should have known that to be only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." "And dost thou imagine then, Partridge," cries Jones, "that he was really frightened?" "Nay, sir," said Partridge, "did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case? But hush! O la! what noise is that? There he is again—Well, to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are." Then turning his eyes upon Hamlet, "Ay, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?"

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses; nor could he help observing upon the king's countenance. "Well," said he, "how people may be deceived by faces? *Nulla fides fronti*⁴ is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king's face, that he had ever committed a murder?" He then enquired after the ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprised, gave him no other satisfaction, than "that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire."

Partridge sat in fearful expectation of this; and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, "There, sir, now; what say you now? is he frightened now, or no? As much frightened as you think me, and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as What's his name, squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me! what's become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth." "Indeed, you saw right," answered Jones. "Well, well," cried Partridge, "I know it is only a play: and besides, if there was anything in all that, Madam Miller would not laugh so; for as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person. There, there, ay, no wonder you are in such a passion, shake the vile wretch to pieces. If she was my own mother, I would serve her so. To be sure all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked

doings. Ay, go about your business, I hate the sight of you."

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play, which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her, "If she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched; though he is," said he, "a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for as that wicked man there hath, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he run away; for your sake I'll never trust an innocent face again."

The grave digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, "That it was one of the most famous burial-places about town." "No wonder then," cried Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton, when I was clerk, that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand. Ay, ay, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe." Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, "Well, it is strange to see how fearless some men are: I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account. He seemed frightened enough too, at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit*.⁵"

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him, "Which of the players he had liked best?" To this he answered with some appearance of indignation at the question, "The king without doubt." "Indeed, Mr. Partridge," says Mrs. Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed, that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer, "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you call it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done just exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, Madam,

⁴ Do not trust in the face.

⁵ No one is wise at all times.

though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. Anybody may see he is an actor."

Thus ended the adventure of the playhouse, where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs. Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said, than to anything that passed on the stage.

He durst not go to bed all that night, for fear of the ghost; and for many nights after sweated two or three hours before he went to sleep, with the same apprehensions, and waked several times in great horrors, crying out, "Lord have mercy upon us! There it is."

Samuel Johnson

1709-1784

THE LADY'S MISERY IN A SUMMER RETIREMENT

(*The Rambler*, No. 124, Saturday, May 25, 1751)

The season of the year is now come, in which the theatres are shut, and the card-tables forsaken; the regions of luxury are for a while unpeopled, and pleasure leads out her votaries to groves and gardens, to still scenes and erratic gratifications. Those who have passed many months in a continual tumult of diversion; who have never opened their eyes in the morning but upon some new appointment; nor slept at night without a dream of dances, music, and good hands, or of soft sighs, and humble supplications; must now retire to distant provinces, where the syrens of flattery are scarcely to be heard, where beauty sparkles without praise or envy, and wit is repeated only by the echo.

As I think it one of the most important duties of social benevolence, to give warning of the approach of calamity, when, by timely prevention, it may be turned aside, or, by preparatory measures, be more easily endured, I cannot feel the increasing warmth, or observe the lengthening days, without considering the condition of my fair readers, who are now preparing to leave all that has so long filled up their hours, all from which they have been accustomed to hope for delight; and who, till fashion proclaims the liberty of returning to the seats of mirth and elegance, must endure the rugged squire, the sober housewife, the

loud huntsman, or the formal parson, the roar of obstreperous jollity, or the dulness of prudential instruction; without any retreat, but to the gloom of solitude, where they will yet find greater inconveniences, and must learn, however unwillingly, to endure themselves.

In winter, the life of the polite and gay may be said to roll on with a strong and rapid current; they float along from pleasure to pleasure, without the trouble of regulating their own motions, and pursue the course of the stream in all the felicity of inattention; content that they find themselves in progression, and careless whither they are going. But the months of summer are a kind of sleeping stagnation, without wind or tide, where they are left to force themselves forward by their own labour, and to direct their passage by their own skill; and where, if they have not some internal principle of activity, they must be stranded upon shallows, or lie torpid in a perpetual calm.

There are, indeed, some to whom this universal dissolution of gay societies affords a welcome opportunity of quitting, without disgrace, the post which they have found themselves unable to maintain; and of seeming to retreat only at the call of nature, from assemblies where, after a short triumph of uncontested superiority, they are overpowered by some new intruder of softer elegance, or sprightlier vivacity. By these, hopeless of victory, and yet ashamed to confess a conquest,¹ the summer is regarded as a release from the fatiguing service of celebrity, a dismissal to more certain joys, and a safer empire. They now solace themselves with the influence which they shall obtain, where they have no rival to fear; and with the lustre which they shall effuse, when nothing can be seen of brighter splendour. They imagine, while they are preparing for their journey, the admiration with which the rustics will crowd about them; plan the laws of a new assembly; or contrive to delude provincial ignorance with a fictitious mode. A thousand pleasing expectations swarm in the fancy; and all the approaching weeks are filled with distinctions, honours, and authority.

But others, who have lately entered the world, or have yet had no proofs of its inconsistency and desertion, are cut off, by this cruel interruption, from the enjoyment of their prerogatives, and doomed to lose four months in unactive obscurity. Many complaints do vexation and desire extort from those exiled

¹ Lat. *errare*, to wander, then to stray, hence literally, the pleasure of roaming.

² *Conquest* has here a passive sense; ashamed to confess = that they have been conquered.

¹ Johnson began his *Dictionary* in 1747, and did not complete and publish it until 1755. The production of so large a book was as expensive as well as laborious, and Johnson made some effort to secure the patronage of Lord Chesterfield for his important undertaking. Johnson's overtures were rejected in a manner that, to his sturdy and independent temper, seemed insulting. Shortly before the publication of the *Dictionary*, Chesterfield wrote two notices of the forthcoming book, whereupon Johnson addressed him in the famous letter, which has been called *The Declaration of Independence for Authors v. Chesterfield*, p. 379, n. 1.

were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind, but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble

"Most obedient servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

COLLINS

(From *Lives of the Poets*, 1779-81)

William Collins was born¹ at Chichester, on the twenty-fifth day of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton² has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College,³ where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the public by some verses to a "Lady weeping," published in "The Gentleman's Magazine."

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College, but unhappily there was no vacancy. He became a Commoner⁴ of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was, in about half a year, elected a *Demy*⁵ of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution; or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his scheme, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote inquiries. He published proposals for a "History Of The Revival Of Learning;" and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth,⁶ and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of his history was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now and then odes and other poems; and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition

¹ Collins was born Dec. 25th, 1721.

² Dr. Joseph Warton (1722-1800), was a schoolfellow of Collins at Winchester, and his life-long friend.

³ Winchester School, or the College of St. Mary Winton, one of the leading English public schools. It was founded towards the end of the 14th century, by William of Wykeham, who was also the founder of New College, Oxford. A certain number of New College scholarships are open to the Winchester students.

⁴ Queen's College, Oxford. A Commoner at Oxford is a student who does not depend on the endowment for support, but pays for his own board.

⁵ A Demy is the holder of one of certain scholarships at Magdalen (one of the most beautiful of the Oxford colleges); the *Demys* are so called because their allowance was about half that of a Fellow.

⁶ Pope from 1513-21, distinguished for his encouragement of art and letters, when the Renaissance was at its height.

cheerful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff,⁷ that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*,⁸ which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He showed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarce think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study* than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities, disease, and insanity.

Having formerly written his character,⁹ while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly on the works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders⁹ of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

"This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by him, but not always attained. Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery, and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but

somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous, as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects,¹⁰ he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death, in 1756,¹¹ came to his relief.

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a Man of Letters had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that is the best.'"

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends, Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his *Oriental Eclogues*,¹² as not suf-

⁷i. e., for his debts. The "Debtors' Act" in 1369 abolished imprisonment for debt in England.

⁸Johnson's *Character* of Collins appeared in the *Political Calendar*, 1763, and was inserted as part of the *Life* in 1781.

⁹i. e., the mases, or windings; from the river Meander in Asia Minor, noted for its tortuous course.

¹⁰Plural, like "wits." The 18th century writers sometimes used the plural where we use the singular.

¹¹Johnson is wrong in the date. Collins died June 12th, 1759.

¹²Published as *Persian Eclogues* in 1742, and republished as *Oriental Eclogues* in 1757. Dr. Francis Warton's "brother" was Thomas Warton, author of the *History of English Poetry*.

ficiently expressive of Asiatic manners, and called them his Irish Eclogues. He showed them at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr. John Home,¹² on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.¹⁴

His disorder was no alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than his intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr. Collins's *first*¹⁵ production is added here from the "Poetical Calendar."

TO MISS AURELIA C——R, ON HER WEEPING AT
HER SISTER'S WEDDING

Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy state;
You may be happy in your turn,
And seize the treasure you regret.

With Love united Hymen stands,
And softly whispers to your charms,—
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
You'll find your sister in his arms."

THE CHARACTER OF POPE

(From the same)

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in

¹² John Home (1722–1808), a Scotch clergyman who was censured by his presbytery for writing plays.

¹⁴ It was first published in 1788, and has since been included in the editions of Collins's poetry.

¹⁵ Published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1739, while Collins was still at school.

his account of the "Little Club,"¹ compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and, as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low,² that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was "long disease."³ His most frequent assailment was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford,⁴ who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet,⁵ under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig,⁶ and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasant and unsocial qualities of a valetudinarian man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parent will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

¹ A club of men under five feet in height, described by Pope in the *Guardian*, Nos. 91 and 92.

² Pope was 4 ft. 6 in. in height.

³ Pope's own expression (s. p. 305, *supra*):

"The muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease my life."

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 1, 131.

⁴ Edward Harley, *Second Earl of Oxford*, friend, admirer, and correspondent of Pope.

⁵ The doublet, originally an outer coat, had become an undergarment in King Charles's time.

⁶ A wig that has the hair gathered and tied at the back with a ribbon.

*C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.*⁷

When he wanted to sleep he "nodded in company," and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.⁸

The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was he left no room for another, because, he exacted the attention, and employed the activity, of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome: but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in the house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to what pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite: he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by the javelin or the sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring.⁹ The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver sauceman, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.¹¹

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but so

⁷ There is always a man in the infant,
There is always an infant in the man.

⁸ This occurred after the accession of George II. in 1727, when Frederick (who died before his father in 1751) was Prince of Wales. He frequently dined at Pope's house.

⁹ Hannibal after the Carthaginian campaign became a fugitive in Asia Minor. Fearing arrest and death, he took poison which he always carried with him in a ring. So that it may be said the ring, in causing the death of Hannibal avenged the slaughter of Cannæ.

¹⁰ Preserved.

¹¹ The lamprey, when full grown resembles an eel, and is considered a delicacy.

that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods, "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem."¹² If, at the house of friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased Lord Orrery¹³ till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." His unjustifiable impression of the "Patriot King,"¹⁴ as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that so near his time,¹⁵ so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of railery; nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apothegm only stands upon record. When an objection, raised against his inscription for Shakespeare,¹⁶ was defended by the authority

¹² Attributed to Lady Mary Wortley Montague. V. p. 390, n. 19.

¹³ John Boyle, the fifth Earl of Orrery, (1707-62) was the friend of Swift, Pope, and Johnson.

¹⁴ A political essay written by Henry St. John, first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751). "The Patriots" was a name given to a faction of the Whig party in the reigns of George I. and George II., opposed to the rule of Walpole. Bolingbroke, after the failure of the Pretender's cause, had affiliated himself with them, and wrote *The Patriot King* in defence of their principles. Not deeming it wise at the time to publish the essay broadcast, he entrusted the manuscript to Pope, who was to have a few copies printed for distribution among Bolingbroke's friends, and Pope, according to Johnson, "assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed." When, soon after Pope's death, it was discovered that 1500 copies had been printed and secretly kept by the printer at Pope's request, Bolingbroke's indignation knew no bounds, and he publicly attacked the memory of his former friend.

¹⁵ Pope died 1744. *The Lives of the Poets* appeared in 1781.

¹⁶ "When Dr. Meade once urged to our author the authority of Patrick, the dictionary-maker, against the latinity of the expression, '*amor publicus*,' which he had used in an inscription, he replied that he would allow a dictionary-maker to understand a single word, but not two words put together." Warton.

of "Patrick,"¹⁷ he replied—*horresco referens*¹⁸—that "he would allow the publisher of a Dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley,¹⁹ who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no intreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the "Iliad,"²⁰ by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire; and say, "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and whatever they may think, a fortune for all."

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit: for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

¹⁷ Samuel Patrick (1684-1748), a classical scholar, and editor of Greek and Latin dictionaries.

¹⁸ "I shudder to relate."

¹⁹ Lady Mary Wortley (Montague) 1689-1762. A brilliant member of the literary circle to which Pope belonged. She was a leader in London society, a friend of Queen Caroline, she wrote poetry, and is remembered for her letters.

²⁰ Preserved in the British Museum.

Of this fortune, which, as it arose from public approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full; it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his letters, and in his poems, his garden and his grotto,²¹ his quincunx²² and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint,²³ and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or severity; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale, he never flattered those whom he did not love, nor praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage²⁴ however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his "Highness's dog."²⁵

His admiration of the great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his "Iliad" to Congreve,²⁶ with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the Letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice: for, except Lord

²¹ The grotto at Twickenham was a tunnel decorated with shells, looking glasses, and minerals, connecting Pope's grounds which lay on either side of the London road.

²² Groups of five trees (Lat. *quincunx*) planted in squares, one at each corner, and one in the middle.

²³ A building in Southwark, London, where debtors formerly found shelter, and immunity from arrest.

²⁴ Richard Savage (1698-1743), a poet who is remembered chiefly through Johnson's *Life of Savage*.

²⁵ "I am his Highness dog at Kew."

Pray tell me, Sir, whose dog are you?"

²⁶ Congreve (1670-1792), writer of comedies that reflect the brilliancy, the wit, but also the coarseness and moral callousness of the Augustan age. Macaulay has explained why Pope should have dedicated his *Iliad* to Congreve. Whigs and Tories had vied in their patronage of the translation, and to avoid offence to either party it was necessary to find some person who was at once eminent and neutral. Congreve united these requisites.

Bathurst,²⁷ none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham,²⁸ Burlington,²⁹ or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptation to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a Letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every

man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity require something to be written. Pope confesses his early Letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*: to know whether he disentangled himself from those perverters of epistolatory integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when he has "just nothing else to do;" yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation because he had "always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related, that, in the dreadful winter of 1740,³⁰ she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns³¹ when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of King, and proclaims that "he never sees Courts." Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not

²⁷ *Allen Bathurst* (1682-1775), first Earl Bathurst, a prominent Tory statesman, a friend of Pope and Swift.

²⁸ *Sir Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham* (1669-1749), a statesman and soldier, who broke with Walpole and the King as a result of his opposition to the South Sea Company.

²⁹ *Richard Boyle*, third Earl of Burlington (1695-1753), celebrated for his cultivation of the Italian style of architecture.

³⁰ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January 3rd, 1740, we read, "This month the frost, which began the 26th of last, grew more severe than has been known since the memorable winter of 1715-16." . . . "The Thames represented a snowy field." . . . "The rivers Severn, Tyne, the Avon by Bristol, the rivers of Forth, Tay, etc. in Scotland, and the Liffey by Dublin, were all frozen up like the Thames."

³¹ The greater part of Pope's literary career was included within the reigns of the first two Georges (1714-27-60). Neither George I, who could not speak English, nor George II, were patrons of literature.

much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, "How he could love a Prince while he disliked Kings?"

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets²² of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was super-structured? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper: he was sufficiently a fool to Fame, and his fault was, that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his Letters; he passed through common life sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the Post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; "after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;" and they can live together, and "show what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand: he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger

lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered, with great propriety, that Pope had not yet acted or suffered enough in the world, to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must have been some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of their age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived among ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled resentments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and, if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Phillips,²³ whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley²⁴ contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos,²⁵ Lady Wortley, and Hill,²⁶ was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley²⁷ with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and, of the subscription of forty pounds

²² Ambrose Phillips (1671-1749) a writer of pastorals. He was known as Namby-Pamby Phillips and Pope retained the name for him as being appropriate to his feeble style of poetry.

²³ Richard Bentley (1662-1742), one of the foremost classical scholars of his time. Pope attacked Bentley in his *Satires*, but Bentley's scholarship was proof against such attacks.

²⁴ In his poem on *Falset Taste*, Pope had criticised the house, furniture, and gardens of "Timon," generally believed to represent the Duke of Chandos, who had hospitably entertained him.

²⁵ Aaron Hill (1685-1750) was one of the pigmy authors satirised in *The Dunciad*.

²⁶ A publisher whom Pope assisted, being pleased with his poem *The Toy Shop*.

²⁷ An older form of *ant*.

a year that he raised for Savage,³⁸ twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money; but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury;³⁹ those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness.⁴⁰ His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it. . . .

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismissal⁴¹ of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never deserved to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often, to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for, when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best; he did not court the candour,⁴² but dared the judgment of his reader, and expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none

³⁸ Savage had rendered Pope some service by procuring information concerning the "dunces" whom Pope attacked in his satire.

³⁹ Johnson apparently overlooked the quarrel of Pope with Addison.

⁴⁰ The one whom Pope loved with a greater fondness was Martha Blount, whom but for his physical weakness he would have married. Pope was under obligations to Mr. Allen of Bath, and Martha Blount refused to accept any legacy from Pope unless he would promise to first make good in his will what he owed Mr. Allen. Pope accordingly left £150 to Mr. Allen, that being what he thought he owed him.

⁴¹ In present use "dismissal."

⁴² Candour in 18th century use meant indulgence, kindness, and not honesty and openness, as now.

to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and re-touched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight;"⁴³ of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the "Iliad," and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the "Essay on Criticism" received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes⁴⁴ the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation;

⁴³ Now known as the *Epilogue to the Satires*, but first entitled *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight*, from the year of publication.

⁴⁴ I. e., obeys, follows. Cf. *observe* a rule.

Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every 10 other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external 15 occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he 20 gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope 25 continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent as- 30 tonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dry- 35 den, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry may, perhaps, show him the reasonableness of my determination.

Laurence Sterne

1713-1764

MR. SHANDY ON HIS SON'S DEATH

(From *Tristram Shandy*, 1759-67)

And a chapter it shall have, and a devil of a one too;—so look to yourselves.

'Tis either Plato, or Plutarch, or Seneca, or 50 Xenophon, or Epictetus, or Theophrastus, or Lucian,—or some one, perhaps, of later date; either Cardan or Budæus, or Petrarch, or Stella,—or possibly it may be some divine or father of the church; St. Austin, or St. 55 Cyprian, or Bernard—who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children;—and Seneca (I'm positive) tells us somewhere that

such griefs evacuate themselves best by that particular channel: and, accordingly, we find that David wept for his son Absalom, Adrian for his Antinous, Niobe for her children, and 5 that Apollodorus and Crito both shed tears for Socrates before his death.

My father managed his afflictions otherwise; and indeed differently from most men, either ancient or modern; for he neither wept it away 10 as the Hebrews and the Romans,—nor slept it off, as the Laplanders,—nor hanged it, as the English,—nor drowned it, as the Germans; nor did he curse nor damn it, nor excommunicate it, nor rhyme it, nor *lillibullero*¹ it 15 —He got rid of it however.

Will your worships give me leave to squeeze in a story between these two pages?

When Tully² was bereft of his dear daughter Tullia, at first he laid it to his heart,—he listened to the voice of nature, and modulated his own unto it.—O, my Tullia!—my daughter! my child!—Still, still, still, it was, O, my Tullia! —my Tullia! Methinks I see my Tullia, I hear my Tullia, I talk with my Tullia.—But as 25 soon as he began to look into the stores of philosophy, and consider how many excellent things might be said upon the occasion,—nobody upon earth can conceive, says the great orator, how happy, how joyful it made me.

My father was as proud of his eloquence as Marcus Tullius Cicero could be for his life; and, for aught I am convinced of to the contrary, at present, with as much reason: it was, indeed, his strength,—and his weakness too.— 35 His strength, for he was by nature eloquent; and his weakness, for he was hourly a dupe to it; and, provided an occasion in life would but permit him to show his talents, or say either a wise thing, a witty, or a shrewd one—(bating 40 the case of a systematic misfortune)—he had all he wanted. A blessing which tied up my father's tongue, and a misfortune which set it loose with a good grace, were pretty equal: sometimes, indeed, the misfortune was the 45 better of the two; for instance, where the pleasure of the harangue was as *ten*, and the pain of the misfortune was as *five*,—my father gained half in half; and consequently was as well again off as if it had never befallen him. . .

Now let us go back to my brother's death.

Philosophy has a fine saying for everything.—For Death, it has an entire set: the misery was they all at once rushed so into my father's head that 'twas difficult to string them to- 55 gether, so as to make anything of a consistent

¹ i. e., make a popular song about it. *Lillibullero* was the name of a song directed against the Irish Roman Catholics, and immensely popular in England during the Revolution of 1688.

² Cicero.

show out of them,—He took them as they came.

"'Tis an inevitable chance,—the first statute in Magna Charta;—it is an everlasting act of parliament, my dear brother,—*All must die.*"

"If my son could not have died, it had been matter of wonder, not that he is dead."

"Monarchs and princes dance in the same ring with us."

"*To die* is the great debt and tribute due 10 unto nature, tombs and monuments, which should perpetuate our memories, pay it themselves; and the proudest pyramid of them all, which Wealth and Science have erected, has lost its apex, and stands obtruncated in the 15 travellers' horizon."—(My father found he got great ease, and went on.) "Kingdoms and provinces, and towns and cities, have they not their periods? and when those principles and powers which at first cemented and put 20 them together have performed their several evolutions, they fall back"—Brother Shandy, said my uncle Toby, laying down his pipe at the word *evolutions*—Revolutions, I meant quoth my father—by Heaven! I meant revolu- 25 tions, brother Toby;—evolutions is nonsense—"Tis not nonsense," said my uncle Toby—But is it not nonsense to break the thread of such a discourse upon such an occasion? cried my father;—do not, dear Toby, continued he, 30 taking him by the hand, do not—do not, I beseech thee, interrupt me at this crisis. My uncle Toby put his pipe in his mouth.

"Where is Troy and Mycenæ, and Thebes, and Delos, Persepolis and Agrigentum?" con- 35 tinued my father, taking up his book of post-roads,* which he had laid down.—"What is become, brother Toby, of Nineveh and Babylon, of Cizycum and Mitylene? the fairest towns that ever the sun rose upon are now no more; 40 the names only are left; and those (for many of them are wrong spelt) are falling themselves by piecemeal to decay, and in length of time will be forgotten, and involved with every- 45 thing in a perpetual night. The world itself, brother Toby, must,—must come to an end."

"Returning out of Asia, when I sailed from Ægina towards Megara," (When can this have been, thought my uncle Toby,) "I began to view the country round about. Ægina was 50 behind me, Megara was before, Pyræus on the right hand, Corinth on the left. What flourishing towns, now prostrate upon the earth! Alas! Alas! said I to myself, that man should

disturb his soul for the loss of a child, when so much as this lies awfully buried in his presence! Remember, said I to myself again,—remember thou art a man."

5 Now, my uncle Toby knew not that this last paragraph was an extract of Servius Sulpicius's consolatory letter to Tully:—he had as little skill, honest man, in the fragments as he had in the whole pieces of antiquity:—and 10 as my father, whilst he was concerned in the Turkey trade, had been three or four different times in the Levant, in one of which he had stayed a whole year and a half at Zant, my uncle Toby naturally concluded that, in some 15 one of these periods, he had taken a trip across the Archipelago into Asia; and that all this sailing affair, with Ægina behind, and Megara before, and Pyræus on the right hand, etc., was nothing more than the true course of my 20 father's voyage and reflections.—"Twas certainly in his *manner*;—and many an undertaking critic would have built two stories higher upon worse foundations. And pray, brother, quoth my uncle Toby, laying the end 25 of his pipe upon my father's hand, in a kindly way of interruption—but waiting till he had finished the account,—What year of our Lord was this?—"Twas no year of our Lord, replied my father—That's impossible, cried my uncle 30 Toby—Simpleton! said my father,—'twas forty years before Christ was born."

My uncle Toby had but two things for it; either to suppose his brother to be the Wandering Jew,—or that his misfortunes had dis- 35 ordered his brain. "May the Lord of heaven and earth protect him and restore him," said my uncle Toby, praying silently for my father, and with tears in his eyes.

My father placed the tears to a proper account, and went on with his harangue with 40 great spirit.

"There is not such great odds, brother Toby, betwixt good and evil, as the world imagines." (This way of setting off, by the 45 bye, was not likely to cure my uncle Toby's suspicions.)—"Labour, sorrow, grief, sickness, want, and woe, are the sources of life."—Much good may it do them,—said my uncle Toby to himself.

"My son is dead!"—so much the better;—'tis a shame in such a tempest, to have but one anchor.

"But he is gone forever from us! be it so.—He is got from under the hands of his barber before he was bald;—he is but risen from a feast before he was surfeited;—from a banquet before he had got drunken."

"The Thracians wept when a child was born,"—(And we were very near it, quoth my

* A book for travellers, giving the roads, stopping 55 places, etc. The reader has been told earlier in the chapter that Mr. Shandy was "busy calculating the expense of his riding post from Calais to Paris, and so on to Lyons," when he received the account of his son's death. He is pictured as sitting with a map, "and a book of post-roads" before him, and a pair of compasses in his hand.

uncle Toby) "and feasted and made merry when a man went out of the world; and with reason—Death opens the gates of fame, and shuts the gate of envy after it;—it unlooses the chain of the captive;—and puts the bondsman's task into another man's hands.

"Shew me the man who knows what life is, who dreads it,—and I'll shew thee a prisoner who dreads his liberty."—

Is it not better, my dear brother Toby—(for 10 mark—our appetites are but diseases)—is it not better not to hunger at all, than to eat?—not to thirst at all than to take physic to cure it?

Is it not better to be freed from cares and 15 agues,—from love and melancholy,—and the other hot and cold fits of life, than, like a galled traveller who comes weary to his inn, to be bound to begin his journey afresh?

There is no terror, brother Toby, in its looks 20 but what it borrows from groans and convulsions—and the blowing of noses and the wiping away of tears with the bottom of curtains in a dying man's room.—Strip it of these,—what is it?—"Tis better in battle than in bed, said 25 my uncle Toby.—Take away its hearses, its mutes, and its mourning, its plumes, escutcheons, and other mechanic aids—What is it?—*Better in battle?* Continued my father, smiling, for he had absolutely forgotten my brother 30 Bobby—it is terrible no way—for consider, brother Toby,—when we *are*—death is *not*;—and when death *is*—we are *not*.—My uncle Toby laid down his pipe, to consider the proposition; my father's eloquence was too rapid to 35 stay for any man;—away it went—and hurried my uncle Toby's ideas along with it.

For this reason, continued my father, 'tis worthy to recollect how little alteration, in great men, the approaches of death have made—40 Vespasian died in a jest,—Galba with a sentence;—Saptimus Severus in a despatch;—Tiberius in dissimulation;—and Cæsar Augustus in a compliment—I hope 'twas a sincere one,—quoth my uncle Toby.

'Twas to his wife,—said my father.

THE STARLING

(From *A Sentimental Journey*,¹ 1768)

But you don't consider, Eugenius, said I, that before I have been three days in Paris, I shall take care to say or do something or

¹ *The Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* purported to be an account of the travels of a certain person named Yorick, the descendant of Yorick the "fellow of infinite wit," in *Hamlet*. But Yorick, says Sir Walter Scott is "Sterne himself." Eugenius is Yorick's friend and adviser, and has just offered to lend him money.

other for which I shall get clapped up into the Bastile, and that I shall live there a couple of months entirely at the King of France's expense—I beg pardon, said Eugenius drily; 5 really I had forgotten that resource.

Now the event that I had treated gaily came seriously to my door.

Is it folly, or *nonchalance*, or philosophy, or pertinacity;—or what is it in me, that after all, when La Fleur had gone down stairs, and I was quite alone, I could not bring down my mind to think of it otherwise than I had then spoken of it to Eugenius?

And as for the Bastile—the terror is in the word.—Make the most of it you can, said I to myself, the Bastile is but another word for a tower;—and a tower is but another word for a house you can't get out of.—Mercy on the gouty! for they are in it twice a year.—But with nine livres a day, and pen and ink and paper and patience, albeit a man can't get out, he may do very well within,—at least for a month or six weeks; at the end of which, if he is a harmless fellow, his innocence appears, 25 and he comes out a better and wiser man than he went in.

I had some occasion (I forget what) to step into the court-yard, as I settled this account; and remember I walked down stairs in no small triumph with the conceit of my reasoning.—Beshrew the *sombre* pencil! said I, vauntingly—for I envy not its power, which paints the evils of life with so hard and deadly a colouring. The mind sits terrified at the objects she has magnified herself, and blackened; reduce them to their proper size and hue, she overlooks them.—'Tis true, said I, correcting the proposition—the Bastile is not an evil to be despised. But strip it of its towers—fill up the foss—un- 35 barricade the doors—call it simply a confinement, and suppose 'tis some tyrant of a distemper—and not a man, which holds you in it—the evil vanishes, and you bear the other half without complaint.

45 I was interrupted in the hey-day of this soliloquy, with the voice which I took to be of a child, which complained "it could not get out."—I looked up and down the passage, and, seeing neither man, woman, nor child, 50 I went out without further attention.

In my return back through the passage, I heard the same words repeated twice over; and, looking up, I saw it was a starling hung in a little cage—"I can't get out—I can't get out—I can't get out," said the starling. I stood looking at the bird; and to every person who came through the passage, it ran fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of his captivity,—

"I can't get out," said the starling—God help thee! said I,—but I'll let thee out, cost what it will, so I turned about the cage to get the door; it was twisted and double twisted so fast with wire there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces.—~~I took both hands to it.~~

The bird flew to the place where I was attempting his deliverance, and, thrusting his head through the trellis, pressed his breast against it, as if impatient. I fear, poor creature, said I, I cannot set thee at liberty.—"No," said the starling; "I can't get out—I can't get out."

I vow I never had any affections more tenderly awakened; nor do I remember an incident in my life where the dissipated spirits, to which my reason had been a bubble, were so rudely call'd home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they overthrew all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastile; and I heavily walked upstairs, unsaying every word I had said in going down them.

Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery, said I, still thou art a bitter draught! and, though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account. 'Tis thou, thrice sweet and gracious goddess, addressing myself to *Liberty*, whom all, in public or in private, worship, whose taste is grateful, and will ever be so, till Nature herself shall change. No tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, no chymic power turn thy sceptre into iron;—with thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than his monarch, from whose Court thou art exiled. Gracious Heaven! cried I, kneeling down upon the last step but one in my ascent, grant me but health, thou great Bestower of it, and give me but this fair goddess as my companion,—and shower down thy mitres, if it seem good unto thy Divine Providence, upon those heads which are aching for them.

Oliver Goldsmith.

1728-1774

IMPRESSIONS OF A CHINESE TRAVELLER

(From *Citizen of the World*, (1760-61) Letter II')

From Lien Chi Altangi, to —, Merchant from Amsterdam,

Friend of my Heart, London.

May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery! For all thy favours accept

¹ These letters, afterwards collected and entitled *The*

my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a poor philosophic wanderer can return. Sure, fortune is resolved to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only words to express the sincerity of mine.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England was more painful to me than all the journeys I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary; felt all the rigours of Siberian skies; I have had my repose a hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen, without shrinking, the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me; against these calamities I was armed with resolution; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves, swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave; these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me unprepared to receive them.

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the Ocean. What a strange people, therefore, am I got amongst, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipertala, and make the deep more formidable than the wildest tempest.

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to take a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, sciences, arts, and manufactures, on the spot. Judge then my disappointment on entering London, to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad: wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principle ornament in Chinese architecture. The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewed with gold-leaf; very different are those of

Citizen of the World, were first published serially in a paper called the *Public Ledger*. They are a remarkable plea for a tolerant and sympathetic attitude toward remote and alien nations, and they maintain that underneath all superficial differences men everywhere are essentially the same. "The truth is," says Goldsmith in his preface, "the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind."

London; in the midst of their pavements, a great lazy puddle moves lazily along; heavy laden machines, with wheels of unwieldy thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting hung out at their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity: their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view: and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than a circuit of half a mile; and yet you know that animals of these colours are no where to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor; and that, like the Persians, they make a splendid figure everywhere but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches may be seen in his eyes; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

I have been here but two days, so will not be hasty in my decisions. Such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you'll endeavour to forward with all diligence; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.

Letter III

From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow, to be forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China.

Think not, O thou guide of my youth! that absence can impair my respect, or interposing trackless deserts blot your reverend figure from my memory. The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force; Those ties that bind me to my native country and you, are still unbroken. By every remove, I only drag a greater length of chain.

Could I find aught worth transmitting from

so remote a region as this to which I have wandered, I should gladly send it; but, instead of this, you must be contented with a renewal of my former professions, and an imperfect account of a people with whom I am as yet superficially acquainted. The remarks of a man who has been but three days in the country, can only be those obvious circumstances which force themselves upon the imagination. I consider myself here as a newly created being introduced into a new world; every object strikes with wonder and surprise. The imagination, still unsated, seems the only active principle of the mind. The most trifling occurrences give pleasure, till the gloss of novelty is worn away. When I have ceased to wonder, I may possibly grow wise; I may then call the reasoning principle to my aid, and compare those objects with each other, which were before examined without reflection.

Behold me then in London, gazing at the strangers, and they at me; it seems they find somewhat absurd in my figure; and had I been never from home, it is possible I might find an infinite fund of ridicule in theirs; but by long travelling I am taught to laugh at folly alone, and to find nothing truly ridiculous but villany and vice.

When I had just quitted my native country, and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature. I smiled at the blue lips and red foreheads of the Tonguese;¹ and could hardly contain when I saw the Daures² dress their heads with horns. The Ostiaks³ powdered with red earth; and the Calmuck⁴ beauties, tricked out in all the finery of sheepskin, appeared highly ridiculous: but I soon perceived that the ridicule lay not in them but in me; that I falsely condemned others for absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice or partiality.

I find no pleasure therefore in taxing the English with departing from nature in their external appearance, which is all I yet know of their character: it is possible they only endeavour to improve her simple plan, since every extravagance in dress proceeds from a desire of becoming more beautiful than nature made us; and this is so harmless a vanity, that I not only pardon but approve it. A desire to be more excellent than others, is what actually makes us so; and as thousands find a livelihood

¹ The people of the *Tonga*, or Friendly Islands, in the South Pacific.

² The people of *Dauria*, a mountainous region of south-eastern Siberia, on the Chinese frontier.

³ A people of western Siberia of Finnish stock.

⁴ A nomadic people of Mongolian stock, now dwelling in certain parts of China, Siberia, and Russia.

in society by such appetities, none but the ignorant inveigh against them.

You are not insensible, most reverend Fum Hoam, what numberless trades, even among the Chinese, subsist by the harmless pride of each other. Your nose-borers, feet-swathers, tooth-stainers, eyebrow-pluckers, all want bread, should their neighbours want vanity. These vanities, however, employ much fewer hands in China than in England; and a fine gentleman or a fine lady here, dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortion from art.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber. You have undoubtedly heard of the Jewish champion, whose strength lay in his hair. One would think that the English were for placing all wisdom there. To appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and clap it like a bush on his own; the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea, to distinguish between the head and the hair.

Those whom I have been now describing affect the gravity of the lion; those I am going to describe, more resemble the pert vivacity of smaller animals. The barber, who is still master of the ceremonies, cuts their hair close to the crown; and then with a composition of meal and hog's-lard, plasters the whole in such a manner as to make it impossible to distinguish whether the patient wears a cap or a plaster; but, to make the picture more perfectly striking, conceive the tail of some beast, a greyhound's tail, or a pig's tail, for instance, appended to the back of the head, and reaching down to the place where tails in other animals are generally seen to begin; thus tailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success more from the powder on the outside of his head, than the sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as fond of powder, and tails, and hog's-lard, as he. To speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horribly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; they no way resemble the beauties of China; the Europeans have quite a different idea of beauty from us. When I reflect on

the small-footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long? I shall never forget the beauties of my native city of Nanfaw. How very broad their faces! how very short their noses! how very little their eyes! how very thin their lips! how very black their teeth! the snow on the tops of Bao is not fairer than their cheeks; and their eyebrows are small as the line by the pencil of Quamsi. Here a lady with such perfections would be frightful; Dutch and Chinese beauties, indeed, have some resemblance, but English women are entirely different; red cheeks, big eyes, and teeth of a most odious whiteness, are not only seen here, but wished for; and then they have such masculine feet, as actually serve some for walking!

Yet uncivil as nature has been, they seem resolved to outdo her in unkindness; they use white powder, blue powder, and black powder, for their hair, and a red powder for the face on some particular occasions.

They like to have the face of various colours, as among the Tartars of Koreki, frequently sticking on, with spittle, little black patches on every part of it, except on the tip of the nose, which I have never seen with a patch. You'll have a better idea of their manner of placing these spots, when I have finished the map of an English face patched up to the fashion, which shall shortly be sent to increase your curious collection of paintings, medals, and monsters.

But what surprises more than all the rest is what I have just now been credibly informed by one of this country. "Most ladies here," says he, "have two faces; one face to sleep in, and another to show in company: the first is generally reserved for the husband and family at home; the other put on to please strangers abroad: the family face is often indifferent enough, but the out-door one looks something better; this is always made at the toilet, where the looking-glass and toad-eater^s sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day."

I can't ascertain the truth of this remark; however, it is actually certain, that they wear more clothes within doors than without; and I have seen a lady, who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half naked in the streets.

The English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival, I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance: stoop to flattery,

^s Toady: an obsequious attendant.

and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure; and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which he himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations, who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from Heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor, who traces his ancestry to the moon. A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not avoid stopping in order to listen to a dialogue which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the grate of his prison, a porter, who had stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France,⁶ and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. "For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what would become of English liberty? My dear friends, Liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer."—"Ay, slaves," cries the porter, "they are all slaves, fit only to carry burdens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison (and he held the goblet in his hand), may this be my poison—but I would sooner list for a soldier."

The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out,

⁶ The Seven Years War (1756-67) in which England and France were involved as antagonists. France and England were opposed at this time in America (French and Indian War) and in India.

"It is not so much our liberties as our religion, that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the devil sink me into flames (such was the solemnity of his adjuration), if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone." So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

A VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(Letter XIII. from the same)

I am just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable names of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas, I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the gravel! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all; they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. If any monument, said he, should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands. I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding, that "I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this, continued I, be properly conducted, as it can in no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage, to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the

finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The man in black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument which appeared more beautiful than the rest; that, said I to my guide, I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or lawgiver, who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection.—It is not requisite, replied my companion smiling, to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice. *What, I suppose then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?* Gaining battles, or taking towns, replied the man in black, may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege. *This then is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?* No, sir, replied my guide, the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself. *Pray tell me then in a word, said I peevishly, what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?* Remarkable, sir! said my companion; why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster Abbey. *But, head of my Ancestors!¹ how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company, where even moderate merit would look like infamy?* I suppose, replied the man in black, the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here, fully re-

¹ Allusion to the ancestor-worship of the Chinese.

solved to keep them company now they are dead.

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, there, says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, that is the poet's corner;² there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton.³ Drayton, I replied, I never heard of him before, but I have been told of one Pope,⁴ is he there? It is time enough, replied my guide, these hundred years, he is not long dead, people have not done hating him yet. Strange, cried I, Can any be found to hate a man, whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow creatures? Yes, says my guide, they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Duncce, and Scribbler, to praise the dead, and revile the living, to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit, to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candour, and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently, the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull; every Poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies, he feels, though he seems to despise their malice; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety.

Has this been the case with every poet I see here? cried I.—Yes, with every mother's son of them, replied he, except he happened to be born a mandarine.⁵ If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple. *But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronise men of merit and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness?*

² In the south-transept of the Abbey. Cf. Irving's description in his *Sketch Book*.

³ If burial in the Abbey conveyed a true title to fame, then Prior and Drayton, minor poets, would be more famous than Shakespeare and Milton, neither of whom are buried in Westminster Abbey, though they have monuments there.

⁴ Pope was buried in the aisle of the parish church at Twickenham, not, however, on account of the hate of his contemporaries, but because he desired to rest near his parents. His epitaph, written by himself, bears this superscription: "For one that would not be buried in Westminster Abbey."

⁵ A Chinese official entitled to wear the "button." (See *Cent. Dict.*, "Button" 3.) Here applied to members of the English nobility by the Chinese traveller.

I own there are many, replied the man in black, but, alas! sir, the book-answers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table.

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate,⁶ through which my companion told me we were to pass in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand; and asked the man whether the people of England kept a *show*? whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honour? As for your questions, replied the gate-keeper, to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them, but, as for that there three-pence, I farm it from one, who rents it from another, who hires it from a third, who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live. I expected upon paying here to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise; but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax.⁸ I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without once blushing, told an hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger,⁹ of a king with a golden head,¹⁰ and twenty such pieces of absurdity; Look ye there, gentlemen, says he, pointing to an old oak chair,¹¹ there's a curiosity for ye;

in that chair the kings of England were crowned, you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow. I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone; could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case, there was no more reason for my surprise, than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi.¹² After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he, at last, desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. This armour, said he, belonged to General Monk.¹³ *Very surprising, that a general should wear armour.* And pray, added he, observe this cap, this is General Monk's cap. *Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?* That, sir, says he, I don't know, but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble. *A very small recompense truly,* said I. Not so very small, replied he, for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money. *What, more money! still more money!* Every gentleman gives something, sir. I'll give thee nothing, returned I; the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars.

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean in the occurrences of the day.

⁶ The south gate of the "ambulatory" separating the kings' tombs from the body of the church. A fee of 6d. is still charged for admission to the chapels, which are only shown to visitors by a vergier.

⁷ Pay for the right to collect it.

⁸ It was formerly customary to place in the Abbey wax effigies of famous personages buried there. These effigies had been carried on a chariot before the body at the funeral.

⁹ The figure of Elizabeth Russell, referred to by the *Spectator* (329) as "that martyr to good housewifery, who died by the prick of a needle."

¹⁰ One of the kings, whose head had been stolen toward the end of Henry VIIIth's reign.

¹¹ The famous coronation chair.

¹² Kobi or Gobi is a great desert in the northern part of China.

¹³ General Monk, the restorer of the Stuarts, is buried in Henry VIIIth's Chapel.

Edmund Burke

1729-1797

WARREN HASTINGS¹

(From *Speech in Opening the Impeachment*.
Fourth Day: Tuesday, February 19, 1788)

My Lords,² you have heard the proceedings of the court before which Gunga Govind Sing³ 10
thought proper to appeal, in consequence of the power and protection of Mr. Hastings being understood to exist after he left India, and authenticated by his last parting deed. Your Lordships will judge by that last act of 15
Mr. Hastings what the rest of his whole life was.

My Lords, I do not mean now to go further than just to remind your Lordships of this, that Mr. Hastings's government was one whole system of oppression, of robbery of individuals, 20
of destruction of the public, and of suppression of the whole system of the English government, in order to vest in the worst of the natives all the powers that could possibly exist in any government,—in order to defeat the 25
ends which all governments ought in common to have in view. Thus, my Lords, I show you at one point of view what you are to expect from him in all the rest. I have, I think, made out as clear as can be to your Lordships, so 30
far as it was necessary to go, that his bribery and peculation was not occasional, but habitual,—that it was not urged upon him at the moment, but was regular and systematic. I have shown to your Lordships the operation 35
of such a system⁴ on the revenues.

¹ In 1786 Burke presented to the House of Commons twenty-two articles charging Hastings with high crimes and misdemeanors. A year later the House appointed a committee of nine prosecutors, of which Burke was chairman. In Feb., 1788, the trial began before the House of Lords. After the charges had been read, Burke made the opening speech, from the conclusion of which this selection is taken.

² i. e., members of the House of Lords, which was sitting as a court to hear the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Governor-General of British India from 1773-85. The East-India Company, chartered by Parliament, controlled the English trade and part of the government of India, especially after the Great Mogul, or King of India, turned over to it the financial management of the three great provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa. The Company was controlled by the Court of Proprietors, or stockholders, who chose a Court of Directors. These were supposed to administer the affairs of the company, but the real power rested in the Supreme Council in India, appointed by Parliament in 1773, and later by the directors. It consisted of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and four other members. Hastings was therefore responsible to Parliament for maladministration.

³ In 1773 Hastings abolished the local Councils of Revenue in the six Provinces of Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, Madras, Bombay, Benccolen, and appointed a general committee of Revenue composed of four members. This committee was really subservient to its secretary, Gunga Govind Sing, a native who had been appointed by Hastings in spite of his reputation for dishonesty.

⁴ The operation of such a system, was to decrease the revenues by impoverishing the country.

My Lords, Mr. Hastings pleads one constant merit to justify those acts,—namely, that they produce an increase of the public revenue; and accordingly he never sells to any of those 5
wicked agents any trusts whatever in the country, that you do not hear that it will considerably tend to the increase of the revenue. Your Lordships will see, when he sold to wicked men the province of Bahar⁴ in the same way in which Debi Sing had this province of Dinagore,⁵ that consequences of a horrid and atrocious nature, though not to so great an extent, followed from it. I will just beg leave to state to your Lordships, that the kingdom of Bahar is annexed to the kingdom of Bengal; that this kingdom was governed by another Provincial Council; that he turned out that Provincial Council, and sold that government to two wicked men:⁷ one of no fortune at all, and the other of a very suspicious fortune; one a total bankrupt, the other justly excommunicated for his wickedness in his country, and then in prison for misdemeanors in a subordinate situation of government. Mr. Hastings destroyed the Council that imprisoned him; and, instead of putting one of the best and most reputable of the natives to govern it, he takes out of prison this excommunicated wretch, hated by God and man,—this bankrupt, this man of evil and desperate character, this mismanager of the public revenue in an inferior station; and, as he had given Bengal to Gunga Govind Sing,⁸ he gave this province to Rajahs Kelloram and Cullian Sing. It was done upon this principle, that they would increase and very much better the revenue. These men seemed to be as strange instruments for improving a revenue as ever were chosen, I suppose, since the world began. Perhaps their merit was giving a bribe of 40,000⁹ to Mr. Hastings. How he disposed of it I don't know. He says, "I disposed of it to the public, and it was in a case of emergency." You will see in the course of this business the falsehood of that pretence: for you will see, though the obligation is given for it as a round sum of money, that the payment was not accomplished till a year after; that therefore it

⁵ V. note 2, *supra*.

⁶ A dispute about the succession of *Rajahs* (princes) in this independent Province was submitted to Hastings, who decided in favour of a child, and assuming an unjust authority, appointed as guardian or steward one of Gunga's men named Debi Sing. The Rajah's income was at once decreased, a large revenue was paid to the East India Company and probably a still larger one to Debi Sing, for by cruel persecution he exacted a land tax of 600 per cent per annum.

⁷ Rajahs Kelloram and Cullian Sing, whom Burke mentions further on,—both friends of Gunga Govind Sing.

⁸ V. note 3, *supra*.

⁹ Hastings received many bribes, some of which he ostentatiously turned into the country's treasury.

could not answer any immediate exigence of the Company. Did it answer in an increase of the revenue? The very reverse. Those persons who had given this bribe of 40,000*l.* at the end of that year were found 80,000*l.* in debt¹⁰ to the Company. The Company always loses, when Mr. Hastings takes a bribe; and when he proposes an increase of the revenue, the Company loses often double. But I hope and trust your Lordships will consider this idea of a monstrous rise of rent, given by men of desperate fortunes and characters, to be one of the grievances instead of one of the advantages of this system.

It has been necessary to lay these facts before you (and I have stated them to your Lordships far short of their reality, partly through my infirmity, and partly on account of the odiousness of the task of going through things that disgrace human nature), that you may be enabled fully to enter into the dreadful consequences which attend a system of bribery and corruption in a Governor-General. On a transient view, bribery is rather a subject of disgust than horror,—the sordid practice of a venal, mean, and abject mind; and the effect of the crime seems to end with the act. It looks to be no more than the corrupt transfer of property from one person to another,—at worst a theft. But it will appear in a very different light, when you regard the consideration for which the bribe is given,—namely, that a Governor-General, claiming an arbitrary power¹¹ in himself, for that consideration delivers up the properties, the liberties, and the lives of an whole people to the arbitrary discretion of any wicked and rapacious person, who will be sure to make good from their blood the purchase he has paid for his power over them. It is possible that a man may pay a bribe merely to redeem himself from some evil. It is bad, however, to live under a power whose violence has no restraint except in its avarice. But no man ever paid a bribe for a power to charge and tax others, but with a view to oppress them. No man ever paid a bribe for the handling of the public money, but to speculate from it. When once such offices become thus privately and corruptly venal, the very worst men will be chosen (as Mr. Hastings has in fact constantly chosen the very worst); because none but those who do not scruple the use of any means are capable, consistently with profit, to discharge at once the rigid demands of a severe public revenue and the private bribes of a rapacious chief

¹⁰ i. e., they had not paid in the stated amount of revenue for their Province.

¹¹ Hastings claimed arbitrary power, laying stress on the great distance between India and England.

magistrate. Not only the worst men will be thus chosen, but they will be restrained by no dread whatsoever in the execution of their worst oppressions. Their protection is sure. The authority that is to restrain, to control, to punish them is previously engaged; he has his retaining fee for the support of their crimes. Mr. Hastings never dared, because he could not, arrest oppression in its course, without drying up the source of his own corrupt emolument. Mr. Hastings never dared, after the fact, to punish extortion in others, because he could not, without risking the discovery of bribery in himself. The same corruption, the same oppression, and the same impunity will reign through all the subordinate gradations.

A fair revenue may be collected without the aid of wicked, violent, and unjust instruments. But when once the line of just and legal demand is transgressed, such instruments are of absolute necessity; and they comport themselves accordingly. When we know that men must be well paid (and they ought to be well paid) for the performance of honorable duty, can we think that men will be found to commit wicked, rapacious, and oppressive acts with fidelity and disinterestedness for the sole emolument of dishonest employers? No: they must have their full share of the prey, and the greater share, as they are the nearer and more necessary instruments of the general extortion. We must not, therefore, flatter ourselves, when Mr. Hastings takes 40,000*l.* in bribes for Dinagepore and its annexed provinces,¹² that from the people nothing more than 40,000*l.* is extorted. I speak within compass, four times forty must be levied on the people; and these violent sales, fraudulent purchases, confiscations, inhuman and unutterable tortures, imprisonment, irons, whips, fines, general despair, general insurrection, the massacre of the officers of revenue by the people, the massacre of the people by the soldiery, and the total waste and destruction of the finest provinces in India, are things of course,—and all a necessary consequence involved in the very substance of Mr. Hastings's bribery.

I therefore charge Mr. Hastings with having destroyed, for private purposes, the whole system of government by the six Provincial Councils, which he had no right to destroy.

I charge him with having delegated to others¹³ that power which the act of Parliament had directed him to preserve unalienably in himself.

I charge him with having formed a com-

¹² *Edrackpore* and *Rungpore*.

¹³ i. e., to the Committee of Revenue, the power of controlling the Revenue.

mittee¹⁴ to be mere instruments and tools, at the enormous expense of 62,000*l.* per annum.

I charge him with having appointed a person their dewan¹⁵ to whom these Englishmen were to be subservient tools,—whose name, to his own knowledge, was, by the general voice of India, by the general recorded voice of the Company, by recorded official transactions, by everything that can make a man known, abhorred, and detested, stamped with infamy;¹⁰ and with giving him the whole power which he had thus separated from the Council-General, and from the Provincial Councils.

I charge him with taking bribes of Gunga Govind Sing.

I charge him with not having done that bribe-service which fidelity even in iniquity requires at the hands of the worst of men.

I charge him with having robbed those people¹⁶ of whom he took the bribes.

I charge him with having fraudulently alienated the fortunes of widows.

I charge him with having, without right, title, or purchase, taken the lands of orphans, and given them to wicked persons under him.²⁵

I charge him with having removed the natural guardians¹⁷ of a minor Rajah, and with having given that trust to a stranger, Debi Sing, whose wickedness was known to himself and all the world, and by whom the Rajah, his family, and dependants were cruelly oppressed.³⁰

I charge him with having committed to the management of Debi Sing three great provinces;¹⁸ and thereby with having wasted the country, ruined the landed interest, cruelly harassed the peasants, burnt their homes, seized their crops, tortured and degraded their persons, and destroyed the honor of the whole female race of that country.

In the name of the Commons of England,⁴⁰ I charge all this villany upon Warren Hastings, in this last moment of my application to you.

My Lords, what is it that we want here to a great act of national justice? Do we want a cause, my Lords? You have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted kingdoms.⁴⁵

Do you want a criminal, my Lords? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one? No, my Lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India. Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent.

¹⁴ *i. e.*, of revenue, consisting of four men with salaries amounting to 62,000 *£.* The cost of living in India made salaries large. Hastings received 25,000 *£.* and residences.

¹⁵ Steward, Gunga Govind Sing.

¹⁶ By renting their lands to Gunga.

¹⁷ *i. e.* his uncle and his mother.

¹⁸ Dinapore, Bdrackpore, and Rungpore.

My Lords, is it a prosecutor you want? You have before you the Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and I believe, my Lords, that the sun, in his beneficent progress round the world, does not behold a more glorious sight than that of men, separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of Nature, united by the bond of a social and moral community,—all the Commons of England resenting, as their own, the indignities and cruelties that are offered to all the people of India.

Do we want a tribunal? My Lords, no example of antiquity, nothing in the modern world, nothing in the range of human imagination, can supply us with a tribunal like this. My Lords, here we see virtually, in the mind's eye, that sacred majesty of the crown, under whose authority you sit, and whose power you exercise.²⁰ We see in that invisible authority, what we all feel in reality and life, the beneficent powers and protecting justice of his Majesty. We have here the heir-apparent¹⁹ to the crown, such as the fond wishes of the people of England wish an heir-apparent of the crown to be. We have here all the branches of the royal family, in a situation between majesty and subjection, between the sovereign and the subject,—offering a pledge in that situation for the support of the rights of the crown and the liberties of the people, both which extremities they touch. My Lords, we have a great hereditary peerage here,—those who have their own honor, the honor of their ancestors and of their posterity to guard, and who will justify, as they have always justified, that provision in the Constitution by which justice is made an hereditary office. My Lords, we have here a new nobility, who have risen and exalted themselves by various merits,—by great military services which have extended the fame of this country from the rising to the setting sun. We have those who, by various civil merits and various civil talents, have been exalted to a situation which they well deserve, and in which they will justify the favor of their sovereign, and the good opinion of their fellow-subjects, and make them rejoice to see those virtuous characters that were the other day upon a level with them now exalted above them in rank, but feeling with them in sympathy what they felt in common with them before. We have persons exalted from the practice of the law, from the place in which they administered high, though subordinate, justice, to a seat here, to enlighten with their knowledge and to strengthen with

¹⁹ The Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV

their votes those principles which have distinguished the courts in which they have presided.

My Lords, you have here also the lights of our religion, you have the bishops of England. 5 My Lords, you have that true image of the primitive Church, in its ancient form, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and the vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions. 10 You have the representatives of that religion which says that their God is love, that the very vital spirit of their institution is charity,—a religion which so much hates oppression, that, when the God whom we adore appeared 15 in human form, He did not appear in a form of greatness and majesty, but in sympathy with the lowest of the people, and thereby made it a firm and ruling principle that their welfare was the object of all government, since the 20 Person who was the Master of Nature chose to appear Himself in a subordinate situation. These are the considerations which influence them, which animate them, and will animate them, against all oppression,—knowing that 25 He who is called first among them, and first among us all, both of the flock that is fed and of those who feed it, made Himself “the servant of all.”³⁰

My Lords, these are the securities which we 30 have in all the constituent parts of the body of this House. We know them, we reckon, we rest upon them, and commit safely the interests of India and of humanity into your hands. Therefore it is with confidence, that, ordered 35 by the Commons,

I impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanors.

I impeach him in the name of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, 40 whose Parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonored.

I impeach him in the name of the people of 45 India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted, whose properties he has destroyed, whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

I impeach him in the name and by virtue 50 of those eternal laws of justice which he has violated.

I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, 55 rank, situation, and condition of life.

³⁰ I. Cor., ix., 19, referring there to St. Paul and not to Christ.

REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

(1790)

(Selections)

On the forenoon of the fourth of November last,¹ Doctor Richard Price,² a Non-Conforming minister of eminence, preached at the Dissenting meeting-house of the Old Jewry,³ to his club⁴ or society, a very extraordinary miscellaneous sermon, in which there are some good moral and religious sentiments, and not ill expressed, mixed up with a sort of porridge of various political opinions and reflections: 15 but the Revolution in France is the grand ingredient in the caldron. I consider the address transmitted⁵ by the Revolution Society to the National Assembly, through Earl Stanhope,⁶ as originating in the principles of the sermon, and as a corollary from them. . . .

Before I read that sermon, I really thought I had lived in a free country; and it was an error I cherished, because it gave me a greater liking to the country I lived in. I was, indeed, aware that a jealous, ever-waking vigilance, to guard the treasure of our liberty, not only from invasion, but from decay and corruption, was our best wisdom and our first duty. However, I considered that treasure rather as a possession to be secured than as a prize to be contended for. I did not discern how the present time came to be so very favourable to all exertions⁷ in the cause of freedom. The present time differs from any other only by the circumstance of what is doing in France. If the example of that nation is to have an influence on this, I can easily conceive why some of their proceedings which have an unpleasant aspect, and are not quite reconcilable to humanity, generosity, good faith, and justice, are palliated with so much milky good-nature towards the actors, and borne with so much heroic fortitude towards the sufferers. It is certainly not prudent to discredit the authority of an example we mean to follow.

¹ The *Reflections* were published in November, 1790, in the form of a letter to Mr. Dupont, “a young gentleman at Paris.”

² Dr. Richard Price (1723–91), wrote on political and financial questions and is best known as the author of the scheme for redeeming the national debt by a permanent sinking fund, adopted by Pitt in 1786.

³ An old London street, so called from the synagogue which stood there.

⁴ i. e., the *Revolution Society*. It was formed in commemoration of the English Revolution of 1688, but it sympathized with the French Revolution.

⁵ An address of sympathy to the National Assembly of France.

⁶ Charles Stanhope, third Earl Stanhope (1753–1816), chairman of the Revolution Society.

⁷ Dr. Price had invited the consideration of his hearers “to the favorableness of the present times to all exertions in the cause of liberty.”

But allowing this, we are led to a very natural question:—What is that cause of liberty, and what are those exertions in its favour, to which the example of France is so singularly auspicious? Is our monarchy to be annihilated, with all the laws, all the tribunals, and all the ancient corporations of the kingdom? Is every landmark of the country to be done away in favour of a geometrical and arithmetical constitution?⁸ Is the House of Lords to be voted useless? Is Episcopacy to be abolished? Are the Church lands to be sold to Jews and jobbers, or given to bribe new-invented municipal republics⁹ into a participation in sacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotic contribution or patriotic presents? Are silver shoe-buckles to be substituted in the place of the land-tax and the malt-tax, for the support of the naval strength of this kingdom. Are all orders, ranks, and distinctions to be confounded, that out of universal anarchy, joined to national bankruptcy, three or four thousand democracies¹⁰ should be formed into eighty-three, and that they may all, by some sort of unknown attractive power, be organized into one? For this end is the army to be seduced from its discipline and its fidelity, first by every kind of debauchery, and then by the terrible precedent of a donative¹¹ in the increase of pay? Are the curates to be seduced from their bishops by holding out to them the delusive hope of a dole out of the spoils of their own order? Are the citizens of London to be drawn from their allegiance by feeding them at the expense of their fellow-subjects? Is a compulsory paper currency to be substituted in the place of the legal coin of this kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered stock of public revenue to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with each other? If these are the ends and means of the Revolution Society, I admit that they are well assorted; and France may furnish them for both with precedents in point.¹² . . .

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the Dauphiness,¹³ at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more

delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning-star, full of life and splendour and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion, that elevation, and that fall! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom! little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour, and of cavaliers! I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom! The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness!

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss, I fear, will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a

⁸ On the abolition of the old provinces by the National Assembly, France was divided into eighty-three departments.

⁹ i. e., self-governing republics.

¹⁰ i. e., the English municipalities. Burke, with many others, thought that France would break up into a number of independent republics.

¹¹ A gratuity.

¹² Every one of Burke's questions is suggested by some specific proceeding or occurrence in France, and for a full understanding of this passage they should be looked up.

¹³ Marie Antoinette.

domination, vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which make power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which by a bland assimilation incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman, a woman is but an animal,—and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide,—and if the people are by any chance or in any way gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny. . . .

I flatter myself that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty, as well as any gentleman of that society, be he who he will; and perhaps I have given as good proofs of my attachment to that cause, in the whole course of my public conduct. I think I envy liberty as little as they do to any other nation. But I cannot stand forward, and give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions and human concerns on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government, (for she then had a government), without inquiry what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered? . . .

Society is, indeed, a contract.¹⁴ Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure; but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures each in their appointed place.

A LETTER TO A NOBLE LORD¹

(1795)

(Abridged)

My Lord,²—I could hardly flatter myself with the hope that so very early in the season I should have to acknowledge obligations to the Duke of Bedford and to the Earl of Lauderdale. These noble persons have lost no time

¹⁴ Burke adapts to his own use some of the ideas of Rousseau's celebrated book, *Le Contrat Social*, published in 1762. Locke and Rousseau thought that society was formed by a definite conscious act, that it was a contract or convention between governors and governed. Burke admits the principle of the contract, but makes a profounder application of it.

¹ In 1794, after the trial of Hastings, Burke prepared to retire from Parliament, being then in his sixty-fourth year. His son, Richard Burke, was nominated and elected to succeed his father, and arrangements were made to raise the elder Burke to the peerage. But in August, 1794, before he had taken his seat in the House, Richard Burke died, and Edmund Burke retired to his estate at Beaconsfield a broken man, with no further desire for the peerage, which his son's death made him regard as a hollow and useless honor. Pitt, who knew that Burke was in financial straits, had procured a pension of twenty-five hundred pounds a year for him from the Crown. The grant was opposed by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale on the ground that it was not sanctioned by Parliament. Their attack was answered by Burke in *A Letter to a Noble Lord*.

² Burke's *Letter* is addressed to *Earl Fitz-William* (1748-1833), a leader of the Irish Whigs, nephew and heir to the Marquis of Rockingham, under whom Burke had entered public life.

in conferring upon me that sort of honour which it is alone within their competence, and which it is certainly most congenial to their nature and their manners, to bestow.

To be ill spoken of, in whatever language they speak, by the zealots of the new sect³ in philosophy and politics, of which these noble persons think so charitably, and of which others think so justly, to me is no matter of uneasiness or surprise. To have incurred the displeasure of the Duke of Orleans⁴ or the Duke of Bedford, to fall under the censure of the Citizen Brissot,⁵ or of his friend the Earl of Lauderdale, I ought to consider as proofs, not the least satisfactory, that I have produced some part of the effect I proposed by my endeavours. I have laboured hard to earn what the noble Lords are generous enough to pay. Personal offence I have given them none. The part they take against me is from zeal to the cause. It is well,—it is perfectly well. I have to do homage to their justice. I have to thank the Bedfords and the Laudersdales for having so faithfully and so fully acquitted towards me whatever arrear of debt was left undischarged by the Priestleys and the Paines.⁶

In one thing I can excuse the Duke of Bedford for his attack upon me and my mortuary pension.⁷ He cannot readily comprehend the transaction he condemns. What I have obtained was the fruit of no bargain, the production of no intrigue, the result of no compromise, the effect of no solicitation. The first suggestion of it never came from me, mediately or immediately, to his Majesty or any of his ministers. It was long known that the instant my engagements would permit it, and before the heaviest of all calamities⁸ had forever condemned me to obscurity and sorrow, I had resolved on a total retreat. I had executed that design. I was entirely out of the way of serving or of hurting any statesman or any party, when the ministers so generously and so nobly carried into effect the spontaneous bounty of the crown. Both descriptions⁹ have acted as became them. When I could no longer serve them, the ministers have considered my situation. When I could no longer hurt them, the revolutionists have trampled on my infirmity. My gratitude, I trust is equal to the

manner in which the benefit was conferred. It came to me, indeed, at a time of life, and in a state of mind and body, in which no circumstance of fortune could afford me any real pleasure. But this was no fault in the royal donor, or in his ministers, who were pleased, in acknowledging the merits of an invalid servant of the public, to assuage the sorrows of a desolate old man.

It would ill become me to boast of anything. It would as ill become me, thus called upon, to depreciate the value of a long life spent with unexampled toil in the service of my country. Since the total body of my services, on account of the industry which was shown in them, and the fairness of my intentions, have obtained the acceptance of my sovereign, it would be absurd in me to range myself on the side of the Duke of Bedford and the Corresponding Society,¹⁰ or, as far as in me lies, to permit a dispute on the rate at which the authority appointed by our Constitution¹¹ to estimate such things has been pleased to set them.

Loose libels ought to be passed by in silence and contempt. By me they have been so always. I knew, that, as long as I remained in public, I should live down the calumnies of malice and the judgments of ignorance. If I happened to be now and then in the wrong, (as who is not?) like all other men, I must bear the consequence of my faults and my mistakes. The libels of the present day are just of the same stuff as the libels of the past. But they derive an importance from the rank of the persons they come from, and the gravity of the place where they were uttered. In some way or other I ought to take some notice of them. To assert myself thus traduced is not vanity or arrogance. It is a demand of justice; it is a demonstration of gratitude. If I am unworthy, the ministers are worse than prodigal. On that hypothesis, I perfectly agree with the Duke of Bedford.

For whatever I have been (I am now no more) I put myself on my country. I ought to be allowed a reasonable freedom, because I stand upon my deliverance;¹² and no culprit ought to plead in irons. Even in the utmost latitude of defensive liberty, I wish to preserve all possible decorum. Whatever it may be in the eyes of these noble persons themselves, to me their situation calls for the most profound respect. If I should happen to trespass a little, which I trust I shall not, let it always be sup-

³ The sympathisers with the French Revolution.

⁴ A wealthy French aristocrat, who joined the ranks of the Revolutionists.

⁵ Jean Pierre Brissot, a leader of the moderate Republicans in France, who were called Brissotins or Girondists. Lauderdale made his acquaintance in 1792.

⁶ The more radical sympathisers with the Revolution.

⁷ A pension given to one who is as good as dead.

⁸ The death of his only son Richard to whom Burke would have transmitted the peerage had he obtained it.

⁹ I. e., the ministers of the Crown and the members of the party whom Burke had "hurt," viz. the Revolutionists.

¹⁰ The London Corresponding Society was a political organisation with liberal principles.

¹¹ I. e., the King and the ministers; a fling at the French constitution.

¹² I. e., I insist upon my legal right to be heard; I appeal to the jury of public opinion.

posed that a confusion of characters may produce mistakes,—that, in the masquerades of the grand carnival of our age, whimsical adventures happen, odd things are said and pass off. If I should fail a single point in the high respect I owe to those illustrious persons, I cannot be supposed to mean the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale of the House of Peers, but the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale of Palace Yard,¹²—the Dukes and Earls of Brentford.¹⁴ There they are on the pavement; there they seem to come nearer to my humble level, and, virtually at least, to have waived their high privilege. . . .

His Grace thinks I have obtained too much. I answer, that my exertions, whatever they have been, were such as no hopes of pecuniary reward could possibly excite; and no pecuniary compensation can possibly reward them. Between money and such services, if done by abler men than I am, there is no common principle of comparison: they are quantities incommensurable. Money is made for the comfort and convenience of animal life. It cannot be a reward for what mere animal life must, indeed, sustain, but never can inspire. With submission to his Grace, I have not had more than sufficient.¹⁵ As to any noble use, I trust I know how to employ as well as he a much greater fortune than he possesses. In a more confined application, I certainly stand in need of every kind of relief and easement much more than he does. When I say I have not received more than I deserve, is this the language I hold to your Majesty? No! Far, very far, from it! Before that presence I claim no merit at all. Everything towards me is favour and bounty. One style to a gracious benefactor; another to a proud and insulting foe. . . .

I was not, like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator: "*Nitor in adversum*"¹⁶ is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts by imposing on the understandings of the people.

¹² The *Palace Yard* is a courtyard outside the Houses of Parliament. Hence, by Bedford and Lauderdale of the *Palace Yard*, Burke means they should be regarded simply as men, and not as members of the House of Peers; considered outside or apart from their official position.

¹⁴ In *The Rehearsal*, a farce by the Duke of Buckingham, the *Two Kings of Brentford* always appear together and do exactly the same thing. *Brentford* is a little village near London, and the ludicrous incongruity of the title has made the *two Kings of Brentford* a byword.

¹⁵ Whatever may be our theory of Edmund Burke's financial resources and speculations, it is certain that from 1769 he was never free from the annoyance of debt.

¹⁶ I make my way against adverse circumstance. Ovid, *Meta.* II, 72.

At every step of my progress in life, (for in every step was I traversed and opposed,) and at every turnpike¹⁷ I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws, and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise, no rank, no toleration even, for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand. . . .

The Duke of Bedford conceives that he is obliged to call the attention of the House of Peers to his Majesty's grant to me, which he considers as excessive¹⁸ and out of all bounds.

I know not how it has happened, but it really seems, that, whilst his Grace was meditating his well-considered censure upon me, he fell into a sort of sleep. Homer nods,¹⁹ and the Duke of Bedford may dream, and as dreams (even his golden dreams) are apt to be ill-pieced and incongruously put together, his Grace preserved his idea of reproach to me, but took the subject-matter from the crown grants to his own family. This is "the stuff of which his dreams are made."²⁰ In that way of putting things together his Grace is perfectly in the right. The grants to the House of Russell²¹ were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan²² among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst "he lies floating many a rood," he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine²³ against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray, everything of him and about him is from the throne. Is it for him to question the dispensation of the royal favour?

I really am at a loss to draw any sort of

¹⁷ Originally it meant a kind of *turn stile* made of *pikes* to obstruct the passage of an enemy, and Burke had in mind this early meaning.

¹⁸ The grant was 2500£.

¹⁹ In allusion to Horace's well-known line in the *Arte Poetica*, 359, "Sometimes even the good Homer nods."

²⁰ "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." *Tempest* IV, i, 157.

²¹ John Russell, the founder of the house of Russell, was a gentleman of the chamber to Henry VIII, and was awarded large grants out of the plunder of the monasteries.

²² "That sea-beast Leviathan, which God of all His works Created hugest that swims the ocean stream."

Par. Lost, I, 201.

²³ All that the Duke of Dedford possessed was derived from Crown grants to his ancestors; in opposing a similar grant to Burke, the Duke therefore "spouted against his origin."

parallel between the public merits of his Grace, by which he justifies the grants he holds, and these services of mine, on the favourable construction of which I have obtained what his Grace so much disapproves. In private life I have not at all the honour of acquaintance with the noble Duke; but I ought to presume, and it costs me nothing to do so, that he abundantly deserves the esteem and love of all who live with him. But as to public service, why, truly, it would not be more ridiculous for me to compare myself, in rank, in fortune, in splendid descent, in youth, strength, or figure, with the Duke of Bedford, than to make a parallel between his services and my attempts to be useful to my country. It would not be gross adulation, but uncivil irony, to say that he has any public merit of his own to keep alive the idea of the services by which his vast landed pensions were obtained. My merits, whatever they are, are original and personal: his are derivative. It is his ancestor, the original pensioner, that has laid up this inexhaustible fund of merit which makes his Grace so very delicate and exceptionable about the merit of all other grantees of the crown. Had he permitted me to remain in quiet, I should have said, "'Tis his estate: that's enough. It is his by law: what have I to do with it or its history?" He would naturally have said, on his side, "'Tis this man's fortune. He is as good now as my ancestor was two hundred and fifty years ago. I am a young man with very old pensions; he is an old man with very young pensions: that's all."

Why will his Grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the crown those prodigies of profuse donation by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals? I would willingly leave him to the Herald's College,³⁴ which the philosophy of the *sans culottes*,³⁵ (prouder by far than all the Garters, and Norroys, and Clarencieux, and Rouge Dragons, that ever pranced in a procession of what his friends call aristocrats and despots) will abolish with contumely and scorn. These historians, recorders, and blazoners of virtues and arms, differ wholly from that other description of historians, who never assign any act of politicians to a good motive. These gentle historians, on the contrary, dip their pens in nothing but the milk of human kindness. They seek no further for merit than the pre-

amble of a patent³⁷ or the inscription on a tomb. With them every man created a peer is first an hero ready-made. They judge of every man's capacity for office by the offices he has filled; and the more offices, the more ability. Every general officer with them is a Marlborough,³⁸ every statesman a Burleigh,³⁹ every judge a Murray⁴⁰ or a Yorke.⁴¹ They, who alive, were laughed at or pitied by all their acquaintance, make as good a figure as the best of them in the pages of Guillim,⁴² Edmondson, and Collins.⁴³ To these recorders so full of good-nature to the great and prosperous, I would willingly leave the first Baron Russell and Earl of Bedford, and the merits of his grants. But the aulnager,⁴⁴ the weigher, the meter of grants, will not suffer us to acquiesce in the judgment of the prince reigning at the time when they were made. They are never good to those who earn them. Well, then, since the new grantees have war made on them by the old, and that the word of the sovereign is not to be taken, let us turn our eyes to history, in which great men have always a pleasure in contemplating the heroic origin of their house.

The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants,⁴⁵ was a Mr. Russell, a person of an ancient gentleman's family, raised by being a minion of Henry the Eighth. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favourite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of those immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient demesne of the crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion, having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcass to the jackal in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favourites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was from the lay nobility.⁴⁶ The second, infinitely improving on the enormity of the first, was from

³⁷ The official document granting the privileges of nobility.

³⁸ Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), the victor of Blenheim, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet.

³⁹ Lord Burleigh (1520-98), a famous Elizabethan statesman.

⁴⁰ William Murray, Earl of Mansfield (1705-93), the founder of English commercial law.

⁴¹ Philip Yorke (1690-1764), first Earl of Hardwicke, a celebrated judge of George II's reign.

⁴² Guillim and Edmondson. Members of the College of Heralds.

⁴³ Collins compiled a *Peerage of England*.

⁴⁴ A royal officer who examined cloth and affixed a seal in guaranty of its quality or measure (*Cent. Dict*). The office existed until the reign of William III.

⁴⁵ A legal phrase, here signifying the first in the family to hold the grants.

⁴⁶ King Henry VIII gave to his favorite the manor of Amerham in Bucks, part of the estate of the Duke of Buckingham who was executed for treason in 1521.

³⁴ *Heralds College* or *College of Arms*, was instituted in the 15th century in England for the purpose of granting armorial bearings and tracing and preserving genealogies.

³⁵ Without breeches, a name given in derision to the French rabble.

³⁶ *Macbeth*, I, v. 19.

the plunder of the church. In truth, his Grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind, so different from his own.

Mine was from a mild and benevolent sovereign: his from Henry the Eighth.

Mine had not its fund in the murder of any innocent person of illustrious rank, or in the pillage of any body of unoffending men. His grants were from the aggregate and consolidated funds of judgments iniquitously legal,⁵⁷ and from possessions voluntarily surrendered by the lawful proprietors with the gibbet at their door.

The merit of the grantee whom he derives from was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *levelling* tyrant, who oppressed all descriptions of his people, but who fell with particular fury on everything that was *great and noble*. Mine has been in endeavouring to screen every man, in every class, from oppression, and particularly in defending the high and eminent, who, in the bad times of confiscating princes, confiscating chief governors, or confiscating demagogues, are the most exposed to jealousy, avarice, and envy.

The merit of the original grantee of his Grace's pensions was in giving his hand to the work, and partaking the spoil, with a prince who plundered a part of the national Church of his time and country. Mine was in defending the whole of the national Church of my own time and my own country, and the whole of the national Churches of all countries, from the principles and the examples which lead to ecclesiastical pillage, thence to a contempt of all prescriptive titles, thence to the pillage of all property, and thence to universal desolation.

The merit of the origin of his Grace's fortune was in being a favourite and chief adviser to a prince who left no liberty to their native country.⁵⁸ My endeavour was to obtain liberty for the municipal country⁵⁹ in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it. Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every right, every privilege, every franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer, and more comprehensive country; and not only to preserve those rights in this chief seat of empire, but in every nation, in every land, in every climate, language, and religion, in the vast

domain that still is under the protection, and the larger that was once under the protection, of the British crown.⁶⁰

His founder's merits were, by arts in which he served his master and made his fortune, to bring poverty, wretchedness, and depopulation on his country. Mine were under a benevolent prince, in promoting the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, of his kingdom,—in which his Majesty shows an eminent example, who even in his amusements is a patriot, and in hours of leisure an improver of his native soil.

His founder's merit was the merit of a gentleman raised by the arts of a court and the protection of a Wolsey to the eminence of a great and potent lord. His merit in that eminence was, by instigating a tyrant to injustice, to provoke a people to rebellion. My merit was to awaken the sober part of the country, that they might put themselves on their guard against any one potent lord, or any greater number of potent lords, or any combination of great leading men of any sort, if ever they should attempt to proceed in the same courses, but in the reverse order,—that is, by instigating a corrupted populace to rebellion, and, through that rebellion, introducing a tyranny yet worse than the tyranny which his Grace's ancestor supported, and of which he profited in the manner we behold in the despotism of Henry the Eighth.

The political merit of the first pensioner of his Grace's house, was that of being concerned as a councillor of state in advising, and in his person executing, the conditions of a dishonourable peace with France,⁶¹—the surrendering the fortress of Boulogne, then our outguard on the Continent. By that surrender, Calais, the key of France, and the bridle in the mouth of that power, was not many years afterwards finally lost. My merit has been in resisting the power and pride of France, under any form of its rule; but in opposing it with the greatest zeal and earnestness, when that rule appeared in the worst form it could assume,—the worst indeed which the prime cause and principle of all evil could possibly give it. It was my endeavour by every means to excite a spirit in the House, where I had the honour of a seat, for carrying on with early vigour and decision the most clearly just and necessary war that this or any nation ever carried on, in order to save my country from the iron yoke of its power, and from the more dreadful contagion of its principles,—to preserve, while

⁵⁷ Probably an allusion to the great sums of money amassed by Henry VII through the "iniquitously legal" proceedings of Empson and Dudley, and inherited by Henry VIII.

⁵⁸ Loose grammar. *They* refers to Henry VIII and Russell.

⁵⁹ Ireland. Burke evidently means a land which is a separate and distinct country, but not a sovereign nation, like England.

⁶⁰ An allusion to the loss of the American colonies.

⁶¹ Boulogne, which had been taken by Henry VIII in 1544, was restored to the French in 1550. The loss of Calais in 1558 is said to have caused Queen Mary's death.

they can be preserved, pure and untainted, the ancient, inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humour of the people of England,⁴² from the dreadful pestilence which, beginning in France, threatens to lay waste the whole moral and in a great degree the whole physical world, having done both in the focus of its most intense malignity.

The labours of his Grace's founder merited the "curses, not loud, but deep,"⁴³ of the Commons of England, on whom he and his master had effected a *complete Parliamentary Reform*,⁴⁴ by making them, in their slavery and humiliation, the true and adequate representatives of a debased, degraded, and undone people. My merits were in having had an active, though not always an ostentatious share, in every one act, without exception, of undisputed constitutional utility in my time and in having supported, on all occasions, the authority, the efficiency, and the privileges of the Commons of Great Britain. I ended my services by a recorded and fully reasoned assertion on their own journals of their constitutional rights, and a vindication of their constitutional conduct. I laboured in all things to merit their inward approbation, and (along with the assistants of the largest, the greatest, and best of my endeavours) I received their free, unbiassed, public, and solemn thanks.

Thus stands the account of the comparative merits of the crown grants which compose the Duke of Bedford's fortune as balanced against mine. In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think that none but the House of Russell are entitled to the favour of the crown? Why should he imagine that no king of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry the Eighth? Indeed, he will pardon me, he is a little mistaken: all virtue did not end in the first Earl of Bedford; all discernment did not lose its vision when his creator closed his eyes. Let him remit his rigour on the disproportion between merit and reward in others, and they will make no inquiry into the origin of his fortune. They will regard with much more satisfaction, as he will contemplate with infinitely more advantage, whatever in his pedigree has been dulcified by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations from the hard, acidulous, metallic tincture of the spring. It is little to be doubted that several of his

forefathers in that long series have degenerated into honour and virtue. Let the Duke of Bedford (I am sure he will) reject with scorn and horror, the counsels of the lecturers, those wicked panders to avarice and ambition, who would tempt him, in the troubles of his country, to seek another enormous fortune from the forfeitures of another nobility and the plunder of another Church. Let him (and I trust that yet he will) employ all the energy of his youth and all the resources of his wealth to crush rebellious principles which have no foundation in morals, and rebellious movements that have no provocation in tyranny.

Then will be forgot the rebellions which, by a doubtful priority in crime, his ancestor had provoked and extinguished. On such a conduct in the noble Duke, many of his countrymen might, and with some excuse might, give way to the enthusiasm of their gratitude, and, in the dashing style of some of the old declaimers, cry out, that, if the Fates had found no other way⁴⁵ in which they could give a Duke of Bedford and his opulence as props to a tottering world, then the butchery of the Duke of Buckingham might be tolerated; it might be regarded even with complacency, whilst in the heir of confiscation they saw the sympathizing comforter of the martyrs, who suffer under the cruel confiscation of this day, whilst they beheld with admiration his zealous protection of the virtuous and loyal nobility of France, and his manly support of his brethren, the yet standing nobility and gentry of his native land. Then his Grace's merit would be pure and new and sharp, as fresh from the mint of honour. As he pleased, he might reflect honour on his predecessors, or throw it forward on those who were to succeed him. He might be the propagator of the stock of honour, or the root of it, as he thought proper.

Had it pleased God to continue to me⁴⁶ the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family: I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste; in honour, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shown himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged

⁴² When Burke speaks of *good nature* and *good humour* he means something more substantial and inward than mere good nature and good humour, and places these attributes together with integrity and piety in the very citadel of character.

⁴³ *Macbeth*, V. iii. 27.

⁴⁴ An ironical allusion to the attacks upon his own *parliamentary reforms*, made by the Duke of Bedford.

⁴⁵ Burke has in mind a passage from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, I. 33.

⁴⁶ "But if our Fates severely have decreed No way but this for Nero to succeed, etc."

⁴⁷ The death of Burke's only son destroyed these hopes.

more to mine than to me. He would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant, wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have repurchased the bounty of the crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature, and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

But a Disposer whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behooves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours, I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice, and in some degree submit to it. But whilst I humble myself before God I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial. After some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes. But even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending, and with a considerable degree of verbal asperity, those ill-natured neighbours of his who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate.⁶⁷ Indeed, my lord, I greatly deceive myself, if in this hard season⁶⁸ I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world. This is the appetite but of a few. It is a luxury, it is a privilege, it is an indulgence for those who are at their ease. But we are all of us made to shun disgrace, as we are made to shrink from pain and poverty and disease. It is an instinct; and under the direction of reason, instinct is always in the right. I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me are gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety which he would have performed to me: I owe it to him

to show that he was not descended, as the Duke of Bedford would have it, from an unworthy parent.

The crown has considered me after long service: the crown has paid the Duke of Bedford by advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform hereafter. He is secure, and long may he be secure, in his advance, whether he performs any services or not. But let him take care how he endangers the safety of that Constitution which secures his own utility or his own insignificance, or how he discourages those who take up even puny arms to defend an order of things which, like the sun of heaven, shines alike on the useful and the worthless. His grants are engrafted in the public law of Europe, covered with the lawful hoar of innumerable ages. They are guarded by the sacred rules of prescription,⁶⁹ found in that full treasury of jurisprudence from which the jejuneness and penury of our municipal law has by degrees been enriched and strengthened. This prescription I had my share⁷⁰ (a very full share) in bringing to its perfection. The Duke of Bedford will stand as long as prescriptive law endures,—as long as the great, stable laws of property, common to us with all civilized nations, are kept in their integrity, and without the smallest intermixture of the laws, maxims, principles, or precedents of the Grand Revolution. They are secure against all changes but one. The whole Revolutionary system, institutes,⁷¹ digest, code, novels, text, gloss, comment, are not only the same, but they are the very reverse, and the reverse fundamentally, of all the laws on which civil life has hitherto been upheld in all the governments of the world. The learned professors of the Rights of Man regard prescription not as a title to bar all claim set up against old possession, but they look on prescription as itself a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than a long continued and therefore an aggravated injustice.

Such are *their* ideas, such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure

⁶⁷ In law a title or right accruing from long continued use or possession.

⁶⁸ Burke assisted in the passage of an act known as Sir George Temple's *Nullem Tempus Ad*, according to which undisputed possession of land for sixty years constituted in itself a deed to the land which even the Crown could not assail or annul.

⁶⁹ Legal terms. The collection of Roman Laws made by the Emperor Justinian (A. D. 529) and known as the *Justinian Code*, consisted of the *Pandects* or *Digest* (abstracts of legal opinions), the *Institutes* or *Laws*, and the *Novels* (supplemental ordinances or *constitutions*). The whole formed the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, or Civil Law. A gloss is a marginal note upon the text of the laws.

⁷⁰ *Psalms*, cxxvii, 3-5, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; . . . they shall speak with thine enemies in the gate."

⁷¹ It was a period of great financial depression. In 1795 Burke had published *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*.

of our Church and State, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion,—as long as the British monarchy, not more limited, than fenced by the orders of the state, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land,—so long the mounds and dikes of the low, fat, Bedford level¹² will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France. As long as our sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects, the lords and commons of this realm,—the triple cord which no man can break,—the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge¹³ of this nation,—the firm guarantees of each other's being and each other's rights,—the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity,—as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe, and we are all safe together,—the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity, the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it! and so it will be,—

*Dum domus Æneæ Capitolii immobili saxum
Accolet, imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.*¹⁴

But if the rude inroad of Gallic tumult,¹⁵ with its sophistical rights of man to falsify the ac-

¹² "The great Bedford level which comprises upward of 300,000 acres and extends into six counties, with its principle area in Cambridgeshire, is the largest tract of fen-land in the Kingdom." Duke of Bedford: *The Story of a Great Agricultural Estate*.

¹³ Among the early English each household in a titling or aggregation of ten families was responsible for the offences of the other households and bound to give satisfaction for any injury done. This system of common responsibility was known as a *frank-pledge*, or the pledge of freemen. Burke represents the Crown, the Parliament, and the People, the "triple cord which no man can break," as bound to each other by a similar pledge of mutual obligation and responsibility.

¹⁴ As long as the house of Æneas holds the immovable rock
Of the Capitol hill, and the grand old Roman continues to rule.

Æn. IX. 448, 449.

¹⁵ An allusion to the story of Brennus the Gaul, whose night attack upon the Capitol (300 B. C.) was frustrated by the cackling of the geese of Juno and the bravery of Manlius Capitolinus. After a six-months' siege the garrison bought Brennus off with one thousand pounds of gold. When the gold was being weighed, a Roman tribune, according to the story, remonstrated against the use of false weights by the Gauls. Brennus threw his sword into the scale with the exclamation *Vae victis!* (Woe to the conquered!). In Burke's pregnant allusion the English Constitution is the Capitol endangered by the Gallic invasion of revolutionary ideas. The French theories of the "Rights of Man" are the "false weights" and the Reign of Terror, with its violence and bloodshed, is the sword thrown into the scale.

count, and its sword as a make-weight to throw into the scale, shall be introduced into our city by a misguided populace, set on by proud great men, themselves blinded and intoxicated by a frantic ambition, we shall all of us perish and be overwhelmed in a common ruin. If a great storm blow on our coast, it will cast the whales on the strand, as well as the periwinkles.¹⁶ His Grace will not survive the poor grantee he despises,—no, not for a twelve-month. If the great look for safety in the services they render to this Gallic cause, it is to be foolish even above the weight of privilege allowed to wealth. If his Grace be one of these whom they endeavour to proselytize, he ought to be aware of the character of the sect whose doctrines he is invited to embrace. With them insurrection is the most sacred of revolutionary duties to the state. Ingratitude to benefactors is the first of revolutionary virtues. Ingratitude is, indeed, their four cardinal virtues¹⁷ compacted and amalgamated into one; and he will find it in everything that has happened since the commencement of the philosophic Revolution to this hour. If he pleads the merit of having performed the duty of insurrection against the order he lives in, (God forbid he ever should!) the merit of others will be to perform the duty of insurrection against him. If he pleads (again God forbid he should, and I do not suspect he will) his ingratitude to the crown for its creation of his family, others will plead their right and duty to pay him in kind. They will laugh, indeed they will laugh, at his parchment and his wax. His deeds will be drawn out with the rest of the lumber of his evidence-room, and burnt to the tune of *Ça ira*¹⁸ in the courts of Bedford¹⁹ (then Equality) House.

William Cowper

1731-1800

LETTERS FROM OLNEY

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN¹

October 31, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I wrote my last letter merely to inform you that I had nothing to

¹ Sea-snails.

¹⁶ In ancient philosophy were justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.

¹⁷ The opening words of a popular song of the French Revolution, meaning, "That will go."

¹⁸ The London mansion of the Duke of Bedford, which formerly occupied the north side of Bloomsbury Square. It was torn down by the Duke of Bedford soon after the publication of Burke's letter and Russell Square laid out on its site.

¹⁹ One of Cowper's dearest friends. He was the son of Rev. Morley and Mary Unwin, who exercised a great and helpful influence on Cowper's life.

say, in answer to which you have said nothing. I admire the propriety of your conduct, though I am a loser by it. I will endeavour to say something now, and shall hope for something in return.

I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography,² for which I thank you: with one exception, and that a swinging one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. A pensioner³ is not likely to spare a republican, and the Doctor, in order, I suppose to convince his royal patron of the sincerity of his monarchical principles, has belaboured that great poet's 15 character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of everything royal in his public, are the two colours with 20 which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him, and it is well for Milton that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been 25 charged; it is evident enough that if his biographer could have discovered more he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of 30 his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) 35 the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity, that prevails in it, 40 go for nothing. I am convinced, by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of the *Paradise* 45 *Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ, has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute; variety without end, and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor 50 has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers,

to degenerate into declamation. Oh! I could thrash his old jacket till I made his pension jingle in his pockets.

I could talk a good while longer, but I have 5 no room. Our love attends yourself, Mrs. Unwin, and Miss Shuttleworth, not forgetting the two miniature pictures at your elbow. Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON¹

May 3, 1780.

Dear Sir—You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe I am the only man alive from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my gold-leaf is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapours that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think that no small proof of your partiality to me that you will read my letters. I am not fond of long-winded metaphors; I have always observed that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so does mine. I deal much in ink, indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions but such as may prevail without the least injury to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks, and dab-chicks.² I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them; and her praise and my praise put together are fame enough for me. Oh! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon the earth could think, for one quarter of an hour, as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one would be found, from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so; for rested in, and viewed without a reference to their Author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say,

¹ John Newton (1725–1807), an English clergyman and hymn writer, who was joint-author with Cowper of the *Olney Hymns*.

² A newly hatched chick.

² Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Life of Milton*, which appeared 55 in 1779. It was one of the biographical prefaces which Johnson had agreed to furnish for an edition of the *English Poets*. These prefaces, collected and published by themselves, are known as Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.
³ In 1762 Johnson was granted a pension of £300 a year.

"The Maker of all these wonders is my friend." Their eyes have never been opened to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be till they are closed forever. They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence: visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a greenhouse which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back and walk away with; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—"This is not mine, 'tis a plaything lent me for the present; I must leave it soon."

W. C.

TO THE SAME

August 21, 1780.

The following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with. Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlour, as if one of the hares was entangled, and endeavouring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from the table when it ceased. In about five minutes a voice on the outside of the parlour door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favorite Puss¹ had made her escape. She had gnawed in sunder the strings of the lattice-work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air. From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me, that having seen her, just after she dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimble, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account. That soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt of men, women, children, and dogs; and that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed between himself and Puss—she ran right through the town, and down the lane

¹ i. e., one of his pet hares.

that leads to Dropshort—a little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tanyard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's—Sturge's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way. There she encountered the tan-pits full of water; and while she was struggling out of one pit and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket, to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe we did not grudge a farthing of it. The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws, and in one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I cannot express better than in the words of Terence, a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.*²

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE SAME (EXTRACT)

June 12, 1793.

As to myself, I have always the same song to sing—well in body, but sick in spirit: sick nigh unto death.

"Seasons return, but not to me returns
God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
Or joy, or hope; or Jesus' face divine;
But cloud,"¹ etc.

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tune, and accompany him through the whole passage, on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his; but time fails me.

Edward Gibbon

1737-1794

GIBBON IS INSPIRED TO WRITE
HIS HISTORY(From *Autobiography*)

June, 1765.

The pilgrimage to Italy, which I now accomplished, had long been the object of my curious

¹ "You think nothing which concerns me unimportant to you." A modification of the oft-quoted passage in Terence: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto* (I am a man: I consider nothing alien to me which concerns humanity).

² A significant paraphrase of *Par. Lost*, III. 41-45. V. p. 223, *supra*.

devotion. The passage of Mount Cenis, the regular streets of Turin, the Gothic cathedral of Milan, the scenery of the Boromean Islands, the marble palaces of Genoa, the beauties of Florence, the wonders of Rome, the curiosities of Naples, the galleries of Bologna, the singular aspect of Venice, the amphitheatre of Verona, and the Palladian architecture of Vicenza, are still present to my imagination. I read the Tuscan writers on the banks of the Arno; but my conversation was with the dead rather than the living, and the whole College of Cardinals was of less value in my eyes than the transfiguration of Raphael, the Apollo of the Coliseum. It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind. After Rome has kindled and satisfied the enthusiasm of the Classic pilgrim, his curiosity for all meaner objects insensibly subsides.

BOETHIUS

(From *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776-88)

The senator Boethius¹ is the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman. As a wealthy orphan, he inherited the patrimony and honors of the Anician family, a name ambitiously assumed by the kings and emperors of the age; and the appellation of Manlius asserted his genuine or fabulous descent from a race of consuls and dictators, who had repulsed the Gauls from the Capitol, and sacrificed their sons to the discipline of the republic. In the youth of Boethius, the studies of Rome were not totally abandoned; a Virgil is now extant, corrected by the hand of a consul; and the professors of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence, were maintained in their privileges and pensions by the liberality of the Goths. But the erudition of the Latin language was insufficient to satiate his ardent curiosity; and Boethius is said to have employed eighteen laborious years in the schools of Athens, which were supported by the zeal, the learning and the diligence of Proclus and his disciples. The reason and piety of their Roman pupil were fortunately saved from the

contagion of mystery and magic, which polluted the groves of the academy; but he imbibed the spirit, and imitated the method of his dead and living masters, who attempted to reconcile the strong and subtile sense of Aristotle with the devout contemplation and sublime fancy of Plato. After his return to Rome, and his marriage with the daughter of his friend, the patrician Symmachus, Boethius still continued, in a palace of ivory and marble, to prosecute the same studies. The church was edified by his profound defence of the orthodox creed against the Arian, the Eutychian, and the Nestorian heresies; and the Catholic unity was explained or exposed in a formal treatise by the *indifference* of three distinct though consubstantial persons. For the benefit of his Latin readers, his genius submitted to teach the first element of the arts and sciences of Greece. The geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry, were translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the Roman senator. And he alone was esteemed capable of describing the wonders of art, a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a sphere which represented the motions of the planets. From these abstruse speculations, Boethius stooped, or to speak more truly he rose to the social duties of public and private life; the indigent were relieved by his liberality; and his eloquence, which flattery might compare to the voice of Demosthenes or Cicero, was uniformly exerted in the cause of innocence and humanity. Such conspicuous merit was felt and rewarded by a discerning prince; the dignity of Boethius was adorned with the titles of consul and patrician, and his talents were usefully employed in the important station of master of the offices. Notwithstanding the equal claims of the East and West, his two sons were created, in their tender youth, the consuls of the same year. On the memorable day of their inauguration, they proceeded in solemn pomp from their palace to the forum amidst the applause of the senate and people; and their joyful father, the true consul of Rome, after pronouncing an oration in the praise of his royal benefactor, distributed a triumphal largess in the games of the circus. Prosperous in his fame and fortunes, in his public honors and private alliances, in the cultivation of science and the consciousness of virtue, Boethius might have been styled happy, if that precarious epithet could be safely applied before the last term of the life of man.

¹ *Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius* (c. 475-524 A.D.), author of *The Consolation of Philosophy*. He was consul in 510, and was put to death on a charge of treason by Theodoric the Ostrogoth, who ruled over the kingdom of the East-Goths (which included Italy), 493-527 A.D.

A philosopher, liberal of his wealth and parsimonious of his time, might be insensible to the common allurements of ambition, the thirst of gold and employment. And some credit may be due to the asseveration of Boethius, that he had reluctantly obeyed the divine Plato, who enjoins every virtuous citizen to rescue the state from the usurpation of vice and ignorance. For the integrity of his public conduct he appeals to the memory of his country. His authority had restrained the pride and oppression of the royal officers, and his eloquence had delivered Paulinus from the dogs of the palace.² He had always pitied, and often relieved, the distress of the provincials, whose fortunes were exhausted by public and private rapine; and Boethius alone had courage to oppose the tyranny of the Barbarians, elated by conquest, excited by avarice, and, as he complains, encouraged by impunity. In these honorable contests his spirit soared above the consideration of danger, and perhaps of prudence; and we may learn from the example of Cato, that a character of pure and inflexible virtue is the most apt to be misled by prejudice, to be heated by enthusiasm, and to confound private enmities with public justice. The disciple of Plato might exaggerate the infirmities of nature, and the imperfections of society; and the mildest form of a Gothic kingdom, even the weight of allegiance and gratitude, must be insupportable to the free spirit of a Roman patriot. But the favor and fidelity of Boethius declined in just proportion with the public happiness; and an unworthy colleague was imposed, to divide and control the power of the master of the offices. In the last gloomy season of Theodoric, he indignantly felt that he was a slave; but as his master had only power over his life, he stood without arms and without fear against the face of an angry Barbarian, who had been provoked to believe that the safety of the senate was incompatible with his own. The senator Albinus³ was accused and already convicted on the presumption of *hoping*, as it was said, the liberty of Rome. "If Albinus be criminal," exclaimed the orator, "the senate and myself are all guilty of the same crime. If we are innocent, Albinus is equally entitled to the protection of the laws." These laws might not have punished the simple and barren wish

of an unattainable blessing; but they would have shown less indulgence to the rash confession of Boethius, that had he known of a conspiracy, the tyrant never should. The advocate of Albinus was soon involved in the danger and perhaps the guilt of his client; their signature (which they denied as a forgery) was affixed to the original address, inviting the emperor⁴ to deliver Italy from the Goths; and three witnesses of honorable rank, perhaps of infamous reputation, attested the treasonable designs of the Roman patrician. Yet his innocence must be presumed, since he was deprived by Theodoric of the means of justification, and rigorously confined in the tower of Pavia, while the senate, at the distance of five hundred miles, pronounced a sentence of confiscation and death against the most illustrious of its members. At the command of the Barbarians, the occult science of a philosopher was stigmatized with the names of sacrilege and magic. A devout and dutiful attachment to the senate was condemned as criminal by the trembling voices of the senators themselves; and their ingratitude deserved the wish or prediction of Boethius, that, after him none should be found guilty of the same offence.

While Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or the stroke of death, he composed, in the tower of Pavia, the *Consolation of Philosophy*; a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of the author. The celestial guide, whom he had so long invoked at Rome and Athens, now condescended to illumine his dungeon, to revive his courage, and to pour into his wounds her salutary balm. She taught him to compare his long prosperity and his recent distress, and to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of fortune. Reason had informed him of the precarious condition of her gifts; experience had satisfied him of their real value; he had enjoyed them without guilt; he might resign them without a sigh, and calmly disdain the impotent malice of his enemies, who had left him happiness, since they had left him virtue. From the earth, Boethius ascended to heaven in search of the Supreme Good; explored the metaphysical labyrinth of chance and destiny, of prescience and free will, of time and eternity; and generously attempted to reconcile the perfect attributes of the Deity with the apparent disorders of his moral and physical government. Such topics of consolation so obvious, so vague, or so abstruse, are ineffectual

² The attacks of Boethius on corruption and misgovernment, aroused the enmity of the evil men who finally ruined him. His protection of the wealthy Paulinus from the avarice and rapacity of certain men at Court was calculated to provoke these *palatine canes* (dogs of the palace), as Boethius calls them, to measures of revenge.

³ His defence of Albinus was one of the chief causes of the downfall of Boethius. By saving Albinus from punishment, Boethius incurred the hatred of a certain informer named Cyprinus.

⁴ Justin I, Emperor of the Byzantine, or Eastern, Empire, 518-527.

to subdue the feelings of human nature. Yet the sense of misfortune may be diverted by the labor of thought; and the sage who could artfully combine in the same work the various riches of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, must already have possessed the intrepid calmness which he affected to seek. Suspense, the worst of evils, was at length determined by the ministers of death, who executed, and perhaps exceeded, the inhuman mandate of Theodoric. A strong cord was fastened round the head of Boethius, and forcibly tightened, till his eyes almost started from their sockets; and some mercy may be discovered in the milder torture of beating him with clubs till he expired. But his genius survived to diffuse a ray of knowledge over the darkest ages of the Latin world; the writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of the English kings,⁵ and the third emperor by the name of Otho removed to a more honorable tomb the bones of a Catholic saint,⁶ who from his Arian persecutors, had acquired the honors of martyrdom, and the fame of miracles.

THE CAUSES OF THE RUIN OF ROME

(From the same)

After a diligent inquiry, I can discern four principal causes of the ruin of Rome, which continued to operate in a period of more than a thousand years. I. The injuries of time and nature. II. The hostile attacks of the Barbarians and Christians. III. The use and abuse of the materials. And, IV. The domestic quarrels of the Romans. I. The art of man is able to construct monuments far more permanent than the narrow span of his own existence; yet these monuments like himself, are perishable and frail; and in the boundless annals of time, his life and his labors must equally be measured as a fleeting moment. Of a simple and solid edifice, it is not easy, however, to circumscribe the duration. As the wonders of ancient days, the pyramids, attracted the curiosity of the ancients; a hundred generations, the leaves of autumn, have dropped into the grave; and after the fall of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies, the Cæsars and caliphs, the same pyramids stand erect and

unshaken above the floods of the Nile. A complex figure of various and minute parts is more accessible to injury and decay; and the silent lapse of time is often accelerated by hurricanes and earthquakes, by fires and inundations. The air and earth have doubtless been shaken; and the lofty turrets of Rome have tottered from their foundations; but the Seven Hills do not appear to be placed on the great cavities of the globe; nor has the city, in any age, been exposed to the convulsions of nature, which, in the climate of Antioch, Lisbon, or Lima,¹ have crumbled in a few moments the works of ages into dust. Fire is the most powerful agent of life and death: the rapid mischief may be kindled and propagated by the industry or negligence of mankind; and every period of the Roman annals is marked by the repetition of similar calamities. A memorable conflagration, the guilt or misfortune of Nero's reign, continued, though with unequal fury, either six, or nine days. Innumerable buildings, crowded in close and crooked streets, supplied perpetual fuel for the flames; and when they ceased, four only of the fourteen regions were left entire; three were totally destroyed, and seven were deformed by the relics of smoking and lacerated edifices. In the full meridian of empire, the metropolis arose with fresh beauty from her ashes, yet the memory of the old deplored their irreparable losses, the arts of Greece, the trophies of victory, the monuments of primitive or fabulous antiquity. In the days of distress and anarchy, every wound is mortal, every fall irretrievable; nor can the damage be restored either by the public care of government, or the activity of private interest. Yet two causes may be alleged, which render the calamity of fire more destructive to a flourishing than a decayed city. 1. The more combustible materials of brick, timber, and metals, are first melted or consumed; but the flames may play without injury or effect on the naked walls, and massy arches, that have been despoiled of their ornaments. 2. It is among the common and plebeian habitations, that a mischievous spark is most easily blown to a conflagration; but as soon as they are devoured, the greater edifices, which have resisted or escaped, are left as so many islands in a state of solitude and safety. From her situation, Rome is exposed to the danger of frequent inundations. Without excepting the Tyber, the rivers that descend from either side of the Apennine have a short and irregular course; a shallow stream in the summer heats; an impetuous torrent, when it

⁵ Alfred, The Great. V. p. 21, *supra*.

⁶ "After his death Boethius came to be regarded by the church of Rome as a martyr for the orthodox faith, and was canonised as St. Severinus. Many works on doctrinal theology have been attributed to him, but modern scholars are not agreed as to his authorship of them, nor even as to his having been a Christian at all." W. J. Sedgefield.

¹ Antioch has suffered repeatedly from earthquakes; Lisbon was nearly destroyed by earthquake in 1755, some twenty years before Gibbon began to publish his *History*; Lima suffered severely from an earthquake in 1746.

is swelled in the spring or winter, by the fall of rain, and the melting of the snows. When the current is repelled from the sea by adverse winds, when the ordinary bed is inadequate to the weight of waters, they rise above the banks, and overspread, without limits or control, the plains and cities of the adjacent country. Soon after the triumph of the first Punic war, the Tyber was increased by unusual rains; and the inundation, surpassing all former measure of time and place, destroyed all the buildings that were situate below the hills of Rome. According to the variety of ground, the same mischief was produced by different means; and the edifices were either swept away by the sudden impulse, or dissolved and undermined by the long continuance, of the flood. Under the reign of Augustus, the same calamity was renewed, the lawless river overturned the palaces and temples on its banks; and, after the labors of the emperor in cleansing and widening the bed that was encumbered with ruins, the vigilance of his successors was exercised by similar dangers and designs. The project of diverting into new channels the Tyber itself, or some of the dependent streams, was long opposed by superstition and local interests; nor did the use compensate the toil and cost of the tardy and imperfect execution. The servitude of rivers is the noblest and most important victory which man has obtained over the licentiousness of nature; and if such were the ravages of the Tyber under a firm and active government what could oppose, or who can enumerate, the injuries of the city, after the fall of the Western empire? A remedy was at length produced by the evil itself: the accumulation of rubbish and earth, that has been washed down from the hills, is supposed to have elevated the plain of Rome, fourteen or fifteen feet, perhaps, above the ancient level; and the modern city is less accessible to the attacks of the river. . . .

IV. I have reserved for the last, the most potent and forcible cause of destruction, the domestic hostilities of the Romans themselves. Under the dominion of the Greek and French emperors, the peace of the city was disturbed by accidental, though frequent, seditions: it is from the decline of the latter, from the beginning of the tenth century, that we may date the licentiousness of private war, which violated with impunity the laws of the Code and the Gospel, without respecting the majesty of the absent sovereign, or the presence and person of the vicar of Christ. In a dark period of five hundred years, Rome was perpetually afflicted by the sanguinary quarrels of the nobles and the people, the Guelphs and

the Ghibelines,³ the Colonna and Ursini;⁴ and if much has escaped the knowledge, and much is unworthy of the notice, of history, I have exposed in the two preceding chapters the causes and effects of the public disorders. At such a time, when every quarrel was decided by the sword, and none could trust their lives or properties to the impotence of law, the powerful citizens were armed for safety, or offence, against the domestic enemies whom they feared or hated. Except Venice alone, the same dangers and designs were common to all the free republics of Italy; and the nobles usurped the prerogative of fortifying their houses, and erecting strong towers, that were capable of resisting a sudden attack. The cities were filled with these hostile edifices, and the example of Lucca, which contained three hundred towers; her law, which confined their height to the measure of fourscore feet, may be extended with suitable latitude to the more opulent and populous states. The first step of the senator Brancalone⁵ in the establishment of peace and justice, was to demolish (as we have already seen) one hundred and forty of the towers of Rome; and, in the last days of anarchy and discord, as late as the reign of Martin the Fifth,⁶ forty-four still stood in one of the thirteen or fourteen regions of the city. To this mischievous purpose the remains of antiquity were most readily adapted: the temples and arches afforded a broad and solid basis for the new structures of brick and stone; and we can name the modern towers that were raised on the triumphal monuments of Julius Cæsar, Titus, and the Antonines. With some slight alterations, a theatre, an amphitheatre, a mausoleum, was transformed into a strong and spacious citadel. I need not repeat that the mole of Adrian has assumed the title and form of the Castle of St. Angelo, the Septizonium⁷ of Severus was capable of standing against a royal army; the sepulcher of Metella has sunk under its outworks; the theatres of Pompey and Marcellus were occupied by the Savelli and Ursini families; and the rough fortress has been gradually softened to the splendor and elegance of an Italian

³ The names of two great contending parties in Germany and Italy during the Middle Ages. The *Guelphs* were the popular party, and were on the side of the Pope; the *Ghibelines* were the aristocratic and imperial party, and were on the side of the Emperor.

⁴ Two noble and influential Italian families whose long rivalry is closely related to Italian history. The *Colonna* were identified with the *Ghibeline* party, while the *Ursini* were allied with the *Guelphs*.

⁵ *Dandalo Brancalone* was elected *podestà*, or senator, of Rome in 1253. He repressed the nobles, and forced Pope Innocent IV to recognise the popular power.

⁶ Pope from 1417-1431.

⁷ The *Septizonium* (Lat. *septem-sona*), the name given to the monument of the Emperor Septimius Severus.

palace. Even the churches were encompassed with arms and bulwarks, and the military engines on the roof of St. Peter's were the terror of the Vatican and the scandal of the Christian world. Whatever is fortified will be attacked; and whatever is attacked, may be destroyed. Could the Romans have wrested from the Popes the castle of St. Angelo, they had resolved by a public decree to annihilate that monument of servitude. Every building of defense was exposed to a siege; and in every siege the arts and engines of destruction were laboriously employed. After the death of Nicholas the Fourth,⁷ Rome, without a sovereign, or a senate, was abandoned six months to the fury of civil war. "The houses," says a cardinal and poet of the times, "were crushed by the weight and velocity of enormous stones; the walls were perforated by the strokes of the battering-ram; the towers were involved in fire and smoke; and the assailants were stimulated by rapine and revenge." The work was consummated by the tyranny of the laws; and the factions of Italy alternately exercised a blind and thoughtless vengeance on their adversaries, whose houses and castles they razed to the ground. In comparing the *days* of foreign, with the *ages* of domestic hostility, we must pronounce, that the latter have been far more ruinous to the city; and our opinion is confirmed by the evidence of Petrarch. "Behold," says the laureate, "the relics of Rome, the image of her pristine greatness! neither time nor the Barbarian can boast the merit of this stupendous destruction; it was perpetrated by her own citizens, by the most illustrious of her sons; and your ancestors (he writes to a noble Annibaldi) have done with battering ram what the Punic hero could not accomplish with the sword. The influence of the two last principles of decay must in some degree be multiplied by each other; since the houses and towers, which were subverted by civil war, required a new and perpetual supply from the monuments of antiquity.

These general observations may be separately applied to the amphitheatre of Titus, which has obtained the name of the Coliseum, either from its magnitude, or from Nero's colossal statue; an edifice, had it been left to time and nature, which might perhaps have claimed an eternal duration. The curious antiquaries, who have computed the numbers and seats, are disposed to believe, that above the upper row of stone steps the amphitheatre was encircled and elevated with several stages of wooden galleries, which were repeatedly consumed by fire, and restored by the emperors.

⁷ Pope Nicholas IV, died 1292.

Whatever was precious, or portable, or profane, the statues of gods and heroes, and the costly ornaments of sculpture which were cast in brass, or overspread with leaves of silver and gold, became the first prey of conquest or fanaticism, of the avarice of the Barbarians or the Christians. In the massy stones of the Coliseum, many holes are discerned; and the two most probable conjectures represent the various accidents of its decay. These stones were connected by solid links of brass or iron, nor had the eye of rapine overlooked the value of the baser metals; the vacant space was converted into a fair or market; the artisans of the Coliseum are mentioned in an ancient survey; and the chasms were perforated or enlarged to receive the poles that supported the shops or tents of the mechanic trades. Reduced to its naked majesty, the Flavian amphitheatre was contemplated with awe and admiration by the pilgrims of the North; and their rude enthusiasm broke forth in a sublime proverbial expression which is recorded in the eighth century, in the fragments of the venerable Bede: "As long as the Coliseum stands, Rome shall stand; when the Coliseum falls, Rome will fall; when Rome falls, the world will fall." In the modern system of war, a situation commanded by three hills would not be chosen for a fortress, but the strength of the walls and arches could resist the engines of assault; a numerous garrison might be lodged in the enclosure; and while one faction occupied the Vatican and the Capitol, the other was entrenched in the lateran and the Coliseum. . .

The use of the amphitheatre was a rare, perhaps a singular, festival; the demand for the materials was a daily and continual want which the citizens could gratify without restraint or remorse. In the fourteenth century, a scandalous act of concord secured to both factions the privilege of extracting stones from the free and common quarry of the Coliseum; and Poggius laments, that the greater part of these stones had been burnt to lime by the folly of the Romans. To check this abuse, and to check the nocturnal crimes that might be perpetrated in the vast and gloomy recess, Eugenius the Fourth⁸ surrounded it with a wall; and, by a charter long extant, granted both the ground and edifice to the monks of an adjacent convent. After his death, the wall was overthrown in a tumult of the people; and had they themselves respected the noblest monument of their fathers, they might have justified the resolve that it should never be degraded to private property. The inside was damaged: but in the middle of the sixteenth

⁸ Pope, 1431-1447.

century, an era of taste and learning, the exterior circumference of one thousand six hundred and twelve feet was still entire and inviolate; a triple elevation of fourscore arches, which rose to the height of one hundred and eight feet. Of the present ruin, the nephews of Paul the third⁹ are the guilty agents; and every traveller who views the Farnese palace may curse the sacrilege and luxury of these upstart princes. A similar reproach is applied to the Barberini; and the repetition of injury might be dreaded from every reign, till the Coliseum was placed under the safeguard of religion by the most liberal of the pontiffs, Benedict the Fourteenth,¹⁰ who consecrated a spot which persecution and fable had stained with the blood of so many Christian martyrs.

When Petrarch first gratified his eyes with a view of those monuments, whose scattered fragments so far surpass the most eloquent descriptions, he was astonished at the supine indifference of the Romans themselves; he was humbled rather than elated by the discovery, that, except his friend Rienzi,¹¹ and one of the Colonna, a stranger of the Rhone, was more conversant with the antiquities than the nobles and natives of the metropolis. . . .

But the clouds of barbarism were gradually dispelled; and the peaceful authority of Martin the Fifth and his successors restored the ornaments of the city as well as the order of the ecclesiastical state. The improvements of Rome, since the fifteenth century, have not been the spontaneous produce of freedom and industry. The first and most natural root of a great city is the labor and populousness of the adjacent country, which supplies the materials of subsistence, of manufactures, and of foreign trade. But the greater part of the Campagna of Rome is reduced to a dreary and desolate wilderness: the overgrown estates of the princes and the clergy are cultivated by the lazy hands of indigent and hopeless vassals; and the scanty harvests are confined or exported for the benefit of a monopoly. A second and more artificial cause of the growth of a metropolis is the residence of a monarch, the expense of a luxurious court, and the tributes of dependent provinces. . . . The ecclesiastical revenues were more decently employed by the popes themselves in the pomp of the Catholic worship; but it is superfluous to enumerate their pious foundations of altars, chapels and churches, since these lesser stars

are eclipsed by the sun of the Vatican, by the dome of St. Peter, the most glorious structure that ever has been applied to the use of religion. The fame of Julius the Second, Leo the Tenth, and Sixtus the Fifth, is accompanied by the superior merit of Bramante and Fontana, of Raphael and Michael Angelo; and the same munificence which had been displayed in palaces and temples was directed with equal zeal to revive and emulate the labors of antiquity. Prostrate obelisks were raised from the ground, and erected in the most conspicuous places, of the eleven aqueducts of the Cæsars and consuls, three were restored; the artificial rivers were conducted over a long series of old, or of new arches, to discharge into marble basins a flood of salubrious and refreshing waters; and the spectator, impatient to ascend the steps of St. Peter's, is detained by a column of Egyptian granite, which rises between two lofty and perpetual fountains, to the height of one hundred and twenty feet. The map, the description, the monuments of ancient Rome, have been elucidated by the diligence of the antiquarian and the student and the footsteps of heroes, the relics, not of superstition, but of empire, are devoutly visited by a new race of pilgrims from the remote, and once savage, countries of the North.

Of these pilgrims, and of every reader, the attention will be excited by a History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; the greatest, perhaps, and most awful scene in the history of mankind. The various causes and progressive effects are connected with many of the events most interesting in human annals: the artful policy of the Cæsars, who long maintained the name and image of a free Republic; the disorders of military despotism; the rise, establishment, and sects of Christianity; the foundation of Constantinople; the division of the monarchy; the invasions and settlements of the Barbarians of Germany and Scythia; the institutions of the civil law; the character and religion of Mahomet; the temporal sovereignty of the popes; the restoration and decay of the Western empire of Charlemagne; the crusades of the Latins in the East; the conquests of the Saracens and Turks; the ruin of the Greek empire; the State and revolutions of Rome in the middle age. The historian may applaud the importance and variety of his subject; but while he is conscious of his own imperfections, he must often accuse the deficiency of his materials. It was among the ruins of the Capitol that I first conceived the idea of a work which has amused and exercised near twenty years of my life, and which, however inadequate to my own wishes, I

⁹ Alessandro Farnese, Pope, 1534-1549.

¹⁰ Benedict XIV, who was Pope from 1740-58, was noted for his learning, and for his encouragement of literature, science, and art. He rebuilt churches, and was interested in the architectural ruins of ancient Rome.

¹¹ Cola di Rienzi (c. 1313-54), the Italian patriot, lived and died in Rome, his native city.

finally deliver to the curiosity and candor of the public.

Lausanne, June 27, 1787.

James Boswell

1740-1795

BOSWELL'S FIRST MEETING WITH DR. JOHNSON

(From *Life of Johnson*, 1791)

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called; and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet,¹ who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan² was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate on Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his

pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of Government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety. . . .

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character: and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after

¹ Samuel Derrick (1721-1789), a minor poet and writer. He edited the works of Dryden, but he is best known by his *Letters*, which were commended by Johnson.

² Thomas Sheridan (1721-1788), the second of his name to gain distinction, was an Irish actor, elocutionist, and author. He wrote a life of *Swift*, and an English Dictionary, was at one time manager of a theater in Dublin, and in 1745 acted with Garrick. He was the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist.

having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, ~~in the~~ ^{in the} manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." "From Scotland," cried Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson (said I), I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down I felt myself not a little embarrassed and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done; and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of the animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which

I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation. . . .

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, . . . I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1 Inner Temple Lane, and I entered with an impression given me by the Rev. Dr. Blair* of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den;" an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. . . . He received me very courteously; but it must be confessed that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir (said I), I am afraid that I intrude upon you.

* *Hugh Blair* (1718–1800), minister of the High Church, Edinburgh, professor of rhetoric and belles lettres in the University of Edinburgh, and author of *Lectures on Rhetoric*, a once famous book.

It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." . . . When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home until two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(From the same)

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent, and, I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he disputed his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of

Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time¹ I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that one Dr. Goldsmith was the author of *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, and of *The Citizen of the World*,² a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer whatever literary acquisitions he made. "*Nihil quod teligit non ornavit.*"³ His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but in truth this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*,⁴ and from vanity and eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini*⁵ in London, when those that sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinised; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of

¹ i. e., 1763.

² The *Inquiry* was published in 1759; Goldsmith also published *The Bee*, a collection of essays, in the same year. For *The Citizen of the World*, v. p. 397, *supra*.

³ He touched nothing that he did not adorn: from Dr. Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey.

⁴ A giddy-goose, a rattle-pate.

⁵ Puppets. (Ital. *fantoccino*, a little doll, or puppet).

imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham, a fiction so easily detected, that it was wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, sir (said he), a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the *Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi⁶ and Sir John Hawkins⁷ have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

⁶ Hester Lynch Salisbury (1741–1821), a friend of Johnson, who met her in 1764, shortly after her marriage to Henry Thrale. In 1784 she married an Italian musician named Piozzi. She published a book of anecdotes and correspondence relating to Johnson.

⁷ One of Johnson's executors, and author of a life of Johnson.

POETS OF THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL

Thomas Gray

1716–1771

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

(1747)

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her HENRY'S¹ holy Shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of WINDSOR'S heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way:

Ah, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,
Ah, fields below'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, father THAMES, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthrall?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmur'ing labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint,
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

¹ Henry VI, who founded Eton College in 1440.

Alas, regardless of their doom
 The little victims play!
 No sense have they of ills to come,
 Nor care beyond to-day:
 Yet see how all around 'em wait
 The Ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!
 Ah, show them where in ambush stand
 To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
 Ah, tell them, they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that sculks behind;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visag'd comfortless Despair,
 And sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.
 The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow:
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,
 And moody Madness laughing wild
 Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
 A grisly troop are seen,
 The painful family of Death,
 More hideous than their Queen:
 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
 That every labouring sinew strains,
 Those in the deeper vitals rage:
 Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,
 And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings: all are men,
 Condemn'd alike to groan,
 The tender for another's pain;
 Th' unfeeling for his own.
 Yet, ah! why should they know their fate? 95
 Since sorrow never comes too late,
 And happiness too swiftly flies,
 Thought would destroy their paradise.
 No more; where ignorance is bliss,
 'Tis folly to be wise. 100

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST¹

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:

¹ A fellow-student of Gray's at Eton, and one of his most intimate friends. West died at the age of 25, June 1st, 1742, and the sonnet on his death was written in the following August.

These ears, alas! for other notes repine; 5
 A different object do these eyes require:
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer, 55
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men: 10
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
 To warm their little loves the birds complain:
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear, 60
 And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

A Democratic Poem ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

London (1751)
 The curfew tolls the knell of parting¹ day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, 5
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
 The moping owl does to the moon complain¹⁰
 Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade
 Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
 Each in his narrow cell forever laid 15
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn, 20
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.²

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke:
 How jocund did they drive their team afield!
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

¹ Here = dying.

² This is to be understood literally: it does not mean the grave.

also with the people.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour. 35
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted
vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of
praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have
sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage, 51
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless
breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's
blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes con-
fin'd;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride 71
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Call forth, summon.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd
muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woful-wan; like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless
love.

"One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree; 110
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

"The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw
him borne:

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the
lay, 115
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged
thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
Fair Science⁴ frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a
friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

¹ i. e., Gray himself. ² Kind, or gracious, learning.

THE BARD¹] (From *Odes*, 1757)

I. 1

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
 Confusion on thy banners wait,
 Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
 They mock the air with idle state.
 Helm, nor Hauberk's twisted mail,
 Nor even thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
 From Cambria's² curse, from Cambria's
 tears!"

Such were the sounds, that o'er the created
 pride

Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side 11
 He wound with toilsome march his long
 array.

Stout Glo'ster³ stood aghast in speechless
 trance:

"To arms!" cried Mortimer,⁴ and couch'd his
 quiv'ring lance.

I. 2

On a rock, whose haughty brow 15
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
 (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
 Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled
 air), 20

And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert
 cave,

Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
 O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they
 wave, 25

Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs
 breathe;

Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 To high-born Hoel's⁵ harp, or soft Llewellyn's
 lay."

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
 That hush'd the stormy main: 30
 Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
 Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred, whose magic song
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd
 head.

On dreary Arvon's shore⁶ they lie, 35

¹ "This ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales
 that Edward I, when he completed the conquest of that
 country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be
 put to death." Gray.

² Cambria, the ancient name of Wales.

³ Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who had con-
 ducted the war in South Wales before joining forces with
 the king.

⁴ Edward de Mortimer, who co-operated with the king
 in North Wales.

⁵ Probably *Hoel ab Owain*, a bard of the latter 12th
 century. For many of the other bards, Gray appears
 simply to have selected appropriate national names,
 without having any specific Welsh poet in mind.

⁶ i. e., on the coast of Carnarvonshire (Arvon = Carnar-
 von = Caer-yn-Arvon, the camp in Arvon).

Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
 The famish'd Eagle screams, and passes by.
 Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 Dear, as the light that visits these sad
 eyes, 40
 Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
 Ye died amidst your dying country's
 cries—

No more I weep. They do not sleep.
 On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
 I see them sit, they linger yet, 45
 Avengers of their native land:
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy
 line."

II. 1

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 The winding-sheet of Edward's race. 50
 Give ample room, and verge enough
 The characters of hell to trace.
 Mark the year, and mark the night,
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs that
 ring, 55

Shrieks of an agonizing King!
 She-Wolf of France,⁷ with unrelenting
 fangs,

That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled Mate,
 From thee be born, who o'er thy country
 hangs

The scourge of Heav'n.⁸ What Terrors round
 him wait! 60

Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
 And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude be-
 hind."

II. 2

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!
 Low on his funeral couch he lies!
 No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65
 A tear to grace his obsequies.

Is the sable Warriour fled?
 Thy son is gone. He rests among the Dead.
 The Swarm, that in thy noontide beam were
 born?

Gone to salute the rising Morn. 70
 Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr
 blows,

While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
 In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes;

Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the
 helm;

Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway, 75
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his even-
 ing prey."

II. 3

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
 The rich repast prepare,
 Reft of a crown, he yet may share the
 feast:

⁷ The Severn flows near to Berkeley Castle, where
 Edward II was murdered.

⁸ The French Princess, Isabelle, wife of Edward II,
 who allied herself with Mortimer to compass the ruin of
 her husband. ⁹ Edward III.

Close by the regal chair 80
 Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
 A baleful smile upon their baffled Guest.
 Heard ye the din of battle bray,
 Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
 Long years of havoc urge their destined
 course, 85
 And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their
 way.
 Ye Towers of Julius,¹⁰ London's lasting
 shame,
 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
 Reverse his Consort's faith, his Father's
 fame,
 And spare the meek Usurper's¹¹ holy head. 90
 Above, below, the rose of snow,
 Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
 The bristled Boar¹² in infant gore
 Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
 Now, Brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his
 doom." 96

III. 1

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate!¹³
 (Weave we the woof. The thread is spun).
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.
 (The web is wove. The work is done). 100
 Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
 Leave me unblest'd, unpitied, here to mourn:
 In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's
 height 105
 Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts un-
 roll?
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
 Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
 All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's Issue,
 hail!" 110

III. 2

"Girt with many a Baron bold
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
 And gorgeous Dames, and Statesmen old
 In bearded majesty, appear.
 In the midst a Form divine!¹⁴ 115
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
 Her lyon-port, her awe-commanding face,
 Attempted sweet to virgin-grace.
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 What strains of vocal transport round her
 play. 120
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin,¹⁵ hear;
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
 Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-colour'd
 wings."

¹⁰ The Tower of London, popularly, but erroneously, supposed to have been built by Julius Cæsar.

¹¹ Henry VI. His consort was Margaret of Anjou, and his father, Henry V.

¹² The badge of Richard III.

¹³ Eleanor, the Queen of Edward I, died suddenly during her husband's absence.

¹⁴ Queen Elizabeth. She is of the Briton-line, being the granddaughter of Henry VII, a descendant of the Welsh, or British, gentleman Owen Tudor.

¹⁵ A famous British bard of the sixth century.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again 125
 Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 And truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
 In buskin'd measures move
 Pale Grief, and Pleasing Pain,
 With Horrour, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.
 A Voice, as of the Cherub-Choir, 131
 Gales from blooming Eden bear;
 And distant warblings¹⁶ lessen on my ear,
 That lost in long futurity expire.
 Fond impious Man, think'st thou, yon sanguine
 cloud, 135
 Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the
 Orb of day?
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 And warms the nations with redoubled
 ray.
 Enough for me: With joy I see
 The different doom our Fates assign. 140
 Be thine Despair, and scepter'd Care,
 To triumph, and to die, are mine."
 He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's
 height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless
 night.

William Collins

1721-1759

ODE TO EVENING

(From *Odes*, 1746)

If aught of oaten stop¹ or pastoral song,
 May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
 Like thy own solemn springs,
 Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired
 sun, 5
 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
 With brede ethereal wove,
 O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
 With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern
 wing; 10
 Or where the beetle winds
 His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
 Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
 Now teach me, maid composed, 15
 To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darken-
 ing vale,

May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
 As, musing slow, I hail
 Thy genial loved return! 20

¹ i. e., of the poets succeeding Milton, who is referred to in the preceding lines.

¹ Here = the shepherd's pipe of reed, or oaten straw; (Vergil's *avens*).

For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows
with sedge, 25
And sheds the freshening dew and, lovelier
still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety
lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed
pile, 30
Or up-land fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side, 35
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he
wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest evel
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves; 45
Or winter yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipp'd
health, 50
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

(From the same)

When music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The passions oft, to hear her shell,¹
Thronged around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting, 5
Possess beyond the muse's painting:
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired, 10
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatched her instruments of sound;
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,

Each (for madness ruled the hour) 15
Would prove his own expressive power.
First fear, his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made. 20
Next anger rushed; his eyes on fire,
In lightning owned his secret stings:
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept, with hurried hand, the strings.

With woful measures wan despair 25
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure? 30
Still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on echo still, through all the song; 35
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every
close,
And hope enchanted smiled, and waved her
golden hair.

And longer had she sung;—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose: 40
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder,
down;

And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe! 45
And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause be-
tween,

Dejected pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied, 50
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed burst-
ing from his head.

Thy numbers, jealousy, to naught were
fixed;
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was
mixed; 55
And now it courted love, now raving called
on hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale melancholy sat retired;
And, from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet, 60
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive
soul:
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled meas-
ure stole,
Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond
delay, 65
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

¹ Lyre. The primitive lyre was supposed to have been made by stretching strings across the shell of a tortoise.

But O! how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest
hue,

Her bow across her shoulder flung, 71
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket
rung,

The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known!
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed
queen, 75

Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green:

Brown exercise rejoiced to hear;
And sport leapt up, and seized his beechen
spear.

Last came joy's ecstatic trial: 80

He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand address;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the
best;

They would have thought who heard the
strain 85

They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native
maids,

Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kissed the
strings,

Love framed with mirth a gay fantastic
round: 90

Loose were her tresses seen, her zone un-
bound;

And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O music! sphere-descended maid, 95
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid!

Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?

As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learned an all-commanding power, 100

Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard;

Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?

Arise, as in that elder time! 105

Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,

Fill thy recording sister's page—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,

Thy humblest reed could more prevail, 110

Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;

E'en all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—

O bid our vain endeavours cease: 115

Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!

Confirm the tales her sons relate!

¹ Collins was unaware of the progress which music was making in England at this time, or else chose to ignore it for the sake of his poetic effect. Most of Handel's greatest works were produced between 1739 and 1751, and his *Messiah* was received with great enthusiasm in London three years before Collins published his *Odes*.

ODE

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1746¹

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blessed!
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod 5
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay; 10
And freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE¹

SUNG BY GUIDERIUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER
FIDELE, SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

(First published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*,
for October, 1749)

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hindes shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear 5
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen;
No goblins lead their nightly crew: 10
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers, 15
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell; 20

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
And mourned till pity's self be dead.

Thomas Percy

1729-1811

THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY

It was a friar of orders gray,
Walked forth to tell his beads,
And he met with a lady fair,
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

¹ In this year England was at war both on the continent and in Scotland. The Jacobite victory of Falkirk was Jan. 17, 1746, and the crushing Jacobite defeat of Culloden, April 16th of the same year.

¹ V. *Cymbeline*, Act IV, sc. ii.

- "Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar! 5
I pray thee tell to me,
If ever at yon holy shrine
My true love thou didst see."
- "And how should I know your true love
From many another one?" 10
"Oh! by his cockle hat¹ and staff,
And by his sandle shoon:²"
- "But chiefly by his face and mien,
That were so fair to view,
His flaxen locks that sweetly curled, 15
And eyne of lovely blue."
- "O lady, he is dead and gone!
Lady, he's dead and gone!
And at his head a green grass turf,
And at his heels a stone. 20
- "Within these holy cloisters long
He languished, and he died,
Lamenting of a lady's love,
And 'plaining of her pride."
- "Here bore him barefaced on his bier 25
Six proper youths and tall;
And many a tear bedewed his grave
Within yon kirkyard wall."
- "And art thou dead, thou gentle youth—
And art thou dead and gone?
And didst thou die for love of me?
Break, cruel heart of stone!" 30
- "O weep not, lady, weep not so,
Some ghostly counsel seek:
Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,
Nor tears bedew thy cheek." 35
- "O do not, do not, holy friar,
My sorrow now reprove;
For I have lost the sweetest youth
That e'er wan³ lady's love. 40
- "And now, alas! for thy sad loss
I'll evermore weep and sigh;
For thee I only wished to live,
For thee I wish to die."
- "Weep no more, lady, weep no more;
Thy sorrow is in vain:
For violets plucked the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow again. 45
- "Our joys as winged dreams do fly;
Why then should sorrow last?
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,
Grieve not for what is past. 50
- "O say not so, thou holy friar!
I pray thee say not so;
For since my true love died for me, 55
"Tis meet my tears should flow."
- And will he ne'er come again—
Will he ne'er come again?
Ah, no! he is dead, and laid in his grave,
For ever to remain. 60
- "His cheek was redder than the rose—
The comeliest youth was he:
But he is dead, and laid in his grave,
Alas! and woe is me."
- "Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more, 65
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot on sea and one on land,
To one thing constant never."
- "Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,
And left thee sad and heavy; 70
For young men ever were fickle found,
Since summer trees were leafy."
- "Now say not so, thou holy friar,
I pray thee say not so;
My love he had the truest heart— 75
O he was ever true!"
- "And art thou dead, thou much-loved youth?
And didst thou die for me?
Then farewell home; for evermore
A pilgrim I will be. 80
- "But first upon my true-love's grave
My weary limbs I'll lay,
And thrice I'll kiss the green grass turf
That wraps his breathless clay."
- "Yet stay, fair lady, rest awhile 85
Beneath this cloister wall;
The cold wind through the hawthorn blows,
And drizzly rain doth fall."
- "O stay me not, thou holy friar,
O stay me not, I pray;
No drizzly rain that falls on me,
Can wash my fault away." 90
- "Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
And dry those pearly tears;
And see, beneath this gown of gray, 95
Thy own true love appears."
- "Here forced by grief and hopeless love,
These holy weeds I sought;
And here, amid these lonely walls,
To end my days I thought. 100
- "But haply, for my year of grace
Is not yet passed away,
Might I still hope to win thy love,
No longer would I stay."
- "Now farewell grief, and welcome joy 105
Once more unto my heart;
For since I've found thee, lovely youth,
We never more will part."

¹ Hat bearing a scallop-shell, the sign of a pilgrim.² Sandle = shoes.³ Won.

William Cowper

1731-1800

THE TASK

(1785)

(Selections from Book I. THE SOFA)

But though true worth and virtue, in the mild

And genial soil of cultivated life,
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there, 680

Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds 685

Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pampered cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught 690

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams

Of warm encouragement, and in the eye 695
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touched by Reynolds,¹ a dull blank becomes 700

A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon² there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone 705
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.

With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile, with what charms soe'er she will, 710
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact, 715
With which she calculates, computes, and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied, 720

As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

¹ At this time Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) was at the height of his fame as a painter.

² John Bacon (1740-1799), a distinguished sculptor of the day.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two 725

That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul, so witty yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt 730
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law;
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oftentimes honour too,
To speculators of the public gold; 735
That thieves at home must hang, but he that puts

Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt 740
Of Holy Writ, she has presumed to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
And centering all authority in modes 745
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town:

What wonder then, that health and virtue, gifts 750

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon 760
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound 766
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth,
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan, 771
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall. . . .

BOOK II.—THE TIME-PIECE

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more! My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report 6
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax 10

That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
 Not coloured like his own, and having power
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey. 15
 Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
 Make enemies of nations who had else
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys; 20
 And worse than all, and most to be deplored,
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his
 sweat

With stripes that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast. 25
 Then what is man? And what man seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush
 And hang his head, to think himself a man?
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep, 30
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
 No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave 35
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on
 him.

We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
 And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England;^a if their
 lungs 40
 Receive our air, that moment they are free;
 They touch our country, and their shackles
 fall.

That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
 And let it circulate through every vein 45
 Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too. . . .

BOOK III.—THE GARDEN

I was a stricken deer that left the herd 108
 Long since; with many an arrow deep infix'd
 My panting side was charged, when I with-
 drew 110
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 There was I found by One who had Himself
 Been hurt by the archers. In His side He
 bore,
 And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts, 115
 He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me
 live.

Since then, with few associates, in remote
 And silent woods I wander, far from those
 My former partners of the peopled scene;
 With few associates, and not wishing more. 120
 Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come. . . .

^a The question as to whether slaves were legally emancipated by being brought to England was judicially settled in 1772. In a case decided in that year, the court held that every slave, as soon as he landed on English soil, acquired his freedom.

BOOK IV.—THE WINTER'S EVENING

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder
 bridge,

That with its wearisome but needful length
 Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world, 5
 With spattered boots, strapped waist, and
 frozen locks,

News from all nations lumbering at his back.
 True to his charge, the close-packed load be-
 hind,

Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
 Is to conduct it to the destined inn, 10
 And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
 Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
 To him indifferent whether grief or joy. 15
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
 With tears that trickled down the writer's
 cheeks

Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
 Or charged with amorous sighs of absent
 swains, 20

Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
 But oh the important budget! ushered in
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say
 What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugged, 26
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
 Is India free?⁴ and does she wear her plumed
 And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate, 30
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
 I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
 And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters
 fast, 36

Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in. . . .

Oh Winter! ruler of the inverted year, 120
 Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
 Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy
 cheeks

Fringed with a beard made white with other
 snows

Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne 125
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urged by storms along its slippery way;
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
 And dreaded as thou art. Thou holdest the sun
 A prisoner in the yet undawning east, 130
 Shortening his journey between morn and noon,

⁴ The relation of England to India was one of the important political issues of the time. In 1784 Pitt introduced a bill for the Government of India, and in 1786 (a year after the publication of *The Task*) the trial of Warren Hastings was begun.

And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease, 135
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness, 140
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know. . . . 143
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245
With matron step slow moving, while the Night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand em-
ployed

In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day; 250
Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,
Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high 255
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ample round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary
calm,

Or make me so. Composure is thy gift: 260
And whether I devote thy gentler hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to
please: 265
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome
still. . . .

In such a world, so thorny, and where none 333
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side, 335
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves, that
thus

We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more. 340
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow, 346
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to
bear 350
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and puckered cheeks, and
teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip, 355

Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
The sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed 360
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every
bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee. 365
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the
great, 371

With needless hurry whirled from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this, 375
And have a friend in every feeling heart. . . .

BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON

The night was winter in his roughest mood, 57
The morning sharp and clear. But now at
noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern
blast, 60
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale 65
And through the trees I view the embattled
tower*

Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms, 70
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its
length

As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me. 75
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half sup-
pressed:

Pleased with his solitude, and fitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he
shakes 80
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the
heart 85

May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,

* Supposed to refer to the church at Emberton, about a mile from Olney.

Have oftimes no connection. Knowledge dwells

In heads replete with thoughts of other men, 90
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothened and squared and fitted to its place,

Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich. 95
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;

Wisdom is humble that he knows no more. . . .

I would not enter on my list of friends 560
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,

Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path; 565
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.

The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,

A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570

Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:

A necessary act incurs no blame.

Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air, 575

Or take their pastime in the spacious field:

There they are privileged: and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,

Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode. 580

The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims

Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.

Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life, 585

As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in His sovereign wisdom made them all.

Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years

Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most 590

By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand

To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,

If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,

Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.

Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule 595

And righteous limitation of its act,

By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man,

And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,

Shall seek it and not find it in his turn. 600

Distinguished much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,

From creatures that exist but for our sake,

Which, having served us, perish, we are held

Accountable, and God, some future day, 605

Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse

Of what He deems no mean or trivial trust.

Superior as we are, they yet depend

Not more on human help than we on theirs.

Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given 610

In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,

That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Matched with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,

Are oftimes vanquished and thrown far behind. . . . 615

THE BASTILLE¹

(BOOK V. THE WINTER MORNING WALK)

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more

To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,

Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharoah—the Bastille.¹

Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts, 81

Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,

That monarchs have supplied from age to age

With music such as suits their sovereign ears,

The sighs and groans of miserable men! 85

There's not an English heart that would not leap

To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That even our enemies, so oft employed

In forging chains for us, themselves were free.

For he who values liberty confines 90

His zeal for her predominance within

No narrow bounds; her cause engages him

Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.

There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,

Immured though unaccused, condemned untried, 95

Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.

There, like the visionary emblem seen

By him of Babylon,² life stands a stump,

And filleted about with hoops of brass,

Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone, 100

To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;

And ever as the sullen sound is heard,

Still to reflect, that though a joyless note

To him whose moments all have one dull pace,

Ten thousand rovers in the world at large 105

Account it music; that it summons some

To theatre or jocund feast or ball;

The wearied hireling finds it a release

From labour; and the lover, who has chid

Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke 110

Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight:—

To fly for refuge from distracting thought

To such amusements as ingenious woe

Contrives, hard shifting and without her tools:—

To read engraven on the mouldy walls, 115

In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,

A sad memorial, and subjoin his own:—

¹ The Bastille, the famous state prison in Paris, fell before the fury of the mob at the beginning of the French Revolution, 1789.

² Nebuchadnezzar, v. *Dan*. iv., 13-17.

To turn purveyor to an overgorged
 And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
 Is made familiar, watches his approach, 120
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend:—
 To wear out time in numbering to and fro
 The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
 Then downward and then upward, then aslant,
 And then alternate, with a sickly hope, 125
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task
 Some relish, till the sum exactly found
 In all directions, he begins again:—
 Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around
 With woes, which who that suffers would not
 kneel 130
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
 That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon the endearments of domestic life 135
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
 Moves indignation, makes the name of king
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please) 140
 As dreadful as the Manichean god,²
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
 "Thy liberty alone that gives the flower
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
 And we are weeds without it. 145

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM

(c. 1790)

O That those lips had language! Life has
 passed
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say, 5
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears
 away!"
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blessed be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same. 10
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
 Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long,¹
 I will obey, not willingly alone, 15
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian revery,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she. 20
 My mother! when I learnt that thou wast
 dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?

¹ Manichæism, a religious sect that arose in Western Asia in the third century, believing that the body must be subdued, taught and rigidly enforced the most extreme asceticism.

² Cowper was six years old when his mother died.

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss— 26
 Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew 30
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such? It was.—Where thou art
 gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more! 35
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,

Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
 By expectation every day beguiled, 40
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.

Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learnt at last submission to my lot;
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot. 45

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no
 more,

Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped, 51

'Tis now become a history little known,
 That once we called the pastoral house our own.
 Short-lived possession! But the record fair
 That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm that has effaced 56
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.

Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly
 laid;

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60
 The biscuit, or confectionery plum;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and
 glowed;

All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall, 65
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks
 That humour interposed too often makes;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed
 here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the
 hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flow-
 ers, 75

The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I pricked them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and
 smile).

Could those few pleasant days again appear, 80
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them
here?

I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much, 85
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean
crossed)

Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle, 90
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons
smile,

There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay; 95
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the
shore,

"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, 100
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-
tossed,

Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass
lost,

And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, Oh, the thought that thou art safe, and
hel! 106

That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise— 110
The son of parents passed into the skies!
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were
mine, 116

Without the sin of violating thine:
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft— 120
Thy self removed, thy power to soothe me
left.

ON THE LOSS OF THE "ROYAL GEORGE"¹

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED, SEPTEMBER,
1782, TO THE MARCH IN "SCIPIO"

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

¹ The Royal George was lost off Spithead, Aug. 29, 1792. The ship had been heeled over for repairs. While the crew were at dinner, she was struck by a sudden squall, and, the leeward deck ports being left open, she rapidly filled and sank.

Eight hundred of the brave, 5
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset; 10
Down went the *Royal George*,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought; 15
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock. 20

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up, 25
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full-charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main. 30

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred 35
Shall plough the wave no more.

THE CAST-AWAY

(March 20, 1799)

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft, 5
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent. 10
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline, 15
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevailed, 20
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford; 25
 And such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delayed not to bestow.
 But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore, 30
 What-e'er they gave, should visit more.
 Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them;
 Yet bitter felt it still to die 35
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld;
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repelled; 40
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
 Had heard his voice in every blast,
 Could catch the sound no more: 45
 For then, by toil subdued, he drank
 The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
 Of narrative sincere 50
 That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's tear:¹
 And tears by bards or heroes shed
 Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
 Descanting on his fate,
 To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date:
 But misery still delights to trace 60
 Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed,
 No light propitious shone,
 When, snatched from all effectual aid,
 We perished, each alone:
 But I beneath a rougher sea, 65
 And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

William Julius Mickle

1735-1788

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE¹

And are ye sure the news is true?
 And are ye sure he's weel?
 Is this a time to think o' wark?
 Mak haste, lay by your wheel;
 Is this the time to spin a thread,
 When Colin's at the door?
 Reach down my cloak, I'll to the quay,
 And see him come ashore.
 For there's nae luck about the house,
 There's nae luck at a'; 10

¹ *The Castaway* is founded on an incident related in Anson's narrative of his *Voyage Round the World*.

² Often called *The Mariner's Wife*. This poem, a copy

There's little pleasure in the house
 When our gudeman's awa'.

And gie to me my bigonet,²
 My bishop's satin gown;
 For I maun tell the baillie's wife 15
 That Colin's in the town.
 My Turkey³ slippers maun gae on,
 My stockings pearly blue;
 It's a' to pleasure our gudeman,
 For he's baith leal and true. 20

Rise, lass, and mak a clean fireside,
 Put on the muckle pot;
 Gie little Kate her button gown,
 And Jock his Sunday coat;
 And mak their shoon as black as slaes,⁴ 25
 Their hose as white as snaw;
 It's a' to pleasure my gudeman,
 For he's been lang awa'.

There's twa fat hens upo' the coop,
 Been fed this month and mair; 30
 Mak haste and thrav⁵ their necks about,
 That Colin weel may fare;
 And mak our table neat and clean,
 Let everything look braw,
 For wha tell how Colin fared
 When he was far awa'? 35

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
 His breath like caller air;
 His very foot has music in't
 As he comes up the stair.
 And will I see his face again? 40
 And will I hear him speak?
 I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
 In troth I'm like to greet!⁶

Since Colin's weel, and weel content, 45
 I hae nae mair to crave;
 And gin I live to keep him sae,
 I'm blest aboon the lave.
 And will I see his face again?
 And will I hear him speak?
 I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought, 50
 In troth I'm like to greet.
 For there's nae luck about the house,
 There's nae luck at a';
 There's little pleasure in the house
 When our gudeman's awa'. 55

James Beattie

1735-1803

THE MINSTREL (1771-1774) (Selections)

Book I

5 Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
 The steep where Fame's proud temple shines
 afar;

Ah! Who can tell how many a soul sublime
 Has felt the influence of malignant star,

of which was found among Mickle's manuscripts has been frequently attributed to Jane Adam, a Scotch school-mistress, and minor poet. ² A cap, or head-dress.

³ Turkish.

⁴ Wring.

⁵ Weep.

⁶ Sloes,—the fruit of the blackthorn.

And waged with Fortune an eternal war; 5
 Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's
 frown,
 And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
 In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
 Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and un-
 known!

And yet the languor of inglorious days, 10
 Not equally oppressive is to all;
 Him, who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
 The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.
 There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
 Would shrink to hear th' obstreperous trump of
 Fame; 15

Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
 Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher
 aim
 Had he, whose simple tale these artless lines
 proclaim.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
 Nor need I here describe in learned lay, 20
 How forth the Minstrel far'd in days of yore,
 Right glad of heart, though homely in array;
 His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:
 While from his bending shoulder, decent hung
 His harp, the sole companion of his way, 25
 Which to the whistling wind responsive rung:
 And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
 That a poor villager inspires my strain;
 With thee let Pageantry and Power abide: 30
 The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign;
 Where through wild groves at eve the lonely
 swain

Enraptur'd roves, to gaze on Nature's charms.
 They hate the sensual and scorn the vain,
 The parasite their influence never warms, 35
 Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold
 alarms. . . .

There lived in Gothic days as legends tell, 91
 A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
 Whose sires, perchance, in Fairy-land might
 dwell,

Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
 But he, I ween, was of the north country;¹ 95
 A nation fam'd for song, and beauty's charms;
 Zealous, yet modest, innocent, though free;
 Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
 Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
 On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock; 101
 The sickle, scythe, or plow, he never sway'd;
 An honest heart was almost all his stock;
 His drink the living water from the rock;
 The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
 Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock; 106
 And he, though oft with dust and sweat be-
 sprengt,²

Did guide and guard their wanderings, where-
 so'er they went.

¹ Scotland.

² Besprinkled.

From labor health, from health contentment
 springs;

Contentment opens the source of every joy. 110
 He envied not, he never thought of kings;
 Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,
 That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy:
 Nor Fate his calm and humble hopes be-
 guiled; 114

He mourn'd no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
 For on his vows the blameless Phoebe smil'd,
 And her alone he lov'd, and lov'd her from a
 child.

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
 Nor blasted were their wedded days with
 strife;

Each season look'd delightful as it past, 120
 To the fond husband and the faithful wife.
 Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd-life
 They never roam'd; secure beneath the storm
 Which in Ambition's lofty hand is rife,
 Where peace and love are canker'd by the
 worm 125
 Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

The wight whose tale these artless lines un-
 fold,

Was all the offspring of this humble pair:
 His birth no oracle or seer foretold:
 No prodigy appear'd in earth or air, 130
 Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
 You guess each circumstance of Edwin's birth;
 The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
 The gossip's³ prayer for wealth, and wit and
 worth;
 And one long summer-day of indolence and
 mirth. 135

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy,
 Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye,
 Dainties he heeded not, nor gaud,⁴ nor toy,
 Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy;
 Silent when glad; affectionate though shy; 140
 And now his look was most demurely sad;
 And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew
 why.

The neighbors star'd, and sigh'd, yet bless'd
 the lad:

Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some
 believ'd him mad. . . . 144

Lo! where the stripling wrapt in wonder, roves
 Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine; 164
 And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
 From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:

While waters, woods and winds, in concert
 join,

And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
 Would Edwin this majestic scene resign 169
 For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
 Ah! no: he better knows great Nature's charms
 to prize.

³ Originally, one who stood sponsor for a child at baptism; a godfather, or godmother. (*Gossip* means literally *God-relative*).

⁴ Glittering trinket, or possibly jest, sport.

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
 When o'er the sky advanc'd the kindling dawn,
 The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain
 grey,
 And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn: 175
 Far to the west, the long, long vale withdrawn,
 Where twilight loves to linger for awhile;
 And now he faintly kens the bounding lawn,
 And villager abroad at early toil.
 But lo! the Sun appears! and heaven, earth,
 ocean, smile. 180

And oft the craggy cliff he lov'd to climb,
 When all in mist the world below was lost.
 What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sub-
 lime,
 Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
 And view th' enormous waste of vapor, lost 185
 In billows, length'ning to th' horizon round,
 Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now
 emboss'd!
 And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
 Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar
 profound! . . . 189

When the long-sounding curfew from afar 280
 Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
 Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
 Lingered and listening, wander'd down the
 vale.
 There would he dream of graves, and corpses
 pale; 284
 And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
 And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
 Till silenc'd by the owl's terrific song,
 Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering
 isles along.

Or, when the setting Moon, in crimson dyed,
 Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep, 290
 To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
 Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
 And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
 A vision brought to his entranced sight. 294
 And first a wildly-murmuring wind 'gan creep
 Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
 With instantaneous gleam, illum'd the vault of
 night.

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
 Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold: 299
 And forth an host of little warriors march,
 Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
 Their look was gentle, their demeanor bold, 302
 And green their helms, and green their silk
 attire;
 And here and there, right venerably old,
 The long-rob'd minstrels wake the warbling
 wire, 305
 And some with mellow breath the martial pipe
 inspire. . . .

But who the melodies of morn can tell? 334
 The wild brook babbling down the mountain-
 side;
 The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;

The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
 In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
 The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
 The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide; 340
 The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
 And the full choir that wakes the universal
 grove.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
 Crown'd with her pail, the tripping milk-maid
 sings;
 The whistling plowman stalks afield; and,
 hark! 345
 Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon
 rings;
 Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd
 springs;
 Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour;
 The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
 Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
 And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial
 tour. 351

O Nature now in every charm supremel
 Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
 O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
 To sing thy glories with devotion due! 355
 Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
 From Pyrrho's maze,* and Epicurus' sty;
 And held high converse with the godlike few,
 Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
 Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and
 melody. 360

Hence! ye who snare and stupefy the mind,
 Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!
 Greedy and fell, though impotent and blind,
 Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair
 fane, 365

And ever ply your venom'd fangs amain!
 Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling
 slime
 First gave you form! Hence! lest the Muse
 should deign,
 (Though loth on theme so mean to waste a
 rhyme), 370
 With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious
 crime.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
 Nature's true sons, the friends of man, and
 truth!

Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
 Amus'd my childhood, and inform'd my youth.
 O let your spirit still my bosom soothe, 376
 Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings
 guide!

Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth:
 For well I know, wherever ye reside,
 There harmony, and peace, and innocence
 abide. . . .

* Pyrrho's uncertainty, perplexities, and doubts. *Pyrrho* (c. 360-c. 270 B. C.), was a Greek philosopher, who taught that we had no certain knowledge of the nature of things.

* A Greek philosopher (342-270 B. C.), founder of the Epicurean School. He was popularly supposed to have taught that pleasure and self-indulgence were the chief objects of man's existence. (Cf. the various meanings of *Epicure*).

THE HERMIT

(Written c. 1766)

At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the
hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the
grove:

'Twas thus by the cave of the mountain afar, 5
While his harp rung symphonious, a hermit
began;

No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a sage, though he felt as a man.

"Ah! why, all abandon'd to darkness and woe,
Why, lone Philomela,¹ that languishing fall? 10
For spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
And sorrow no longer thy bosom enthrall.
But, if pity inspire you, renew the sad lay,
Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee to
mourn;

O soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass
away: 15
Full quickly they pass—but they never return.

"Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent dis-
plays:

But lately I mark'd, when majestic on high
She shone, and the planets were lost in her
blaze. 20

Roll on, thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
The path that conducts thee to splendour
again:

But man's faded glory what change shall renew!
Ah, fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

"'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more:
I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for
you; 26

For morn is approaching, your charms to re-
store,
Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glittering
with dew:

Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;
Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save: 30
But when shall spring visit the mouldering
urn!

O when shall it dawn on the night of the
grave!"

"'Twas thus, by the glare of false science²
betray'd,

That leads, to bewilder, and dazzles, to blind,
My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward
to shade, 35

Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.

"O Pity, great Father of light," then I cried,
"Thy creature, who fain would not wander
from thee;

Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride:
From doubt and from darkness thou only canst
free." 40

¹ Or Philomel, the nightingale.² Knowledge, learning.

"And darkness and doubt are now flying away;
No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.

So breaks on the traveller, faint, and astray,
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph de-
scending, 45

And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!
On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are
blending,

And Beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

James Macpherson

1738-1796

CARTHON: A POEM

(Selections from translation of *Ossian*,¹ ed. of
1773)

Tell, said the mighty Fingal, the tale of thy
youthful days. Sorrow, like a cloud on the
sun, shades the soul of Clessámmor. Mournful
are thy thoughts, alone, on the banks of the
5 roaring Lora. Let us hear the sorrow of thy
youth, and the darkness of thy days!

"It was in the days of peace," replied the
great Clessámmor, "I came in my bounding
ship, to Balclutha's walls of towers. The
10 winds had roared behind my sails, and Clutha's
streams received my dark-bosomed ship.
Three days I remained in Reuthámir's halls,
and saw his daughter, that beam of light.

¹ In ancient Gaelic tradition, *Ossian* (or *Oíson*) was famous as a bard and warrior. He was the son of Finn, or Fin (the Fingal of Macpherson's poem), and he lived in the latter half of the third century. In 1762, James Macpherson, a young Scotch schoolmaster, published *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, with other lesser poems*. Ancient Gaelic legends had been preserved in remote parts of Scotland as well as in Ireland, and Macpherson asserted that his book was a translation of certain poems of *Ossian*, out of the original Gaelic. This claim was contested by Dr. Johnson, and, although the matter has been fully discussed and investigated, the authenticity of Macpherson's so-called "translation," has never been fully established. But, whatever its origin, Macpherson's *Ossian*, was a widely read and highly influential book, and with all its faults it holds an important place in the rise of romanticism in the 18th century.

Carthon, one of the short poems of Macpherson's collection, is supposed to be "a tale of the times of old," related by *Ossian* to Malvina, the betrothed of his dead son, and the companion and comfort of his age. The following story, partly told, and partly implied, forms the basis of the poem. When a young man, *Clessámmor*, the uncle of Fingal, came to *Balclutha*, a British town on the river *Clutha*, or *Clyde*. There he married *Moína*, the daughter of *Reuthámir*, the chief man of the town, but, having killed a rival in a quarrel ("the son of a stranger"), *Clessámmor* was forced to leave *Moína* and fly for his life. *Carthon*, the son of *Clessámmor* and *Moína*, was born after his father's flight and grew up ignorant of his parentage. While *Carthon* was a child, *Comhal*, Fingal's father and the brother-in-law of *Clessámmor*, attacks and burns *Balclutha*, and when *Carthon* comes to manhood, he resolves to take vengeance for this act of destruction on *Comhal*'s family. *Carthon* is thus unwittingly involved in a feud with his own kindred, and in an expedition of vengeance, he meets *Clessámmor* in single combat. Both combatants are ignorant of the relationship between them, and *Carthon* dies by his father's hand. The poem opens on the night before the young hero's death.

The joy of the shell went round, and the aged hero gave the fair. . . . My love for Moína was great: my heart poured forth in joy.

"The son of a stranger came; a chief who loved the white-bosomed Moína. His words were mighty in the hall; he often half-un-sheathed his sword. Where, said he, is the mighty Comhal, the restless wanderer of the heath? Comes he, with his host, to Balclutha, since Clessámmor is so bold? My soul, I replied, O warrior! burns in a light of its own. I stand without fear in the midst of thousands, though the valiant are distant far. Stranger! thy words are mighty, for Clessámmor is alone. But my sword trembles by my side, and longs to glitter in my hand. Speak no more of Comhal, son of the winding Clutha.

"The strength of his pride arose. We fought; he fell beneath my sword. The banks of Clutha heard his fall; a thousand spears glittered around. I fought; the strangers prevailed: I plunged into the stream of Clutha; my white sails rose over the waves, and bounded on the dark-blue sea. Moína came to the shore, and rolled the red eye of her tears: her loose hair flew on the wind; and I heard her mournful, distant cries. Often did I turn my ship; but the winds of the East prevailed. Nor Clutha ever since have I seen, nor Moína of the dark-brown hair. She fell in Balclutha, for I have seen her ghost. I knew her as she came through the dusky night, along the murmur of Lora; she was like the new moon, seen through the gathered mist: when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark."

Raise, ye bards, said the mighty Fingal, the praise of unhappy Moína. Call her ghost, with your songs, to our hills; that she may rest with the fair of Morven, the sunbeams of other days, the delight of heroes of old. I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook, there, its lonely head: the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round its head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moína, silence is in the house of her fathers. Raise the song of mourning, O bards! over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us: for one day we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers today; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round

thy half-worn shield. And let the blast of the desert come! we shall be renowned in our day! The mark of my arm shall be in battle; my name in the song of bards. Raise the song; send round the shell: let joy be heard in my hall. When thou, sun of heaven, shalt fail! if thou shalt fail, thou mighty light! if thy brightness is for a season, like Fingal; our fame shall survive thy beams!

Such was the song of Fingal, in the day of his joy. His thousand bards leaned forward from their seats, to hear the voice of the king. It was like the music of harps on the gale of the spring. Lovely were thy thoughts, O Fingal! why had not Ossian the strength of thy soul? But thou standest alone, my father! who can equal the king of Selma? . . .

Joy rose in Carthon's face; he lifted his heavy eyes. He gave his sword to Fingal, to lie within his hall, that the memory of Balclutha's king might remain in Morven. The battle ceased along the field, the bard had sung the song of peace. The chiefs gathered round the falling Carthon; they heard his words with sighs. Silent they leaned on their spears, while Balclutha's hero spoke. His hair sighed in the wind, and his voice was sad and low.

"King of Morven," Carthon said, "I fall in the midst of my course. A foreign tomb receives, in youth, the last of Reuthámir's race. Darkness dwells in Balclutha: the shadows of grief in Crathmo. But raise my remembrance on the banks of Lora, where my fathers dwelt. Perhaps the husband of Moína will mourn over his fallen Carthon." His words reached the heart of Clessámmor: he fell, in silence on his son. The host stood darkened around; no voice is on the plain. Night came, the moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field; but still they stood, like a silent grove that lifts its head on Gormal, when the loud winds are laid, and dark autumn is on the plain.

Three days they mourned above Carthon; on the fourth his father died. In the narrow plain of the rock they lie; a dim ghost defends their tomb. There lovely Moína is often seen; when the sunbeam darts on the rock, and all around is dark. There she is seen, Malvina! but not like the daughters of the hill. Her robes are from the stranger's land; and she is, still alone!

Fingal was sad for Carthon; he commanded his bards to mark the day; when shadowy autumn returned; and often did they mark the day, and sing the hero's praise. "Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud? Death is trembling in his hand! his eyes are flames of fire! Who roars along dark Lora's heath? Who but Carthon, king of

swords! The people fall! see! how he strides,
like the sullen ghost of Morven! But there he
lies, a goodly oak, which sudden blasts over-
turned! When shalt thou rise, Balclutha's joy?
When, Carthon, shalt thou arise? Who comes so
dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy
cloud?" Such were the words of the bards,
in the day of their mourning: Ossian often
joined their voice; and added to their song.
My soul has been mournful for Carthon; he
fell in the days of his youth: and thou, O
Clessámmor! where is thy dwelling in the
wind? Has the youth forgot his wound?
Flies he, on clouds, with thee? I feel the sun,
O Malvina! leave me to my rest. Perhaps
they may come to my dreams; I think I hear
a feeble voice! the beam of heaven delights to
shine on the grave of Carthon: I feel it warm
around!

O thou that rollest above, round as the
shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams,
O sun! thy everlasting light? Thou comest
forth in thy awful beauty; the stars hide them-
selves in the sky; the moon, cold and pale,
sinks in the western wave. But thou thyself
movest alone: who can be a companion of thy
course! The oaks of the mountains fall: the
mountains themselves decay with years: the
ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon
herself is lost in heaven; but thou art forever
so the same; rejoicing in the brightness of thy
course. When the world is dark with tempests;
when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou
lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and
laughest at the storm. But to Ossian, thou
lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no
more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the
eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates
of the west. But thou art perhaps, like me,
for a season, thy years will have an end. Thou
shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice
of the morning. Exult thee, O sun! in the
strength of thy youth! Age is dark and un-
lovely; it is like the glimmering light of the
moon, when it shines through broken clouds,
and the mist is on the hills; the blast of north
is on the plain; the traveller shrinks in the
midst of his journey.

Thomas Chatterton

1752-1770

MINSTREL'S ROUNDELAY

(From *Ælla*, 1770)

O sing unto my roundelay,
O drop the briny tear with me,
Dance no more at holy-day,
Like a running river be.

My love is dead, 5
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Black his hair as the winter night
White his skin as the summer snow,
Red his face as the morning light, 10
Cold he lies in the grave below.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note, 15
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout,
O he lies by the willow-tree!
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed, 20
All under the willow-tree.

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
In the briar'd dell below;
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares as they go. 25
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true love's shroud; 30
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree. 35

Here upon my true love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid:
Not one holy Saint to save
All the coldness of a maid! 40
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

With my hands I'll gird the briars
Round his holy corse to grow. 45
Elfin Faëry, light your fires;
Here my body still shall bow.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn, 50
Drain my heart's blood away;
Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night or feast by day.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed, 55
All under the willow-tree.

THE BALADE OF CHARITIE

(From *Poems* collected 1777)

In Virginè¹ the sultry Sun 'gan sheene
And hot upon the meads did cast his ray:
The apple ruddied from its paly green,
And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;
The pied chelandy² sang the livelong day: 5

¹ In the Zodiacal sign of *Virgo*, i. e., in September.

² Goldfinch. (Chatterton).

'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year,
And eke the ground was dight in its most deft
aumere.³

The sun was gleaming in the mid of day,
Dead still the air and eke the welkin blue,
When from the sea aris't in drear array 10
A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodland drew,
Hiding at once the sunnè's festive face;
And the black tempest swelled and gathered up
apace.

Beneath an holm,⁴ fast by a pathway side 15
Which did unto Saint Godwyn's convent lead,
A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,
Poor in his view, ungente in his weed,
Long breast-full of the miseries of need. 19
Where from the hailstorm could the beggar fly?
He had no housen there, nor any convent nigh.

Look in his gloomèd face; his sprite there scan,
How woe-begone, how withered, sapless,
dead!

Haste to thy church-glebe-house,⁵ accursèd
man,
Haste to thy coffin, thy sole slumbering-bed!
Cold as the clay which will grow on thy
head 26

Are Charity and Love among high elves;
The Knights and Barons live for pleasure and
the pleasures.

The gathered storm is ripe; the big drops fall;
The sunburnt meadows smoke and drink the
rain; 30

The coming ghastness⁶ dothe the cattle appal,
And the full flocks are driving o'er the plain;
Dashed from the clouds, the waters gush
again;

The welkin⁷ opes, the yellow levin⁸ flies,
And the hot fiery steam in the wide flame-
lowe dies. 35

List! now the thunder's rattling clamouring
sound

Moves slowly on, and then upswollen clangs,
Shakes the high spire, and lost, dispended,
drown'd,

Still on the affrighted ear of terror hangs;
The winds are up; the lofty elm-tree swangs;⁹
Again the levin and the thunder pours, 41
And the full clouds are burst at once in stormy
showers.

Spurring his palfrey o'er the watery plain,
The Abbot of Saint Godwyn's convent came;
His chapournette¹⁰ was drenchèd with the
rain, 45
His painted girdle met with mickle shame;
He backwards told his bederoll¹¹ at the same.
The storm increased, and he drew aside,
With the poor alms-crauer near to the holm to
bide.

His cope¹² was all of Lincoln cloth so fine, 50
With a gold button fastened near his chin,
His autremete¹³ was edged with golden twine,
And his peaked shoe a lordling's might have
been;

Full well it showed he counted cost no sin:
The trammels of the palfrey pleased his sight,
For the horse-milliner¹⁴ his head with roses
dight. 56

"An alms, Sir Priest!" the drooping pilgrim
said,

"O let me wait within your convent-door
Till the sun shineth high above our head
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er. 60
Helpless and old am I, alas! and poor:
No house, nor friend, no money in my pouch;
All that I call my own is this my silver crouch."¹⁵

"Varlet," replied the Abbot, "cease your din;
This is no season alms and prayers to give; 65
My porter never lets a beggar in;
None touch my ring who not in honour
live."

And now the sun with the black clouds did
strive,
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray:
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode
away. 70

Once more the sky was black, the thunder
roll'd:

Fast running o'er the plain a priest was
seen,
Not dight full proud nor buttoned up in gold;
His cope and jape¹⁶ were grey, and eke were
clean;

A Limitour¹⁷ he was, of order seen; 75
And from the pathway side then turned he,
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen
tree.

"An alms, Sir Priest," the drooping pilgrim
said,

"For sweet Saint Mary and your order's
sake!"

The Limitour then loosened his pouch-thread so
And did thereout a groat of silver take;
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake.
"Here, take this silver, it may ease thy care;
We are God's stewards all,—nought of our own
we bear.

"But ah! unhappy pilgrim, learn of me, 85
Scarce any give a rentroll to their Lord:
Here, take my semicope,¹⁸—thou'rt bare, I see;

¹² Cloak, mantle.

¹³ "A loose white robe worn by priests." (Chatterton).

¹⁴ One who supplies trappings for horses. Stevens
says, he saw "Horse-milliner" over a shop-door in Bristol,
in 1776. Outside the shop stood a wooden horse adorned
with ribbons.

¹⁵ Cross, crucifix.

¹⁶ "A short surplice, worn by friars of an inferior class,
and secular priests." (Chatterton).

¹⁷ A friar licensed to beg and limited to a certain speci-
fied district. V. p. 66, n. 24, *supra*.

¹⁸ Short cape.

³ Here= apparel, mantle.

⁴ i. e., the grave.

⁵ The heaven.

⁶ "A small round hat." (Chatterton).

⁷ To tell one's beads backwards was "a figurative
expression to signify cursing." (Chatterton).

⁸ Holly-tree.

⁹ Terror. (*Othello*, V. i.)

¹⁰ Lightning. ¹¹ Swings.

'Tis thine; the Saints will give me my reward!"

He left the pilgrim and his way aborde.¹⁹
Virgin and holy Saints who sit in gloure,²⁰ 90
Or give the mighty will, or give the good man power.

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BRISTOWE TRAGEDY; OR, THE DEATH OF SIR CHARLES BAWDIN

I

The feathered songster Chanticleer
Has wound his bugle horn,
And told the early villager
The coming of the morn:

II

King Edward¹ saw the ruddy streaks 5
Of light eclipse the gray;
And heard the raven's croaking throat
Proclaim the fated day.

III

"Thou'rt right," quoth he, "for, by the God
That sits enthroned on high! 10
Charles Bawdin, and his fellows twain,
Today shall surely die."

IV

Then with a jug of nappy ale²
His knights did on him wait:
"Go tell the traitor, that today 15
He leaves this mortal state."

V

Sir Canterlone then bended low,
With heart brimful of woe;
He journeyed to the castle-gate,
And to Sir Charles did go. 20

VI

But when he came, his children twain,
And eke his loving wife,
With briny tears did wet the floor,
For good Sir Charles's life.

VII

"O good Sir Charles," said Canterlone, 25
"Bad tidings I do bring."
"Speak boldly, man," said brave Sir Charles,
"What says thy traitor king?"

VIII

"I grieve to tell, before yon sun
Does from the welkin fly, 30
He hath upon his honour sworn,
That thou shalt surely die."

IX

"We all must die," quoth brave Sir Charles,
"Of that I'm not afear'd;
What boots to live a little space? 35
Thank Jesu, I'm prepared.

¹⁹ Went on. (Chatterton)

¹ King Edward IV, 1461-1483.

²⁰ Glory.

² Strong ale.

X

But tell thy king, for mine he's not,
I'd sooner die today
Than live his slave, as many are,
Tho' I should live for aye." 40

XI

Then Canterlone he did go out,
To tell the mayor straight
To get all things in readiness
For good Sir Charles's fate.

XII

Then Master Canynge³ sought the king, 45
And fell down on his knee;
"I'm come," quoth he, "unto your grace
To move your clemency."

XIII

Then quoth the king, "your tale speak out,
You have been much our friend;
Whatever your request may be, 50
We will to it attend."

XIV

"My noble liege! all my request
Is for a noble knight,
Who tho' mayhap he has done wrong, 55
He thought it still was right.

XV

"He has a spouse and children twain,
All ruined are for aye;
If that you are resolved to let
Charles Bawdin die today." 60

XVI

"Speak not of such a traitor vile,"
The king in fury said;
"Before the evening star doth shine,
Bawdin shall lose his head.

XVII

"Justice does loudly for him call, 65
And he shall have his mead:
Speak, Master Canynge! What thing else
At present do you need?"

XVIII

"My noble liege," good Canynge said,
"Leave justice to our God, 70
And lay the iron rule aside;
Be thine the olive rod.

XIX

"Was God to search our hearts and reins, 75
The best were sinners great;
Christ's vicar only knows no sin,
In all this mortal state.

³ William Canynge, a rich merchant, mayor and foremost citizen, in the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV, of Chatterton's native city of Bristol. Canynge is represented as the friend and literary patron of one Thomas Rowley, the "poet-priest." Rowley is put forward as the author of Chatterton's imitations of ancient poetry, which he pretended to have transcribed from old manuscripts.

XX
 "Let mercy rule thine infant reign,
 'Twill fast thy crown full sure;
 From race to race thy family
 All sovereigns shall endure: 80

XXI
 "But if with blood and slaughter thou
 Begin thy infant reign,
 Thy crown upon thy children's brows
 Will never long remain."

XXII
 "Canynge, away! this traitor vile 85
 Has scorned my power and me:
 How canst thou then for such a man
 Entreat my clemency?"

XXIII
 "My noble liege! the truly brave 90
 Will valorous actions prize;
 Respect a brave and noble mind
 Although in enemies."

XXIV
 "Canynge, away! By God in Heaven 95
 That did me being give,
 I will not taste a bit of bread
 Whilst this Sir Charles doth live."

XXV
 "By Mary, and all Saints in Heaven,
 This sun shall be his last;"
 Then Canynge dropped a briny tear,
 And from the presence past. 100

XXVI
 With heart brimful of gnawing grief,
 He to Sir Charles did go,
 And sat him down upon a stool,
 And tears began to flow.

XXVII
 "We all must die," quoth brave Sir Charles; 105
 "What boots it how or when;
 Death is the sure, the certain fate
 Of all we mortal men."

XXVIII
 "Say, why, my friend, thy honest soul 110
 Runs over at thine eye:
 Is it for my most welcome doom
 That thou dost child-like cry?"

XXIX
 Quoth godly Canynge, "I do weep,
 That thou so soon must die,
 And leave thy sons and helpless wife;
 'Tis this that wets mine eye." 115

XXX
 "Then dry the tears that out thine eye
 From godly fountains spring;
 Death I despise, and all the power
 Of Edward, traitor king. 120

XXXI
 "When through the tyrant's welcome means
 I shall resign my life,

The God I serve will soon provide
 For both my sons and wife.

XXXII
 "Before I saw the lightsome sun, 125
 This was appointed me;
 Shall mortal man repine or grudge
 What God ordains to be?"

XXXIII
 "How oft in battle have I stood,
 When thousands died around;
 When smoking streams of crimson blood
 Imbrued the fattened ground; 130

XXXIV
 "How did I know that every dart,
 That cut the airy way,
 Might not find passage to my heart,
 And close mine eyes for aye? 135

XXXV
 "And shall I now, for fear of death,
 Look wan and be dismayed?
 Nay! from my heart fly childish fear,
 Be all the man displayed. 140

XXXVI
 "Ah! godlike Henry!⁴ God forbend,
 And guard thee and thy son,
 If 'tis his will; but if 'tis not,
 Why then, his will be done. 145

XXXVII
 "My honest friend, my fault has been 145
 To serve God, and my prince;
 And that I no time-server am,
 My death will soon convince."

XXXVIII
 "In London city was I born,
 Of parents of great note;
 My father did a noble arms
 Emblazon on his coat: 150

XXXIX
 "I make no doubt but he is gone
 Where soon I hope to go;
 Where we for ever shall be blest,
 From out the reach of woe; 155

XL
 "He taught me justice and the laws
 With pity to unite;
 And eke he taught me how to know
 The wrong cause from the right: 160

XLI
 "He taught me with a prudent hand
 To feed the hungry poor,
 Nor let my servants drive away
 The hungry from my door:

⁴ Henry VI (1422-1461). Tyrwhitt points out that Chatterton's ballad was probably suggested by the execution at Bristol of Sir Baldwin Fulford, a Lancastrian Knight, in 1461, the year of Edward IV's accession. Henry VI's son, Edward, Prince of Wales, was killed in 1471 at the battle of Tewkesbury, or, perhaps, murdered after the fight; Henry VI himself died in the Tower in the same year; he was probably murdered by the commands of Edward IV.

XLII

"And none can say but all my life
I have his wordes kept;
And summed the actions of the day
Each night before I slept. 185

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"I have a spouse, go ask of her,
If I defiled her bed? 170
I have a king and none can lay
Black treason on my head.

XLIV

"In Lent, and on the holy eve,
From flesh I did refrain;
Why should I then appear dismayed 175
To leave this world of pain?

XLV

"No! Hapless Henry! I rejoice,
I shall not see thy death;
Most willingly in thy just cause
Do I resign my breath. 180

XLVI

"Oh, fickle people! ruined land!
Thou wilt know peace no more;
While Richard's sons^a exalt themselves,
Thy brooks with blood will flow.

XLVII

"Say, were ye tired of godly peace, 185
And godly Henry's reign,
That you did chop^a your easy days
For those of blood and pain?

XLVIII

"What tho' I on a sledge be drawn,
And mangled by a hind,⁷
I do defy the traitor's power, 190
He cannot harm my mind;

XLIX

"What tho' uphoisted on a pole,
My limbs shall rot in air,
And no rich monument of brass 195
Charles Bawdin's name shall bear;

L

"Yet in the holy book above,
Which time can't eat away,
There with the servants of the Lord
My name shall live for aye. 200

LI

"Then welcome death! for life eterne
I leave this mortal life:
Farewell, vain world, and all that's dear,
My sons and loving wife!

LII

"Now death as welcome to me comes, 205
As e'er the month of May;
Nor would I even wish to live,
With my dear wife to stay."

LIII

Quoth Canynge, "'Tis a goodly thing
To be prepared to die; 210
And from this world of pain and grief
To God in Heaven to fly."

LIV

And now the bell began to toll,
And clarions to sound;
Sir Charles he heard the horses' feet 215
A-prancing on the ground:

LV

And just before the officers
His loving wife came in,
Weeping unfeigned tears of woe,
With loud and dismal din. 220

LVI

"Sweet Florence! now I pray forbear,
In quiet let me die;
Pray God that every Christian soul
May look on death as I.

LVII

"Sweet Florence! why these briny tears? 225
They wash my soul away,
And almost make me wish for life,
With thee, sweet dame, to stay.

LVIII

"'Tis but a journey I shall go
Unto the land of bliss; 230
Now, as a proof of husband's love,
Receive this holy kiss."

LIX

Then Florence, faltering in her say,
Trembling these wordes spoke,
"Ah, cruel Edward! bloody king! 235
My heart is well nigh broke:

LX

"Ah, sweet Sir Charles! why wilt thou go,
Without thy loving wife?
The cruel axe that cuts thy neck,
It eke shall end my life." 240

LXI

And now the officers came in
To bring Sir Charles away,
Who turned to his loving wife,
And thus to her did say:

LXII

"I go to life, and not to death; 245
Trust thou in God above,
And teach thy sons to fear the Lord,
And in their hearts him love;

^a Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. His Sons were Edward IV, George, Duke of Clarence, and Richard III.

⁶ Interrupt, cut short.

⁷ A rustic, a man of the lower class.

LXIII

"Teach them to run the noble race
That I their father run; 250
Florence! should death thee take—adieu!
Ye officers, lead on."

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LXIV

Then Florence raved as any mad,
And did her tresses tear;
"Oh! stay, my husband! lord! and life!"— 255
Sir Charles then dropped a tear.

LXV

Till, tired out with raving loud,
She fell upon the floor;
Sir Charles exerted all his might,
And marched from out the door. 260

LXVI

Upon a sledge he mounted then
With looks full brave and sweet;
Looks, that displayed no more concern
Than any in the street.

LXVII

Before him went the council-men, 265
In scarlet robes and gold,
And tassels spangling in the sun,
Much glorious to behold:

LXVIII

The Friars of Saint Augustine next
Appeared to the sight, 270
All clad in homely russet weeds
Of godly monkish plight:

LXIX

In different parts a godly psalm
Most sweetly they did chant;
Behind their backs six minstrels came, 275
Who tuned the strung bataunt.*

LXX

Then five-and-twenty archers came;
Each one the bow did bend,
From rescue of King Henry's friends
Sir Charles for to defend. 280

LXXI

Bold as a lion came Sir Charles,
Drawn on a cloth-laid sledde,
By two black steeds in trappings white,
With plumes upon their head.

LXXII

Behind him five-and-twenty more 285
Of archers strong and stout,
With bended bow each one in hand,
Marchéd in goodly rout:

LXXIII

Saint James's Friars marchéd next,
Each one his part did chant; 290
Behind their backs six minstrels came,
Who tuned the strung bataunt:

LXXIV

Then came the mayor and aldermen,
In cloth of scarlet deck't;
And their attending men each one, 295
Like Eastern princes trick't:

LXXV

And after them a multitude
Of citizens did throng;
The windows were all full of heads,
As he did pass along. 300

LXXVI

And when he came to the high cross,
Sir Charles did turn and say,
"O thou that savest man from sin,
Wash my soul clean this day!"

LXXVII

At the great minster window sat 305
The king in mickle state,
To see Charles Bawdin go along
To his most welcome fate.

LXXVIII

Soon as the sledge drew nigh enough,
That Edward he might hear, 310
The brave Sir Charles he did stand up
And thus his words declare:

LXXIX

"Thou seest me, Edward! traitor vile!
Exposed to infamy;
But be assured, disloyal man! 315
I'm greater now than thee.

LXXX

"By foul proceedings, murder, blood,
Thou wearest now a crown;
And hast appointed me to die,
By power not thine own. 320

LXXXI

"Thou thinkest I shall die today;
I have been dead till now,
And soon shall live to wear a crown
For aye upon my brow;

LXXXII

"Whilst thou, perhaps, for some few years, 325
Shalt rule this fickle land,
To let them know how wide the rule
'Twixt king and tyrant hand:

LXXXIII

"Thy power unjust, thou traitor slave!
Shall fall on thy own head—" 330
From out of hearing of the king
Departed then the sledde.

* Evidently intended to suggest a musical instrument of the viol class. The word *bataunt* seems to have been invented by Chatterton; perhaps for the sake of the rhyme.

LXXXIV

King Edward's soul rushed to his face,
He turned his head away,
And to his brother Gloucester* 335
He thus did speak and say:

LXXXV libtool.com.cn

"To him that so-much-dreaded death
No ghastly terrors bring,
Behold the man! he spake the truth,
He's greater than a king!" 340

LXXXVI

"So let him die!" Duke Richard said;
"And may each one our foes
Bend down their necks to bloody axe,
And feed the carrion crows."

LXXXVII

And now the horses gently drew 345
Sir Charles up the high hill;
The axe did glisten in the sun,
His precious blood to spill.

LXXXVIII

Sir Charles did up the scaffold go,
As up a gilded car 350
Of victory by valorous chiefs
Gained in the bloody war:

LXXXIX

And to the people he did say,
"Behold you see me die 355
For serving loyally my king,
My king most rightfully.

XC

"As long as Edward rules this land,
No quiet you will know;
Your sons and husbands shall be slain,
And brooks with blood shall flow. 360

XCI

"You leave your good and lawful king
When in adversity;
Like me, unto the true cause stick;
And for the true cause die."

XCII

Then he, with priests, upon his knees, 365
A prayer to God did make,
Beseeching him unto himself
His parting soul to take.

XCIII

Then, kneeling down he laid his head 370
Most seemly on the block;
Which from his body fair at once
The able headsman struck;

XCIV

And out the blood began to flow,
And round the scaffold twine;
And tears enough to wash't away, 375
Did flow from each man's eyne.

XCV

The bloody axe his body fair
Into four parties cut;
And every part, and eke his head,
Upon a pole was put. 380

XCVI

One part did rot on Kynwulph hill,
One on the minster tower,
And one from off the castle gate
The crowen did devour;

XCVII

The other on Saint Paul's good gate, 385
A dreary spectacle;
His head was placed on the high cross,
In High-street most noble.

XCVIII

Thus was the end of Bawdin's fate:
God prosper long our king, 390
And grant he may with Bawdin's soul,
In heaven God's mercy sing!

George Crabbe

1754-1832

THE MODERN PASTORAL

(From *The Village*, Bk. I. 1783)

The Village Life, and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasants, and declining swains;
What labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor finds at last;
What form the real picture of the poor, 5
Demand a song—the Muse can give no more.
Fled are those times, when, in harmonious
strains,

The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs'
rehearse; 10
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains re-
veal,

The only pains, alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous
reign, 15

If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?¹
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?
Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swains, 21
Because the Muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasant's pipes; but peasants
now

Resign their pipes, and plod behind the plow;

¹ i. e., the pastoral poems of Vergil, who was born near Mantua. The river *Mincio* (or *Mincius*) flows near Vergil's birthplace; Tityrus is the name of a shepherd in Vergil's *Eclogues*.

* Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III.

And few, amid the rural tribe, have time 25
To number syllables, and play with rhyme;
Save honest Duck,² what son of verse could
share

The poet's rapture, and the peasant's care?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade? 30

From this chief cause these idle praises
spring,

That themes so easy, few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask;
To sing of shepherds is an easy task:

The happy youth assumes the common strain, 35
A nymph his mistress, and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.

I grant indeed that fields and flocks have
charms

For him that grazes or for him that farms; 40
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads, and dewy temples play;
While some, with feeble hands and fainter
hearts, 45

Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts;
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?

No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse re-
lates, 51

And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as bards will not:
Nor you, ye poor, of lettered scorn complain, 55
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain:
O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?

Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed? 60
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'er-
power,

Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?

Lol where the heath, with withering brake
grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neigh-
bouring poor;

From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd
ears; 66

Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar
And to the ragged infant threaten war; 70
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a
shade, 75

And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;

With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around. . . .

Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race, 85
With sullen woe displayed in every face;

Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.

Here too the lawless merchant of the main
Draws from his plow th' intoxicated swain; 90
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.

Where are the swains, who, daily labour
done,

With rural games play'd down the setting
sun;

Who struck with matchless force the bounding
ball, 95

Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engaged some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks return'd the
sound? 100

Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they
stand,

To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course, 105
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.

Here, wand'ring long, amid these frowning
fields,

I sought the simple life that Nature yields; 110
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her
place,

And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,³
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run
high,

On the tost vessel bend their eager eye. 116
Which to their coast directs its vent'rous
way;

Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.

As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows
stand,

And wait for favouring winds to leave the
land;

While still for flight the ready wing is spread; 121
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;

Fled from these shores where guilt and famine
reign,

And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar, 125

Whose greedy waves devour the lessening
shore,

Till some fierce tide, with more imperious
sway,

Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to
door,

And begs a poor protection from the poor. . . .

² Stephen Duck, d. 1756, a self-taught and obscure versifier, of humble origin, who gave a truthful picture of the farmer's life in a poem called the *Thresher's Labour*, v. Southey's *Lives and Works of our Uneducated Poets*.

³ i. e., the bribe given for their votes at a Parliamentary election. By the Act of 1716, a new Parliament had to be elected at least once in every seven years.

PETER GRIMES¹(From *The Borough*, Letter XXII, 1810)

Alas! for Peter, not a helping hand, 65
 So was he hated, could he now command;
 Alone he row'd his boat, alone he cast
 His nets beside, or made his anchor fast;
 To hold a rope, or hear a curse was none,—
 He toil'd, and rail'd; he groan'd and swore
 alone. 70

Thus by himself compell'd to live each day,
 To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
 At the same time the same dull views to see,
 The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted
 tree;

The water only, when the tides were high, 75
 When low, the mud half-cover'd and half-
 dry:

The sun-burnt tar, that blisters on the planks,
 And bank side stakes in their uneven ranks;
 Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
 As the tide rolls by the impeded boat. 80

When the tides were neap, and, in the sultry
 day,

Through the tall bounding mud-banks made
 their way,

Which on each side rose swelling, and below
 The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
 There anchoring, Peter chose from man to
 hide, 85

There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
 In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;

Where the small cels that left the deeper way
 For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
 Where gaping mussels, left upon the mud, 90

Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
 Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
 How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked
 race;

Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
 Of fishing gull or clanging golden eye;² 95

What time the sea-birds to the marsh would
 come,

And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
 Gave from the salt-ditch side the bellowing
 boom:

He nursed the feelings these dull scenes pro-
 duce

And loved to stop beside the opening sluice; 100
 Where the small stream, confined in narrowing
 bound,

Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound;
 Where all, presented to the eye or ear,

Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief and fear.

Besides these objects, there were places
 three, 105

Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see;

¹ Peter Grimes is a fisherman, ignorant, lawless, avaricious, and cruel, from his youth. He gets from London a workhouse-boy to help him in his labors, receiving a small sum of money for giving the boy a home. The boy dies from brutality and neglect, and Peter procures another, thus gaining a second fee. This boy also dies, and after that a third boy, in a way that arouses the gravest suspicion. The murder is not proved, but Peter is forbidden to employ another boy, and warned that if he should be again accused he will find no mercy.

² A sea-duck.

When he drew near them he would turn from
 each,

And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach.
 A change of scene to him brought no relief;
 In town, t'was plain, men took him for a
 thief; 110

The sailors' wives would stop him in the street,
 And say, "Now, Peter, thou'st no boy to beat:"

Infants at play, when they perceived him, ran,
 Warning each other—"That's the wicked
 man,"

He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone 115
 Cursed the whole place, and wished to be alone.

FARMER MOSS'S DAUGHTER

(From *Tales in Verse*, 1812)

To farmer Moss, in Langar Vale, came down
 His only daughter, from her school in town;

A tender, timid maid! who knew not how
 To pass a pig-sty, or to face a cow:

Smiling she came, with petty talents graced, 5
 A fair complexion, and a slender waist.

Used to spare meals, disposed in manner pure,
 Her father's kitchen she could ill endure;

Where by the steaming beef he hungry sat,
 And laid at once a pound upon his plate; 10

Hot from the field, her eager brother seized
 An equal part, and hunger's rage appeased;

The air, surcharged with moisture, flagg'd
 around,

And the offended damsel sighed and frowned;
 The swelling fat in lumps conglomerate laid, 15

And fancy's sickness seized the loathing maid:
 But when the men beside their station took:

The maidens with them, and with these the
 cook;

When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
 Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food; 20

With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
 Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;

When from a single horn the party drew
 Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;

When the coarse cloth she saw, with many a
 stain, 25

Soil'd by rude hinds! who cut and come again—
 She could not breathe, but with a heavy sigh,

Rein'd the fair neck, and shut th' offended eye;
 She minced the sanguine flesh in frustums² fine,

And wonder'd much to see the creatures dine;³⁰
 When she resolved her father's heart to move,

If hearts of farmers were alive to love.
 She now entreated by herself to sit

In the small parlour, if papa thought fit,
 And there to dine, to read, to work alone: 35

"No," said the farmer in an angry tone;
 "These are your school-taught airs; your
 mother's pride

Would send you there; but I am now your
 guide.—

Arise betimes, our early meal prepare,
 And this despatch'd, let business be your
 care; 40

¹ Farm-laborers, rustics.

² Pieces (Lat. *frustum*, a piece, part.)

Look to the lasses, let there not be one
Who lacks attention, till her tasks be done;
In every household work your portion take,
And what you make not, see that others make:
At leisure times attend the wheel, and see 45
The whit'ning web be sprinkled on the Lea,
When thus employ'd, should our young neigh-
bour view
A useful lass, you may have more to do."

William Blake

1757-1827

TO THE MUSES

(From *Poetical Sketches*, 1783)

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair, 5
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove 10
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove;
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move, 15
The sound is forced, the notes are few.

TO THE EVENING STAR

(From the same)

Thou fair-haired angel of the evening,
Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountain,
light

Thy brilliant torch of love; thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves; and whilst thou drawest
round 5

The curtains of the sky, scatter thy dew
On every flower that closes its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering
eyes,

And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full
soon 10

Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And then the lion glares through the dun forest.
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew: protect them with thine in-
fluence.

INTRODUCTION

(From *Songs of Innocence*, 1787)

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he, laughing, said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!" 5
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!" 10
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read." 15
So he vanish'd from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear. 20

THE LAMB

(From the same)

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight, 5
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee? 10

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is call'd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild, 15
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are call'd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee! 20

NIGHT

(From the same)

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine,
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine. 5

The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight; 10
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen, they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom, 15
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm. 20
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey 25
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful, 30
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries, 35
And walking round the fold:
Saying "Wrath by His meekness,
And by His health, sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day. 40

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep. 45
For wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane forever
Shall shine like the gold,
As I guard o'er the fold."

TO THE DIVINE IMAGE

(From the same)

To mercy, pity, peace, and love,
All pray in their distress,
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For mercy, pity, peace, and love, 5
Is God our Father dear;
And mercy, pity, peace, and love,
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face; 10
And Love, the human form divine;
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress, 15
Prays to the human form divine;
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where mercy, love, and pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too. 20

ON ANOTHER'S SORROW

(From the same)

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear, 5
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd?

Can a mother sit and hear, 10
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He, who smiles on all,
Hear the wren, with sorrow small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care, 15
Hear the woes that infants bear?

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring Pity in their breast,
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear? 20

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
Oh, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give His joy to all: 25
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by: 30
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

Oh! He gives to us His joy,
That our griefs He may destroy. 35
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

THE TIGER

(From *The Songs of Experience*, 1794)

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies 5
Burned that fire within thine eyes?
On what wings dared he aspire?
What the hand dared seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art, 10
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
When thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer, what the chain,
Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dared thy deadly terrors clasp? 15

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee? 20

AH! SUNFLOWER

(From the same)

Ah! Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden prime
Where the traveller's journey is done;
Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go! 5

SCOTCH SONG WRITERS

John Skinner

1721-1807

TULLOCHGORUM¹

Come gie's a sang, Montgomery cried,
And lay your disputes all aside,
What signifies 't for folk to chide
For what's been done before them?
Let Whig and Tory all agree, 5
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
To drop their Whig-mig-morum;
Let Whig and Tory all agree, 10
To spend the night in mirth and glee,
And cheerfu' sing, along wi' me,
The reel o' Tullochgorum.

O, Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And any sump² that keeps up spite, 15
In conscience I abhor him.
For blythe and cheery we's be a',
Blythe and cheery, blythe and cheery,
Blythe and cheery we's be a',
As lang as we hae breth to draw, 20
And dance, till we be like to fa',
The reel of Tullochgorum.

There needs na' be sae great a phrase,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wadna gie our ain strathspeys³ 25
For half a hundred score o' 'em.
They're douff⁴ and dowie⁵ at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie,

They're douff and dowie at the best
Wi' a' their variorium. 30
They're douff and dowie at the best,
Their allegros and a' the rest,
They canna please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

Let warldly minds themselves oppress 35
Wi' fears of want, and double cess,⁶
And sullen sots themselves distress
Wi' keeping up decorum.
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky, 40
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Like auld Philosophorum?
Shall we so sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,
Nor ever rise to shake a fit 45
To the reel of Tullochgorum?

May choicest blessings still attend
Each honest open-hearted friend,
And calm and quiet be his end,
And a' that's good watch o'er him! 50
May peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' 'em;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstained by any vicious spot!
And may be never want a groat 55
That's fond of Tullochgorum.

But for the dirty, yawning fool,
Who wants to be oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him! 60
May dool⁷ and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
And nane say wae's me for 'im!
May dool and sorrow be his chance, 65
Wi' a' the ills that come frae France,
Whae'er he be, that winna dance
The reel of Tullochgorum.

Jane Elliot

1727-1805

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

I've heard them liting,¹ at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a-liting, before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning, on ilka green
loaning;² 3
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede⁴ away.
At bughts⁵ in the morning nae blythe lads are
scorning; 5
The lasses are lanely, and dowie, and wae;
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and
sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin,⁶ and hies her away.

¹ Double taxes. (Cess = a tax); i. e., the amount of tax
ceased, or assessed, by the Government.

² Dole, grief.

³ Singing joyously.

⁴ A path left for the cattle between the corn fields.

⁵ Withered, faded.

⁶ Sheep-pens.

⁷ Milk-pail.

¹ When Skinner wrote this poem, *Tullochgorum* was not a song but the name of a tune to a Highland reel. Burns pronounced Skinner's *Tullochgorum* "the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw."

² Fool, softly. ³ A Scotch dance resembling the reel.

⁴ Dull. ⁵ Doleful.

In hairst,⁶ at the shearing, nae youths now are
 jeering,
 The bandsters⁷ are lyart,⁸ and runckled and
 gray;
 At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae
 fleeching⁹
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies¹⁰ are
 roaming
 'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle¹¹ to play;
 But ilk ane sits eerie, lamenting her dearie— 15
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the
 Border!
 The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
 The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the
 foremost,
 The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay. 20

We'll hear nae more liltin' at our ewe-milking,
 Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
 Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Isabel Hagan

1740-1821

CA' THE YOWES

Ca' the yowes¹ to the knowes²
 Ca' them where the heather grows,
 Ca' them where the burnie rows,³
 My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water side, 5
 There I met my shepherd lad,
 He rowed me sweetly in his plaid,
 And he ca'd me his dearie.

Will ye gang down the water side, 10
 And see the waves sae sweetly glide
 Beneath the hazels spreading wide,
 The moon it shines fu' clearly.

I was bred up at nae sic school, 15
 My shepherd lad to play the fool;
 And a' the day to sit in dool,
 And naeboddy to see me.

Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet, 20
 Caulf-leather shoon upon your feet,
 And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
 And ye shall be my dearie.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
 I'se gang wi' you my shepherd lad;
 And ye may row me in your plaid,
 And I shall be your dearie.

⁶ Harvest. ⁷ Men who bind the sheaves.
⁸ Gray-haired. ⁹ Coaxing.
¹⁰ Active young men. ¹¹ Hide-and-seek.

¹ Ewes. ² Knolls. ³ The brook rolls.

While waters wimple⁴ to the sea, 25
 While day blinks in the lift sae hie;
 Till clay-cauld death shall blin' my e'e,
 Ye aye shall be my dearie.

Lady Anne Barnard

1750-1825

AULD ROBIN GRAY

When the sheep are in the fauld, when the
 kye's¹ come hame,
 And a' the weary warld to rest are gane,
 The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae ma ee,
 Unkent by my guidman, wha sleeps sound by
 me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for
 his bride, 5
 But saving ae crown-piece he had naething
 beside;
 To make the crown a pound my Jamie gaed to
 sea,
 And the crown and the pound—they were baith
 for me.

He hadna been gane a twelvemonth and a day,
 When my father brake his arm and the cow
 was stown² away; 10
 My mither she fell sick—my Jamie was at sea,
 And auld Robin Gray came a-courting me.

My father couldna wark—my mother couldna
 spin—
 I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna
 win;
 Auld Rob maintained them baith, and, wi'
 tears in his ee, 15
 Said: "Jeanie, O for their sakes, will ye no
 marry me?"

My heart it said na, and I looked for Jamie
 back,
 But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a
 wrack,
 His ship was a wrack—why didna Jamie die,
 Or why am I spared to cry wae is me? 20

My father urged me sair—my mither didna
 speak,
 But she looked in my face till my heart was like
 to break;
 Thy gied him my hand—my heart was in the
 sea—
 And so auld Robin Gray he was guidman to me.

I hadna been his wife a week but only four, 25
 When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my
 door,
 I saw my Jamie's ghaist, for I couldna think
 it he,
 Till he said: "I'm come hame, love, to marry
 thee!"

⁴ Ripple.
¹ Cows.

² Stolen.

Oh, sair sair did we greet, and mickle say o' a',
 I gied him ae kiss, and bade him gang awa'— 30
 I wish that I were dead, but I'm na like to die,
 For, though my heart is broken, I'm but young,
 wae is me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena much to spin,
 I carena think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin,
 But I'll do my best a gude wife to be, 35
 For, oh! Robin Gray, he is kind to me.

Caroline Oliphant (Lady Nairn)

1766-1845

THE LAND OF THE LEAL

I'm wearin' awa', John,
 Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
 I'm wearin' awa',
 To the land o' the leal.¹
 There's nae sorrow there, John, 5
 There's neither cauld nor care, John,
 The day is aye fair
 In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
 She was baith gude and fair, John; 10
 And O! we grudged her sair
 To the land o' the leal.
 But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
 And joy's a-coming fast, John,
 The joy that's aye to last
 In the land o' the leal. 15

Sae dear's the joy was bought, John,
 Sae free the battle fought, John,
 That sinfu' man e'er brought,
 To the land o' the leal.
 O, dry your glistening e'e, John!
 My saul lings to be free, John,
 And angels beckon me
 To the land o' the leal.

O, haud ye leal and true, John! 25
 Your day it's wearin' through, John,
 And I'll welcome you
 To the land o' the leal.
 Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
 This world's cares are vain, John, 30
 We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
 In the land o' the leal.

ANONYMOUS

THE WEE, WEE GERMAN LAIRDIE

Wha the deil hae we got for a king,
 But a wee, wee German lairdie!¹
 An' when we gae'd to bring him hame,
 He was delving in his kail-yardie!²

¹ Loyal, faithful, true-hearted.

¹ i. e., George I (1714-1727), Elector of Hanover.
 Both George I and George II were favorite subjects
 for ridicule with the Jacobite song-writers.

² Cabbage-garden.

Sheughing kail,³ and laying leeks, 5
 Without the hose and but the breeks;⁴
 And up his beggar duds he cleeks,
 The wee, wee German lairdie!

And he's clappit down in our gudeman's chair,
 The wee, wee German lairdie! 10
 And he's brought fouth⁵ o' foreign trash,
 And dibbled⁶ them in his yardie:
 He's pu'd the rose o' English loons,
 And brake the harp o' Irish clowns,
 But our Scot's thistle will jag his thumbs, 15
 The wee, wee German lairdie!

Come up amang the Highland hills,
 Thou wee, wee German lairdie,
 And see how Charlie's⁷ lang-kail thrive,
 That he dibbled in his yardie: 20
 And if a stock ye daur to pu',
 Or haud the yoking o' a plough,
 We'll break your sceptre o'er your mou',
 Thou wee bit German lairdie!

Our hills are steep, our glens are deep, 25
 Nae fitting for a yardie;
 And our norlan' thistles winna pu',
 For a wee bit German lairdie!
 And we've the trenching blades o' weir,
 Wad glib⁸ ye o' your German gear, 30
 And pass ye neath the claymore's sheer
 Thou feckless German lairdie!

Auld Scotland! thou'rt owre cauld a hole
 For nursing siccan vermin;
 But the very dogs o' England's court 35
 Can bark and howl in German!
 Then keep thy dibble⁹ i' thy ain hand,
 Thy spade but and thy yardie;
 For wha the deil now claims your land, 40
 But a wee, wee German lairdie?

CHARLIE IS MY DARLING

'Twas on a Monday morning,
 Right early in the year,
 That Charlie¹ came to our town,
 The young Chevalier.
 And Charlie he's my darling, 5
 My darling, my darling,
 And Charlie he's my darling,
 The young Chevalier.

As Charlie he came up the gate,
 His face shone like the day: 10
 I gat to see the lad come back
 That had been lang away.
 And Charlie he's my darling, etc.

³ Ditching cabbage.

⁴ Without breeches.

⁵ Plenty.

⁶ Planted.

⁷ Charles Edward Stuart, "the young Pretender,"
 grandson of King James II.

⁸ Deprive.

⁹ A pointed tool, used to make holes for planting seeds,
 or "dibbling."

¹ Charles Stuart, "the young Pretender," as his father
 James Edward Stuart, was called the "Chevalier" by
 his friends, Charles gained the title of "the young Chev-
 alier."

And ilka bonnie lassie sang,
As to the door she ran,
Our king shall hae his ain again,
And Charlie is the man.
And Charlie he's my darling, etc.

15

Out-owre yon moory mountain,
And down yon craigy glen,
Of naething else our lasses sing
But Charlie and his men.
And Charlie he's my darling, etc.

20

Our Highland hearts are true and leal,
And glow without a stain;
Our Highland swords are metal keen,
And Charlie he's our ain.
And Charlie he's my darling
My darling, my darling,
And Charlie he's my darling,
The young Chevalier.

25

30

Robert Fergusson

1750-1774

THE DAFT DAYS

Now mirk December's dowie¹ face
Glow'r's ow'r the rigs² wi' sour grimace,
While, thro' his *minimum* o' space,
The bleer-ey'd sun,
Wi' blinkin' light, and stealin' pace,
His race doth run.

5

Frae naked groves nae birdie sings,
To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings,
The breeze nae od'rous flavour brings
From Borean cave,
An' dwynin'³ Nature droops her wings,
Wi' visage grave.

10

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean
Frae snawy hill or barren plain,
Whan Winter, 'midst his nipping train,
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift ow'r a' his bleak domain,
And guides the weir.⁴

15

Auld Reekie!⁵ thou'rt the canty hole,
A bield⁶ for mony a cauldribe⁷ soul,
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth;⁸
While round they gar the bicker⁹ roll,
To weet their mouth. . . .

20

Ye browster wives, now busk ye bra',
An' fling your sorrows far awa';
Then come and gie's the tither blaw
O' reaming ale,
Mair precious than the well o' Spa,
Our hearts to heal. . . .

25

30

Fiddlers, your pins in temper fix,
And roset weel your fiddle-sticks,
But banish vile Italian tricks
Frae out your quorum,
Nor fortes wi' pianos mix,
Gie's Tullochgorum. . . .

35

And thou, great god of *Aqua Vitae*!
Wha sways the empire o' this city,
When fou we're sometimes capernoity,
Be thou prepar'd
To hedge us from that black banditti,
The City-Guard.

40

Robert Burns

(1759-1796)

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

(1785)

"Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."
GRAY.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected
friend!

No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays, 5
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless
ways,

What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there
I ween!

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;¹⁰
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their
repose:

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil¹¹ is at an end, 15
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his
hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
hameward bend.

At length his lonely oot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree; 20
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher¹²
through

To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and
glee.

His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonily,

¹ Robert Aiken, a solicitor in Ayr, who was a patron of Burns, and an admirer of his poetry.

² A whistling, rushing sound. (Scottish form of *sough*.)
³ Drudgery.

⁴ Stagger.

¹ Gloomy.

² Ridges, hills.

³ Pining, wasting away.

⁴ War.

⁵ Old smoky, i. e., Edinburgh.

⁶ Shelter.

⁷ Chilly.

⁸ Kind, friendly.

⁹ Wooden drinking-cup, or bowl.

His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wife's smile,
The lispin infant, prattling on his knee, 25
Does a' his weary kiaugh⁶ and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

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Belyve,⁶ the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca'⁷ the pleugh, some herd, some tentie
rin 30

A cannie errand⁸ to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-
grown,
In youthfu' bloom,—love sparkling in her
e'e—

Comes hame, perhaps to shew a brow⁹ new
gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,¹⁰ 35
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly
spiers;¹¹

The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd
fleet:

Each tells the uncos¹² that he sees or hears;
The parents partial eye their hopeful
years; 41

Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the
new,
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due. 45

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkens a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent¹³ hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk¹⁴ or
play;

"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway, 50
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord
aright."

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door; 55
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek; 60
Wi' heart-struck anxious care enquires his
name,

While Jenny haffins¹⁵ is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild,
worthless rake.

⁶ Worry, labor. ⁸ By-and-bye, presently.
⁷ Drive. As in "ca canny," drive slowly, or cau-
tiously.

⁸ Tentie rin a cannie errand—careful run a frugal errand.
⁹ Brave, fine, gay. ¹⁰ i. e., hard-won wages.

¹¹ Enquires. ¹² Strange happenings, little incidents out of the com-
mon. ¹³ Diligent. ¹⁴ Half.

¹⁵ To trifle, or, as we would say, to fool.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;¹⁶
A strappin youth, he takes the mother's
eye; 65

Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and
kye.¹⁷

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi'
joy,

But blate an' laithfu',¹⁸ scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy¹⁹
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae
grave,
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like
the lave.²⁰

Oh, happy love! where love like this is found!
Oh, heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond com-
pare!

I've paced much this weary, mortal round, 75
And sage experience bids me this declare;
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure
spare—

One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender
tale, 80
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
evening gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling
smooth! 85

Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their
child?

Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distrac-
tion wild? 90

But now the supper crowns their simple
board,
The wholesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's
food;

The soupe their only hawkie²¹ does afford,
That, 'yont the hallan²² snugly chows her
cood:

The dame brings forth, in complimentary
mood, 95

To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck,
fell;²³

And aft he's preest, and aft he ca's it guid:
The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell
How 't was a towmond auld, ²⁴ sin' lint was i' the
bell.²⁴

¹⁶ Inside, into the inner room. In two-roomed houses
the outer apartment was called the *but*, the inner, con-
taining the fire-place, *ben*.

¹⁷ Cows.
¹⁸ Blate an' laithfu'—shamefaced and reluctant. The
youth is hesitating and awkward through shyness and
modesty.

¹⁹ The rest, the others.
²⁰ Cow, more especially a black and white cow. *Soups*,
i. e., milk.

²¹ Partition. ²² Well-saved cheese, strong, pungent.
²³ Twelve-month old. ²⁴ Since flax was in the flower.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,¹⁰⁰
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
 The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-bible,²⁸ ance his father's pride;
 His bonnet²⁹ rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets³⁰ wearing thin and bare;¹⁰⁵
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion
 glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care;
 And "Let us worship God!" he says, with
 solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple
 guise,
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
 aim;¹¹⁰
 Perhaps "Dundee's"³¹ wild-warbling meas-
 ures rise,
 Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the
 name;
 Or noble "Elgin" beets³² the heaven-ward
 flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
 Compar'd with these, Italian trills are
 tame;¹¹⁵
 The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
 How Abram was the friend of God on high;
 Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage¹²⁰
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
 Or how the royal bard³³ did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
 Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;¹²⁵
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was
 shed:
 How He, who bore in Heaven the second
 name,
 Had not on earth whereon to lay His
 head;¹³⁰
 How His first followers and servants sped;
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
 How he, who lone in Patmos banish'd,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
 And heard great Bab'lon's doom³¹ pronounc'd
 by Heaven's command.¹³⁵

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal
 King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband
 prays:
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant
 wing,"³²

²⁸ Hall-bible, i. e., house-hold, or family, Bible.
²⁹ In Scotland (as in Shakespeare) *bonnet* often means
 a cap, or head-covering, worn by men or boys. In Scott's
 well-known song the "*Blue Bonnets*"=the Scotch.
 (c. p. 501).

³⁰ Grey temples, i. e., the locks of gray about his tem-
 ples.

³¹ *Dundee, Martyrs, and Elgin* are among the most
 familiar and characteristic of the Scottish hymn-tunes.

³² Rouses, fans.

³³ King David.

³⁴ Rev. xviii.

³⁵ Pope, *Windsor Forest*, l. 111.

That thus they all shall meet in future
 days,
 There, ever bask in uncreated rays,¹⁴⁰
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear;
 While circling Time moves round in an eternal
 sphere.¹⁴⁴

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method, and of art;
 When men display to congregations wide
 Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
 The Power, incens'd, the pageant will
 desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;¹⁵⁰
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the
 soul;
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor en-
 roll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral
 way;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest:¹⁵⁵
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heaven the warm re-
 quest,
 That He who stills the raven's clam'rous
 nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the
 best,¹⁶⁰
 For them and for their little ones provide;
 But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine
 preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur
 springs,
 That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd
 abroad:¹⁶⁴
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 "An honest man's the noblest work of
 God;"³³
 And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
 What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous
 load,¹⁶⁹
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is
 sent,
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
 content!¹⁷⁵
 And O! may Heaven their simple lives pre-
 vent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be
 rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-
 lov'd isle.¹⁸⁰

³⁴ Pope, *Essay on Man*, Ep. iv. 247.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' great unhappy Wal-
lace's heart,
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art, 185
His friend, inspirer, guardian and reward!)
Oh never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and
guard!

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD

April 1st, 1785

While briars and woodbines budding green,
And patricks scraichin' loud at e'en,
And morning poussie whidden² seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien' 5
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en³ we had a rockin',⁴
To ca' the crack⁵ and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle fun and jokin',
Ye needna doubt; 10
At length we had a hearty yokin'⁶
At sang about.

There was ae sang, among the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had address 15
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd⁷ the heart-strings through the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What generous manly bosoms feel; 20
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's war?
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain⁸ to hear't,
And sae about him there I spiert;⁹
Then a' that kent him round declared
He had ingine;¹⁰
That name excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine. 30

That, set him to a pint of ale,
And either douce¹¹ or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches:
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale 35
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, and swore an aith,
Though I should pawn my plough and graith,¹²
Or die a cadger pownie's¹³ death,
At some dike back, 40
A pint and gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.¹⁴

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,¹⁵ 45
Though rude and rough:
Yet croonin' to a body's sel
Does weel enough.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymier, like by chance, 50
And hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet what the matter?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To make a sang?" 55
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang. 60

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs¹⁶ your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spadds and shoos, 65
Or knappin'-hammers.¹⁷

A set o' dull conceited hashies,¹⁸
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks,¹⁹ and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak; 70
And syne²⁰ they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me a spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then, though I drudge through dub²¹ and mire
At plough or cart, 75
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

Oh for a spunk²² o' Allan's²³ glee,
Or Fergusson's the bauld and slee,²⁴ 80
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear²⁵ enough for me,
If I could get it!

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow, 85
Though real friends I b'lieve are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fu',
I' se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list. 90

¹² Tackle. ¹³ A packman's, or carrier's pony.
¹⁴ Talk. ¹⁵ i. e. I fell to making doggerel verses.
¹⁶ Serves. ¹⁷ Stone-breakers' hammers.
¹⁸ Blockheads. ¹⁹ Young cattle. ²⁰ Then. ²¹ Puddle.
²² Spark. ²³ Allan Ramsay. ²⁴ Sly. ²⁵ Learning.

¹ Partridges crying. ² Hare scampering.
³ The evening before the fast of Lent, or before Ash
Wednesday.
⁴ Evening party. ⁵ Drive the talk.
⁶ A turn, or bout. *Hearty yokin'* corresponds to "a
good spell."
⁷ Thrilled. ⁸ i. e. it made me impatient.
⁹ Inquired. ¹⁰ Genius. ¹¹ Serious, sober.

I winna blaw about mysel;
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose²⁰ me;
Though I maun own, as mony still 95
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For mony a plack²¹ they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair; 100
Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to Care, 105
If we forgather,
And hae a swap o' rhymin' ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
And kirsen²² him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down and tak our whitter,²³ 110
To cheer our heart;
And faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa' ye selfish war'ly race, 115
Wha think that havins,²⁴ sense and grace,
E'en love and friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack!²⁵
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.²⁶ 120

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms, 125
My friends, my brothers.

But, to conclude my long epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle;
Twa lines frae you would gar me fiddle,²⁷
Who am most fervent, 130
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servaut.

TO A MOUSE, ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST, WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!¹
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee, 5
Wi' murd'ring pattle!²

²⁰ Praise. ²¹ Coin. ²² Christen. ²³ Draught.
²⁴ Manners. ²⁵ Money-making. "chasing-the-dollar."
²⁶ Talk. ²⁷ Fidget, i. e., jump for joy.

¹ Hurrying flight.

² The stick used to scrape the earth from the plough-share.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle 10
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles,³ but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave⁴ 15
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin! 20
An' naething now to big⁵ a new ane,
O' foggage⁶ green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell⁷ an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste, 25
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell—
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell. 30

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But⁸ house or hald,⁹
To thole the winter's sleety dribble, 35
An' cranreuch¹⁰ cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,¹¹ 40
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promis'd joy!

Still, thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee;
But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear! 45
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY, ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tipp'd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush among the stour¹
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r, 5
Thou bonie gem.

³ At times, occasionally.
⁴ An occasional ear in twenty-four sheaves. A thrave consisted of two stooks of corn of twelve sheaves each.
⁵ Build. ⁶ Grass growing among the grain. ⁷ Bitter.
⁸ Without. ⁹ Home. ¹⁰ Hoar-frost. ¹¹ Awry.

¹ In Scotland stour usually means dust, or moving dust. Here, stour involves the idea of the earth up-turned or disturbed by the plough,

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weat,
Wi' speckl'd breast! 10
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Could blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth 15
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield; 20
But thou, beneath the random field²
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie³ stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy anawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head 25
In humble guise;
But now the share upturns thy bed,
And low thou lies! 30

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust, 35
Till she, like thee, all soil'd is laid,
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card⁴ 40
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n, 45
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate, 50
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

A BARD'S EPITAPH

(1786)

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate¹ to seek, owre proud to snool,²
Let him draw near; 5
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,³
And drap a tear.

² Shelter. ³ Dry, barren.
⁴ Probably here=compass. The card, or compass-card, on which the points were given, was often used for the compass itself.

¹ Bashful.² To cringe.³ A lamentation.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by! 10
But, with a frater-feeling⁴ strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career, 15
Wild as the wave,
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow, 20
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole, 25
In low pursuit:
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root. 30

A PRAYER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF
VIOLENT ANGUISH

(1786)

O Thou Great Being! what Thou art,
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all thy Works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands, 5
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath! 10
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design,
Then man my soul with firm resolves, 15
To bear and not repine!

AULD LANG SYNE

(1788)

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus. For auld lang syne, my dear, 5
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

⁴ Brotherly feeling.

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!¹
 And surely I'll be mine!² 10
 And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
 For auld lang syne.
 For auld, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
 And pou'd the gowans;³ fine; 15
 But we've wandered mony a weary fit,
 Sin' auld lang syne.
 For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,³
 Frae morning sun till dine;⁴ 20
 But seas between us braid hae roar'd
 Sin' auld lang syne.
 For auld, &c.

And there's a hand, my trusty fere!⁵
 And gie's a hand o' thine!⁶ 25
 And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught,⁶
 For auld, &c.

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW

(1788)

Of a' the airts¹ the wind can blaw,
 I dearly like the west,
 For there the bonie lassie lives,
 The lassie I lo'e best:
 There wild-woods grow, and rivers row, 5
 And mony a hill between:
 But day and night my fancy's flight
 Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
 I see her sweet and fair: 10
 I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
 I hear her charm the air:
 There's not a bonie flower that springs,
 By fountain, shaw,² or green;
 There's not a bonie bird that sings, 15
 But minds me o' my Jean.

MY BONIE MARY

(1788)

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
 And fill it in a silver tassie;¹
 That I may drink before I go,
 A service to my bonie lassie.
 The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith; 5
 Fu' loud the wind blows frae the Ferry;
 The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
 And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
 The glittering spears are rank'd ready: 10
 The shouts o' war are heard afar,
 The battle closes deep and bloody;

¹ Stand for a pint cup.

² Paddled in the brook.

³ Companion.

⁴ Direction.

⁵ A goblet.

⁶ Daisies.

⁷ Dinner time.

⁸ A hearty draught.

⁹ Grove or wood.

It's not the roar o' sea or shore,
 Wad mak me langer wish to tarry!
 Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar— 15
 It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary!

THE WOUNDED HARE

(1789)

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
 And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye,
 May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
 Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wand'r'er of the wood and field! 5
 The bitter little that of life remains:
 No more the thickening brakes and verdant
 plains
 To thee a home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted
 rest,
 No more of rest, but now the dying bed! 10
 The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
 The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe;
 The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side;
 Ah! helpless nurslings, who will now provide
 That life a mother only can bestow! 15

Of as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
 The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
 I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
 And curse the ruffian's arm, and mourn thy
 hapless fate. 20

AE FOND KISS, AND THEN WE SEVER

(1791)

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
 Ae farewell, and then for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
 Who shall say that Fortune grieves him, 5
 While the star of hope she leaves him?
 Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me;
 Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
 Naething could resist my Nancy: 10
 But to see her was to love her;
 Love but her, and love for ever.
 Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
 Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
 Never met—or never parted, 15
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
 Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
 Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure! 20
 Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
 Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

TAM O'SHANTER

(First published 1791)

"Of Brownie's and of Bogillie's is this Buke."

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

When chapman billies¹ leave the street,
And drouthy² neighbors, neighbors meet,
As market days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate,³
While we sit bousing at the nappy,⁴
An' getting fou⁵ and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,⁶
The mosses, waters, slaps,⁷ and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum;⁸
A blethering, blustering, drunken biellum;⁹
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou wasna sober;
That ilka melder¹⁰ wi' the Miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd¹¹ a shoe on
The Smith and thee gat roarin fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean¹² till Monday;
She prophesied that late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon,<
Or catch'd wi' warlocks¹³ i' the mirk,¹⁴
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,¹⁵
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle,¹⁶ bleesing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter¹⁷ Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.

¹ Pedlar fellows, pedlars. ³ Thirsty.
² Road. ⁴ Ale, especially strong ale. ⁵ Full.
The Scotch mile was several hundred yards longer
than the English mile.

⁷ Gaps in a hedge or fence. ⁸ Scoundrel.
⁹ Blatherkite, noisy talker.
¹⁰ i. e., Every time he took meal to be ground. *Melder* =
the amount of meal ground at one time.

¹¹ i. e., every horse that was shod. *Ca'd* = driven; to
ca a shoe = to drive, or nail on, a shoe.

¹² i. e., Jean Kennedy, who kept a public house at the
village of Kirkcaldy, on the road from Portpatrick to
Glasgow. At Kirkcaldy, Douglas Graham and John
Davidson are buried, the first is thought to have been
the original of Tam O' Shanter, the second of Souter
Johnie.

¹⁵ Here, monsters, creatures in league with the devil.
¹⁶ Dark. ¹⁷ Makes me weep.
¹⁸ Fire, or fire-place. ¹⁹ Cobbler.

The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And aye the ale was growing better:
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair¹⁸ and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel among the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades¹⁹ o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the Borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the Rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.—

Nae man can tether Time or Tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he takes the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel-mounted on his gray mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit²⁰ on thro' dub²¹ and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'rin round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles²² catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets²³ nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;²⁴
And past the birks²⁵ and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins,²⁶ and by the cairn,²⁷
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel'.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll,
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze,
Thro' ilka bore²⁸ the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

¹⁸ Roar. ¹⁹ Loads. ²⁰ Dashed, hurried.
²¹ Puddle. ²² Ghosts, hobgoblins. ²³ Owls.
²⁴ Was smothered. ²⁵ Birches.
²⁶ Furze. ²⁷ A heap of stones. ²⁸ Hole, opening.

- Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!³⁰ 105
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny,³¹ we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquebae,³¹ we'll face the devill
 The swats sae ream'd³² in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle,³³ 110
 But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
 She ventur'd forward on the light;
 And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
- Warlocks and witches in a dance: 115
 Nae cotillion, brent new³⁴ frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker³⁵ in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast; 120
 A towzie tyke,³⁶ black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge;
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,³⁷
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirle.³⁸
 Coffins stood round, like open presses, 125
 That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses;
 And (by some devilish cantraip³⁹ sleight)
 Each in its cauld hand held a light.
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table, 130
 A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
 A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
 Wi' his last gasp his gab⁴⁰ did gape;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
 Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted; 135
 A garter which a babe had strangled:
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son of life bereft,
 The gray-hairs yet stack to the heft; 140
 Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.
- As Tammie glowr'd amaz'd, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The Piper loud and louder blew, 145
 The dancers quick and quicker flew;
 They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they
 cleekit,⁴¹
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coast her duddies⁴² to the wark,
 And linket⁴³ at it in her sark!⁴⁴ 150
- Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,⁴⁵
 A' plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flainen,⁴⁶
 Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen!⁴⁷—
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair, 155
 That aye were plush, o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gien them off my hurdies,⁴⁸
 For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!⁴⁹
- But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie⁵⁰ hags wad spean⁵¹ a foal, 160
 Louping an' flinging on a crummock,⁵²
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach.
 But Tam kennt what was what fu' brawlie;
 There was ae winsome wench and waulie,⁵³ 165
 That night enlisted in the core,
 Lang after ken'd on Carrick shore;
 (For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear,⁵⁴
 And kept the country-side in fear); 170
 Her cutty sark,⁵⁵ o' Paisley harn,⁵⁶
 That while a lassie she had worn,
 In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.⁵⁷
 Ah! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
 That sark she coft⁵⁸ for her wee Nannie,
 Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
 Wad ever grac'd a dance o' witches! 175
 But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
 Sic flights are far beyond her power;
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
 (A souple jade she was and strang),
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
 And thought his very een enrich'd:
 Even Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain, 185
 And hotch'd⁵⁹ and blew wi' might and main:
 Till first ae caper, syne⁶⁰ anither,
 Tam tint⁶¹ his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
 And in an instant all was dark: 190
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.
- As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,⁶²
 When plundering herds assail their byke,⁶³
 As open pussie's⁶⁴ mortal foes, 195
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' mony an eldritch skreich⁶⁵ and hollow. 200
- Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!⁶⁶
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
 Now, do thy speedy-utmost, Meg, 205
 And win the key-stane⁶⁷ o' the brig;
 There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they darena cross!
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fiend a tail⁶⁸ she had to shakel 210
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 Perhaps = wrinkled, withered. ⁶¹ Wean.
 Staff, a witch's stick. ⁶² Strapping.
 Barley. ⁶³ Short shirt.
 Paisley yarn, i. e., a kind of coarse linen. Paisley
 is noted for its manufacture of linen, shawls, etc.
 Proud of it. ⁶⁴ Bought. ⁶⁵ Hitched.
 Then. ⁶⁶ Lost.
 Fuss, restlessness. ⁶⁷ Hive.
 Pussy =, here, hare, or rabbit.
 Ghastly, or unearthly, screech. ⁶⁸ Deserts.
 i. e., the middle of the bridge. This was the point of
 safety, since the pursuing spirits could not pass beyond
 the middle of the running stream beneath.
 i. e., "The devil a bit of a tail." (Fiend = fiend, devil).

³⁰ The personification of barley, or malt, liquor. Cf. Burns' poem *John Barleycorn*.

³¹ Twopenny ale. ³² Whiskey. ³³ Ale so frothed.

³⁴ A small Scotch coin. ³⁵ Bright, new = bran-new.

³⁶ Window-ledge, or seat. ³⁷ Shaggy cur.

³⁸ Made them scream, or sound shrilly.

³⁹ Rattle, tremble. ⁴⁰ Magic. ⁴¹ Mouth.

⁴² Joined hands. ⁴³ Cast off her old clothes.

⁴⁴ Tripped. ⁴⁵ Shirt. ⁴⁶ Young girls.

⁴⁷ Greasy flannel. ⁴⁸ i. e., fine linen.

⁴⁹ Hips. ⁵⁰ Lasses.

And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;²
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
 Ae spring brought off her master hale, 215
 But left behind her ain gray tail:
 The carling clauht;³ her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed: 220
 Whene'er to Drink you are inclin'd,
 Or Cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
 Think ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

AFTON WATER

(1791)

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
 braes,¹
 Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
 dream.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds through
 the glen, 5

Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
 Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming for-
 bear—

I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
 Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding
 rills; 10

There daily I wander as noon rises high,
 My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys
 below,

Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
 blow;

There, oft as mild evening weeps over the lea, 15
 The sweet-scented birk⁴ shades my Mary and
 me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
 And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
 How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
 As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy
 clear wave. 20

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
 braes,

Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays:
 My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
 Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
 dream!

HIGHLAND MARY

(1792)

Ye banks and braes and streams around
 The castle o' Montgomery!
 Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
 Your waters never drumlie:¹

² Intent.³ Clutched.¹ Banks.⁴ Birch.¹ Muddy.

There Simmer first unfold her robes, 5
 And there the longest tarry;
 For there I took the last Farewell
 O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,¹
 How rich the hawthorn's blossom, 10
 As underneath their fragrant shade,
 I clasp'd her to my bosom!
 The golden Hours on angel wings,
 Flew o'er me and my Dearie;
 For dear to me, as light and life, 15
 Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
 Our parting was fu' tender;
 And, pledging aft to meet again,
 We tore oursel's asunder; 20
 But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
 That nipt my Flower sae early!
 Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay
 That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips, 25
 I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
 And clos'd for aye, the sparkling glance
 That dwelt on me sae kindly!
 And mouldering now in silent dust,
 That heart that lo'd me dearly! 30
 But still within my bosom's core
 Shall live my Highland Mary.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY AT
BANNOCKBURN

(1793)

Scots, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
 Scots, wham BRUCE has often led;
 Welcome to your gory bed,
 Or to Victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour; 5
 See the front o' battle lour;
 See approach proud EDWARD's power—
 Chains and Slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave? 10
 Wha sae base as be a slave?
 Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 FREEMAN stand, or FREEMAN fa', 15
 Let him on wi' me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
 By your Sons in servile chains!
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be free! 20

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
 Tyrants fall in every foe!
 LIBERTY's in every blow!—
 Let us Do or Die!
¹ Birch.

A RED, RED ROSE

(1793)

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melody
That's sweetly play'd in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.
Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.
And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve!
And fare-thee-weel awhile!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile!

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE AND CANTIE
WI' MAIR

(1794)

Contented wi' little, and cantie¹ wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' Sorrow and Care,
I gie them a skelp² as they're creeping along,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats³ and an auld Scottish
sang.

Chorus—Contented wi' little, &c.

I whiles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But Man is a soger,⁴ and Life is a faught;⁵
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my
pouch,
And my Freedom's my Lairdship nae monarch
dare touch.

Contented wi' little, &c.

A towmond⁶ o' trouble, should that be my fa',⁷
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers⁸ it a':
When at the blythe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has
past?

Contented wi' little, &c.

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte⁹ on
her way;
Be 't to me, be 't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come Ease, or come Travail, come Pleasure or
Pain,
My warst word is: "Welcome, and welcome
again!"

Contented wi' little, &c.

IS THERE, FOR HONEST POVERTY

(1795)

(Tune—"For a' that")

Is there for honest Poverty,
That hangs his head, an' a' that;
The coward slave—we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!

¹ Merry, cheerful. ² Slap. ³ Bowl of good ale.
⁴ Soldier. ⁵ Fight. ⁶ A twelvemonth.
⁷ Fate. ⁸ Solders. ⁹ Stagger and stumble.

For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The Man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey,¹ an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A Man's a Man for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see you birkie² ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof³ for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that:
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he maunna fa'⁴ that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities an' a' that;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that),
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST
(1796)

O wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blow, around thee blow,
Thy bield¹ should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my Crown
Wad be my Queen, wad be my Queen.

¹ Hodden grey, a coarse woolen stuff, which (being undyed) retained the natural gray color of the wool.
² A conceited, self-assertive man; a "young sport."
³ Lout, fool. ⁴ Try.
⁵ Shelter.

VII. THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH AND SCOTT

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c. 1784-c. 1837

Typical of Wordsworth
William Wordsworth

1770-1850

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY,¹
 ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE
 DURING A TOUR (July 13, 1798)

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines 15

Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
 Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: 25
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind, 30
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts 35
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

¹ This poem was composed during a short excursion in the valley of the Wye, which Wordsworth made with his sister. He visited the ruins of Tintern Abbey, but the poem, we are told, was composed some miles from the historic ruin, and deals entirely with the beauties of the Wye valley, and apparently with some scenes especially associated with memories of the past.

In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight 40
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood 45
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul;
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things. 50

If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world, 55
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer thro' the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
 thought, 60
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food 66
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
 when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides 70
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led: more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature
 then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, 75
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love, 82
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is
 past, 85

And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
 Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompense. For I have learned 90
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt 95
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air, 100
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I
 still

A lover of the meadows and the woods, 105
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense, 110
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more 115
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read 120
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray 125
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed 130
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb 135
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free
 To blow against thee: and, in after years, 140
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief, 146
 Should be thy portion, with what healing
 thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
 If I should be where I no more can hear 150
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these
 gleams
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came 155
 Unwearied in that service: rather say
 With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor will thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy
 sake! 162

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

(1798)

"Why, William, on that old gray stone
 Thus for the length of half a day,
 Why, William, sit you thus alone,
 And dream your time away?"

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
 To Beings else forlorn and blind! 6
 Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
 From dead men to their kind."

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
 As if she for no purpose bore you; 10
 As if you were her first-born birth,
 And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
 When life was sweet, I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake, 15
 And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
 We cannot bid the ear be still;
 Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
 Against or with our will. 20

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
 Which of themselves our minds impress;
 That we can feed this mind of ours
 In a wise passiveness."

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum 25
 Of things forever speaking,
 That nothing of itself will come,
 But we must still be seeking?"

"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone, 30
 Conversing as I may,
 I sit upon this old gray stone,
 And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

(1798)

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
 Or surely you'll grow double:
 Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
 Why all this toil and trouble?"

The sun, above the mountain's head, 5
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet, 10
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throistle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things, 15
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness. 20

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; 25
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves; 30
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

(1799)

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make 5
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower, 10
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs; 15
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend; 20
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm,
Grace that shall mold the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give 35
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

(1799)

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone 5
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be; 10
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

(1800)

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,¹
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites

That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones:
And to that simple object appertains

¹ Narrow valley or ravine.

A story unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved:—not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
 Where was their occupation and abode. 26
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35
 For the delight of a few natural hearts;
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale² 40
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the South 50
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me!" 55
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
 The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past. 61
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams and
 rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's
 thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
 breathed 65
 The common air; hills, which with vigorous
 step
 He had so often climbed; which had impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70
 Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honourable gain,
 Those fields, those hills—what could they less?
 had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,

² The valley in which lie the lake and village of Grasmere where Wordsworth lived for eight years.

The pleasure which there is in life itself.
 His days had not been passed in singleness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
 She was a woman of a stirring life, 81
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she
 had
 Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
 It was because the other was at work. 85
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's
 phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a
 storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even
 then,
 Their labor did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes, 101
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when
 the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ 105
 Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's
 edge, 110
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed 115
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left the couple neither gay perhaps 120
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his eight-
 eenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
 Father and Son, while far into the night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighborhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and
 south,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake; 135
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of
years, 140
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's
heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of
all— 145

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door 165
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
shade

Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
THE CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
There while they two were sitting in the
shade, 170

With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts 175
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the
shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy
grew up

A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equip
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed 185
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;

And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though naught was left undone which staff, or
voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could per-
form.

But soon, as Luke, full ten years old, could
stand
Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways, 196
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there
came 200
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind:
And that the old Man's heart seemed born
again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth
year, 205
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man 211
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for
claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours 230
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but 240
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

"When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land

Shall not go from us, and it shall be free; 245
 He shall possess it free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
 Another kinsman—he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where everyone is poor,
 What can be gained?" 255

At this the old Man paused,
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to
 herself,

He was a parish-boy—at the church-door 260
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
 And half pennies, wherewith the neighbors
 bought

A basket, which they filled with peddler's wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there, 265
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
 And left estates and moneys to the poor,
 And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
 With marble, which he sent from foreign
 lands. 271

These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
 These two days, has been meat and drink to
 me. 276

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the
 best 280

Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night."
 Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went
 forth

With a light heart. The Housewife for five
 days 285
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work: for, when she lay 290
 By Michael's side, she through the last two
 nights

Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
 We have no other Child but thee to lose, 297
 None to remember—do not go away;
 For if thou leave thy Father, he will die."
 The youth made answer with a jocund voice; 300
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare

Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work; 305
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy; 310
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
 Nor was there at that time on English land 315
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
 The Housewife answered, talking much of
 things

Which, if at such short notice he should go, 320
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head
 Ghyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard 325
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
 And soon as they had reached the place he
 stopped, 331

And thus the old Man spake to him: "My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth, 335
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of.—After
 thou 340

First came into the world—as oft befalls
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's
 tongue

Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love. 345
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed
 month, 350

And in the open fields my life was passed
 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's
 knees.

But we were playmates, Luke: among these
 hills,

As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know." 357
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his
 hand,

And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see 360
 That these are things of which I need not speak.
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father. And herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hands; for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man I still 368
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not
 loth 370
 To give their bodies to the family mould.
 I wished that thou shouldst live the life they
 lived:
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
 And see so little gain from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came
 to me; 375
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was
 free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure 380
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou should'st go."

At this the old man paused.
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they
 stood, 385
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 "This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four 391
 I am strong and hale;—Do thou thy part;
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms, 395
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee,
 Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating
 fast

With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish 401
 To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love: When thou art gone,
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone, 405
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment: hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear 410
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee
 well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt
 see 415
 A work which is not here: a covenant

'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
 down, 420
 And, as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
 The old Man's grief broke from him; to his
 heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned. 425
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming
 peace,
 Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the
 Boy
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell
 prayers, 431

That followed him till he was out of sight.
 A good report did from their Kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news, 435
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were
 throughout
 "The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on; and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work 440
 With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
 He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke
 began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length, 445
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love, 450
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news. 455
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep, 460
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart 465
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he
 seen,
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog, 470
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to
 time,

He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel 475
 Survive her husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING
 STAR

Is gone—the plowshare has been through the
 ground

On which it stood; great changes have been
 wrought 480

In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head
 Ghyll.

MY HEART LEAPS UP

(From *Poems*, 1807)

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old, 5

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety. }

THE SOLITARY REAPER

(From *Poems*, 1807)

Behold her, single in the field,

Yon solitary Highland Lass!

Reaping and singing by herself;

Stop here, or gently pass!

Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5

And sings a melancholy strain;

O, listen! for the Vale profound

Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt

More welcome notes to weary hands 10

Of travellers in some shady haunt,

Among Arabian sands:

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard

In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,

Breaking the silence of the seas 15

Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings!—

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

For old, unhappy, far-off things,

And battles long ago: 20

Or is it some more humble lay,

Familiar matter of to-day?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,

That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang 25

As if her song could have no ending;

I saw her singing at her work,

And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listened, motionless and still;
 And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more.

also famous

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLEC-
 TIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

(1803–1806)

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and
 stream,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no
 more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10

And lovely is the Rose,

The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare,

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair; 15

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath passed away a glory from the
 earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young lambs bound 20

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the
 steep; 25

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;

I hear the Echoes through the mountains

throng,

15 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,¹

And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,

And with the heart of May

Doth every Beast keep holiday;—

Thou Child of Joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou
 happy Shepherd-boy! 35

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;

¹ The poet seems to mean simply the quiet, peaceful
 fields of the more remote country districts.

My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal, 40
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 O evil day! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are culling 45
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,
 A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat: 55
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home: 65
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy; 70
 The Youth, who daily farthest from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended; 75
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.]

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim, 80
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, 85
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
 See, 'where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, 90
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 95
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage; 105
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted forever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest, 115
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 120
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? 125
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live, 130
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest; 135
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
 breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise; 140
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized, 145
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:

* The stage on which men and women are exhibited in various moods and whims. The quotation is from Daniel's *Misophilus*.

* Wordsworth tells us that at times the external world became vague and unreal to him, and adds: "Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality." This questioning of the reality of the world, this occasional feeling that things of the senses are *falling* from us, *vanishing*, suggests to Wordsworth the immortality of the soul; and it is for these experiences that he is chiefly thankful.

But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may, 150
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
 make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake, 155
 To perish never;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy! 160
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither, 165
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound! 170
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once so
 bright 175
 Be now forever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind; 180
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering;
 In the faith that looks through death 185
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills and
 Groves,
 Forebode not any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
 I only have relinquished one delight 190
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the Brooks which down their channels
 fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet; 195
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober colouring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are
 won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live, 200
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

(From *Poems*, 1807)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay: 10
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay, 15
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood, *you stuck*
 They flash upon that inward eye *20*
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils. *2*

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

(From *Poems*, 1807) *Foot.*

She was a Phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;
 A lovely Apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes are stars of Twilight fair; 5
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;

A countenance in which did meet 15
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eyes serene
 The very pulse of the machine;¹
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A traveller between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

¹ i. e., the vital impulse of the whole organism. Hamlet speaks of the body as a *machine* (Act II. ii. 124), and to associate the word too exclusively with a mechanical contrivance (as we are apt to do), spoils the poetry of the passage.

A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light. 30

ODE TO DUTY

(From *Poems*, 1807)

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law 5
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not.
Long may the kindly impulse last!
But thou, if they should totter, teach them to 15
stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. 20
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support according to their
need.

I, loving freedom, and untried; 25
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I
may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control; 35
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds 45
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee,
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend 50
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give; 55
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me
live!

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

(From *Poems*, 1807)

I

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove 5
broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of
waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the
moors 10
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth
run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor; 15
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly; 20
And all the ways of men, so vain and mel-
ancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low; 25
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not,
nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare: 30
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty. 35

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
 As if life's business were a summer mood;
 As if all needful things would come unsought
 To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
 But how can He expect that others should 40
 Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
 Love him, who for himself will take no heed at
 all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton,¹ the marvellous Boy,
 The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
 Of Him² who walked in glory and in joy 45
 Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
 By our own spirits are we deified:
 We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
 But thereof come in the end despondency and
 madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50
 A leading from above, a something given,
 Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
 When I with these untoward thoughts had
 striven,
 Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
 I saw a Man before me unawares: 55
 The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey
 hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
 Wonder to all who do the same espy,
 By what means it could thither come, and
 whence; 60
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
 Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
 Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age: 65
 His body was bent double, feet and head
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
 A more than human weight upon his frame had
 cast. 70

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
 Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood
 Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood, 75
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
 And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
 Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water, which he conned, 80
 As if he had been reading in a book:

¹ Thomas Chatterton, the poet, who committed suicide at the age of 18 (1770) to escape a slower death by starvation. V. p. 446, *supra*.

² Burns.

And now a stranger's privilege I took;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
 "This morning gives us promise of a glorious
 day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make, 85
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
 And him with further words I thus bespake,
 "What occupation do you there pursue?
 This is a lonesome place for one like you."
 Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise 90
 Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
 But each in solemn order followed each,
 With something of a lofty utterance drest—
 Choice word and measured phrase, above the
 reach 95
 Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
 Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and man their
 dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
 To gather leeches, being old and poor: 100
 Employment hazardous and wearisome!
 And he had many hardships to endure:
 From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to
 moor;
 Housing, with God's good help, by choice or
 chance;
 And in this way he gained an honest main-
 tenance. 105

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
 But now his voice to me was like a stream
 Scarce heard; nor word from word could I
 divide;
 And the whole body of the man did seem
 Like one whom I had met with in a dream; 110
 Or like a man from some far region sent,
 To give me human strength, by apt admonish-
 ment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that
 kills;
 And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
 Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills; 115
 And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
 —Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 "How is it that you live, and what is it you
 do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat: 120
 And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
 He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the pools where they abide.
 "Once I could meet with them on every side;
 But they have dwindled long by slow decay; 125
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I
 may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled
me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually, 130
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse
renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind, 135
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely
moor!" 140

SONNETS

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER,
1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppress'd,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman,
cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a 5
brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry: and these we adore: 10
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the
sea: 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"
(1802)

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts de-
part
When men change swords for ledgers, and
desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears un-
named
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed? 5
Now, when I think of Thee, and what Thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed,
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men; 10
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER

Best at Bridge, &c. week.
SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare, 5
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill; 10
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

COMPOSED UPON THE BEACH NEAR
CALAIS

AUGUST, 1802

It is a beautiful evening, calm and free:
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea. 5
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me
here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, 10
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"
(1806)

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon; 5

The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772-1834

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

(From the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798)

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was
driven by storms to the cold Country towards
the South Pole; and how from thence she made
her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great
Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that
befell; and in what manner the Ancyent
Marinere came back to his own Country.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three,
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand, 10
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons¹ his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye— 15
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone: 20
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

1-12. An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden
to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

13-20. The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of
the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

21-30. The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward
with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

¹ Soon after.

"The sun came up upon the left 25
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day, 30
Till over the mast at noon—
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall, 35
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast, 40
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there, 60
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!²

At length did cross an Albatross,³
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul, 65
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through! 70

31-40. The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music;
but the Mariner continueth his tale.

41-50. The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

51-62. The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no
living thing was to be seen.

63-70. Till a great seabird, called the Albatross, came
through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and
hospitality.

² Swound.

³ The albatross was considered by sailors to be a bird of
good omen; which makes the Mariner's crime all the
blackier.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
It perched for vespers nine;
While all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— 80
Why look'st thou so?"—With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right;⁴
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left 85
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay, 95
That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist. 100
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst 105
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

71-78. And lo! the Albatross prove a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

78-82. The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

83-96. His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

97-102. But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

103-106. The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the line.

107-118. The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

⁴ The ship having rounded the Horn, is now sailing North.

Day after day, day after day, 115
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink; 120
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs 125
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white. 130

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit⁵ that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young! 140
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time! 145
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist; 150
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155
It plunged and tacked and veered.

119-130. And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

131-138. A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels: concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

139-142. The shipmates, in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

143-156. The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

⁵ The spirit of the South Polar region, who loved the Albatross.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 We could nor laugh nor wail;
 Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
 And cried, A sail! a sail!

160

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call:
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

165

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
 Hither to work us weal;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel!

170

The western wave was all a-flame.
 The day was well-nigh done!
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

175

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

180

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears!
 Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
 Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew?
 Is that a Death? and are there two?
 Is Death that woman's mate?

185

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold:
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

190

The naked hulk alongside came,
 And the twain were casting dice;
 "The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
 Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

195

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
 At one stride comes the dark;
 With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
 Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

157-163. At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

164-166. A flash of joy.

167-176. And horror follows; for can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

177-180. It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship. And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

187-194. The Spectre-Woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship. Like vessel, like crew!

195-198. Death and Life-in-Death have dined for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

199-202. No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

We listened and looked sideways up!
 Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
 My life-blood seemed to sip!
 The stars were dim, and thick the night,
 The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;

205

From the sails the dew did drip—
 Till clomb above the eastern bar
 The horned Moon, with one bright star
 Within the nether tip.

210

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
 Too quick for groan or sigh,
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
 And cursed me with his eye.

215

Four times fifty living men,
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
 They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
 They fled to bliss or woe!
 And every soul, it passed me by,
 Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

220

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
 I fear thy skinny hand!
 And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
 As is the ribbed sea-sand."

225

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
 And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
 Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
 This body dropt not down.

230

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
 Alone on a wide wide sea!
 And never a saint took pity on
 My soul in agony.

235

The many men, so beautiful!
 And they all dead did lie:
 And a thousand thousand slimy things
 Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
 And drew my eyes away;
 I looked upon the rotting deck,
 And there the dead men lay.

240

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,
 A wicked whisper came, and made
 My heart as dry as dust.

245

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
 And the balls like pulses beat;
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the
 sky
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet.

250

203-223. At the rising of the Moon, one after another; his shipmates drop down dead. But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

224-235. The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him; but the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

236-252. He despiseth the creatures of the calm, and envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me 255
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye! 260
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up, 265
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread:
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away 270
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light 275
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware: 285
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven, 295
That slid into my soul.

253-262. But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

263-271. In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

272-281. By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

282-283. Their beauty and their happiness.

284-287. He blesseth them in his heart.

288-291. The spell begins to break.

292-308. By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets^a on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere. 310

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out— 315
The wan stars danced between.
And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud; 320
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag, 325
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan. 330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew; 335
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew. 340

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me.

309-326. He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element

327-376. The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on; but not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

^a Possibly foolish, or ridiculous, because they "had so long remained" useless.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

345 How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
395 I heard and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
351 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
400 The harmless Albatross.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
355 Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
405 Who shot him with his bow."

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
360 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

PART VI

First Voice

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
365 That makes the heavens be mute.

"But tell me, tell me! speak again,
410 Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?"

Second Voice

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
370 In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
415 His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
375 Moved onward from beneath.

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
420 She looketh down on him."

First Voice

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
380 That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?"

Second Voice

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
385 With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

"The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.
425

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
390 And I fell down in a swoond."

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated."

"I woke, and we were sailing on
430 As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high,
390 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
435 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

377-392. The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requirath vengeance.

393-409. The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

↑ Swoon. ♫

410-429. The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

430-441. The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green, 445
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew. 460

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep away.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came. 480

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were: 485
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh Christ! what saw I there!

442-463. The curse is finally expiated.
464-479. And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

480-499. The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies, and appear in their own forms of light.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice, did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.
The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast: 505
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood 465
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree. 515

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve— 470
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump. 520

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk, 475
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said—
"And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails, 480
How thin they are and sere! 530
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod^s is heavy with snow, 535
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

514-545. The Hermit of the wood approacheth the ship with wonder.

^s Ivy bush.

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!" 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard. 545

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead. 550

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat. 555

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro. 565
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585

546-549. *The ship suddenly sinketh.*
550-573. *The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.*

574-581. *The ancient Mariner earnestly entreats the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.*
582-625. *And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land, and to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.*

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell, 595
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be. 600

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk, 605
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell 610
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best 615
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest 620
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn. 625

FRANCE: AN ODE

(1798)

I

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may con-
trol!

Ye Ocean-Waves! that, whereso'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws!

Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds'
singing, 5

Midway the smooth and perilous slope
reclined,

Save when your own imperious branches
swinging,

Have made a solemn music of the wind!

Where, like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms, which never woodman trod, 10
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I
 wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable
 sound!
 O ye loud waves! and O ye Forests high! 15
 And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, everything that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored 20
 The spirit of divinent liberty.

II

When France in wrath her giant-limbs up-
 reared,
 And with that oath, which smote air, earth,
 and sea,
 Stamped her strong foot and said she would
 be free,
 Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared! 25
 And with what a joy my lofty gratulation
 Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
 And when to whelm the disenchanting nation,
 Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
 The monarchs marched in evil day, 30
 And Britain joined the dire array;
 Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
 Though many friendships, many youthful loves
 Had swoll'n the patriot emotion
 And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and
 groves; 35
 Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
 To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
 And shame too long delayed and vain retreat!
 For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
 I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame; 40
 But blessed the paeans of delivered France,
 And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's
 loud scream
 With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
 Though all the fierce and drunken passions
 wove 45
 A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's
 dream!
 Ye storms, that round the dawning east
 assembled,
 The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"
 And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and
 trembled,
 The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and
 bright; 50
 When France her front deep-scar'd and gory
 Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;
 When, insupportably advancing,
 Her arm made mockery of the warrior's
 tramp;
 While timid looks of fury glancing, 55
 Domestic treason crushed beneath her fatal
 stamp,

Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
 Then I reproached my fears that would not
 flee;
 "And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her
 lore
 In the low huts of them that toil and groan! 60
 And, conquering by her happiness alone,
 Shall France compel the nations to be free,
 Till Love and Joy look round, and call the
 Earth their own."

IV

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
 I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament, 65
 From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
 I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained
 streams!
 Heroes, that for your peaceful country per-
 ished,
 And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
 With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I
 cherished 70
 One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
 To scatter rage and traitorous guilt
 Where Peace her jealous home had built;
 A patriot-race to disinherit
 Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear; 75
 And with inexorable spirit
 To taint the bloodless freedom of the moun-
 taineer—
 O France, that mockst Heaven, adulterous,
 blind,
 And patriot only in pernicious toils, 79
 Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
 To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
 Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey:
 To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
 From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

V

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain, 85
 Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad
 game
 They burst their manacles and wear the name
 Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
 O Liberty! with profitless endeavor
 Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour; 90
 But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor
 ever
 Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human
 power.
 Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
 (Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
 Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions, 95
 And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
 Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
 The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of
 the waves!
 And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,
 Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze
 above, 100
 Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
 Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
 And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
 Possessing all things with intensest love,
 O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there. 105

DEJECTION: AN ODE

(1802)

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
 With the old moon in her arms;
 And I fear, I fear, my master dear!
 We shall have a deadly storm.

Ballad of Sir Patrich Spence.

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
 The grand old ballad of Sir Patrich Spence,¹ 6
 This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
 Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
 Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy
 flakes,
 Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and
 rakes 10

Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
 Which better far were mute.
 For lo! the new-Moon winter-bright!
 And overspread with phantom light,
 (With swimming phantom light o'erspread 15
 But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
 I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
 The coming on of rain and squally blast.
 And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
 And the slant night-shower driving loud and
 fast! 20
 Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst
 they awed,
 And sent my soul abroad,
 Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
 Might startle this dull pain, and make it move
 and live! 24

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
 In word or sigh or tear—
 O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
 To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd, 30
 All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,
 And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
 And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye! 34
 And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
 That give away their motion to the stars;
 Those stars that glide behind them or between,
 Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always
 seen:
 Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue: 40
 I see them all so excellently fair,
 I see, not feel how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
 And what can these avail
 To lift the smothering weight from off my
 breast? 45
 It were a vain endeavour,
 Though I should gaze forever

¹ V. p. 93, *supra*.

On that green light that lingers in the west:
 I may not hope from outward forms to win
 The passion and the life whose fountains are
 within. 50

IV

O Lady, we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does nature live:
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
 And would we aught behold of higher worth,
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed 55
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
 Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the Earth—
 And from the soul itself must there be sent 60
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart; thou need'st not ask of me
 What this strong music in the soul may be!
 What, and wherein it doth exist, 65
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.
 Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was
 given,
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
 Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and
 shower, 70
 Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
 A new Earth and new Heaven,
 Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud— 74
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous
 cloud—
 We in ourselves rejoice!
 And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was
 rough, 80
 This joy within me dallied with distress,
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
 Whence Fancy made me dreams of happi-
 ness:
 For hope grew round me like the twining
 vine,
 And fruits and foliage, not my own, seemed
 mine. 85
 But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
 But oh! each visitation
 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
 My shaping spirit of Imagination. 90
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,
 But to be still and patient, all I can;
 And haply by abstruse research to steal
 From my own nature all the natural man—
 This was my sole resource, my only plan: 95
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
 And now is almost grown the habit of my
 soul.

VII

THE GOOD GREAT MAN

(1802)

COMPLAINT

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my
mind,
Reality's dark dream!

I turn from you and listen to the wind, 100
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a
scream

Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind that ravest
without,

Bare craig, or mountain-tairn, or blasted
tree, 101

Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,

Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule with worse than wintry
song, 110

The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves
among.

Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!

What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout, 115
With groans of trampled men, with smarting
wounds—

At once they groan with pain, and shudder
with the cold!

But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all the noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans and tremulous shuddering—all is
over— 120

It tells another tale, with sounds less deep
and loud!

A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay, 125

'Tis of a little child,
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her
way:

And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her
mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of
sleep; 130

Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-
birth,

May all the stars hang bright above her dwell-
ing,

Silent as though they watched the sleeping
Earth! 135

With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul! 140

O simple spirit guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

THE GOOD GREAT MAN

(1802)

COMPLAINT

"How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits
Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits
Or any merit that which he obtains." 5

REPLY

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting
strain!

What would'st thou have a good great man ob-
tain?

Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
Or throne of coress which his sword had slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but
ends! 10

Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? three treasures, LOVE and
LIGHT,

And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infants' breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and
night—

HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH! 15

TO THE RIVER OTTER

Dear native brook! wild streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past,
What happy, and what mournful hours, since
last

I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy
breast,

Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine
eyes 6

I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows
gray,

And bedded sand that, veined with various
dyes, 10

Gleamed through thy bright transparence! On
my way,

Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs.
Ah! that once more I were a careless child!

KUBLA KHAN: OR A VISION IN A
DREAM

Coleridge's Vision of a Dream
(1816)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea. 5

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing
tree:

And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

Very much like a mystic vision

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which
slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil
seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breath-
ing,

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion 25
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device, 35

A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played, 40
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

That with music loud and long, 45

I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

YOUTH AND AGE

(1822-1832)

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!

When I was young?—Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong, 10
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly *then* it flashed along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,

That fear no spite of wind or tide! 15
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like, 20
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old.

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet, 25
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold! 30
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that Thou art gone?

I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips 35
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve! 40
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old:

That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave, 45
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismiss;
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE

(February 21st, 1827)

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their
lair—

The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing, 5
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranth
blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar
flow.

Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye
may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams,
away! 10

With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I
stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my
soul?

Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

Robert Southey

1774-1843

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM¹

(Written at Westbury, 1798)

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I

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

II

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

III

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
"Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory."

IV

"I find them in the garden,
For there's many hereabout;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out!
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

V

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

VI

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out;
But every body said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory."

VII

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

¹ The Duke of Marlborough, Commander-in-Chief of the English and Dutch forces, assisted by Prince Eugene of Savoy, won a celebrated victory over the French and Bavarians at Blenheim, Aug. 13, 1704. The war arose over the disputed succession to the throne of Spain.

VIII

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then
And new-born baby died:
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

IX

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

X

"Great praise the Duke of Marlboro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay . . nay . . my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory."

XI

"And every body praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a famous victory."

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE

1798

A Well there is in the west country,
And a clearer one never was seen;
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm-tree stand beside,
And behind doth an ash-tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne;
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he;
And he sat down upon the bank,
Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by,
At the Well to fill his pail;
On the Well-side he rested it,
And he bade the Stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger?" quoth
he;

"For, an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this
day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

"Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast, 25
 Ever here in Cornwall been?
 For, an if she have, I'll venture my life,
 She has drank of the Well of St. Keyne."

"I have left a good woman who never was
 here,"

The Stranger he made reply, 30

"But that my draught should be the better
 for that,

I pray you answer me why."

"St. Keyne," quoth the Cornish-man, "many
 a time

Drank of this crystal Well;
 And, before the Angel summon'd her, 35
 She laid on the water a spell.

"If the Husband, of this gifted Well
 Shall drink before his Wife,
 A happy man thenceforth is he,
 For he shall be Master for life. 40

"But if the Wife should drink of it first,
 God help the Husband then!"—
 The Stranger stoop'd to the Well of St. Keyne,
 And drank of the water again.

"You drank of the Well, I warrant, betimes?"
 He to the Cornish-man said: 46

But the Cornish-man smiled as the Stranger
 spake,
 And sheepishly shook his head.

"I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,
 And left my Wife in the porch; 50
 But i' faith she had been wiser than me,
 For she took a bottle to church."

MY DAYS AMONG THE DEAD ARE PAST

(Written at Keswick, 1818)

I

My days among the Dead are past;
 Around me I behold,
 Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
 The mighty minds of old;
 My never-failing friends are they, 5
 With whom I converse day by day.

II

With them I take delight in weal,
 And seek relief in woe;
 And while I understand and feel
 How much to them I owe, 10
 My cheeks have often been bedew'd
 With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

III

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
 I live in long-past years;
 Their virtues love, their faults condemn, 15
 Partake their hopes and fears,
 And from their lessons seek and find
 Instruction with an humble mind.

IV

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
 My place with them will be, 20
 And I with them shall travel on
 Through all Futurity:
 Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
 That will not perish in the dust.

Sir Walter Scott

1771-1832

HAROLD'S SONG TO ROSABELLE

(From *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805)

CANTO VI

XXIII

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
 No haughty feat of arms I tell;
 Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
 That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew! 5
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
 Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
 To inch¹ and rock the sea-mews fly; 10
 The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
 Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
 A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
 Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch: 15
 Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
 To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
 But that my ladye-mother there
 Sits lonely in her castle-hall. 20

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
 But that my sire the wine will chide,
 If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle.—"

O'er Roslin all that dreary night, 25
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
 'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
 And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen; 30
 'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
 And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
 Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
 Each Baron, for a sable shroud, 35
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.

¹ Island.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail. 40
 Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
 So still they blaze, when fate is nigh.
 The lordly line of high St. Clair.
 There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold 45
 Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold—
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!
 And each St. Clair was buried there,
 With candle, with book, and with knell; 50
 But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds
 sung,
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

HUNTING SONG

(1808)

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 On the mountain dawns the day;
 All the jolly chase is here
 With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear;
 Hounds are in their couples yelling, 5
 Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
 Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
 "Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 The mist has left the mountain gray, 10
 Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
 Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
 And foresters have busy been
 To track the buck in thicket green;
 Now we come to chant our lay,
 "Waken, lords and ladies gay." 15

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 To the green-wood haste away;
 We can show you where he lies,
 Fleet of foot, and tall of size; 20
 We can show the marks he made,
 When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
 You shall see him brought to bay,
 "Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay, 25
 Waken, lords and ladies gay!
 Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
 Run a course as well as we;
 Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
 Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk; 30
 Think of this, and rise with day,
 Gentle lords and ladies gay.

LOCHINVAR

(From *Marmion*, 1808)

CANTO V

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
 Through all the wide border his steed was the
 best;

And save his good broadsword, he weapons had
 none,
 He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war, 5
 There never was knight like the young Lochin-
 var.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for
 stone,
 He swam the Eek river where ford there was
 none;
 But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
 The bride had consented, the gallant came
 late: 10
 For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
 Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
 Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers,
 and all:

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his
 sword 15
 (For the poor craven bridegroom said never a
 word),

"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
 Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochin-
 var?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you
 denied;—
 Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its
 tide— 20

And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
 To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
 There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by
 far,
 That would gladly be bride to the young
 Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it
 up, 25
 He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the
 cup.

She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to
 sigh,
 With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
 He took her soft hand, ere her mother could
 bar,—

"Now tread we a measure!" said young
 Lochinvar. 30

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
 That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
 While her mother did fret, and her father did
 fume,

And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet
 and plume;

And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere
 better by far, 35

To have match'd our fair cousin with young
 Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
 When they reach'd the hall-door, and the
 charger stood near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
 So light to the saddle before her he sprung! 40

"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth
young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the
Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode
and they ran:

There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie
Lee, 45
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they
see.

So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochin-
var?

BALLAD

ALICE BRAND

(From *The Lady of the Lake*, 1810)

CANTO IV

XII

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle¹ are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are
in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land 5
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue, 10
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,²
For leaves to spread our lowly bed, 15
And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall,³ thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughter'd deer, 20
To keep the cold away."

"O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair⁴ no more I wear, 25
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard, 30
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

¹ Thrush and blackbird.

² A kind of fine cloth worn by the upper classes.

³ A kind of fur.

⁴ Sword.

XIII

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side, 35
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who won'd⁵ within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
His voice was ghostly shrill. 40

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear 45
The fairies' fatal green?"

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban. 50

"Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood, 55
Though the birds have still'd their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands, 60
And, as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
"I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
"That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear,— 65
"And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer."

"Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood, 70
The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
"And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine. 75

"And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?"—

XV

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land, 80
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's
side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

⁵ Dwelt.

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show, 85
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape, 90
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And, 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd away, 95
To the joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mold,
As fair a form as thine." 100

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold; 105
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,*
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing, 110
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray
When all the bells were ringing.

EDMUND'S SONG

(From *Rokeby*, 1812)

CANTO III

XVI

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods¹ are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall, 5
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily,—

Chorus

"O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green; 10
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen."—

"If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we, 15
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May."— 20

* Soil, ground.

¹ On the Greta river in Yorkshire; the estate of Rokeby was situated at the junction of this river with the Tees.

Chorus

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

"I read you, by your bugle-horn, 25
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn,
To keep the king's greenwood.—
"A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light; 30
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."—

Chorus

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there, 35
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnish'd brand and musketoons,²
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragon,
That lists the tuck³ of drum."— 40
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

Chorus

"And, O! though Brignall banks be fair, 45
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die; 50
The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met,
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget, 55
Nor think what we are now.

Chorus

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."— 60

SONG

A WEARY LOT IS THINE

(From the same, CANTO III, xxviii)

"A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!"

² A short musket.

³ Beat.

¹ Instead of the wine of life she has only rue, the plant associated with repentance and sorrow.

A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien, 5
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
No more of me you knew,
My love!

No more of me you knew. 10

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow,
Ere we two meet again."

He turn'd his charger as he spake, 15

Upon the river shore,

He gave his bridle-reins a shake,

Said, "Adieu forever more,

My love!

And adieu forever more."— 20

SONG

ALLAN-A-DALE

(From the same, CANTO III, xxx)

Allan-a-Dale has no faggots for burning,
Allan-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allan-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allan-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
Come, read me my riddle! come, harken my tale! 5

And tell me the craft of bold Allan-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkendale side.
The mere for his net, and the land for his game,
The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame; 10

Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allan-a-Dale!

Allan-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be
as bright; 15

Allan-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,¹
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allan-a-Dale.

Allan-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she ask'd of his household and home: 20

"Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
My hall," quoth bold Allan, "shows gallanter still;

'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale,

And with all its bright spangles!" said Allan-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch and they bade him begone;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry: 27

He has laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye,

And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale, 29
And the youth it was told by was Allan-a-Dale!

¹ Doff in token of submission.

SONG

THE CAVALIER

(From the same, CANTO V, xx)

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and gray,

My true love has mounted his steed and away,
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down;
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

He has doff'd the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear, 5

He has placed the steel-cap o'er his long flowing hair,

From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs down,—

Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broadsword he draws;

Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
His watchword is honour, his pay is renown,—

God strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown! 12

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all

The round-headed rebels of Westminster Hall;
But tell those bold traitors of London's proud town, 15

That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes;

There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose!

Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and Brown,

With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown? 20

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!

Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,

In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

(1816)

I

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?

Why weep ye by the tide?"

I'll wed ye to my youngest son,

And ye sall be his bride:

And ye sall be his bride, ladie, 5

Sae comely to be seen!"—

But aye she loot! the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

¹ Let.

II

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha'
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean. 15

III

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost of them a',
Shall ride our forest-queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean. 20

IV

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide, 25
The tapers glimmered fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there:
They sought her baith by bower and ha'
The ladie was not seen! 30
She's o'er the border and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

HARLAW

(From *The Antiquary*, 1816)

Now haud your tongue, baith wife and carle,¹
And listen, great and sma',
And I will sing of Glenallan's Earl
That fought on the red Harlaw.

"The cronach's² cried on Bennachie, 5
And down the Don and a',
And hieland and lawland may mournfu' be
For the sair field of Harlaw.—

"They saddled a hundred milk-white steeds,
They hae bridled a hundred black, 10
With a chafron³ of steel on each horse's head,
And a good knight upon his back."—

"They hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile, but barely ten,
When Donald came branking⁴ down the brae 15
Wi' twenty thousand men.

"Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives⁵ were glancing clear,
Their pibrochs⁶ rung frae side to side
Would deafen ye to hear. 20

¹ Carle. Here = husband. ² i. e., coronach, or dirge.
³ The front part of the head piece of a war-horse's armor.

⁴ Francing. ⁵ Swords.
⁶ Martial music played on the bag pipes by the Highlanders.

"The great Earl in his stirrups stood
That Highland host to see:
Now here a knight that's stout and good
May prove a jeopardie:

"What wouldst thou do, my squire so gay, 25
That rides beside my reyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl the day,
And I were Roland Cheyne?

"To turn the rein were sin and shame,
To fight were wondrous peril, 30
What would ye do now, Roland Cheyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl?"

"Were I Glenallan's Earl this tide,
And ye were Roland Cheyne,
The spur should be in my horse's side, 35
And the bridle upon his mane.

"If they hae twenty thousand blades,
And we twice ten times ten,
Yet they hae but their tartan plaids,
And we are mail-clad men. 40

"My horse shall ride through ranks sae rude,
As through the moorland fern,
Then ne'er let the gentle Norman blude
Grow cauld for Highland kerne." 45

MADGE WILDFIRE'S SONG

(From *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1818)

"Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me? 5
'When six braw' gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye. . . .

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?— 10
'The grey-headed sexton,
That delves² the grave duly. . . .

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing, 15
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

BORDER BALLAD

(From *The Monastery*, 1820)

I

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in
order?

March, march, Eekdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the
Border.

Many a banner spread, 5
Flutters above your head,

¹ Time. ² A soldier of the lowest rank; or a boor.

³ Brave. ⁴ Digs.

Many a crest that is famous in story;
 Mount and make ready then,
 Sons of the mountain glen,
 Fight for the Queen and the old Scottish
 glory! 10

Come from the hills where the hirsels¹ are graz-
 ing,

Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
 Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
 Come with the buckler, the lance, and the
 bow.

Trumpets are sounding, 15
 War-steeds are bounding,
 Stand to your arms then, and march in good
 order;

England shall many a day
 Tell of the bloody fray, 19
 When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border!

COUNTY GUY

(From *Quentin Durward*, 1823)

"Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
 The sun has left the lea,
 The orange-flower perfumes the bower,
 The breeze is on the sea.
 The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day, 5
 Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
 Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
 But where is County Guy?"

"The village maid steals through the shade,
 Her shepherd's suit to hear; 10
 To beauty shy, by lattice high,
 Sings high-born Cavalier.
 The star of Love, all stars above,
 Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
 And high and low the influence know— 15
 But where is County Guy?"

Charles Lamb

1775-1834

TO HESTER

(1805)

When maidens such as Hester die,
 Their place ye may not well supply,
 Though ye among a thousand try,
 With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead, 5
 Yet cannot I by force be led
 To think upon the wormy bed,
 And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
 A rising step, did indicate 10
 Of pride and joy no common rate,
 That flushed her spirit.

¹ A flock of sheep or a herd of cattle.

I know not by what name beside
 I shall it call;—if 'twas not pride,
 It was a joy to that allied, 15
 She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
 Which doth the human feeling cool,
 But she was train'd in Nature's school,
 Nature had blest her. 20

A waking eye, a prying mind,
 A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
 A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
 Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before 25
 To that unknown and silent shore,
 Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
 Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
 Hath struck a bliss upon the day, 30
 A bliss that would not go away,
 A sweet fore-warning?

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
 In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-
 days:
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
 Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom
 cronies; 5
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a Love once, fairest among women;
 Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man; 10
 Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
 Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my
 childhood,
 Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse.
 Seeking to find the old familiar faces. 15

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
 Why wert not thou born in my father's dwell-
 ing?
 So might we talk of the old familiar faces,—

How some they have died, and some they have
 left me, 10
 And some are taken from me; all are departed;
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces. 21

Walter Savage Landor

1775-1864

MILD IS THE PARTING YEAR, AND SWEET

(Collected Works, 1846)

Mild is the parting year, and sweet
 The odour of the falling spray;
 Life passes on more rudely fleet,
 And balmless is its closing day.
 I wait its close, I court its gloom, 5
 But mourn that never must there fall
 Or on my breast or on my tomb
 The tear that would have sooth'd it all.

AH WHAT AVAILS THE SCEPTERED RACE

(From the same)

Ah what avails the sceptered race,
 Ah what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
 Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes 5
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and of sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

YES; I WRITE VERSES

(From the same)

Yes; I write verses now and then,
 But blunt and flaccid is my pen,
 No longer talkt of by young men
 As rather clever:
 In the last quarter are my eyes, 5
 You see it by their form and size;
 Is it not time then to be wise?
 Or now or never.
 Fairest that ever sprang from Eve!
 While Time allows the short reprieve, 10
 Just look at me! would you believe
 'Twas once a lover?
 I cannot clear the five-bar gate
 But, trying first its timber's state,
 Climb stiffly up, take breath, and wait 15
 To trundle over.
 Thro' gallopade¹ I cannot swing
 The entangling blooms of Beauty's spring:
 I cannot say the tender thing,
 Be't true or false, 20
 And am beginning to opine
 Those girls are only half-divine
 Whose waists yon wicked boys entwine
 In giddy waltz.
 I fear that arm above that shoulder, 25
 I wish them wiser, graver, older,
 Sedater, and no harm if colder
 And panting less.

¹ A kind of dance.

Ah! people were not half so wild
 In former days, when starchy mild, 30
 Upon her high-heel'd Essex smiled
 The Brave Queen Bess.

TO ROBERT BROWNING

(From the same)

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear
 Beside the singer; and there is delight
 In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
 And see the prais'd far off him, far above.
 Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's, 5
 Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
 Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
 No man hath walkt along our roads with step
 So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
 So varied in discourse. But warmer climes 10
 Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the
 breeze
 Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
 Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
 The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAST FRUIT OFF AN OLD TREE

(1853)

I strove with none, for none was worth my
 strife.
 Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;
 I warmed both hands before the fire of Life;
 It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Joseph Blanco White

1775-1841

SONNET TO NIGHT

(First published 1828)

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
 Thee by report Divine, and heard thy name,
 Did he not tremble for this goodly frame,
 This glorious canopy of light and blue?
 But through a curtain of translucent dew, 5
 Bathed in the hues of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the Host of Heaven came,
 And lo! creation broadened to man's view.
 Who could have guessed such darkness lay con-
 cealed
 Within thy beams, O Sun! or who divined 10
 Whilst bud, and flower, and insect stood re-
 vealed,
 Thou to such countless worlds hadst made us
 blind?
 Why should we, then, shun death with anxious
 strife,
 If Light conceals so much, wherefore not Life?

Thomas Campbell

1777-1844

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND¹

(1801)

Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again 5
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 10

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake² and mighty Nelson³ fell 15
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 20

Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak 25
She quells the floods below—
As they roar on the shore,
Where the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 30

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors! 35
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow. 40

HOHENLINDEN⁴

(1802)

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay th' untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

¹ When this ode was written England was arrayed singly against France and the greater part of Europe, and her safety depended on the maintenance of her supremacy on the sea.

² Robert Blake (1599-1657), a great English admiral, particularly noted for his victories over the Dutch in 1652 and 1657.

³ Horatio Nelson (afterwards Viscount), the greatest of England's admirals (1758-1805), who was killed in the Battle of Trafalgar. In the original version of the poem Sir Richard Grenville's name was used instead of Nelson's, who was then living.

⁴ Campbell was near Hohenlinden, a village in upper

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery. 5

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,
Each horseman drew his battle blade,
And furious every charger neighed,
To join the dreadful revelry. 10

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery. 15

But redder yet that light shall glow,
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly. 20

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank, and fiery Hun,
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave, 25
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few, shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding sheet, 30
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC⁵

(1809)

Of Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone; 5
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determin'd hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat 10
Lay their bulwarks on the brine,
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime;
As they drifted on their path, 15
There was silence deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

Bavaria, at the time of the battle there in 1800, between the victorious French and the allied Bavarians and Austrians.

⁵ An English expedition under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson second in command, was sent to the Baltic against a confederacy formed by Russia, Sweden and Denmark. The Battle of the Baltic was fought on April 2, 1801, and Nelson, rather than Parker, was the hero of the day.

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene, 20
And her van the fleetest rushed
O'er the deadly space between—
"Hearts of oak," our captains cried, when each
gun
From its adamant line
Spread a death-shade round the ships, 25
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane 30
To our cheering sent us back;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom:—
Then ceased—and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail,
Or in conflagration pale 35
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then,
As he hailed them o'er the wave;
"Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save; 40
So peace instead of death let us bring:
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King." 45

Then Denmark blest our chief,
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy and grief,
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day; 50
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, old England, raise
For the tidings of thy night,
By the festal cities' blaze,
While the wine cup shines in light;
And yet amidst that joy and uproar, 60
Let us think of them that sleep,
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!²

Brave hearts! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true, 65
On the deck of fame that died,
With the gallant good Riou,³
Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their grave!
While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condoles, 70
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!

¹ A Danish sea-port town about twenty miles from Copenhagen.

² Captain Riou, who distinguished himself in an important part of the engagement.

SONG

"MEN OF ENGLAND"

Men of England! who inherit
Rights that cost your sires their blood,
Men whose undegenerate spirit
Has been proved on land and flood:
By the foes ye've fought uncounted, 5
By the glorious deeds ye've done,
Trophies captured—breaches mounted,
Navies conquered—kingdoms won!
Yet, remember, England gathers
Hence but fruitless wreaths of fame, 10
If the patriotism of your fathers
Glow not in your hearts the same.
What are monuments of bravery,
Where no public virtues bloom?
What avail in lands of slavery, 15
Trophied temples, arch and tomb?
Pageants!—Let the world revere us
For our people's rights and laws,
And the breasts of civic heroes
Bared in Freedom's holy cause. 20
Yours are Hampden's, Russell's glory,
Sydney's matchless fame is yours,—
Martyrs in heroic story,
Worth a hundred Agincourts!
We're the sons of sires that baffled 25
Crowned and mitred tyranny:
They defied the field and scaffold
For their birthrights—so will we!

SONG

TO THE EVENING STAR

Star that bringest home the bee,
And sett'st the weary labourer free!
If any star shed peace, 'tis thou,
That send'st it from above,
55 Appearing when Heaven's breath and brow, 5
Are sweet as hers we love.
Come to the luxuriant skies,
Whilst the landscape's odours rise,
Whilst far-off lowing herds are heard, 60
And songs, when toil is done,
From cottages whose smoke unstirred
Curls yellow in the sun.
Star of love's soft interviews,
Parted lovers on thee muse;
Their remembrancer in Heaven 15
Of thrilling vows thou art,
Too delicious to be riven
By absence from the heart.

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

(1804)

A Chieftan to the Highlands bound,
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound,
To row us o'er the ferry."—

"Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle, 5
This dark and stormy water?"
"O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter,—

"And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together, 10
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

"His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonnie bride 15
When they have slain her lover?"—

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
"I'll go, my chief—I'm ready:—
It is not for your silver bright;
But for your winsome lady: 20

"And by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry:
So though the waves are raging white,
I'll row you o'er the ferry."—

By this the storm grew loud apace, 25
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armed men,
Their trampling sounded nearer. 30

"Oh, haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,
"Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father."— 35

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gathered o'er her.— 40

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing;
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore,
His wrath was changed to wailing.—

For sore dismayed, through storm and shade, 45
His child he did discover:—
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover.

"Come back! come back!" he cried in grief,
"Across this stormy water: 50
And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter!—oh, my daughter!"—

'Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,
Return or aid preventing:—
The waters wild went o'er his child, 55
And he was left lamenting.

Thomas Poore

1779-1852

AS SLOW OUR SHIP

(From *Irish Melodies*, 1807-1834)

As slow our ship her foamy track
Against the wind was cleaving,
Her trembling pennant still look'd back
To that dear isle 'twas leaving. 5
So loath we part from all we love,
From all the links that bind us;
So turn our hearts, where'er we rove,
To those we've left behind us!

When, round the bowl, of vanish'd years
We talk, with joyous seeming, 10
And smiles that might as well be tears,
So faint, so sad their beaming;
While mem'ry brings us back again
Each early tie that twin'd us,
Oh, sweet's the cup that circles then 15
To those we've left behind us!

And, when in other climes we meet
Some isle or vale enchanting,
Where all looks flow'ry, mild and sweet,
And nought but love is wanting; 20
We think how great had been our bliss,
If Heav'n had but assign'd us
To live and die in scenes like this,
With some we've left behind us!

As travellers oft look back at eve, 25
When eastward darkly going,
To gaze upon the light they leave
Still faint behind them glowing—
So, when the close of pleasure's day
To gloom hath near consign'd us, 30
We turn to catch one fading ray
Of joy that's left behind us.

THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS¹

(From the same)

The harp that once, through Tara's Halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled:— 5
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er;
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more!

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells; 10
The chord,² alone, that breaks at night,
Its tale of ruin tells:—
Thus freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks, 15
To show that still she lives!

¹ The palace of the ancient kings of Ireland, which is said to have stood on the Hill of Tara, in County Meath, Ireland. ² Cord, string.

SHE IS FAR FROM THE LAND

(From the same)

She is far from the land where her young Hero
sleeps,

And lovers are round her, sighing;
But coldly she turns from their gaze, and weeps,
For her heart in his grave is lying!

She sings the wild song of her dear native plains,
Every note which he lov'd awaking;—
Ah! little they think, who delight in her strains,
How the heart of the Minstrel is breaking!

He had liv'd for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwin'd him, 10
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him!

Oh! make her a grave where the sun-beams rest,
When they promise a glorious morrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep, like a smile from
the West, 15
From her own loved island of sorrow!

OFT IN THE STILLY NIGHT

(1816)

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Mem'ry brings the light

Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears, 5
Of boyhood's years,

The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken! 10

Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Mem'ry brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all 15
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;

I feel like one
Who treads alone 20
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garland's dead,
And all but he departed!

Thus, in the stilly night, 25
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Mem'ry brings the light
Of other days around me.

Ebenezer Elliott

1781-1849

A POET'S EPITAPH

Stop, Mortal! Here thy brother lies,
The Poet of the Poor.

His books were rivers, woods, and skies,
The meadow, and the moor;

His teachers were the torn hearts' wail, 5

The tyrant and the slave,
The street, the factory, the jail,
The palace—and the grave!
The meanest thing, earth's feeblest worm,
He feared to scorn or hate; 10
And honoured in a peasant's form
The equal of the great.

But if he loved the rich who make
The poor man's little more,
Ill could he praise the rich who take 15
From plundered labour's store.

A hand to do, a head to plan,
A heart to feel and dare—
Tell man's worst foes, here lies the man
Who drew them as they are. 20

James Henry Leigh Hunt

1784-1859

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE
CRICKET¹ (1816)

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning
brass: 2

And you, warm little housekeeper, who class 5
With those who think the candles come too
soon,

Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;
Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong, 5
One to the fields, the other to the hearth, 10
Both have your sunshine; both, though small,
are strong

At your clear hearts; and both seem giv'n to
earth

To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

Bryan Waller Procter

(Barry Cornwall)

1787-1874

A PETITION TO TIME (1850)

Touch us gently, Time!
Let us glide adown thy stream
Gently,—as we sometimes glide
Through a quiet dream! 5
Humble voyagers are We, 5
Husband, wife, and children three—
(One is lost,—an angel, fled
To the azure overhead!)

Touch us gently, Time!
We've not proud nor soaring wings: 10
Our ambition, our content
Lies in simple things.
Humble voyagers are We,
O'er Life's dim unsounded sea,
Seeking only some calm clime:— 15
Touch us gently, gentle Time!

¹ Cf. Keats' sonnet and n., p. 529.² This refers to an old custom of beating on pans, at the time of the swarming of the bees, which was thought to prevent their leaving the premises.

THE SEA

The Sea! the Sea! the open Sea!
 The blue, the fresh, the ever free!
 Without a mark, without a bound,
 It runneth the earth's wide regions 'round;
 It plays with the clouds; it mocks the skies; 5
 Or like a cradled creature lies.

I'm on the Sea! I'm on the Sea!
 I am where I would ever be;
 With the blue above, and the blue below,
 And silence wheresoe'er I go; 10
 If a storm should come and awake the deep,
 What matter? I shall ride and sleep.

I love (oh! how I love) to ride
 On the fierce foaming bursting tide,
 When every mad wave drowns the moon, 15
 Or whistles aloft his tempest tune,
 And tells how goeth the world below,
 And why the south-west blasts do blow.

I never was on the dull tame shore,
 But I lov'd the great Sea more and more, 20
 And backwards flew to her billowy breast,
 Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest;
 And a mother she was, and is to me;
 For I was born on the open Sea!

The waves were white, and red the morn, 25
 In the noisy hour when I was born;
 And the whale it whistled, the porpoise rolled,
 And the dolphins bared their backs of gold;
 And never was heard such an outcry wild
 As welcomed to life the Ocean-child! 30

I've lived since then in calm and strife,
 Full fifty summers a sailor's life,
 With wealth to spend and a power to range,
 But never have sought, nor sighed for change;
 And Death, whenever he come to me, 35
 Shall come on the wide unbounded Sea!

George Gordon Byron

1788-1824

HE WHO HATH BENT HIM O'ER THE DEAD

(From *The Giaour*, 1813)

He who hath bent him o'er the dead,
 Ere the first day of death is fled,
 The first dark day of nothingness, 70
 The last of danger and distress,
 (Before decay's effacing fingers
 Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
 And mark'd the mild angelic air,
 The rapture of repose that's there, 75
 The fix'd, yet tender traits that streak
 The languor of the placid cheek,
 And—but for that sad shrouded eye,

That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
 And but for that chill, changeless brow, 80
 Where cold obstruction's apathy
 Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
 As if to him it could impart

The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
 Yes, but for these, and these alone, 85
 Some moments, ay, one treacherous hour
 He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
 So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
 The first, last look by death reveal'd!
 Such is the aspect of this shore; 90
 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
 So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
 We start, for soul is wanting there.
 Hers is the loveliness in death,
 That parts not quite with parting breath; 95
 But beauty with that fearful bloom,
 That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
 Expression's last receding ray,
 A gilded halo hovering round decay,
 The farewell beam of feeling past away! 100
 Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly
 birth,
 Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished
 earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
 Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
 Was freedom's home, or glory's grave! 105
 Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
 That this is all remains of thee?
 Approach, thou craven crouching slave
 Say, is not this Thermopylae?
 These waters blue that round you lave, 110
 Oh servile offspring of the free—
 Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
 The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
 These scenes, their story not unknown,
 Arise, and make again your own; 115
 Snatch from the ashes of your sires
 The embers of their former fires;
 And he who in the strife expires
 Will add to theirs a name of fear
 That tyranny shall quake to hear, 120
 And leave his sons a hope, a fame
 They too will rather die than shame:
 For freedom's battle once begun,
 Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
 Though baffled oft, is ever won. 125
 Bear witness, Greece, thy living page,
 Attest it many a deathless age!
 While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
 Have left a nameless pyramid,
 Thy heroes, though the general doom 130
 Hath swept the column from their tomb,
 A mightier monument command,
 The mountains of their native land!
 There points thy muse to stranger's eye
 The graves of those that cannot die! 135
 'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,
 Each step from splendour to disgrace;
 Enough—no foreign foe could quell
 Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
 Yes! self-abasement paved the way 140
 To villain-bonds and despot-sway.

What can he tell who treads thy shore?
 No legend of thine olden time,
 No theme on which the muse might soar
 High as thine own in days of yore, 145
 When man was worthy of thy clime.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB¹

(From *Hebrew Melodies*, 1815)

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:

Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur² are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

OH! SNATCH'D AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

(From the same)

I

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

¹ Sennacherib, King of Assyria (705-681 B. C.), was defeated in an expedition against Phœnicia and Palestine, and was compelled to abandon the siege of Jerusalem. See *II Chron.* xxxii.

² Widows of Ashur = Assyria.

II

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

III

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress.
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

(1815)

"O Lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros¹
Ducentium ortus ex animo: quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit."
—*Gray's Poemata.*

I

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, e'er youth itself be past.

II

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never stretch again.

III

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

IV

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy leaves around the ruin'd turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and gray beneath.

¹ "O fount of tears, sprung from the tender heart of those who inspire the holy! Thrice blessed is he who feels thee, sacred Nymph, gush from his inmost being."

V

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I
have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many a
vanish'd scene:
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all
brackish though they be,
So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears
would flow to me. 20

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

(From the same)

I

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies. 5

II

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear, their dwelling-place. 10

III

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow, 15
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

SONNET ON CHILLON

(Introduction to *The Prisoner of Chillon*)

(1816)

Eternal spirit of the chainless mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd— 5
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless
gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyr-
dom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every
wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod, 10
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard!¹—May none those marks
efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

¹ Bonnivard was the "Prisoner of Chillon," the chief figure in Byron's poem of that title. A man of republican views and of high character, he was imprisoned in the castle of Chillon about 1530, and remained there for six years.

CHILDE¹ HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

(1816)

CANTO III

III

In my youth's summer² I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark
mind; 20
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up
tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years 26
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower
appears. . . .

VIII

Something too much of this:—but now 'tis
past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal. 65
Long absent Harold re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would
feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but
ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal 70
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near
the brim.

IX

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he
found
The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd
again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground, 75
And deem'd its spring perpetual; but in
vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which gall'd forever, fettering though un-
seen,
And heavy though it clank'd not; worn
with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and
grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through
many a scene. . . . 81

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit 100
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he
held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was
quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncon-
pell'd,

¹ *Childe* (the heir, of a noble house) is a title made familiar by the Old Ballads like *Childe Waters*, *Childe Roland*.

² The first two cantos appeared in 1812, or about four years previously.

He would not yield dominion of his mind 105
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without man-
kind.

XXX

Where rose the mountains, there to him
were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his
home; 110
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, ex-
tends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome 115
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft for-
sake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the
lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-
born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite: 121
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link 125
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos
us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and weari-
some,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt
wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were
home: 130
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom
eat. 135

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With naught of hope left, but with less of
gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume, 140
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the
plunder'd wreck
When mariners would madly meet their
doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking
deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to
check. . . . 144

XXIII

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo; 155
How in an hour the power which gave annals
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In "pride of place" here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations
through; 160
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's
broken chain. . . .

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,⁴ 181
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave
men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when 185
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake
again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a
rising knell!

XXII

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the
wind, 190
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure
meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying
feet—
But, Hark!—that heavy sound breaks in
once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat; 196
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening
roar!

XXIII

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain;⁵ he did
hear 200
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic
ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it
near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody
bier, 205
And roused the vengeance blood alone could
quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting
fell.

⁴ A term in falconry, applied to certain hawks that
soar to a place high in the air, and from thence swoop
upon their prey. V. Macb. II. iv.

⁵ This stanza refers to a ball given by the Duchess of
Richmond, at Brussels, on the night before the battle of
Waterloo. The boom of cannon rang through the city,
and the festivity was broken up by a rush to arms.

⁶ Duke Frederick William of Brunswick, who lost his
life fighting at Quatre Bras, 1815.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago 210
 Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
 And there were sudden partings, such as
 press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking
 sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who could
 guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual
 eyes, 215
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn
 could rise?

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste: the
 steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering
 car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war; 220
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
 While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe!
 They come! they come!" 225

XXVI

And wild and high the "Cameron's gather-
 ing" rose!
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's
 hills'
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon
 foes:—
 How in the noon of night that pibroch
 thrills, 229
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath
 which fills
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-
 taineers
 With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's,* Donald's fame rings in each clans-
 man's ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green
 leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves, 237
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall
 grow 240
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder
 cold and low.

* The tune played on the bagpipes to marshal the clan of Cameron. At Waterloo the Gordon Highlanders were commanded by Colonel Cameron, a descendant of the famous Highland Camerons of Lochiel.

† The Scotch Highlands.

* Sir Evan Cameron and his son Donald, famous ancestors of Colonel Cameron, who fought against England.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay, 245
 The midnight brought the signal-sound of
 strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
 Battle's magnificently-sterm array!
 The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when
 rent
 The earth is cover'd thick with other clay, 250
 Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and
 pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red
 burial blent! . . .

LXXXV

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake, 797
 With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring. 800
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To wait me from distraction; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reprov'd,
 That I with stern delights should e'er have
 been so moved. 805

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet
 clear,
 Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
 Save darken'd Jura, whose cap't heights
 appear
 Precipitously steep; and drawing near, 810
 There breathes a living fragrance from the
 shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the
 ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol
 more;

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes 815
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
 There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
 But that is fancy, for the starlight dew's 820
 All silently their tears of love instil,
 Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
 Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her
 hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
 If in your bright leaves we would read the
 fate 825
 Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
 A beauty and a mystery, and create 830
 In us such love and reverence from afar,
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named
 themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentr'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense 840
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone, 845
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's^s zone,
Binding all things with beauty;—'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm. 850

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak, 855
Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r!

XCII

The sky is changed!—and such a change—
Oh night, 860
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud, 865
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII

And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be 870

* Venus.

A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee 875
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted! 881
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted:
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:
Itself expired, but leaving them an age 885
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage.

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunderbolts from hand to hand, 890
Flashing and cast around: of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd. 895

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! Ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll 900
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now 905
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,

All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into *one*
 word, 910
 And that one word were Lightning, I would
 speak;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, *sheathing it as a*
sword. . . .

CANTO IV
 (1818)

LXXVIII

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul! 694
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
 Lone mother of dead empires! and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come
 and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your
 way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples,
 Yel! 700
 Whose agonies are evils of a day—
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe¹⁰ of nations! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe,
 An empty urn within her wither'd hands, 705
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
 The Scipio's tomb contains no ashes now;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness? 710
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her
 distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood,
 and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
 She saw her glories star by star expire,
 And up the steep, barbarian monarchs ride,
 Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far and
 wide 716
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a
 site:—
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, "here was, or is," where all is doubly
 night?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her, 721
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt
 . and wrap
 All round us; we but feel our way to err:
 The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
 And knowledge spreads them on her ample
 lap; 725
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry "Eureka!" it is clear—
 Where but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

¹⁰ The wife of Amphiion, king of Thebes. She had six
 sons and six daughters, all of whom were slain through
 jealousy of Latrona.

LXXXII

Alas! the lofty city! and alas! 730
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame
 away!
 Alas, for Tully's¹¹ voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall
 be 735
 Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
 Alas for earth, for never shall we see
 That brightness in her eye she bore when
 Rome was free. . . .

CLXXV

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
 And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
 His task and mine alike are nearly done;
 Yet once more let us look upon the sea; 1570
 The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
 And from the Alban Mount we now behold
 Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when
 we
 Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
 Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark
 Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years—
 Long, though not very many, since have
 done 1577
 Their work on both; some suffering and some
 tears
 Have left us nearly where we had begun:
 Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run,
 We have had our reward—and it is here; 1581
 That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
 And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as
 dear
 As if there were no man to trouble what is
 clear.

CLXXVII

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
 With one fair Spirit for my minister, 1586
 That I might all forget the human race,
 And, hating no one, love but only her!
 Ye Elements!—in whose ennobling stir
 I feel myself exalted—Can ye not 1590
 Accord me such a being? Do I err
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
 Though with them to converse can rarely be
 our lot.

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595
 There is society, where none intrudes,
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be, or have been before, 1600
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all con-
 ceal.

¹¹ Cicero.

CLXXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—
roll!¹²
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling
groan, 1610
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and
unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength
he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful
spray 1617
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him
lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the
walls 1621
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take 1625
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which
mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save
thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are
they?
Thy waters wasted them while they were
free, 1632
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure
brow— 1637
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest
now.

¹² These lines suggest the following passage from
Lucretius:

"So when wild tempests over ocean sweep
Leaders, and legions, and the pomp of war;
Their fleet a plaything in the hands of storms,
How come the proud commanders then with prayers
And votive gifts, imploring peace from god!
In vain: since not the less for prayers they oft
In whirlwinds seized are borne to shades of death," etc.
(*De Rerum Natura*, Bk. V. 1221. Good's trans.)

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's
form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time 1640
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or
storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sub-
lime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime 1645
The monsters of the deep are made; each
zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless,
alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea 1652
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near 1655
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do
here. . . .

THE COLISEUM AT NIGHT

(From *Manfred*, Act III. iv, 1817)

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops 261
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade 265
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall, 270
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome:
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the star
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and 275
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood 281
Within a bowshot—Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battle-
ments,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;— 286
But the gladiator's bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsars' chambers and the Augustan
halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay,— 290
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,

Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
 Of rugg'd desolation, and fill'd up,
 As 't were anew, the gaps of centuries, 295
 Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
 And making that which was not, till the place
 Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
 With silent worship of the great of old—
 The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still
 rule 300
 Our spirits from their urns.—

DON JUAN

CANTO III

(1821)

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung,—690
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
 Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse, 695
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse;
 Their place of birth alone is mute
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' "Islands of the Bless'd." 700

The mountains look on Marathon—
 And Marathon looks on the sea;
 And musing there an hour alone,
 I dream'd that Greece might still be free,
 For, standing on the Persians' grave, 705
 I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
 Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
 And ships, by thousands, lay below,
 And men in nations,—all were his! 710
 He counted them at break of day—
 And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
 My country? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now— 715
 The heroic bosom beats no more!
 And must thy lyre, so long divine,
 Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race, 720
 To feel at least a patriot's shame,
 Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
 For what is left the poet here?
 For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more bless'd? 725
 Must we but blush?—Our fathers bled.
 Earth! render back from out thy breast
 A remnant of thy Spartan dead!
 Of the three hundred grant but three,
 To make a new Thermopylae. 730

What, silent still? and silent all?
 Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
 Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
 And answer, "Let one living head,
 But one arise,—we come, we come!" 735
 'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
 Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
 Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
 And shed the blood of Scio's vine! 740
 Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
 How answers each bold bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
 Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
 Of two such lessons, why forget 745
 The nobler and the manlier one?
 You have the letters Cadmus gave—
 Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 We will not think of themes like these. 750
 It made Anacreon's song divine:
 He served—but served Polycrates—
 A tyrant; but our masters then
 Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant or the Chersonese 755
 Was freedom's best and bravest friend,
 That tyrant was Miltiades!
 Oh! that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind!
 Such claims as his were sure to bind. 760

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the Doric mothers bore;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown, 765
 The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
 They have a king who buys and sells.
 In native swords, and native ranks,
 The only hope of courage dwells; 770
 But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
 Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
 I see their glorious black eyes shine; 775
 But, gazing on each glowing maid,
 My own the burning tear-drop laves,
 To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep—
 Where nothing, save the waves and I, 780
 May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
 There, swan-like, let me sing and die.
 A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
 Dash down yon cup of Samian wine! . . .

XC

And glory long has made the sages smile;
 'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
 wind— 810
 Depending more upon the historian's style
 Than on the name a person leaves behind:
 Troy owes to Homer ~~what whist owes to Hoyle~~;
 The present century was growing blind
 To the great Marlborough's skill in giving
 knocks 815
 Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

XCII

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;
 A little heavy, but no less divine:
 An independent being in his day—
 Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
 But his life falling into Johnson's way, 821
 We're told this great high-priest of all the
 Nine
 Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd
 spouse,
 For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

XCIII

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts, 825
 Like Shakespeare's stealing deer, Lord
 Bacon's bribes;
 Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts;
 Like Burns (whom Dr. Currie well describes)
 Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although truth
 exacts
 These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
 As most essential to their hero's story, 831
 They do not much contribute to his glory.

XCIII

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
 He prated to the world of "Pantisocracy";¹
 Or Wordsworth unexcised,² unhir'd, who then
 Season'd his pedlar poems³ with democracy;
 Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen 837
 Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
 When he and Southey, following the same path,
 Espoused two partners⁴ (milliners of Bath). 840

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
 The very Botany Bay⁵ in moral geography;
 Their loyal treason, renegado vigour,
 Are good manure for their more bare biog-
 raphy.
 Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is
 bigger 845
 Than any since the birthday of typography;
 A clumsy, frowzy poem, call'd the "Excursion"⁶
 Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

¹ The equal rule of all. Southey and Coleridge, when young men, planned to found a Utopian society on the banks of the Susquehanna. They called it Pantisocracy.
² After ardently advocating Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, in his youth, Wordsworth in later life became more conservative and even accepted a post under the government.

³ An allusion to an early poem of Wordsworth's on *Peter Bell*, a pedlar.

⁴ The Misses Fricker of Bath.

⁵ The well known convict colony in New South Wales.

⁶ Published in 1814.

XCIV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intellect; 850
 But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers,
 like
 Joanna Southcote's Shiloh,⁷ and her sect,
 Are things which in this century don't strike
 The public mind,—so few are the elect;
 And the new births of both their stale vir-
 ginities 855
 Have proved but dropsies taken for divini-
 ties. . . .

CI

T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves
 gone,
 The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retir'd;
 The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
 And every sound of revelry expir'd; 900
 The lady and her lover, left alone,
 The rosy flood of twilight sky admir'd;—
 Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
 That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest
 thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour! 905
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I so
 oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
 While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
 Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft, 910
 And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
 And yet the forest leaves seem stirr'd with
 prayer. . . .

CV

Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
¹ Of the pine forest, and the silent shore 930
 Which bounds Ravenna's² immemorial wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd
 o'er,
 To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore³
 And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to
 me, 935
 How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless
 song,
 Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and
 mine,
 And vesper-bell's that rose the boughs
 along; 940

¹ Joanna Southcote was a visionary, born in Devon about 1750, who prophesied that she would give birth to a second *Shiloh*, or Prince of Peace, on Oct. 19th, 1814. Instead, she fell into a trance and died in the same year.
² The celebrated pine forest called *La Pineta*, the most venerable forest in Italy.

³ Boccaccio chose this forest for the scene of a ghastly story, *Nostalgia degli Onesti*, in which the mounted spectre of a knight pursues with dogs the ghostly form of a woman who in life repelled his love with scorn. Dryden used the legend in his poem of *Theodore and Honoria*.

The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair
throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover, shadow'd my mind's eye.

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C VII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer, 946
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest; 951
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's
breast.

C VIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the
heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn
apart; 955
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something
mourns! . . . 960

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

MISSOLONGHI, Jan. 22, 1824.

I

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move!
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

II

My days are in the yellow leaf
The flowers and fruits of love are gone:
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

III

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile!

IV

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

V

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts would shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow. 20

VI

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was nor more free.

VII

Awake (not Greece—she is awake!) 25
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

VIII

Tread these reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee 30
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

IX

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live*:
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

X

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest. 40

Percy Bysshe Shelley

1792-1822

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

(1819)

I

1 O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's
being,
2 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves
dead
3 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter
fleeing, 5
4 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
5 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, 5
6 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
7 The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
8 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
9 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
10 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
11 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
12 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

15 Wild Spirit, which art moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's
commotion, 15
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are
shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and
Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce *Mænad*,¹ even from the dim
verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou
dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, 25
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh,
hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in *Baiæ's*² bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers 35
So sweet the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which
wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed 50
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have
striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and
bowed 55
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and
proud.

¹ A priestess of Bacchus, or Bacchante. *Manad* (derived from a Greek verb meaning *to rage*) suggests the frenzied enthusiasm of the worshippers at the Bacchic festivals.

² The modern *Baja* on the Bay of Naples; in classic times it was a luxurious and beautiful resort, and the ruins of some of its splendid buildings still remain.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit
fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70

TO A SKYLARK

(1820)

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singing. 10

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen,—but yet I hear thy shrill
delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there. 25

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when Night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is
overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden 36
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded
 not: 40

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Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love,—which overflows
 her bower: 45

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aerial hue
 Among the flowers and grass which screen it
 from the view: 50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-
 winged thieves: 55

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth sur-
 pass. 60

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine;
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

'Chorus Hymenæal, 66
 Or triumphal chaunt,
 Matched with thine, would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden
 want. 70

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields or waves or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of
 pain? 75

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be;
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee;
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad
 satiety. 80

Waking or asleep
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream—
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal
 stream? 85

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not;
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
 thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate and pride and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come
 near. 95

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
 ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then—as I am listening
 now. 105

Handwritten signature: H. W. Wordsworth
 THE CLOUD

(1820)

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that
 waken 5

The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under, 10
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white, 15
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
 Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits;
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls by fits; 20

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills, 25
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains;
 And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack;
 When the morning star shines dead;
 As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
 An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
 And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea
 beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
 And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of heaven above,
 With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden, 45
 Whom mortals call the Moon,
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn;
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear, 50
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin
 roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer;
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built
 tent, 55
 Till the calm rivers, lakes and seas,
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on
 high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl; 60
 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and
 swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,— 65
 The mountains its columns be.
 The triumphal arch, through which I march,
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the powers of the air are chained to my
 chair;
 Is the million-coloured bow; 70
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
 And the nursling of the sky;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and
 shores; 75
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain, when with never a stain
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their con-
 vex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air, 80
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from
 the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

OZYMANDIAS

(1817)

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said, Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, 5
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless
 things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart
 that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: 10
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

 ADONAIŠ¹

(1821)

I

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a
 head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure com-
 peers, 5
 And teach them thine own sorrow; Say:
 "With me
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he
 lay, 10
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the Shaft
 which flies
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured
 breath, 15

¹ Keats, whose untimely loss to poetry is the theme
 of *Adonais*, died in Rome, Feb. 23, 1821, in his twenty-
 sixth year. *Adonais* was written in the following May
 (v. Stanzas xvi and xviii.). While not a close friend
 of Keats, Shelley had a sincere, increasing, but not an
 unqualified admiration for his poetry; moreover, he held
 the then prevalent, but unfounded, belief, that the young
 poet's death was the result of his grief and disappoint-
 ment over the harsh and unfair criticism he had received.
 Hence, in writing *Adonais*, Shelley was influenced chiefly
 by two feelings: regret that a poet of high promise should
 have been "hotted from the stage of life," and passionate
 indignation against the perpetrator of the wrong. Under
 these circumstances, Shelley's elegy became a lament for
 Keats the poet, rather than for Keats the man, and its
 true theme is the loss that poetry (rather than Shelley
 himself) has sustained. Beginning with this theme,
 Shelley passes to general speculations on life, death, and
 the hereafter.

Adonais is modelled on two Greek elegies, that of
 Bion on *Adonis* (translated by Mrs. Browning), and of
 Moschus on *Bion*.

The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer
light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's
delight, 170
The beauty and the joy of their renewed
might.

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The leprous corpse touched by this spirit
tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splen-
dour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes be-
neath. 176
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone
which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—the intense atom
glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold
repose. 180

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what
scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life
must borrow. 186
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the
morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake
year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more! 190
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless
Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's
core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and
sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's
eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried, "Arise!" 196
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory
stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour
sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings, 201
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse,—sorrow and
fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way 206
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone,
and steel,
And human hearts which, to her airy tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible 211
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more
sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of
May, 215
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving
way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light 220
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear
delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfort-
less,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania; her distress
Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and met
her vain caress. 225

XXVI

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else
survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive, 230
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence
depart!

XXVII

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, 235
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of
men
Too soon, and with weak hands though
mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon^a in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the
spear? 240
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent
sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee
like deer.

XXVIII

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner
true, 246
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they
fled,

^a The brutal critic, ravening for prey like a beast in his
den. *Unpastured* (Lat. *impastus*), unfed, hungry.

When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age¹⁰ one arrow sped 250
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second
blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them
lying low.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles
spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255
And the immortal stars awake again;
So it is in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and
when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared
its light 260
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful
night."

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shep-
herds¹¹ came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles
rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity,¹² whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent, 265
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne¹³ sent
The sweetest lyrist¹⁴ of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his
tongue. 270

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail
Form,¹⁵
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275
Acteon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and
their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike¹⁶ Spirit beautiful and swift— 280
A Love in desolation masked:—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce
uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;

¹⁰ Byron, who slew the wolves, ravens, and vultures of the critical *Reviews* by a counter-attack in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. He is here likened to *Apollo the Pythian*, or the *Pythian-slayer*.

¹¹ Keats' brother-poets. Their songs are hushed "in sorrow;" their laurel-wreaths are withered; their singing-robcs "rent" in token of grief. Shelley follows *Lycidas*, and other accepted models, in making his elegy pastoral in character.

¹² Byron, the poet of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

¹³ Ireland.

¹⁴ Thomas Moore. By Ireland's "saddest wrong" Shelley is supposed to mean the suppression of the insurrection of 1803, and the execution of the Irish leader Robert Emmet. Several songs of Moore, including *O Breathes not his Name*, were inspired by Emmet's fate.

¹⁵ Shelley himself.

¹⁶ Leopard-like.

It is a dying lamp, a falling shower, 284
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart
may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses
grew 292
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it: of that
crew 295
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's
dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that
gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own, 300
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who
art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined
brow, 305
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it
should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?¹⁷
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle
thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-
bed,
In mockery of monumental stone, 310
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the de-
parted one;
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. 315

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh,
What deaf and viperous murderer could
crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown;
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone 320
Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre
unstrung.

¹⁷ The last poet-mourner is Leigh Hunt, the early friend of Keats in London, and the head of the "Cockney-school" of poetry with which Keats was at first associated.

XXXVII

Live thou,¹⁸ whose infamy is not thy fame! 325
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow;
 Renorse and Self-contempt shall cling to
 thee; 331
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as
 now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream
 below; 335
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably the
 same, 341
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth
 of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead,¹⁹ he doth not
 sleep—
 He hath awakened from the dream of life—
 'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep 345
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's
 knife
 Invulnerable nothings. We decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Consume us and consume us day by day, 350
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our
 living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again; 355
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in
 vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not
 he; 361
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;

¹⁸ i. e. Keats' hostile critic before referred to.

¹⁹ The second natural division of the elegy begins with this stanza. The first part is devoted to grief for Keats, indignation at his critics, and regrets over his loss to poetry; this second part is chiefly occupied with general reflections suggested by the fact of death. The present note of this second part is hope.

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! 365
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and
 thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst
 thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its
 despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan 371
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may
 move 375
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never wearied
 love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth
 bear 380
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull sense world, com-
 pelling there,
 All new successions to the forms they wear;
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its
 flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear,
 And bursting in its beauty and its might 386
 From trees and beasts and men into the
 Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
 Like stars to their appointed height they
 climb, 390
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty
 thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
 And move like winds of light on dark and
 stormy air. 396

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from their thrones,²⁰ built beyond mor-
 tal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not 400
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved,
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved;
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing re-
 proved. 405

²⁰ Keats having died young, is received into the company of those "immortal dead" whose promise of renown had, like his, been unfulfilled. Chatterton was not eighteen when he died, Sir Philip Sidney but thirty-two, and Lucan, who died because of his share in a conspiracy against Nero, about twenty-seven.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry; 410
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 Swung blind in unascended majesty.
 Silent alone amid a Heaven of song,
 Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our
 throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? oh, come forth, 415
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous
 Earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference; then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night; 421
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to
 the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis naught 425
 That ages, empires, and religions there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their
 prey; 429
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, 435
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is
 spread. 441

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull
 Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilions the dust of him who planned 445
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath
 A field is spread, on which a newer band

Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp
 of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished
 breath. 450

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young
 as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which con-
 signed
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou
 find 455
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter
 wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and
 pass; 460
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou
 dost seek! 465
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are
 weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to
 speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my
 Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before; from all things
 here 470
 They have departed; thou shouldst now de-
 part!
 A light is past from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers
 near; 475
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join
 together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Uni-
 verse,
 That Beauty in which all things work and
 move, 479
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly
 wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and
 sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst, now beams on
 me, 485
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in
 song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling
 throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest
 given; 400
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of
 Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal
 are. 495

TIME

(1821)

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years,
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
 Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and
 flow
 Claspest the limits of mortality, 5
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
 Who shall put forth on thee,
 Unfathomable Sea? 10

TO —

(1821)

Music, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory;
 Odours, when sweet violets sicken;
 Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, 5
 Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

TO NIGHT

(1821)

I

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where all the long and lone daylight 5
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;— 10
 Kiss her until she be wearied out;
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15
 I sighed for thee;
 When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
 And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
 And the weary Day turned to his rest,
 Lingered like an unloved guest, 20
 I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee, 25
 Shall I nestle at thy side?
 Would'st thou me?—and I replied,
 No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead, 30
 Soon, too soon;
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night,—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon! 35

A LAMENT

(1821)

I

O world! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—oh, never more! 5

II

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with
 delight
 No more—oh, never more! 10

TO —

(1821)

I

One word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it;
 One hope is too like despair 5
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not,— 10

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar 15
From the sphere of our sorrow?

John Keats

1795-1821

ENDYMION

(1818)

Book I

(A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
breathing. 5

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'erdarkened ways 10
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils 15
With the green world they live in; and clear
rills

That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose
blooms:

And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20
That we have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences 25
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-
cast,
They alway must be with us, or we die. . .

SONNETS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER¹

(Written 1816)

XI

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

¹ Chapman's translation of Homer (like the *Faerie Queene* and the *Elgin Marbles*) early stimulated Keats' genius and helped to mould his taste. C. Cowden Clarke introduced Keats to the book in 1815. It is hardly necessary to add that Balboa, not Cortes, discovered the Pacific (l. 12).

Of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer rul'd as his
demesne; 5

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken; 10
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

SONNET

(June, 1816)

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a
prayer

Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's con-
tent, 5

Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,¹—an eye 10
Watching the sailing cloudlets' bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

XV

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET¹

(Written December 30th, 1816)

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown
mead;

That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead 5
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with
fun

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:

On a lone winter evening, when the frost 10
Has wrought a silence, from the stove
there shrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy
hills.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES¹ FOR THE FIRST TIME

(1817)

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die

¹ The nightingale.

¹ This sonnet and that of Hunt's (p. 507), were the result of a friendly competition.

¹ V. p. 562, n. 15.

Like a sick eagle looking at the sky. 5
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
 Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain, 11
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the
 rude
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
 A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the
 spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found, 5
 That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moved for days from whence it sometime
 fell,
 When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
 Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vex'd and
 tired,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea; 10
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar
 rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and
 brood
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

SONNET

Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
 No God, no Demon of severe response,
 Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
 Then to my human heart I turn at once.
 Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone; 5
 I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
 O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in
 vain.
 Why did I laugh? I know this Being's lease,
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads; 10
 Yet could I on this very midnight cease,
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;
 Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

SONNET

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain.
 Before high pil'd books in character,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face, 5
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of
 chance;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more, 10
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

LAST SONNET

Written on a Blank Page in Shakespeare's
 Poems, Facing *A Lover's Complaint*

(Written 1820)

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task 5
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
 No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell, 11
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

One of his best.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

(1820)

I

St. Agnes' Eve¹—Ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limp'd trembling through the
 frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the Beadsman's² fingers, while
 he told 5
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,
 Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a
 death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
 prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;¹⁰
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
 knees,
 And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
 The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to
 freeze,
 Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails: 15
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods and
 mails.

¹ The night of January 20th. It was supposed that by observing certain ceremonies on this night a maiden might see her future husband in her dreams.

² One who prays, particularly one who prays for others.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden
 tongue 20
 Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
 But no—already had his deathbell rung;
 The joys of all his life were said and sung;
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' eve:
 Another way he went, and soon among 25
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to
 grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude
 soft;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
 The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice
 rests, 35
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-
 wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent³ revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
 The brain, newstuff'd in youth, with triumphs
 gay 40
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry
 day,
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times
 declare. 45

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright; 50
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they
 desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline: 55
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60
 And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of
 the year.

³ Silvery-bright, shining.

VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and
 short: 65
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she
 sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,⁴ 70
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,⁵
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the
 moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on
 fire 75
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and
 implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen; 80
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth
 such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
 For him, those chambers held barbarian
 hordes, 85
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,⁶
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in
 soul. 90

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland: 95
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from
 this place;
 "They are all here to-night, the whole blood-
 thirsty race!

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish
 Hildebrand; 100
 "He had a fever late, and in the fit
 "He curs'd thee and thine, both house and
 land:

⁴ Dead, absorbed in thought (Fr. *à la mort*).

⁵ On St. Agnes' Day, it was the custom in some places for the nuns to bring two white lambs to Church, and (when the *Agnus Dei* was chanted) to present them before the altar. The lambs, thus dedicated, were kept apart until shearing-time, and their fleece was regarded as holy. (s. *Stanza xii*).

⁶ Here = harmful, mischievous.

"Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 "More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me! flit!
 "Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear, 105
 "We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
 "And tell me how"—"Good Saints not here, not here:
 "Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arch'd way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume, 110
 And as she muttered "Well-a-well-a-day!"
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
 "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115
 "Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 "When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 "Yet men will murder upon holy days:
 "Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120
 "And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 "To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 "To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
 "God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
 "This very night: good angels her deceive!
 "But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve." 128

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth clos'd a wondrous riddle-book, 130
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
 "A cruel man and impious thou art: 140
 "Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 "Alone with her good angels, far apart
 "From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
 "Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear," 145
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
 "When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 "If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 "Or look with ruffian passion in her face;
 "Good Angela, believe me by these tears; 150
 "Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 "Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
 "And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
 "A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, 155
 "Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
 "Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 "Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy 165
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legion'd fairies pac'd the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleep-ey'd.
 Never on such a night have lovers met, 170
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
 "All cates and dainties shall be stored there
 "Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
 "Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare, 175
 "For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 "On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 "Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
 "The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
 "Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

⁷ The night after Merlin was shut up forever in a tree, a frightful tempest swept through the forest of Broceliande, in which this tree stood. As Merlin (according to some versions of the story) was the child of a "Demon," he said it to have "paid" his "monstrous debt" when, his own magic being turned against him, he was overpowered by the wily Vivian.
⁸ Delicacies.

XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd!
 The dame return'd and whisper'd in his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, 185
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and
 chaste;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her
 brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 190
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd^o spirit, unaware:
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led 195
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove
 fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died: 200
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side; 205
 As though a tongueless nightingale should
 swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her
 dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-
 grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains¹⁰ and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-darnask'd wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of
 queens and kings. 216

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair
 breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and
 boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst, 221
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew
 faint:
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal
 taint. 225

* Commisioned.

** Colors.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
 Of all its wreath'd pearls her hair she frees;
 Unclasps her warm'd jewels one by one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed, 231
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is
 fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly
 nest, 235
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she
 lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her sooth'd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
 day;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and
 pain; 240
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims
 pray;¹¹
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
 again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress, 245
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he
 bless
 And breath'd himself: then from the closet
 crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, steep,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—
 how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:— 256
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!¹²
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is
 gone. 261

Example of his sumptuousness
 XXX

And still she slept an asure-lidded sleep,
 In blanch'd linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
 gourd; 265
 With jellies soother¹³ than the creamy curd,

¹¹ Swart Paynims = dark pagans. "Clasped like a missal in a land of pagans; that is to say, where Christian prayer-books must not be seen, and are, therefore, doubly cherished for the danger." Leigh Hunt.

¹² A charm capable of producing sleep.

¹³ Apparently = smother.

And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand¹⁴ to cedar'd Lebanon.

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These delicacies he heap'd with glowing
hand 271
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreath'd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
"Thou art my heaven, and I thine hermit:
"Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes'
sake, 278
"Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth
ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerv'd arm 280
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight
charm
Impossible to melt as ic'd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies: 285
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entail'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and,—in chords that tender-
est be, 290
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans
mercy:"¹⁵
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft
moan:
He ceas'd—she panted quick—and sud-
denly 295
Her blue affray'd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
sculptured-stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh ex-
pell'd 300
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a
sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;

¹⁴ An ancient city in Turkestan. It was the capital of the great conqueror Timur, or Tamerlane, and, in his time, a center of learning and commerce.

¹⁵ The title of a poem by Alain Chartier, court poet of Charles VI and Charles VII, of France. An English translation of this poem, erroneously attributed to Chaucer, and formerly included in editions of his works, had attracted Keats' fancy. Chartier's title was adopted by Keats as the title of one of his best lyrics (s. p. 535).

Who knelt, with join'd hands and piteous
eye, 305
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dream-
ingly.

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
"Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
"Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
"And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;
"How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill,
and drear! 311
"Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
"Those looks immortal, those complainings
dear!
"Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
"For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where
to go." 315

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
Blended its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind
blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon
hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown
sleet: 325
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the ic'd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
"Porphyro will leave me here to fade and
pine.—
"Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring? 330
"I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
"Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
"A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned
wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
"Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest? 335
"Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and
vermilion dy'd?
"Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
"After so many hours of toil and quest,
"A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.
"Though I have found, I will not rob thy
nest 340
"Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st
well
"To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
"Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
"Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;— 345
"The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
"Let us away, my love, with happy speed;

"There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 "Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy
 mead:
 "Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be, 350
 "For o'er the southern moors I have a home for
 thee."

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She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
 spears—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they
 found.— 355
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each
 door;
 The arras rich with horseman, hawk, and
 hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty
 floor. 360

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side:
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his
 hide, 365
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges
 groans.

XLII

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago 370
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and
 form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old 375
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face de-
 form;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

ROBIN HOOD

TO A FRIEND

(Pub. 1820)

No! those days are gone away,
 And their hours are old and gray,
 And their minutes buried all
 Under the down-trodden pall 5
 Of the leaves of many years:
 Many times have winter's shears,
 Frozen North, and chilling East,
 Sounded tempests to the feast
 Of the forests whispering fleeces,
 Since men knew not rents nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
 And the twanging bow no more;
 Silent is the ivory shrill
 Past the heath and up the hill;

There is no mid-forest laugh, 15
 Where lone echo gives the half
 To some wight, amaz'd to hear
 Jestings, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time in June
 You may go with sun or moon, 20
 Or the seven stars to light you,
 Or the polar ray to right you;
 But you never may behold
 Little John, or Robin bold;
 Never one, of all the clan, 25
 Thrumming on an empty can
 Some old hunting ditty, while
 He doth his green way beguile
 To fair hostess Merriment,
 Down beside the pasture Trent; 30
 For he left the merry tale
 Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone the merry morris din;
 Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
 Gone, the tough-belted outlaw 35
 Idling in the "grené shawe;"
 All are gone away and past!
 And if Robin should be cast
 Sudden from his turf'd grave,
 And if Marian should have 40
 Once again her forest days,
 She would weep, and he would craze:
 He would swear, for all his oaks,
 Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
 Have rotted on the briny seas; 45
 She would weep that her wild bees
 Sang not to her—strange! that honey
 Can't be got without hard money!

So it is: yet let us sing,
 Honour to the old bow string! 50
 Honour to the bugle-horn!
 Honour to the woods unshorn!
 Honour to the Lincoln green!
 Honour to the archer keen!
 Honour to tight little John, 55
 And the horse he rode upon!
 Honour to bold Robin Hood!
 Sleeping in the underwood!
 Honour to maid Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood-clan! 60
 Though their days have hurried by
 Let us two a burden try.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

(1820)

I
 Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
 Alone and palely loitering;
 The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

II
 Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight, 5
 So haggard and so woe-begone?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

¹ V. note to *Eve of St. Agnes*, xxiii, p. 534.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew; 10
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

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I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light, 15
And her eyes were wild.

V

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean and sing
A faery's song. 20

VI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet, 25
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sigh'd deep; 30
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kissed to sleep.

IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dream'd, 35
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cry'd—"La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!" 40

XI

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom,
With horrid warning gap'd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here 45
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake
And no birds sing.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

(1819)

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the
trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delv'd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt
mirth! 20
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,¹
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world un-
seen,
And with thee fade away into the forest
dim: 30

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never
known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other
groan;
Where palsies shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
Where youth grows pale, and spectro-thin,
and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-ey'd despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
morrow. 30

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,²
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night, 35
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes
blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding
mossy ways. 40

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalm'd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows

¹ A fountain sacred to the Muses on Mt. Helicon.
"The true . . . Hippocrene" = wine, whose aid is after-
wards rejected (Stanza IV).

² Leopards. In a painting by Titian in the National
Gallery, London, Bacchus, the god of Wine, is repre-
sented as descending from a chariot drawn by leopards.

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;⁴⁵
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer
 eves. www.libtool.com.cn 50

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick
 for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep? 80

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

(Written 1819)

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy
 shape 5
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe¹ or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maid-
 ens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild
 ecstasy? 10

¹ A valley in Thessaly, celebrated for its beauty.

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not
 leave 15
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not
 grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy
 bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

III

Ah! happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above, 28
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore, 35
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede²
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of
 thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! 45
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
 say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
 know. 50

TO AUTUMN

(Written 1819 ?)

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-
 eaves run;

² The urn is "overwrought" with the shapes of "men and maidens" gracefully interwoven, so that the succession of figures, encircling the vase like a fillet, or band, is spoken of as a *brede*, or *braid*.

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spires the next swath and all its twined flowers:
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
 While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows,¹ borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
 Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden croft;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

(Pub. 1820)

I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,

¹ Willows.

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

III

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

Charles Wolfe

1791–1823

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE
AT CORUNNA¹

(1817)

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
 As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
 Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
 O'er the grave where our hero was buried.
 We buried him darkly at dead of night,
 The sods with our bayonets turning;
 By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
 And the lantern dimly burning.
 No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
 Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him;
 But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
 With his martial cloak around him.
 Few and short were the prayers we said,
 And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
 But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
 And we bitterly thought of the morrow.
 We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed
 And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
 That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er
 his head,
 And we far away on the billow!
 Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
 And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him—
 But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
 In the grave where a Briton has laid him.
 But half of our heavy task was done
 When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
 And we heard the distant and random gun;
 That the foe was sullenly firing.

¹ For an account of Moore's gallant death, s. Napier's *Peninsular War I*, Bk. IV, Ch. V.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down, 29
 From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
 We carved not a line and we raised not a stone,
 But we left him alone with his glory.

William Motherwell

1797-1834

G. and J. JEANIE MORRISON
 (From *Poems*, 1832)

I've wandered east, I've wandered west,
 Through mony a weary way;
 But never, never can forget
 The luve o' life's young day!
 The fire that's blawn on Beltane e'en,
 May weel be black gin Yule:
 But blacker fa' awaits the heart
 Where first fond luve grows cule.

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
 The thochts o' bygone years
 Still fling their shadows owre my path,
 And blind my een wi' saut, saut tears,
 They blind my een wi' saut, saut tears,
 And sair and sick I pine,
 As Memory idly summons up
 The blithe blinks o' langsyne.

'Twas then we luvit ilk ither weel,
 'Twas then we twa did part;
 Sweet time, sad time!—twa bairns at schule,
 Twa bairns, and but ae heart! 20
 'Twas then we sat on ae laigh bink,
 To leir ilk ither lear;¹
 And tones, and looks, and smiles were shed,
 Remembered evermair.

I wonder, Jeanie, aften yet,
 When sitting on that bink,
 Check touchin' cheek, loof² locked in loof,
 What our wee heads could think!
 When baith bent down owre ae braid page,
 Wi' ae buik on our knee,
 Thy lips were on thy lesson, but
 My lesson was in thee.

Oh, mind ye how we hung our heads,
 How cheeks brent red wi' shame,
 Whene'er the schule-weans, laughin' said,
 We cleek'd thegither hame?
 And mind ye o' the Saturdays
 (The schule then skail't at noon),
 When we ran off to speel the braces—
 The broomy braes o' June.

My head rins round and round about,
 My heart flows like a sea,
 As, ane by ane, the thochts rush back
 O' schule-time and o' thee.
 Oh, mornin' life! Oh, mornin' luve!
 Oh, lightsome days and lang,
 When hinnied hopes around our hearts,
 Like simmer blossoms, sprang!

Oh, mind ye, luve, how aft we left
 The deavin' dinsome toun, 50

To wander by the green burnside,
 And hear its waters croon?
 The simmer leaves hung owre our heads,
 The flowers burst round our feet,
 And in the gloamin' o' the wud
 The throssil whusslit sweet. 55

The throssil whusslit in the wud,
 The burn sung to the trees,
 And we, with Nature's heart in tune,
 Concerted harmonies;
 And on the knowe abune the burn
 For hours thegither sat
 In the silentness o' joy, till baith
 Wi' very gladness grat. 60

Ay, ay, dear Jeanie Morrison,
 Tears tinkled down your cheek,
 Like dew-buds on a rose, yet nane
 Had ony power to speak!
 That was a time, a blessed time,
 When hearts were fresh and young, 70
 When freely gushed all feelings forth,
 Unsyllabled—unsung!

I marvel, Jeanie Morrison,
 Gin I hae been to thee
 As closely twined wi' earliest thochts 75
 As ye hae been to me?
 Oh! tell me gin their music fills
 Thine ear as it does mine:
 Oh! say gin e'er your heart grows great
 Wi' dreamings o' langsyne? 80

I've wandered east, I've wandered west,
 I've borne a weary lot:
 But in my wanderings, far or near,
 Ye never were forgot.
 The fount that first burst frae this heart, 85
 Still travels on its way;
 And channels deeper as it rins
 The luve o' life's young day.

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
 Since we were sindered young, 90
 I've never seen your face, nor heard
 The music of your tongue:
 But I could hug all wretchedness,
 And happy could I dee,
 Did I but ken your heart still dreamed 95
 O' bygone days and me!

Sir Walter Scott

1771-1832

SELECTIONS FROM SCOTT'S JOURNAL

(Edinburgh) November 20, 1825.—I have
 all my life regretted that I did not keep a
 Journal. I have myself lost recollection of
 much that was interesting, and I have de-
 prived my family and the public of some curi-
 ous information, by not carrying this resolu-
 tion into effect. I have bethought me, on
 seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes,
 that he probably had hit upon the right way
 of keeping such a memorandum-book, by

¹ i. e. to teach each other the lesson. *Lear* = lore, learn-
 ing.

² Palm, or hand.

throwing aside all pretence of regularity and order, and marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan; and behold I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's album.

December 18. An odd thought strikes me; when I die will the Journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read as the transient pout of a man worth £60,000, with wonder that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of chivalry has hung up his scutcheon for some 20s. a week, and where one or two old friends will look grave and whisper to each other, "Poor gentleman," "A well-meaning man," "Nobody's enemy but his own," "Thought his parts could never wear out," "Family poorly left," "Pity he took that foolish title"? Who can answer this question?

What a life mine has been!—half educated, almost wholly neglected or left to myself, stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued in society for a time by most of my companions, getting forward and held a bold and clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer, broken-hearted for two years, my heart handsomely pieced again, but the crack will remain to my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times, once on the verge of ruin, yet opened new sources of wealth almost overflowing. Now taken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless the good news hold), because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in a tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. And what is to be the end of it? God knows. And so ends the catechism.

March 14, 1826. Read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!

April 1.—*Ex uno die discite omnes*.¹ Rose at seven or sooner, studied, and wrote till breakfast with Anne,² about a quarter before ten. Lady Scott seldom able to rise till twelve or

one. Then I write or study again till one. At that hour to-day I drove to Huntly Burn, and walked home by one of the hundred and one pleasing paths which I have made through the woods I have planted—now chatting with Tom Purdie, who carries my plaid, and speaks when he pleases, telling long stories of hits and misses in shooting twenty years back—sometimes chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy—and sometimes attending to the humours of two curious little terriers of the Dandie Dinmont breed, together with a noble wolf-hound puppy which Glengarry had given me to replace Maida. This brings me down to the very moment I do tell—the rest is prophetic. I will feel sleepy when this book is locked, and perhaps sleep until Dalgleish brings the dinner summons. Then I will have a chat with Lady S. and Anne; some broth or soup, a slice of plain meat—a man's chief business, in Dr. Johnson's estimation, is briefly despatched. Half an hour with my family, and half an hour's coquetting with a cigar, a tumbler of weak whisky and water, and a novel perhaps, lead on to tea, which sometimes consumes another half hour of chat; then write or read in my own room till ten o'clock at night; a little bread and then a glass of porter, and to bed.

August 15. I write on, though a little afflicted with the oppression on my chest. Sometimes I think it is something dangerous, but as it always goes away on change of posture, it cannot be speedily so. I want to finish my task, and then good-night. I will never relax my labour in these affairs, either for fear of pain or for love of life. I will die a free man if working will do it. Accordingly, to-day I cleared the ninth leaf, which is the tenth part of a volume, in two days—four and a half leaves a day.

March 21, 1827. Wrote till twelve, then out upon the heights though the day was stormy, and faced the gale bravely. Tom Purdie was not with me. He would have obliged me to keep the sheltered ground. But, I don't know—

"Even in our ashes live our wonted fires."

There is a touch of the old spirit in me yet that bids me brave the tempest,—the spirit that, in spite of manifold infirmities, made me a roaring boy in my youth, a desperate climber, a bold rider, a deep drinker, and a stout player at single-stick, of all which valuable qualities there are now but slender remains. I worked hard when I came in, and finished five pages.

March 16, 1831. The affair with Mr. Cadell being settled, I have only to arrange a set of

¹ From one day learn all. Cf. Vergil, *Æn.* II. 65.

² Scott's daughter.

regular employment for my time, without over-fatiguing myself. What I at present practice seems active enough for my capacity, and even if I should reach the three score and ten, from which I am thrice three years distant, or nearer ten, the time may pass honourably, usefully, and profitably, both to myself and other people. My ordinary runs thus:— Rise at a quarter before seven; at a quarter after nine breakfast, with eggs, or in the single number, at least; before breakfast private letters, etc.; after breakfast Mr. Laidlaw comes at ten, and we write together till one. I am greatly helped by this excellent man, who takes pains to write a good hand, and supplies the want of my own fingers as far as another person can. We work seriously at the task of the day till one o'clock, when I sometimes walk—not often, however, having failed in strength, and suffering great pain even from a very short walk. Oftener I take the pony for an hour or two and ride about the doors; the exercise is humbling enough, for I require to be lifted on horseback by two servants, and one goes with me to take care I do not fall off and break my bones, a catastrophe very like to happen. My proud promenade à pied or à cheval, as it happens, concludes by three o'clock. An hour intervenes for making up my Journal and such light work. At four comes dinner,—a plate of broth or soup, much condemned by the doctors, a bit of plain meat, no liquors stronger than small beer, and so I sit quiet to six o'clock, when Mr. Laidlaw returns, and remains with me till nine or three quarters past, as it happens. Then I have a bowl of porridge and milk, which I eat with the appetite of a child. I forgot to say that after dinner I am allowed half a glass of whiskey or gin made into weak grog. I never wish for any more, nor do I in my secret soul long for cigars, though once so fond of them. About six hours per day is good working, if I can keep it up.

May 4, 1831. My pronunciation is a good deal improved. My time glides away ill employed, but I am afraid of the palsy. I should not like to be pinned to my chair. But I believe even that kind of life is more endurable than we could suppose. Your wishes are limited to your little circle—yet the idea is terrible to a man who has been active. My own circle in bodily matters is daily narrowing; not so in intellectual matters, but I am perhaps a bad judge. The plough is coming to the end of the furrow, so it is likely I shall not reach the common goal of mortal life by a few years. I am now in my sixtieth year only, and

"Three score and ten years do sum up."

October. I have been very ill, and if not quite unable to write, I have been unfit to do so. I have wrought however, at two Waverly things, but not well, and, what is worse, past mending. A total prostration of bodily strength is my chief complaint. I cannot walk half a mile. There is, besides, some mental confusion, with the extent of which I am not perhaps fully acquainted. I am perhaps setting. I am myself inclined to think so, and, like a day that has been admired as a fine one, the light of it sets down amid mists and storms. I neither regret nor fear the approach of death if it is coming. I would compound for a little pain instead of this heartless muddiness of mind which renders me incapable of anything rational. The expense of my journey will be something considerable, which I can provide against by borrowing £500 from Mr. Gibson. To Mr. Cadell I owe already, with the cancels on these apoplectic books, about £200, and must run it up to £500 more at least; yet this heavy burthen would be easily borne if I were to be the Walter Scott I once was; but the change is great.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772-1834

THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN¹

CANTO II

(Written 1798)

"A little further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight." Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

"It is dark, O my father!" said Enos, "but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight."

"Lead on, my child!" said Cain: "guide

¹ Coleridge tells us that while he was living near Wordsworth, at Nether-Stowey in 1798, they agreed to write in concert a "prose-poem" on the story of Cain and Abel in three cantos. Wordsworth was to write the first canto, Coleridge the second, and whoever finished his part first, was to undertake the third. The second canto, *The Wanderings of Cain*, was the only part ever written. It is well known that Coleridge did not consider meter essential to poetry.

me, little child!" And the innocent little child clasped a finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. "The fir branches drip upon thee, my son." "Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I clomb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them, but they leaped away from the branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me; and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when thou givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me?" Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly, and said, "The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sandblast he passeth through me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die—yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth—behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils. So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice: and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I dried up." Then Enos spake to his father, "Arise, my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher." And Cain said, "How knowest thou?" And the child answered—"Behold the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the echo." Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides' length of its termination, when it turned sud-

denly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the bison's forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath; and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophesy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. As far from the wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its points and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, "Woe is me! woe is me! I must never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger."

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening, whispered, "Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father,

that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice? O my father! this is it;" and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous, like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet cannot refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round, and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother Abel whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of soul, the Shape fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, "Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery." Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, "What beholdest thou? Didst thou hear a voice, my son?" "Yes, my father, I beheld a man in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice, full of lamentation." Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said:—"The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?" Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sat beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child: "I know where the cold waters are, but I may not drink, wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?" But Cain said, "Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?" The Shape answered, "The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God." Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. "Wretched shall they be all the days of their mortal life," exclaimed the Shape, "who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother,

who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion." Having uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands: and Cain said in his heart, "The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead?" and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outran Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped and beholding him not, said, "he has passed into the dark woods," and he walked slowly back to the rock; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground; and Cain once more sat beside him, and said, "Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead? where doth he make his dwelling? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him? for I have offered, but have not been received; I have prayed, and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am?" The Shape arose and answered, "O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam! and bring thy child with thee!"

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

ORIGIN OF THE LYRICAL BALLADS

(From *Biographia Literaria*, 1817)

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature; and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. The sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself—to which of us I do not recollect—that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In

the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*;¹ in which it was agreed, that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing among other poems, *The Dark Ladie*, and the *Christable*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published; and were presented by him, as an experiment, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed

in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of speech that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr. Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being; had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr. Wordsworth's admirers. They were found too not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its religious fervor.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS

(*Lectures Upon Shakespeare*, 1818)

Poetry in essence is as familiar to barbarous as to civilized nations. The Laplander and the savage Indian are cheered by it as well as the inhabitants of London and Paris;—its spirit takes up and incorporates surrounding materials, as a plant clothes itself with soil and climate, whilst it exhibits the working of a vital principle within independent of all accidental circumstances. And to judge with fairness of an author's works, we ought to distinguish what is inward and essential from what is outward and circumstantial. It is essential

¹ *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1798, was the epoch-making book of poems in which Wordsworth and Coleridge first appeared as important poets.

to poetry that it be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature; that it be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash; that it be impassioned, and be able to move our feelings and awaken our affections. In comparing different poets with each other, we should inquire which have brought into the fullest play our imagination and our reason, or have created the greatest excitement and produced the completest harmony. If we consider great exquisiteness of language and sweetness of metre alone, it is impossible to deny to Pope the character of a delightful writer; but whether he be a poet, must depend upon our definition of the word; and, doubtless, if everything that pleases be poetry, Pope's satires and epistles must be poetry. This, I must say, that poetry, as distinguished from other modes of composition, does not rest in metre, and that it is not poetry, if it make no appeal to our passions or our imagination. One character belongs to all true poets, that they write from a principle within, not originating in any thing without; and that the true poet's work in its form, its shapings, and its modifications, is distinguished from all other works that assume to belong to the class of poetry, as a natural from an artificial flower, or as the mimic garden of a child from an enamelled meadow. In the former the flowers are broken from their stems and stuck into the ground; they are beautiful to the eye and fragrant to the sense, but their colors soon fade and their odor is transient as the smile of the planter;—while the meadow may be visited again and again with renewed delight; its beauty is innate in the soil, and its bloom is of the freshness of nature.

The next ground of critical judgment, and point of comparison, will be as to how far a given poet has been influenced by accidental circumstances. As a living poet must surely write, not for the ages past, but for that in which he lives, and those which are to follow, it is, on the one hand, natural that he should not violate, and on the other, necessary that he should not depend on, the mere manners and modes of his day. See how little does Shakespeare leave us to regret that he was born in his particular age! The great era in modern times was what is called the Restoration of Letters;—the ages preceding it are called the dark ages; but it would be more wise, perhaps, to call them the ages in which we were in the dark. It is usually overlooked that the supposed dark period was not universal, but partial, or successive, or alternate; that the dark age of England was not the dark age of Italy, but that one country was in its

light and vigor, whilst another was in its gloom and bondage. But no sooner had the Reformation sounded through Europe like the blast of an archangel's trumpet, than from king to peasant there arose an enthusiasm for knowledge; the discovery of a manuscript became the subject of an embassy; Erasmus read by moonlight, because he could not afford a torch, and begged a penny, not for the love of charity, but for the love of learning. The three great points of attention were religion, morals, and taste; men of genius as well as men of learning, who in this age need to be so widely distinguished, then alike became copyists of the ancients; and this, indeed, was the only way by which the taste of mankind could be improved, or their understandings informed. Whilst Dante imagined himself a humble follower of Virgil, and Ariosto of Homer, they were both unconscious of that greater power working within them, which in many points carried them beyond their supposed originals. All great discoveries bear the stamp of the age in which they are made;—hence we perceive the effects of the purer religion of the moderns, visible for the most part in their lives; and in reading their works we should not content ourselves with the mere narrative of events long since passed, but should learn to apply their maxims and conduct to ourselves.

Having intimated that times and manners lend their form and pressure to genius, let me once more draw a slight parallel between the ancient and modern stage, the stages of Greece and of England. The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art, and taste, was their gods; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated impression of perfect beauty, and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole, a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakespeare; in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with a sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet at the same time, so promising of our social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry

in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music;—the one consisting of melody arising from a succession only of pleasing sounds,—the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination and the effect of a whole.

I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakespeare, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. The Greek stage had its origin in the ceremonies of a sacrifice, such as of the goat to Bacchus, whom we most erroneously regard as merely the jolly god of wine;—for among the ancients he was venerable, as the symbol of that power which acts without our consciousness in the vital energies of nature,—the *vinum mundi*,¹—as Apollo was that of the conscious agency of our intellectual being. The heroes of old under the influences of this Bacchic enthusiasm, performed more than human actions;—hence tales of the favourite champions soon passed into dialogue. On the Greek stage the chorus was always before the audience; the curtain was never dropped, as we should say; and change of place being therefore, in general, impossible, the absurd notion of condemning it merely as improbable in itself was never entertained by any one. If we can believe ourselves at Thebes in one act, we may believe ourselves at Athens in the next. If a story lasts twenty-four hours or twenty-four years, it is equally improbable. There seems to be no just boundary but what the feelings prescribe. But on the Greek stage where the same persons were perpetually before the audience, great judgment was necessary in venturing on any such change. The poets never, therefore, attempted to impose on the senses by bringing places to men, but they did bring men to places, as in the well-known instance in the *Eumenides*,² where during an evident retirement of the chorus from the orchestra, the scene is changed to Athens, and Orestes is first introduced in the temple of Minerva, and the chorus of Furies come in afterwards in pursuit of him.

In the Greek drama there were no formal divisions into scenes and acts; there were no means, therefore, of allowing for the necessary lapse of time between one part of the dialogue and another, and unity of time in a strict sense

was, of course, impossible. To overcome that difficulty of accounting for time, which is effected on the modern stage by dropping a curtain, the judgment and great genius supplied music and measured motion, and with the lyric ode filled up the vacuity. In the story of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, the capture of Troy is supposed to be announced by a fire lighted on the Asiatic shore, and the transmission of the signal by successive beacons to Mycenæ. The signal is first seen at the 21st line, and the herald from Troy itself enters at the 486th, and Agamemnon himself at the 783d line. But the practical absurdity of this was not felt by the audience, who, in imagination, stretched minutes into hours, while they listened to the lofty narrative odes of the chorus which almost entirely filled up the interspace. Another fact deserves attention here, namely, that regularly on the Greek stage a drama, or acted story, consisted in reality of three dramas, called together a trilogy, and performed consecutively in the course of one day. Now you may conceive a tragedy of Shakespeare's a trilogy connected in one single representation. Divide *Lear* into three parts and each would be a play with the ancients; or take the three Æschylean dramas of Agamemnon, and divide them into, or call them, as many acts, and they together would be one play. The first act would comprise the usurpation of Ægisthus, and the murder of Agamemnon; the second, the revenge of Orestes, and the murder of his mother; and the third, the penance and absolution of Orestes;—occupying a period of twenty-two years.

The stage in Shakespeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is everywhere and at all times observed by Shakespeare in his plays. Read *Romeo and Juliet*;—all is youth and spring,—youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies;—spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth;—whilst in *Juliet* love had all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of the spring; but it ends with a long deep

¹ The wine of the world.

² Æschylus's *Eumenides*, V. 230–239.

³ Agamemnon, *Choephori*, *Eumenides*.

sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakespeare.

It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the passage—"God said, Let there be light, and there was light;"—not there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakespeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of the parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena⁴ her favourite, and soften down the point in her which Shakespeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakespeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet,—a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation,—should express himself satirically,—yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him, and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakespeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty of one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid

representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est*.⁵ A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.⁶

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice;—he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues⁷ of the day. Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel.

Let the morality of Shakespeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakespeare;—even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites, nor flatters passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakespeare vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of its place;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental ratcatchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedict and Beatrix,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the Much Ado About Nothing all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night constables would

⁵ "This is the toil, this the work," a misquotation of Vergil's *Hoc opus, hic labor est*.

⁶ The foolish watchman in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

⁴ *Bertram, Helena*, are characters in *All's Well that Ends Well*.

⁷ August F. F. von Kotzebue, a German dramatist born in 1761. His plays are pervaded by the tone of moral laxity.

have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedict, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what would remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character: in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the mainspring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the groundwork of the plot. Hence Shakespeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had already been invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,—names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself, the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard, that Shakespeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in Lear, and yet every thing will remain; so the first and second scenes in the Merchant of Venice. Indeed it is universally true.

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio,* where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakespeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's "Willow," and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in *As You Like It*. But the whole of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is one continued specimen of the dramatised lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of *Hotspur*;—

Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart;
I'd rather be a kitten and cry—mew, &c.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimer;—

I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh
Which thou pourest down from these swelling
heavens,
I am too perfect in, &c.

Henry IV, Part 1, Act iii, sc. 1.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the

reader;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakespeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakespeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting on or in the character!—Passion in Shakespeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakespeare followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration and constitutes our Shakespeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

Robert Southey

1774–1843

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

(From *Life of Nelson*, 1813)

His [Nelson's] services were as willingly accepted as they were offered, and Lord Barham,* giving him the list of the navy, desired him to choose his own officers. "Choose yourself, my lord," was his reply; "the same spirit actuates the whole profession: you cannot choose wrong." Lord Barham then desired him to say what ships and how many he would wish, in addition to the fleet which he was going to command, and said they should follow him as soon as each was ready. No appointment was ever more in unison with the feelings and judgment of the whole nation. They, like

* An Italian Dramatist (1698–1782), and court-poet at Vienna, who wrote lyric dramas, various composers supplying the music for each.

† Charles Middleton (1726–1813), who had then been recently appointed First Lord of the Admiralty (April 30, 1805), and raised to the peerage as Lord Barham, after a long and honorable career in the navy.

Lady Hamilton,² thought that the destruction of the combined fleets ought properly to be Nelson's work; that he who had been

"Half around the sea-girt ball,
The hunter of the recreant Gaul,"³

ought to reap the spoils of the chase which he had watched so long and so perseveringly pursued.

Unremitting exertions were made to equip the ships which he had chosen, and especially to refit the *Victory*, which was once more to bear his flag. Before he left London he called at his upholsterer's, where the coffin⁴ which Captain Hallowell had given him was deposited, and desired that its history might be engraven upon the lid, saying it was highly probable he might want it on his return. He seemed, indeed, to have been impressed with an expectation that he should fall in the battle. In a letter to his brother, written immediately after his return, he had said: "We must not talk of Sir Robert Calder's battle.⁵ I might not have done so much with my small force. If I had fallen in with them, you might probably have been a lord before I wished, for I know they meant to make a dead set at the *Victory*." Nelson had once regarded the prospect of death with gloomy satisfaction; it was when he anticipated the upbraids of his wife and the displeasure of his venerable father. The state of his feelings now was expressed in his private journal in these words: "Friday night (Sept. 13th), at half-past ten, I drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in this world, to go to serve my king and country. May the great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my country! And if it is His good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the throne of His mercy. If it is His good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission; relying that He will protect those so dear to me whom I may leave behind. His will be done. Amen! Amen! Amen!"

Early on the following morning he reached Portsmouth, and having despatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace

² A beautiful adventuress, who gained an unfortunate influence over Nelson. His attachment to her brought about his separation from his wife.

³ From the *Songs of Trafalgar*, by John Wilson Croker. Croker was secretary of the Admiralty when the *Life of Nelson* was published, and it was to him that Southey dedicated his book.

⁴ This coffin was made of the main-mast of the French ship *L'Orient*, which had been one of the ships in the fleet defeated by Nelson in the battle of the Nile, 1798. It was presented to Nelson by Capt. Hallowell, that the great Admiral might be buried in one of his trophies.

⁵ An engagement between the Franco-Spanish fleet and the English, which took place off Cape Finisterre, July 22, 1805. Calder was severely criticised for not winning a decisive victory.

by taking a by-way to the beach, but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain sight of his face; many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed. England has had many heroes, but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless; that there was not in his nature the slightest alloy of selfishness or cupidity, but that with perfect and entire devotion he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength; and therefore they loved him as truly and as fervently as he loved England. They pressed upon the parapet to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon this ground, were wedged among the crowd, and an officer who, not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat; for the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the hero—the darling hero—of England. . . .

About half-past nine in the morning of the 19th the *Mars*, being the nearest to the fleet of the ships which formed the line of communication with the frigates in-shore, repeated the signal that the enemy were coming out of port.⁶ The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the S. S. W. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-east quarter. About two the repeating ships announced that the enemy were at sea. All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the southeast. At daybreak⁷ they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the enemy were not in sight. About seven, one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the *Victory* hove-to, and shortly afterwards Nelson made sail again to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the south-west, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port.

A little before sunset, however, Blackwood,⁸ in the *Euryalus*, telegraphed that they appeared determined to go to the westward. "And that," said the Admiral in his diary, "they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them." Nelson had signified to Blackwood that he depended upon him to

⁶ i. e., Cadiz.

⁷ On October 21, 1805, the day of the battle of Trafalgar.

⁸ Sir Henry Blackwood (1770-1832), had been given command of the in-shore squadron, with the duty of keeping the Admiral informed of every move of the enemy.

keep sight of the enemy. They were observed so well that all their motions were made known to him, and, as they were twice, he inferred that that they were aiming to keep the port of Cadiz open, and would retreat there as soon as they saw the British fleet; for this reason he was very careful not to approach near enough to be seen by them during the night. At daybreak the combined fleets⁹ were distinctly seen from the *Victory's* deck, formed in a close line of battle ahead, on the starboard tack, about twelve miles to leeward, and standing to the south. Our fleet consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line and four frigates;¹⁰ theirs of thirty-three and seven large frigates. Their superiority was greater in size and weight of metal than in numbers. They had four thousand troops on board; and the best riflemen who could be procured, many of them Tyrolese, were dispersed through the ships. Little did the Tyrolese, and little did the Spaniards at that day, imagine what horrors the wicked tyrant whom they served was preparing for their country.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling in the *Dreadnough*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates.¹¹ Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also, and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west—light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines, and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood,¹² in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee line of thirteen ships; the *Victory* led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin and wrote the following prayer:—"May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it, and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British

fleet! For myself individually,—I commit my life to Him that made me, and may His blessing alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen." . . .

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen; he knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack; thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under the lee of the British and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done; and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve¹³ was a skillful seaman, worthy of serving a better master and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived and as original as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line, every alternate ship being about a cable's length¹⁴ to windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied: "I shall not be satisfied with less than twenty." Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made which will be remembered as long as the language or even the memory of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal: "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY!" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed and the feeling which it expressed. "Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty."

He wore that day, as usual, his Admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was in-

⁹ In 1805 Spain formed an alliance with France, and agreed to furnish twenty-five ships of the line and eleven frigates for the combined fleet.

¹⁰ Sail of the line corresponded to the modern battle ships and were so called because of their heavy armament, which enabled them to take a place in the line of battle. *Frigates* were fast sailers, corresponding to the modern cruisers; Nelson called them "the eyes of the fleet."

¹¹ The action referred to took place in 1757 off Cape Francis in the West Indies, when Capt. Suckling, under Commodore Forrest attacked and disabled a powerful French squadron.

¹² Cuthbert Collingwood (1750-1810) was next in command to Nelson, with the rank of Vice-Admiral.

¹³ The French Admiral. ¹⁴ A cable's length is 600 feet.

vested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships, and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other, and the surgeon, Mr. Beatty,¹⁵ spoke to the chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress or cover the stars; but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honour I gained them," he had said when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honour I will die with them." Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting his displeasure from speaking to him himself upon a subject in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned; but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity. This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him; but both Blackwood and his own captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible, and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Téméraire*, which were sailing abreast of the *Victory*, be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged, for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail, and so far was Nelson from shortening sail that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the Bay of Cadiz. Our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy; and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable; but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle, and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead.¹⁶

The French Admiral, from the *Bucéphale* he beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet

Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him he desired Blackwood and Captain Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates, and on their way to tell all the captains of the line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions, and that, if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front of the poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, "God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never see you again."

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz. The lee line, therefore, was first engaged. "See," cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign*,¹⁷ as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the *Santa Anna*, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side; "see how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!" Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his Commander and old friend, turned to his captain and exclaimed, "Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!" Both these brave officers perhaps at this moment thought of Nelson with gratitude for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the captains, having gone on board the *Victory* to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his captain was, and was told in reply that they were not upon good terms with each other. "Terms!" said Nelson, "good terms with each other!" Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham, led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying, "Look, yonder are the enemy!" bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory* till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-top-gallant sail; then

¹⁵ Afterwards Sir William Beatty, physician to the fleet. Beatty's *Narration of Lord Nelson's Death* was Southey's chief authority for this part of his book.

¹⁶ Off the south coast of England, between the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth; a station for the British navy.

¹⁷ Collingwood's ship, being new-coppered, outtailed the other ships by three-quarters of a mile, and for twenty minutes stood the combined fire of the enemy alone.

they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason the *Santissima Trinidad*—Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her—was distinguishable only by her four decks, and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The Admiral's secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon-shot while conversing with Hardy. Captain Adair, of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott; but he anxiously asked, "Is that poor Scott that's gone?" and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, "Poor fellow!" Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them, upon which Nelson immediately desired Captain Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace bits on the quarter-deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle and bruising his foot. Both stopped and looked anxiously at each other: each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said: "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long."

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun; fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding-sails and their booms, shot away. Nelson declared that in all his battles he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships; Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied: "Take your choice, Hardy; it does not signify much." The master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoubtable* just as her tiller-ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a broadside, then instantly let down her lower-deck ports for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry

■ Alongside, for boarding purposes.

in his tops; he had a strong dislike to the practice, not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Captain Harvey, in the *Téméraire*, fell on board the *Redoubtable* on the other side; another enemy was in like manner on board the *Téméraire*; so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads all lying the same way. The lieutenants of the *Victory*, seeing this depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through and injure the *Téméraire*; and because there was danger that the *Redoubtable* might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water, which, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides; her larboard guns playing upon the *Bucentaur* and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizzen-top, which in the then situation of the two vessels was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing struck the epaulette on his left shoulder about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. "They have done for me at last, Hardy!" said he. "I hope not!" cried Hardy. "Yes," he replied, "my back-bone is shot through!" Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller-ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately. Then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England perhaps would not have had

cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men, over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived upon examination that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back and the gush of blood he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; "for," said he, "you can do nothing for me." All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurraed, and at every hurra a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried: "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!" An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence; Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"—"Very well," replied Hardy, "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing."—"I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered, "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he, "I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh, no!" he replied, "it is impossible; my back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Captain Hardy then once more shook hands with him, and with a heart almost bursting hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon

ascertain this, said to him: "You know I am gone. I know it. I feel something rising in my breast"—putting his hand on his left side—"which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, "So great that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer too!" And after a few minutes, in the same under-tone, he added: "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation?" Next to his country she occupied his thoughts. Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned, and again taking the hand of his dying friend and Commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly, but fourteen or fifteen at least. "That's well!" cried Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty." And then in a stronger voice he said: "Anchor, Hardy, anchor." Hardy upon this hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed. "Do you anchor." His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him in low voice: "Don't throw me overboard!" and he desired that he might be buried by his parents unless it should please the king to order otherwise. Then, reverting to private feelings, "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy; take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy!" said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek, and Nelson said: "Now I am satisfied. Thank God I have done my duty!" Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again, and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson; and being informed, he replied: "God bless you, Hardy!" And Hardy then left him for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said: "I wish I had not left the deck, for I shall soon be gone." Death was indeed rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain: "Doctor, I have not been a great sinner." And after a short pause: "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country." His articulation now became difficult, but he was distinctly heard to say: "Thank God, I have done my duty!" These words he repeatedly pronounced, and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four, three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound. . . .

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity; men started at the intelligence and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never till then known how deeply we loved and revered him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own and of all former times—was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly indeed had he performed his part that the maritime war after the battle of Trafalgar was considered at an end: the fleets of the enemy were not merely 15 defeated, but destroyed; new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection 20 upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him; the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards were all which they 25 could now bestow upon him whom the king, the Legislature, and the nation would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed 30 would have awakened the church bells, have given school-boys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and “old men from the chimney-corner” to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory 35 of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy through Nelson’s surpassing genius that it scarcely seemed to receive any 40 addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas; and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or 45 strength; for while Nelson was living, to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that in the course of nature he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done, nor ought he to be lamented who 55 died so full of honours and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid that of the

hero in the hour of victory; and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson’s translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England—a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and the wise continue to live and to act after them, verifying in this sense the language of the old mythologist:

Τοι μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι, Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς
Ἑσθλοὶ, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.¹⁹

Charles Lamb

1775-1834

DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERY

(*Essays of Elia*, 1822-24)

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,¹ who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and Papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood.² Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its 45 stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother’s looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and 50 respected by everybody, though she was not

¹⁹ “Shining spirits there are that dwell upon earth among mortals,
Prompting illustrious deeds, and fulfilling the counsel of Zeus.”
Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 122.

¹ Lamb’s maternal grandmother, Mary Field, was for fifty years housekeeper to the Plummer family. Recollections of their “fine old family mansion” at Blakesmoor enter into his essay, and form the subject of the essay *Blakesmoor in H . . . shire*. Lamb, in his fondness for disguising facts, here places it in Norfolk.

² The familiar old ballad, known also as *Babes in the Wood*.

indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C's tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holy-days, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with

roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—; because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear)

* Lamb's brother John, twelve years his senior, had died a short time before this essay was written.

make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb—Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and as much as children could understand, I explained, to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representation, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice,⁴ nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe⁵ millions of ages before we have existence, and a name;"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget⁶ unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

⁴ Lamb never married. He gave up his courtship of the "fair Alice" in order to devote his life to the care of his afflicted sister Mary.

⁵ The river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology.

⁶ The cousin Bridget of the *Essays of Elia* is Lamb's sister Mary.

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

(*Last Essays*, 1833)

5 To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own.—Lord Foppington,¹ in *The Relapse*.

An ingenious acquaintance of my own was so much struck with this bright sally of his Lordship, that he has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality. At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftsbury² is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild³ too low. I can read anything which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books*—*biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket-Books, Draught Boards,⁴ bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large: the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without:" the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted playbook, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay.⁵ To expect a

¹ A shallow, affected dandy in Sir John Vanbrugh's play, *The Relapse*, 1697.

² Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftsbury (1671–1713). A moral philosopher and generally considered a model of the genteel style in writing.

³ A famous English thief (c. 1682–1725). He is the subject of Fielding's satire, *History of a Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743).

⁴ Folding checker-boards, made outwardly to resemble books.

⁵ Malthus, an English economist, published in 1798 his famous essay on the *Principle of Population*.

Steele, or a Farquhar, and find — Adam Smith.⁶ To view a well-arranged assortment of block-headed Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of russia, or morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus⁷ himself, and enable old Raymund Lully⁸ to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with russia backs ever) is our costume. A Shakespeare or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn and dog-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn-out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? what better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when that perishes,

⁶ The author of the *Wealth of Nations*, and the founder of modern political economy.

⁷ A celebrated German physician, alchemist, and philosopher (1493–1541).

⁸ A mediæval philosopher and alchemist, author of a system of logic. The presence of *Paracelsus* and *Lully* in Lamb's library suggest his fondness for quaint and out-of-the-way reading.

We know not where is that Promethean torch
That can its light relumine,—⁹

such a book, for instance, as the *Life of the Duke of Newcastle*, by his Duchess¹⁰—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted, but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose works, Fuller—of whom we have reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know have not enderized themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books—it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a First Folio of Shakespeare.¹¹ [You cannot make a *pet* book of an author whom everybody reads.] I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson,¹² without notes, and with plates, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps or modest remembrancers to the text; and, without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much better than the Shakespeare gallery engravings,¹³ which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best which have been oftentimes tumbled about and handled.—On the contrary, I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in Folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.¹⁴ What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular?—The wretched Malone¹⁵

⁹ Quoted by memory from *Othello*, V. ii. 12.

"I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume."

¹⁰ Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1624–74), a famous beauty, and voluminous writer of plays and poems. Her *Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle* (1667), is generally considered a masterpiece.

¹¹ The first collected edition of Shakespeare's works, 1623.

¹² Nicholas Rowe edited the first critical edition of Shakespeare; it was published by Tonson in 1709.

¹³ The Shakespeare gallery of John Boydell, who in 1786 began the publication of a series of prints illustrative of Shakespeare's plays, after pictures painted for him by English artists; he built a gallery in Pall Mall for their exhibition.

¹⁴ By Robert Burton (1577–1740), see p. 229, *supra*.

¹⁵ "This happened in 1793 on the occasion of Malone's visit to Stratford to examine the municipal and other records of that town, for the purpose of his edition." Ainger.

could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him whitewash the painted effigy of old Shakespeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of the cheek, the eye, the eyebrow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By —, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapt both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these 18 sapient trouble-tombs.

Shall I be thought fantastical if I confess, that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or Shakespeare? It may be, that the latter are more staled and rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley. 25

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Fairy Queen for a stopgap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' 30 sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears. 35

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season the *Tempest*, or his own *Winter's Tale*—

These two poets you cannot avoid reading 40 aloud—to yourself, or (as it chances) to some single person listening. More than one—and it degenerates into an audience.

Books of quick interest, that hurry on for incidents, are for the eye to glide over only. 45 It will not do to read them out. I could never listen to even the better kind of modern novels without extreme irksomeness.

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the Bank offices it is the custom (to 50 save so much individual time) for one of the clerks—who is the best scholar—to commence upon the *Times*, or the *Chronicle* and recite its entire contents aloud, *pro bono publico*. With every advantage of lungs and elocution, 55 the effect is singularly vapid. In barbers'

shops and public-houses a fellow will get up and spell out a paragraph, which he communicates as some discovery. Another follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piecemeal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and, without this expedient, no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.

Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.

What an eternal time that gentleman in black, at Nando's,¹⁷ keeps the paper! I am sick of hearing the waiter bawling out incessantly, "The Chronicle is in hand, Sir."

Coming into an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest,—two or three numbers of the old Town and Country Magazine, with its amusing *l'le-d-l'le* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G—," "The Melting Platonian and the old Beau,"—and such-like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book?

Poor Tobin,¹⁸ who latterly fell blind, did not regret it so much for the weightier kinds of reading—the *Paradise Lost*, or *Comus*, he could have read to him—but he missed the pleasure of skimming over with his own eye a magazine, or a light pamphlet.

I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone, and reading *Candide*.¹⁹

I do not remember a more whimsical surprise than having been once detected—by a familiar damsel—reclined at my ease upon the grass, on Primrose Hill²⁰ (her Cythera) reading *Pamela*.²¹ There was nothing in the book to make a man seriously ashamed at the exposure, but as she seated herself down by me, and seemed determined to read in company, I could have wished it had been—any other book. We read on very sociably for a few pages; and, not finding the author much to her taste, she got up, and—went away. Gentle casuist, I leave it to thee to conjecture, whether the blush (for there was one between us) was the property of the nymph or the swain in this dilemma. From me you shall never get the secret.

¹⁷ A London coffee-house.

¹⁸ John Tobin, a dramatist, whose life had recently been published.

¹⁹ A philosophical novel by Voltaire, whose sceptical, scoffing spirit Lamb felt would ill harmonize with the associations of a cathedral.

²⁰ Primrose Hill was north of Regent's Park. The "familiar damsel" arose from the grass, as Venus did from the sea-foam at the isle of Cythera.

²¹ A novel by Samuel Richardson.

²² Author of sermons, and a member of the commission appointed by James I to make the King James' Version of the Bible, which appeared in 1611.

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow Hill (as yet Skinner's Street was not), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner.²² I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot,²³ or a breadbasket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.²⁴

There is a class of street-readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry, who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, slich a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdiction, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they “snatch a fearful joy.” Martin B——, in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of *Clarissa*,²⁵ when the stallkeeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares, that under no circumstance in his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. A quaint poetess²⁷ of our day has moralized upon this subject in two very touching but homely stanzas:

I saw a boy with eager eye
Open a book upon a stall,
And read, as he'd devour it all;
Which, when the stall-man did espy,
Soon to the boy I heard him call,
“You Sir, you never buy a book,
Therefore in one you shall not look.”
The boy pass'd slowly on, and with a sigh
He wish'd he never had been taught to read,
Then of the old churl's books he should have
had no need.

Of sufferings the poor have many,
Which never can the rich annoy.
I soon perceived another boy,
Who look'd as if he had not any
Food, for that day at least,—enjoy
The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.

²² Nathaniel Lardner (1684–1768), wrote a noted defence of the Christian religion, which was used as a theological text book.

²³ A pad used by porters for carrying trunks.

²⁴ The leading tenets of Calvinistic theology.

²⁵ Martin Burney, an unsuccessful lawyer, who died in London, 1852.

²⁶ *Clarissa Harlowe*, a novel by Richardson in eight volumes.

²⁷ Mary Lamb.

This boy's case, then thought I, is surely harder,
Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,
Beholding choice of dainty dress'd meat:
No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learn'd to eat.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

(From the same)

*Sera tamen respexit Libertas.*¹ Vergil.

A Clerk I was in London gay. O'Keefe.

If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison-days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years² since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane.³ Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers,—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation

¹ The line in Vergil is: *Libertas, quas sera tamen respexit inertem*. Liberty, though late, at last looks on the idle.

² Lamb was a clerk in the office of the East India Company from 1792–1825. From 1789–92 he had been in the South Sea House. He was retired on a pension of £450, two-thirds of his salary at the time of his retirement.

³ The South Sea House was on Mincing Lane, and the East India House was not far away.

from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and *livelyly* expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire.⁴ This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly in-

quired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid that I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock,) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life, (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—forever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

*Esto perpetua!*⁶

For the first day or two I felt stunned—overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile,⁷ suddenly

⁶ May you live forever.

⁷ The prison in Paris, the storming of which on July 14, 1789, marked the beginning of the French Revolution.

⁴ Strictly speaking, Lamb's "native fields" were the London streets, but he often visited relatives in Hertfordshire.

⁵ The names of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy, mentioned further on, were invented by Lamb.

let lodge after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity,—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do not walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do not read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man.

... that's born and has his years come to him, in some green desert.

"Years!" you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For that is the only true Time which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not gone, one was, that a vast tract of Time had intervened since I quitted the Counting-House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours of each

day in the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard,⁸ speaking of a friend's death:—

... 'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D—I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that soothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell Ch—, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do—, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl—, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham⁹ or a Whittington¹⁰ of old, stately house of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my woe, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works!"

⁸ Dryden's brother-in-law, and joint author with him of the *Indian Queen*. The lines are from the *Vestal Virgin*, or *The Roman Ladies*.

⁹ Thomas Gresham (d. 1579?), a noted financier of Elizabeth's time, was the founder of the Royal Exchange and of Gresham College.

¹⁰ Sir Richard Whittington (d. 1423) was a famous Lord Mayor of London.

There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas¹¹ left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian,¹² from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street,¹³ and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What has become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street?¹⁴ Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toilworn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles.¹⁵ It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post-days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black

Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure¹⁶ to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him Nothing-To-Do; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.¹⁷

I am no longer . . . , clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.*¹⁸ I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

ON THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE

(Nov. 21, 1834)

When I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world,—that he had a hunger for eternity. I grieved

¹¹ The famous scholastic theologian, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274).

¹² The Carthusians were an order of Monks founded in 1036; their discipline was very strict.

¹³ In the "West End" the quarter of fashionable shops. Pall Mall and Soho Square are in the same locality.

¹⁴ Streets in the City near the India House. See note on Fish Street, pp. 280, 292.

¹⁵ The Elgin marbles, among the finest specimens of Greek sculpture, were originally part of the decorations of the Parthenon. They are now in the British Museum, having been brought from Greece by the Earl of Elgin. See Keats' Sonnet, p. 529.

¹⁶ An allusion to a famous passage in Lucretius:

Sweet it is, when the winds are troubling the waters on the wide sea, to contemplate from the shore the great hardship of another, not because it is a delicious satisfaction to feel that anyone should be made miserable, but because it is consoling to discern from what evils we ourselves are free.—*De Rerum Natura*, II. 1-4.

¹⁷ From the player's declamation in *Hamlet*, II. ii. 475.

¹⁸ My work is done.

then that I could not grieve. But, since, I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men and books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations. He was a Grecian (or in the first form) at Christ's Hospital, where I was Deputy-Grecian; and the same subordination and deference to him I have preserved through a life-long acquaintance. Great in his writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight; yet who ever would interrupt him? who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion?¹ He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his "Friend" would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients. He was my fifty-years-old friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived. I love the faithful Gilman² more than while they exercised their virtues towards him living. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel.

KING LEAR

(From *The Tragedies of Shakespeare*, Collected Works, 1818)

The truth is, the Characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap those moral fences. Barnwell¹ is a wretched murderer; there is a certain fitness between his neck and the rope; he is the legitimate heir to the gallows; nobody who thinks at all can think of any alleviating circumstances in his case to make him a fit object of mercy. Or to take an instance from the higher tragedy, what else but a mere

¹ i. e. from Greek or Hebrew literature, or perhaps more generally from profane or sacred letters.

² Coleridge had found a refuge in his last years in the house of Mr. Gilman, a physician who had helped him in his struggle against the opium habit.

³ A character in a prose tragedy of that name by George Lillo (1693-1739).

assassin is Glenalvon?³ Do we think of anything but of the crime which he commits, and the rack which he deserves? That is all which we really think about him. Whereas in corresponding characters in Shakespeare, so little do the actions comparatively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness, solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively everything, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan,—when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage-ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, as I have witnessed it in Mr. K.'s⁴ performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence; it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has anything to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear; they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turn-

³ A character in John Home's tragedy *Douglas*, acted in Edinburgh, 1750.

⁴ Edmund Kean (1787-1833), the most famous English tragedian of his day, especially in Shakespearean rôles.

ing up and disclosing to the bottom, that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage, while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the heavens themselves, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that “they themselves are old?” What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show; it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate⁴ has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick⁵ and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world’s burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

Walter Savage Landor

1775–1864

ESSEX AND SPENSER¹

(*Imaginary Conversations*, 1834)

Essex. Instantly on hearing of thy arrival from Ireland, I sent a message to thee, good Edmund, that I might learn, from one so ju-

⁴ Nahum Tate (1652–1715), a poet and playwright who gained an unenviable reputation as an adapter of several of Shakespeare’s plays, among them *King Lear*. In his version, Cordelia survives and marries Edgar.

⁵ David Garrick, the celebrated English actor, a contemporary of Dr. Johnson.

¹ In 1580 the poet Spenser went to Ireland as secretary

dicious and dispassionate as thou art, the real state of things in that distracted country; it having pleased the Queen’s Majesty to think of appointing me her deputy, in order to bring the rebellious to submission.

Spenser. Wisely and well considered; but more worthily of her judgment than her affection. May your lordship overcome, as you have ever done, the difficulties and dangers you foresee.

Essex. We grow weak by striking at random; and knowing that I must strike, and strike heavily, I would fain see exactly where the stroke shall fall.

Some attribute to the Irish all sorts of excesses; others tell us that these are old stories; that there is not a more inoffensive race of merry creatures under heaven, and that their crimes are all hatched for them here in England, by the incubation of printers’ boys, and are brought to market at times of distressing dearth in news. From all that I myself have seen of them, I can only say that the civilized (I mean the richer and titled) are as susceptible of heat as iron, and as impenetrable to light as granite. The half-barbarous are probably worse; the utterly barbarous may be somewhat better. Like game-cocks, they must spur when they meet. One fights because he fights an Englishman; another, because the fellow he quarrels with comes from a distant county; a third, because the next parish is an eyesore to him, and his fist-mate is from it. The only thing in which they all agree as proper law is the tooth-for-tooth act.² Luckily, we have a bishop who is a native, and we call him before the Queen. He represented to Her Majesty that everything in old Ireland tended to re-produce its kind,—crimes among others; and he declared frankly that if an honest man is murdered, or, what is dearer to an honest man, if his honour is wounded in the person of his wife, it must be expected that he will retaliate. Her Majesty delivered it as her opin-

to Lord Grey, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, who undertook to put down the rebellion of Desmond, a powerful Munster chief. The English policy involved extermination of the natives and the desolation of the country. In the eyes of Englishmen the Irish chiefs were a band of barbarians, the enemies of law and order, and Spenser came to look upon the Irish with the loathing that animated most Englishmen of his time. He spent practically the rest of his life in Ireland as an agent of the government, and was rewarded for his services by the grant of Killecolman Castle, formerly a Desmond possession, in County Cork. In 1594 there was a new uprising in Ulster, headed by Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone. By 1598 the rebellion had spread to Munster, and Killecolman Castle was sacked and burnt. Spenser and his wife escaped, but their young child perished in the flames. The poet returned to England just as the Queen was preparing to send her favorite Essex to end the rebellion. It is at this juncture that the conversation between Essex and Spenser is imagined by Landor to have taken place.

² The law of retaliation, as “an eye for an eye,” etc.

ion, that the latter case of vindictiveness was more likely to take effect than the former. But the bishop replied, that in his conscience he could not answer for either if the man was up. The dean of the same diocese gave us a more favourable report. Being a justice of the peace, he averred most solemnly that no man ever had complained to him of murder, excepting one who had lost so many fore-teeth by a cudgel that his deposition could not be taken exactly; added to which, his head was a little clouded with drunkenness; furthermore, that extremely few women had adduced sufficiently clear proofs of violence, excepting those who were wilful, and resisted with tooth and nail. In all which cases, it was difficult—nay, impossible—to ascertain which violence began first and lasted longest.

There is not a nation upon earth that pretends to be so superlatively generous and high-minded; and there is not one (I speak from experience) so utterly base and venal. I have positive proof that the nobility, in a mass, are agreed to sell, for a stipulated sum, all their rights and privileges, so much per man; and the Queen is inclined thereunto. But would our Parliament consent to pay money for a cargo of rotten pilchards?³ And would not our captains be readier to swamp than to import them? The noisiest rogues in that kingdom, if not quieted by a halter, may be quieted by making them brief-collectors,⁴ and by allowing them, first, to encourage the incendiary; then, to denounce and hang them; and, lastly, to collect all the money they can, running up and down with the whining ferocity of half-starved hyenas, under pretence of repairing the damages their exhausted country hath sustained. Others ask, modestly, a few thousands a year, and no more, from those whom they represent to us as naked and famished; and prove clearly, to every dispassionate man who hath a single drop of free blood in his veins, that at least this pittance is due to them for abandoning their liberal and lucrative professions, and for endangering their valuable lives on the tempestuous seas, in order that the voice of truth may sound for once upon the shores of England, and humanity cast her shadow on the council-chamber.

I gave a dinner to a party of these fellows a few weeks ago. I know not how many kings and princes were among them, nor how many poets and prophets and legislators and sages. When they were half-drunk, they coaxed and threatened; when they had gone somewhat

deeper, they joked, and croaked and hiccoughed, and wept over sweet Ireland; and, when they could neither stand nor sit any longer, they fell upon their knees and their noddles, and swore that limbs, life, liberty, Ireland, and God himself, were all at the Queen's service. It was only their holy religion, the religion of their forefathers,—here sobs interrupted some, howls others, execrations more, and the liquor they had engulfed the rest. I looked down on them with stupor and astonishment, seeing faces, forms, dresses, much like ours, and recollecting their ignorance, levity, and ferocity. My pages drew them gently by the heels down the steps; my grooms set them upright (inasmuch as might be) on their horses; and the people in the streets, shouting and pelting, sent forward the beasts to their straw.

Various plans have been laid before us for civilizing or coercing them. Among the pacific, it was proposed to make an offer to five hundred of the richer Jews in the Hansetowns⁵ and in Poland, who should be raised to the dignity of the Irish peerage, and endowed with four thousand acres of good forfeited land, on condition of each paying two thousand pounds, and of keeping up ten horsemen and twenty foot, Germans or Poles, in readiness for service. The Catholics bear nowhere such ill-will toward Jews as toward Protestants. Brooks make even worse neighbors than oceans do.

I myself saw no objection to the measure; but our gracious Queen declared she had an insuperable one,—*they stank!* We all acknowledged the strength of the argument, and took out our handkerchiefs. Lord Burleigh almost fainted; and Raleigh wondered how the Emperor Titus could bring up his men against Jerusalem.

"Ah!" said he, looking reverentially at Her Majesty, "the star of Berenice shone above him!" And what evil influence could that star not quell! what malignancy could it not annihilate!"

Hereupon he touched the earth with his brow, until the Queen said,—

"Sir Walter! lift me up those laurels."

At which manifestation of princely good-will he was advancing to kiss Her Majesty's hand; but she waved it, and said sharply,—

"Stand there, dog!"

³ The towns of the Hanseatic League, of northern Germany and the neighboring countries, which were leagued together for commercial protection and the general benefit of trade.

⁴ i. e. above Titus during his siege of Jerusalem, 70 A. D. During this expedition, Titus became infatuated with the beautiful Jewess *Berenice* and the star of *Berenice* is supposed to have been potent enough to enable Titus to "bring up his men against Jerusalem" in spite of the evil odors of the Jews.

¹ A fish similar to a herring.

² Men holding licenses to collect money for the repairing of churches, or for the payment of losses by fire, etc.

Now what tale have you for us?

Spenser. Interrogate me, my lord, that I may answer each question distinctly, my mind being in sad confusion at what I have seen and undergone.

Essex. Give me thy account and opinion of these very affairs as thou ledest them; for I would rather know one part well than all imperfectly; and the violences of which I have heard within the day surpass belief.

Why weepest thou, my gentle Spenser? Have the rebels sacked thy house?

Spenser. They have plundered and utterly destroyed it.

Essex. I grieve for thee, and will see thee 15 righted.

Spenser. In this they have little harmed me.

Essex. How! I have heard it reported that thy grounds are fertile, and thy mansion large and pleasant.

Spenser. If river and lake and meadow-ground and mountain could render any place the abode of pleasantness, pleasant was mine, indeed!

On the lovely banks of Mulla' I found deep 25 contentment. Under the dark alders did I muse and meditate. Innocent hopes were my gravest cares, and my playfullest fancy was with kindly wishes. Ah! surely of all cruelties the worst is to extinguish our kindness. Mine 30 is gone: I love the people and the land no longer. My lord, ask me not about them: I may speak injuriously.

Essex. Think rather, then, of thy happier hours and busier occupations; these likewise 35 may instruct me.

Spenser. The first seeds I sowed in the garden, ere the old castle was made habitable for my lovely bride, were acorns from Penshurst.⁸ I planted a little oak before my mansion at 40 the birth of each child. My sons, I said to myself, shall often play in the shade of them when I am gone; and every year shall they take the measure of their growth, as fondly as I take theirs.

Essex. Well, well; but let not this thought make thee weep so bitterly.

Spenser. Poison may ooze from beautiful plants; deadly grief from dearest reminiscences.

I must grieve, I must weep: it seems the law 50 of God, and the only one that men are not disposed to contravene. In the performance of this alone do they effectually aid one another.

Essex. Spenser! I wish I had at hand any arguments or persuasions, of force sufficient 55

to remove thy sorrow; but, really, I am not in the habit of seeing men grieve at anything except the loss of favour at court, or of a hawk, or of a buckhound. And were I to swear out 5 my condolences to a man of thy discernment, in the same round roll-call phrases we employ with one another upon these occasions, I should be guilty, not of insincerity, but of insolence. True grief hath ever something sacred in it; 10 and, when it visiteth a wise man and a brave one, is most holy.

Nay, kiss not my hand: he whom God smiteth hath God with him. In his presence what am I?

Spenser. Never so great, my lord, as at this hour, when you see aright who is greater. May he guide your counsels, and preserve your life and glory!

Essex. Where are thy friends? Are they 20 with thee?

Spenser. Ah, where, indeed! Generous, true-hearted Philip! where art thou, whose presence was unto me peace and safety; whose smile was contentment, and whose praise re- 25 nown? My lord! I cannot but think of him among still heavier losses: he was my earliest friend, and would have taught me wisdom.

Essex. Pastoral poetry, my dear Spenser, doth not require tears and lamentations. Dry 30 thine eyes; rebuild thine house: the Queen and Council, I venture to promise thee, will make ample amends for every evil thou hast sustained. What! does that enforce thee to wail yet louder?

Spenser. Pardon me, bear with me, most 35 noble heart! I have lost what no Council, no Queen, no Essex, can restore.

Essex. We will see that. There are other swords, and other arms to wield them, besides a 40 Leicester's and a Raleigh's. Others can crush their enemies, and serve their friends.

Spenser. O my sweet child! And of many so powerful, many so wise and so beneficent, was there none to save thee? None! None!

Essex. I now perceive that thou lamentest 45 what almost every father is destined to lament. Happiness must be bought, although the payment may be delayed. Consider; the same calamity might have befallen thee here in London. Neither the houses of ambassadors, nor the palaces of kings, nor the altars of God 50 himself, are asylums against death. How do I know but under this very roof there may sleep some latent calamity, that in an instant shall cover with gloom every inmate of the house, and every far dependent?

Spenser. God avert it!

Essex. Every day, every hour of the year, do hundreds mourn what thou mournest.

Spenser. Oh, no, no, no! Calamities there

⁷ This stream flowed near Spenser's castle of Kilcolman, in Munster.

⁸ Penshurst was the splendid estate of the Sidneys in the western part of Kent. Sir Philip Sidney was one of Spenser's heroes and patrons.

are around us; calamities there are all over the earth; calamities there are in all seasons: but none in any season, none in any place, like mine.

Essex. So say all fathers, so say all husbands. Look at any old mansion-house, and let the sun shine as gloriously as it may on the golden vanes, or the arms recently quartered over the gateway or the embayed window, and on the happy pair that haply is toying at it: nevertheless, thou mayest say that of a certainty the same fabric hath seen much sorrow within its chambers, and heard many wailings; and each time this was the heaviest stroke of all. Funerals have passed along through the stout-hearted knights upon the wainscot, and amid the laughing nymphs upon the arras. Old servants have shaken their heads as if somebody had deceived them, when they found that beauty and nobility could perish.

Edmund! the things that are too true pass by us as if they were not true at all; and when they have singled us out, then only do they strike us. Thou and I must go too. Perhaps the next year may blow us away with its fallen leaves.

Spenser. For you, my lord, many years (I trust) are waiting: I shall never see those fallen leaves. No leaf, no bud, will spring upon the earth before I sink into her breast for ever.

Essex. Thou, who art wiser than most men, shouldst bear with patience, equanimity, and courage what is common to all.

Spenser. Enough, enough, enough! have all men seen their infant burned to ashes before their eyes?

Essex. Gracious God! Merciful Father! what is this?

Spenser. Burned alive! burned to ashes! burned to ashes! The flames dart their serpent tongues through the nursery window. I cannot quit thee, my Elizabeth! I cannot lay down our Edmund! Oh, these flames! They persecute, they enthrall me; they curl round my temples; they hiss upon my brain; they taunt me with their fierce, foul voices; they carp at me, they wither me, they consume me, throwing back to me a little of life to roll and suffer in, with their fangs upon me. Ask me, my lord, the things you wish to know from me: I may answer them; I am now composed again. Command me, my gracious lord! I would yet serve you: soon I shall be unable. You have stooped to raise me up; you have borne with me; you have pitied me, even like one not powerful. You have brought comfort, and will leave it with me; for gratitude is comfort.

Oh! my memory stands all a tip-toe on one burning point: when it drops from it, then it

perishes. Spare me: ask me nothing; let me weep before you in peace,—the kindest act of greatness.

Essex. I should rather have dared to mount into the midst of the conflagration than I now dare entreat thee not to weep. The tears that overflow thy heart, my Spenser, will stanch and heal it in their sacred stream; but not without hope in God.

Spenser. My hope in God is that I may soon see again what he has taken from me. Amid the myriads of angels, there is not one so beautiful; and even he (if there be any) who is appointed my guardian could never love me. Ah! these are idle thoughts, vain wanderings, distempered dreams. If there ever were guardian angels, he who so wanted one—my helpless boy—would not have left these arms upon my knees.

Essex. God help and sustain thee too, gentle Spenser! I never will desert thee. But what am I? Great they have called me! Alas, how powerless then and infantile is greatness in the presence of calamity! Come, give me thy hand: let us walk up and down the gallery. Bravely done! I will envy no more a Sidney or a Raleigh.

William Hazlitt

1778-1830

HAMLET

(From *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817)

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we may be said almost to remember in our after-years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life, who gave the advice to the players, who thought "this goodly frame, the earth, a sterile promontory, and this brave o'er-hanging firmament, the air, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire," whom "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours;" whom "man delighted not, nor woman neither;" he who talked with the grave-diggers, and moralised on Yorick's skull; the schoolfellow of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakespeare.

Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as

our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has born about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' the sun;" whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes;" he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady; who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock representation of them—this is the true Hamlet.

We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticise it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of the oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moraliser, and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralises on his own feelings and experience. He is not a common-place pedant. If *Lear* is distinguished by the greatest depth of passion, *Hamlet* is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakespeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort, the incidents succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think and speak and act just as they might do, if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion

come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a by-stander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and witnessed something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only "the outward pageants and the signs of grief;" but "we have that within which passes show." We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature; but Shakespeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. This is a very great advantage.

The character of Hamlet stands quite by itself. It is not a character marked by strength of will, or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be; but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, as in the scene where he kills Polonius, and again, where he alters the letters which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided and skeptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and finds out some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers. . . .

He is the prince of philosophical speculators, and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he declines it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it. . . . Still, he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not from any want of

attachment to his father or of abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act; and any vague pretext that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes.

THE ENGLISH AND THEIR LITERATURE

(From *The Age of Elizabeth*, 1821)

We are a nation of islanders, and we cannot help it; nor mend ourselves if we would. We are something in ourselves, nothing when we try to ape others. Music and painting are not our *forte*: for what we have done in that way has been little, and that borrowed from others with great difficulty. But we may boast of our poets and philosophers. That's something. We have had strong heads and sound hearts among us. Thrown on one side of the world, and left to bustle for ourselves, we have fought out many a battle for truth and freedom. That is our natural style; and it were to be wished we had in no instance departed from it. Our situation has given us a certain cast of thought and character; and our liberty has enabled us to make the most of it. We are of a stiff clay, not moulded into every fashion, with stubborn joints not easily bent. We are slow to think, and therefore impressions do not work upon us till they act in masses. We are not forward to express our feelings, and therefore they do not come from us till they force their way in the most impetuous eloquence. Our language is, as it were, to begin anew, and we make use of the most singular and boldest combinations to explain ourselves. Our wit comes from us, "like birdlime, brains and all."¹ We pay too little attention to form and method, leave our works in an unfinished state, but still the materials we work in are solid and of nature's mint; we do not deal in counterfeits. We both under and overdo, but we keep an eye to the prominent features, the main chance. We are more for weight than show; care only about what interests ourselves, instead of trying to impose upon others by plausible appearances, and are obstinate and intractable in not conforming to common rules, by which many arrive at their ends with half the real waste of thought and trouble. We neglect all but the

principal object, gather our force to make a great blow, bring it down, and relapse into sluggishness and indifference again. *Materiam superabat opus*,² cannot be said of us. We may be accused of grossness, but not of flimsiness; of extravagance, but not of affectation; of want of art and refinement, but not of a want of truth and nature. Our literature, in a word, is Gothic and grotesque; unequal and irregular; not cast in a previous mould, nor of one uniform texture, but of great weight in the whole, and of incomparable value in the best parts. It aims at an excess of beauty or power, hits or misses, and is either very good indeed, or absolutely good for nothing. This character applies in particular to our literature in the age of Elizabeth, which is its best period, before the introduction of a rage for French rules and French models; for whatever may be the value of our own original style of composition, there can be neither offense nor presumption in saying, that it is at least better than our second-hand imitations of others. Our understanding (such as it is, and must remain to be good for anything) is not a thoroughfare for common places, smooth as the palm of one's hand, but full of knotty points and jutting excrescences, rough, uneven, overgrown with brambles; and I like this aspect of the mind (as some one said of the country), where nature keeps a good deal of the soil in her own hands. Perhaps the genius of our poetry has more of Pan than of Apollo;³ "but Pan is a God, Apollo is no more!"⁴

ON THE FEELING OF IMMORTALITY IN YOUTH

(From *Winterslow*, 1850)

No young man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brother's, and a fine one. There is a feeling of Eternity in youth which makes us amend for everything. To be young is to be one of the Immortals. One half of time indeed is spent—the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures, for there is no line drawn, and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own—

"The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us."¹

Death, old age, are words without a meaning, a dream, a fiction, with which we have nothing

¹ The work ever excelled the matter. Ovid, *Mét.* II. 5.

² i. e. more of nature than of art.

³ Quoted from Lyly's play *Midas*, Act IV. 1.

⁴ "The wide, th' unbounded prospect lies before me." Addison's *Cato*, V. l. 13. V. p. 295.

¹ Quoted from memory from *Othello*, II. i. 127. *Birdlime* is a sticky substance used to spread on twigs for the purpose of catching birds.

to do.. Others may have undergone, or may still undergo them—we “bear a charmed life,”² which laughs to scorn all such idle fancies. As, in setting out on a delightful journey, we strain our eager sight forward,

“Bidding the lovely scenes at distance hail,”³

and see no end to prospect after prospect, new objects presenting themselves as we advance, so in the outset of life we see no end to our desires nor to the opportunities of gratifying them. We have as yet found no obstacle, no disposition to flag, and it seems that we can go on so forever. We look round in a new world, full of life and motion, and ceaseless progress, and feel in ourselves all the vigour and spirit to keep pace with it, and do not foresee from any present signs how we shall be left behind in the race, decline into old age, and drop into the grave. It is the simplicity and, as it were, abstractedness of our feelings in youth that (so to speak) identifies us with nature and (our experience being weak and our passions strong) makes us fancy ourselves immortal like it. Our short-lived connection with being, we fondly flatter ourselves, is an indissoluble and lasting union. As infants smile and sleep, we are rocked in the cradle of our desires, and hushed into fancied security by the roar of the universe around us—we quaff the cup of life with eager thirst without draining it, and joy and hope seem ever mantling to the brim—objects press around us, filling the mind with their magnitude and with the throng of desires that wait upon them, so that there is no room for the thoughts of death. We are too much dazzled by the gorgeousness and novelty of the bright waking dream about us to discern the dim shadow lingering for us in the distance. Nor would the hold that life has taken of us permit us to detach our thoughts that way, even if we could. We are too much absorbed in present objects and pursuits. While the spirit of youth remains unimpaired, ere “the wine of life is drunk,”⁴ we are like people intoxicated or in a fever, who are hurried away by the violence of their own sensations: it is only as present objects begin to pall upon the sense, as we have been disappointed in our favourite pursuits, cut off from our closest ties, that we by degrees become weaned from the world, that passion loosens its hold upon futurity, and that we begin to contemplate as in a glass darkly the possibility of parting with it for good. Till then, the example of others

has no effect upon us. Casualties we avoid; the slow approaches of age we play at *hide and seek* with. Like the foolish fat scullion in Sterne,⁵ who hears that Master Bobby is dead, our only reflection is, “So am not I!” The idea of death, instead of staggering our confidence, only seems to strengthen and enhance our sense of the possession and enjoyment of life. Others may fall around us like leaves, or be mowed down by the scythe of Time like grass: these are but metaphors to the unreflecting, buoyant ears and overweening presumption of youth. It is not till we see the flowers of Love, Hope, and Joy withering around us, that we give up the flattering delusions that before led us on, and that the emptiness and dreariness of the prospect before us reconciles us hypothetically to the silence of the grave.

Life is indeed a strange gift, and its privileges are most mysterious. No wonder when it is first granted to us, that our gratitude, our admiration, and our delight should prevent us from reflecting on our own nothingness, or from thinking it will ever be recalled. Our first and strongest impressions are borrowed from the mighty scene that is opened to us, and we unconsciously transfer its durability as well as its splendour to ourselves. So newly found, we cannot think of parting with it yet, or at least put off that consideration *sine die*.⁶ Like a rustic at a fair, we are full of amazement and rapture, and have no thought of going home, or that it will soon be night. We know our existence only by ourselves, and confound our knowledge with the objects of it. We and Nature are therefore one. Otherwise the illusion, the “feast of reason and the flow of soul,”⁷ to which we are invited, is a mockery and a cruel insult. We do not go from a play till the last act is ended, and the lights are about to be extinguished. But the fairy face of Nature still shines on: shall we be called away before the curtain falls, or ere we have scarce had a glimpse of what is going on? Like children, our step-mother Nature holds us up to see the raree-show⁸ of the universe, and then, as if we were a burden to her to support, lets us fall down again. Yet what brave sublunary things does not this pageant present, like a ball or *fête* of the universe!

To see the golden sun, the azure sky, the out-stretched ocean; to walk upon the green earth, and be lord of a thousand creatures;

² Cf. *Macbeth*, V. viii, 12.

³ “Still it whispered, promised pleasure,
And bid the lovely scenes at distance hail!”

Collins, *Ode On The Passions*.

⁴ Cf. *Macbeth*, II. iii, 100. “The wine of life is drawn.”

⁵ From *Tristram Shandy*, Bk. V. ch. 7.

⁶ “Without day,” a legal or parliamentary phrase used of an adjournment taken without fixing a day for re-assembling.

⁷ Pope, *Satires*, I, 128.

⁸ A show carried about in a box, like a puppet show.

to look down yawning precipices or over distant sunny vales; to see the world spread out under one's feet on a map; to bring the stars near; to view the smallest insects through a microscope; to read history, and consider the revolutions of empire and the successions of generations; to hear of the glory of Tyre, of Sidon, of Babylon, and of Susa,⁹ and to say all these were before me and are now nothing; to say I exist in such a point of time, and in such a point of space; to be a spectator and a part of its ever-moving scene; to witness the change of season, of spring and autumn, of winter and summer; to feel hot and cold, pleasure and pain, beauty and deformity, right and wrong; to be sensible to the accidents of nature; to consider the mighty world of eye and ear; to listen to the stock-dove's notes amid the forest deep; to journey over moor and mountain; to hear the midnight sainted choir; to visit lighted halls, or the cathedral's gloom, or sit in crowded theatres and see life itself mocked; to study the works of art and refine the sense of beauty to agony; to worship fame, and to dream of immortality; to look upon the Vatican, and to read Shakespeare; to gather up the wisdom of the ancients, and to pry into the future; to listen to the trump of war, the shout of victory; to question history as to the movements of the human heart; to seek for truth; to plead the cause of humanity; to overlook the world as if time and nature poured their treasures at our feet—to be and to do all this and then in a moment to be nothing—to have it all snatched from us as by a juggler's trick, or a phantasmagoria! There is something in this transition from all to nothing that shocks us and damps the enthusiasm of youth new flushed with hope and pleasure, and we cast the comfortless thought as far from us as we can. In the first enjoyment of the estate of life we discard the fear of debts and duns, and never think of the final payment of our great debt to Nature. Art we know is long; life, we flatter ourselves, should be so too. We see no end of the difficulties and delays we have to encounter: perfection is slow of attainment, and we must have time to accomplish it in. The fame of the great names we look up to is immortal: and shall not we who contemplate it imbibe a portion of ethereal fire, the *divina particula aura*,¹⁰ which nothing can extinguish? A wrinkle in Rembrandt or in Nature takes whole days to resolve itself into its component parts, its softenings and its sharpnesses; we refine upon our perceptions, and unfold the

intricacies of nature. What a prospect for the future! What a task have we not begun! And shall we be arrested in the middle of it? We do not count our time thus employed lost, or our pains thrown away; we do not flag or grow tired, but gain new vigour at our endless task. Shall Time, then, grudge us to finish what we have begun, and have formed a compact with Nature to do? Why not fill up the blank that is left us in this manner? I have looked for hours at a Rembrandt without being conscious of the flight of time, but with ever new wonder and delight, have thought that not only my own but another existence I could pass in the same manner. This rarefied, refined existence seemed to have no end, nor stint, nor principle of decay in it. The print would remain long after I who looked on it had become the prey of worms. The thing seems in itself out of all reason: health, strength, appetite are opposed to the idea of death, and we are not ready to credit it till we have found our illusions vanished, and our hopes grown cold.

Objects in youth, from novelty, &c., are stamped upon the brain with such force and integrity that one thinks nothing can remove or obliterate them. They are riveted there, and appear to us as an element of our nature. It must be a mere violence that destroys them, not a natural decay. In the very strength of this persuasion we seem to enjoy an age by anticipation. We melt down years into a single moment of intense sympathy, and by anticipating the fruits defy the ravages of time. If, then, a single moment of our lives is worth years, shall we set any limits to its total value and extent? Again, does it not happen that so secure do we think ourselves of an indefinite period of existence, that at times, when left to ourselves, and impatient of novelty, we feel annoyed at what seems to us the slow and creeping progress of time, and argue that if it always moves at this tedious snail's pace it will never come to an end? How ready are we to sacrifice any space of time which separates us from a favourite object, little thinking that before long we shall find it move too fast.

For my part, I started in life with the French Revolution, and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. But I did not foresee this result. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. The new impulse to ardour given to men's minds imparted a congenial warmth and glow to mine; we were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that long before mine was set, the sun of liberty¹¹ would turn to blood, or

⁹ A royal Persian residence.

¹⁰ "Particles of divine air." It was the doctrine of the Pythagoreans and the Stoics that our souls were emanations from the Divine mind.

¹¹ An allusion to the Reign of Terror, and the accession of Napoleon.

set once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell.

I have since turned my thoughts to gathering up some of the fragments of my early recollections, and putting them into a form to which I might occasionally revert. The future was barred to my progress, and I turned for consolation and encouragement to the past. It is thus that, while we find our personal and substantial identity vanishing from us, we strive to gain a reflected and vicarious one in our thoughts: we do not like to perish wholly, and wish to bequeath our names, at least, to posterity. As long as we can make our cherished thoughts and nearest interests live in the minds of others, we do not appear to have retired altogether from the stage. We still occupy the breasts of others, and exert an influence and power over them, and it is only our bodies that are reduced to dust and powder. Our favourite speculations still find encouragement, and we make as great a figure in the eye of the world, or perhaps a greater, than in our lifetime. The demands of our self-love are thus satisfied, and these are the most imperious and unremitting. Besides, if by our intellectual superiority we survive ourselves in this world, by our virtues and faith we may attain an interest in another, and a higher state of being, and may thus be recipients¹² at the same time of men and of angels.

"E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."¹³

As we grow old, our sense of the value of time becomes vivid. Nothing else, indeed, seems of any consequence. We can never cease wondering that that which has ever been should cease to be. We find many things remain the same: why then should there be change in us. This adds a convulsive grasp of whatever is, a sense of a fallacious hollowness in all we see. Instead of the full, pulpy feeling of youth, tasting existence and every object in it, all is flat and vapid,—a whited sepulchre, fair without, but full of ravening and all uncleanness within. The world is a witch that puts us off with false shows and appearances. The simplicity of youth, the confiding expectation, the boundless raptures, are gone: we only think of getting out of it as well as we can, and without any great mischance or annoyance. The flush of illusion, even the complacent retrospect of past joys and hopes, is over: if we can slip out of life without indignity, can escape with little

¹² i. e. we may obtain immortality on earth by our "intellectual superiority," and in heaven by our "virtues and faith," and so be received by men and by angels.

¹³ Gray's *Elegy*.

bodily infirmity, and frame our minds to the calm and respectable composure of *still-life* before we return to physical nothingness, it is as much as we can expect. We do not die wholly at our deaths: we have mouldered away gradually long before. Faculty after faculty, interest after interest, attachment after attachment disappear: we are torn from ourselves while living, year after year sees us no longer the same, and death only consigns the last fragment of what we were to the grave. That we should wear out by slow stages, and dwindle at last into nothing, is not wonderful, when even in our prime our strongest impressions leave little trace but for the moment, and we are the creatures of petty circumstance. How little effect is made on us in our best days by the books we have read, the scenes we have witnessed, the sensations we have gone through! Think only of the feelings we experience in reading a fine romance (one of Sir Walter's, for instance); what beauty, what sublimity, what interest, what heart-rending emotions! You would suppose the feelings you then experienced would last for ever, or subdue the mind to their own harmony and tone: while we are reading it seems as if nothing could ever put us out of our way, or trouble us:—the first splash of mud that we get on entering the street, the first twopence we are cheated out of, the feeling vanishes clean out of our minds, and we become the prey of petty and annoying circumstance. The mind soars to the lofty: it is at home in the grovelling, the disagreeable, and the little. And yet we wonder that age should be feeble and querulous,—that the freshness of youth should fade away. Both worlds would hardly satisfy the extravagance of our desires and of our presumption.

Thomas De Quincey

(1785–1859)

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

(From *Suspiria de Profundis*, 1845)

Oftentimes at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the newborn infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man

everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps in his heart, "Behold what is greater than yourselves!" This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore, watches over human education. Now, the word *edūco*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallization of languages) from the word *edūco*, with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes*, or develops, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant,—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works forever upon children,—resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering forever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader! think,—that children generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*,—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this world, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules

of Eton¹ require that a boy on the *foundation*² should be there twelve years: he is superannuated³ at eighteen, consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted among its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart: therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number, as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty: the *Parcæ* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colours sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and at once even the *Muses*⁴ were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute,⁵ to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now*; but in Oxford⁶ I said, "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I shall know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful sisters. These sisters—by what name shall we call them?

If I say simply, "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow,—separate cases of sorrow,—whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart; and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*. I know them

¹ One of the oldest and most aristocratic of the "public schools" in England. It is situated on the Thames opposite Windsor, and was founded by Henry VI in 1441. See Gray's Ode, p. 427.

² There are about seventy boys on the *foundation* or endowment: i. e. holding a scholarship.

³ i. e. required to leave on account of age.

⁴ Pausanias states that originally three muses were worshipped on Mount Helicon, namely, *Melēth* (Meditation), *Mnēmō* (Memory), and *Aradē* (Song).

⁵ Each instrument seems chosen by De Quincey to suggest a different province of emotion: the harp for religious feeling; the trumpet for patriotism and martial ardor; and the lute for love and sentiment.

⁶ De Quincey matriculated at Worcester College at Oxford in 1803, aged nineteen. It was during his stay there that he began the use of opium.

thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? Oh, no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in their kingdoms. They spoke not, as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sang not; though oftentimes methought they might have sung: for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. They wheeled in mazes; I spelled the steps. They telegraphed from afar; I read the signals. They conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness my eye traced the plots. Theirs were the symbols; mine are the words.

What is it the sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form, and their presence; if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline; or presence it were that forever advanced to the front, or forever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama,⁷ where a voice was heard of lamentation,—Rachel weeping for her children, and refused to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened forever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven.

Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard that sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal⁸ at her girdle, which

open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, he recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns forever over her; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he awakens to a darkness that is now within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter⁹ of 1844-5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of "Madonna."

The second sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops forever, forever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the

to the Pope, as the successor of St. Peter, are given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

⁹ The Czar, Nicholas I, visited London in June, 1844. The death of his daughter, the Princess Alexandra, in the following August, aroused universal sympathy for him in England.

⁷ Jeremiah, xxxi. 15, and St. Matt., ii. 18.

⁸ In allusion to the belief in the Roman Church that

visitor of the Pariah,¹⁰ of the Jew,¹¹ of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island,¹² blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes forever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no obligations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for him a stepmother, —as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against him sealed and sequestered;—every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of hereditary disgrace,—all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem,¹³ and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, yet who secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third sister, who is also the youngest!—Hush! whisper whilst we talk of her! Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele,¹⁴ raises her almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes rising so high might be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape that she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night,

for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with a tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And her name is *Mater Tenebrarum*.—Our Lady of Darkness. These were the *Semnai Theai*,¹⁵ or Sublime Goddesses, these were the *Eumenides*, or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation), of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she beckoned to Our Lady of Sighs; and what she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads; was this:—

"Lo! here is he, whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled, and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshipped the worm and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolater, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to thy heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou,"—turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum*, she said, "wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from her. See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope, wither the relenting of love, scorch the fountains of tears, curse him as only thou canst curse. So shall he be accomplished¹⁶ in the furnace, so shall he see the things that ought not to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again before he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished

¹⁰ A low caste Hindoo, employed in India for menial labor; a social outcast.

¹¹ In allusion to the terrible persecutions of the Jews.

¹² A British Island off the east coast of Australia, formerly the site of a penal colony.

¹³ Cf. *Genesis*, ix., 27.

¹⁴ The wife of Chronos and mother of the gods; in early Greek mythology, represented as sitting between lions with a mural crown on her head.

¹⁵ Another name for the Furies, called *semnai*, or sublime, in "shuddering propitiation" by the Athenians, who worshipped them.

¹⁶ Perfected, made complete.

which from God we had,—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit."

THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

1849. libtool.com.cn

(Abridged)

SECTION THE FIRST

THE GLORY OF MOTION

Some twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer,¹ at that time M.P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing, discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organised by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, 1st, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; 2ndly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; 3rdly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; 4thly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that, in the midst of vast distances—of storms, of darkness, of danger—overruled all obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger

¹ John Palmer (1742-1818), a public-spirited citizen of Bath, observing "that the state-post was the slowest mode of conveyance in the country" and that it took letters three days to pass between Bristol and London, while he could cover the distance in one day, laid before Pitt a plan for conveying the mail in government coaches, which were to maintain a uniform speed of 8 to 10 miles an hour. After much discussion, in which Palmer was supported by Pitt, but opposed by the postal authorities, a service between Bristol and London was inaugurated, and Palmer himself despatched the first mail-coach from Bristol, Aug. 2, 1784. By the autumn of 1785 mail-coaches were running to most of the important English cities and towns, and in the following year the service was extended to Edinburgh. Palmer was rewarded by Pitt with an appointment as comptroller-general of the Post Office.

of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *bâton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organisation. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and 10 terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo.² These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered. . . .

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government—a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined—gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, 50 they do not hear us as yet; but as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings.³ Treason they feel to be their crime; each individual

² All battles in the Napoleonic wars.

³ Crossing the road from side to side so as to avoid ruts, etc.

carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder;⁴ his blood is attainted through six generations; and nothing is wanting but the headsman and his axe, the block and the saw-dust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What! shall it be within benefit of clergy⁵ to delay the king's message on the high road?—to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *systole and diastole*,⁶ of the national intercourse?—to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages? Or can it be fancied amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions.⁷ We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station, and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, &c. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes of Marengo),⁸ "Ah! wherefore have we not time to weep over you?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases

of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *d fortiori*⁹ I upheld its rights; as a matter of duty I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedence, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem,¹⁰ had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor.¹¹ For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman.—"I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard

⁴ *Attainder*, deprived the attainted of all the civil rights of a free citizen. He was "dead in the eyes of the law," and could neither inherit nor transmit property.

⁵ A technical phrase in Old English Law, signifying the exemption of the clergy from criminal proceedings in the King's courts.

⁶ In physiology the alternate contraction and expansion of the heart by which the circulation of the blood is effected.

⁷ A Court originally so called from the fact that its sessions were held quarterly. The administration of the highway laws was one of its functions.

⁸ At the battle of Marengo, June 14, 1800, the French General Desaix, by his timely arrival, saved Napoleon from defeat, but was himself killed. The story that Napoleon on hearing of his death said: "Ah, wherefore have we not time to weep over you!" is called by De Quincey a "theatrical fiction."

⁹ A technical term in logic equivalent to "all the more so."

¹⁰ An old form of Birmingham, still in colloquial use, and often applied to cheap jewelry, for the manufacture of which Birmingham is noted. *Cf. Rich. III.* l. iv. 55:—"Clarence is come,—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence, That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury."

¹¹ In upper Egypt, on the site of the ancient capital of Egypt, is famous for its temples and tombs.

to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No*; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that*; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "Race us, if you like," I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; for its own sake I am glad that the 'Tallyho' was disappointed." So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists—viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs,¹² were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

¹² A plural of the Arabic *amir*, a commander, a nobleman,

with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls,¹³ and then led off to instant execution." The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18,¹⁴ for regulating the precedence of coaches as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that "if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the 'Tallyho' appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law."

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody says that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *vivimus*.¹⁵ Yes, "*magna vivimus*;" we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realise our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion.

¹³ i. e. imitation pearls.

¹⁴ A humorous invention of De Quincey's. The 6th of Edward Longshanks would be a statute passed in 1278. Coaches were not known in England until much later.

¹⁵ "We do not *talk* great things, we *live* them."

Nile nor Trafalgar¹⁶ has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the interagencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight soli-¹⁰tudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings¹⁷ of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for²⁰ public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about²⁵ a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train. . . .³⁰

GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from³⁵ London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815⁴⁰ inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position—partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its⁴⁵ keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling¹⁸ schooner⁵⁰ under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How

¹⁶ Nelson destroyed the French fleet in the battle of the Nile, fought in Aboukir Bay, Aug. 1, 1798. For Trafalgar see Southey's account, p. 548, *supra*.

¹⁷ The sound made as a pot in boiling. The design of the whole passage is to belittle the steam engine by comparing it to a tea-kettle.

¹⁸ Petty, trifling.

much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was⁵ worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable¹⁰ for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did an unauthorised rumour steal away a prelibation¹⁹ from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

¹⁵ From eight p. m. to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street,²⁰ where, at that time, and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity—but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might first have fixed²⁵ the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold³⁰ to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition!—horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially his Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such³⁵ as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without⁴⁰ any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they⁴⁵ have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells

¹⁹ Foretaste.

²⁰ Near the Bank of England. The General Post Office in St. Martin le Grand, was built in 1825–29.

all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The speculators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment!—what a thundering of wheels!—what a trampling of hoofs!—what a sounding of trumpets!—what farewell cheers!—what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail—"Liverpool for ever!"—with the name of the particular victory—"Badajoz" for ever! or "Salamanca for ever!" The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long, and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred miles—northwards for six hundred; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundred-fold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the City, and issuing into the broad uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer

evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every storey of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows—young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols—and rolling volleys of sympathising cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness—real or assumed—thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels: sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies—one likely to be "mamma," and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful, unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage!—by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them—and by the heightened colour on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, "See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory." In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers—I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me—raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them*? Oh, no; they will not say *that*. They cannot deny—they do not deny—that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for twelve hours to come,

²¹ In Spain, taken by Wellington in 1812.

²² Eleven miles north of London.

we on the outside have the honour to be their brothers. Those poor women, again, who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labour—do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birth-right to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

Every joy, however, even rapturous joy—such is the sad law of earth—may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also, the glasses are all down—here, also, is an elderly lady seated; but the two daughters are missing; for the single young person sitting by the lady's side, seems to be an attendant—so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a "Courier" evening paper, containing the gazette,²² for the next carriage that might pass.

Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as—GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to have suffered the heaviest of afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its details, as gave to her the appearance which

²² I. e. the official report of the battle.

amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *sey*.²⁴ This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels; whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendours, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we stayed for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera²⁵—imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23rd Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses—over a trench where they could, into it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could not. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such

²⁴ Not a Gaelic word, but an Old English word retained in the Scotch. In Old English poetry it was applied to warriors who were "doomed" to fall in battle. In its Scottish use it implies a state of high spirits and wild exaltation in the person unconscious of his doom.

²⁵ *Talavera de la Reina*, at the confluence of the Alberche and the Tagus, where the English under Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterward Duke of Wellington) and the Spanish under Cuesta were attacked by the French under Marshal Victor and Joseph Bonaparte, July 27, 1809.

divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then He was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23rd Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralysed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23rd were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment—a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama²¹—in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself—to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I

showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly—poured out their noble blood as cheerfully—as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23rd Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that he, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict—a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London—so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy—that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

²¹ "The field of blood." See *Acts* i. 19.

VIII. THE VICTORIAN AGE

c. 1837-1900

Alfred Tennyson

1809-1892

SONG—THE OWL

(From *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, 1830)

I

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb, *accent*
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits; *accents*
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch 10
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

THE PALACE OF ART¹

(From *Poems*, 1832)

To . . .

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I send you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain, 5
That did love Beauty only (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind),
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three 10
sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie 15
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

¹ Tennyson wrote the following notes on this poem in 1890: "Trench said to me, when we were at Trinity together, 'Tennyson, we cannot live in art.'" "The Palace of Art" is the embodiment of my own belief that the Godlike life is with man and for man, that 'Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters,' etc."

(*Memoir*, by H. Tennyson, I. 118.)
Tennyson made a number of changes in this poem, especially for the edition of 1842. The version here given is the final and more familiar one.

THE PALACE OF ART

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell,
I said "O soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd
brass, 5
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair. 10
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round,"
I said
"Reign thou apart a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast 15
shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide." 20

Four courts I made, East, West and South
and North,
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a
row 25
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge¹ to distant lands, 30
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell 35
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd 40
From out a golden cup.

¹ Horizon; a peculiarly Tennysonian use.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd 45
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and
traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires 50
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did 55
pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood 60
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand, 65
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall 70
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low, 75
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.² 80

And one a foreground black with stones and
slags;
Beyond, a line of heights; and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful
crags;
And highest, snow and fire. 84

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

² "To appreciate this touch, one must have seen a
grove of olive-trees, when the peculiar whitish-gray
underside of the leaves is turned up by the wind." Rolfe.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind, 90
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costlily sardonyx 95
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;³
An angel look'd at her. 100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, we wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son⁴ 105
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw 110
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king⁵
to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama⁶ slowly sail'd 115
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne;
From one hand droop'd a crocus; one hand
grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn. 120

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half buried in the eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair 125
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself was there,
Not less than life design'd.

Then in the towers I placed great bells that
swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound; 130
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

³ St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music, whose har-
monies brought an angel down from heaven. Cf. Dry-
den's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, p. 277, and his *Alexan-
der's Feast*, p. 273, *supra*.

⁴ King Arthur, according to legend the son of Uther
Pendragon.

⁵ Numa Pompilius, according to legend the second
King of Rome. The "wood-nymph," Egeria, met him
in a grove near the city, and there taught him how to
frame laws and religious ceremonies for his people.

⁶ Or Kama, the Hindoo god of love.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his
song, 135
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest,⁷
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin. 140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd 145
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and
stings; 150
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man de-
clined, 155
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone. 160

And thro' the topmost oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,⁸
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change, 165
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald,
blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, 170
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,⁹
drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song 175
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five; 180

⁷ Homer.

⁸ Francis Bacon, who was made Baron Verulam.

⁹ A hero in the Trojan war. His name was erroneously given by the Greeks to a colossal statue at Thebes, which was said to give forth a musical sound when the rays of the rising sun touched the stone.

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young might
divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils— 185
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,¹⁰
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and
cried,
"I marvel if my still delight 190
In this great house so royal-rich and wide
Be flattered to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise, 195
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of
swine
That range on yonder plain. 200

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep." 211

Then of the moral instinct would she prate 205
As hers of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl. 210
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth, 215
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd; so three years
She prosper'd; on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,¹¹
Struck thro' with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her
sight 225
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene,"¹² and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

¹⁰ Garlands, chaplets.

¹¹ St. Matt., viii. 32.

¹² V. Ads, xii. 21-23.

¹³ Dan., v. 23-29, but read the whole chapter and note the points of resemblance between the "sinful soul" and both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
 Fell on her, from which mood was born 230
 Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength,"
 she said,
 "My spacious mansion built for me,
 Whereof the strong foundation-stones were
 laid 235
 Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood.
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of
 blood,
 And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
 And with dim fretted foreheads all,
 On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
 That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light 245
 Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
 Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
 Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
 Left on the shore, that hears all night 250
 The plunging seas draw backward from the
 land
 Their moon-led waters white;

A star that with the choral starry dance
 Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
 The hollow orb of moving Circumstance 255
 Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
 "No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
 "No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this
 world;
 One deep, deep silence all!" 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's moulder-
 ing sod,
 Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
 Lay there exiled from eternal God.
 Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally, 265
 And nothing saw, for her despair,
 But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
 No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
 And ever worse with growing time, 270
 And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
 And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
 With blackness as a solid wall,
 Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound 275
 Of human footsteps fall;

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
 In doubt and great perplexity,
 A little before moonrise hears the low
 Moan of an unknown sea; 280

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
 Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
 Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have
 found
 A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within. 285
 There comes no murmur of reply.
 What is it that will take away my sin,
 And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
 She threw her royal robes away. 290
 "Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
 "Where I may mourn and pray."

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
 So lightly, beautifully built;
 Perchance I may return with others there 295
 When I have purged my guilt."

Spencerian
 THE LOTOS-EATERS
Spencerian
 (From *Poems*, 1832)

"Courage!" he said,¹ and pointed toward the
 land,
 "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward
 soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land
 In which it seemed always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon,⁵
 Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
 And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did
 seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward
 smoke, 10
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows
 broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
 From the inner land; far off, three mountain-
 tops, 15
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flushed; and, dew'd with showery
 drops,
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven
 copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
 In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the
 dale 20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale

¹ i. e. Ulysses. The poem is founded on a passage in
 Homer's *Odyssey*, Bk. IX.

And meadow, set with slender galingale;*
 A land where all things always seem'd the same!
 And round about the keel with faces pale, 25
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
 To each, but whoso did receive of them 30
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
 Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
 On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
 And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake, 35
 And music in his ears his beating heart did
 make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, 40
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
 Most Weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
 Then some one said, "We will return no more;"
 And all at once they sang, "Our island home
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
 roam." 45

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
 Music that gentler on the spirit lies, 5
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
 blissful skies.
 Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
 weep, 10
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in
 sleep.

II

hy are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
 While all things else have rest from weariness?
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone, 15
 We only toil, who are the first of things,
 And make perpetual moan,
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings, 20
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
 "There is no joy but calm!"—
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of
 things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 25
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,

* A sedge with an aromatic root, sometimes called the
English Galangal.

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 30
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days 35
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labor be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last? 45
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 50
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence—ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
 dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
 stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem 55
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the
 height;
 To hear each other's whispered speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 60
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 65
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of
 brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 70
 And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd
 change;
 For surely now our household hearths are cold,
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold 75
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain. 80
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,

Long labor unto aged breath, 85
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-
stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth¹ and moly,²
How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly—
With half-dropt eyelid still, 90
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling 94
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath
the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak, 100
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellow
tone;
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow
Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion
we, 105
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal
mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie re-
clined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of
mankind. 110
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts
are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds
are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the
gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over
wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
roaring deeps and fiery sands, 115
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a
doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
cleave the soil, 120
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest, with en-
during toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine
and oil;

¹ A imaginary flower which was supposed never to fade.

² The plant given to Ulysses by Mercury; it was to protect him against the witchcraft of Circe.

Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis
whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian val-
leys dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil,
the shore 126

Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar;

O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more. J

and the coast in after defeat

YOU ASK ME WHY THOUGH ILL AT
EASE¹

(Written in 1833, first printed 1842)

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till, 5
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown, 10
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought 15
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute, 20

Tho' power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth, 25
Wild wind: I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

(Written in 1833, first published 1842)

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet;
Above her shook the starry lights;
She heard the torrents meet.

¹ Aubrey De Vere wrote of this and of the following poem (*Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights*): "If I remember right they were suggested by some popular demonstrations connected with the Reform Bill of 1832, and its rejection by the House of Lords." See the whole passage in *Memoir*, by H. Tennyson, I. 506.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd¹ in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

LOCKSLEY HALL¹

(From *Poems*, 1842)

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet
'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound
upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the
curls call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over
Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks
the sandy tracts,
And the hollow-ocean ridges roaring into
cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I
went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the
West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the
mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a
silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a
youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long
result of Time;

¹ Wrapped up in herself, self-centered.

¹ Tennyson says of this poem: "The whole poem represents young life, its good side, its deficiencies, and its yearnings." He tells us further that "'Locksley Hall' is an imaginary place (tho' the coast is Lincolnshire), and the hero is imaginary." (*Memoir*, by H. Tennyson, I. 195). But the poem represents not merely young life in general, but a young man at a time when youth in England was stirred by great changes, by the marvels of invention and of scientific discovery.

5 When the centuries behind me like a fruitful
land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise
that it closed.

When I dipt into the future far as human eye
could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the
robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself
another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the bur-
nish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly
turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than
should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute
observance hung.

And I said, "My Cousin Amy, speak, and
speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being
sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour
and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a
sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of
hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they
should do me wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping,
"I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in
his glowing hands,
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all
the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd
in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear
the copes ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the
fullness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch
the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching
of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy,
mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren,
barren shore! 40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all
songs have sung, *www.libtool.com.cn*
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a
shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known
me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower
heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day
by day, 45
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sym-
pathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated
with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight
to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have
spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer
than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they
are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his
hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is
over-wrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him
with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to
understand— 55
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew
thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the
strength of youth!²
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the
living truth! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened
forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst
thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than
ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which
bears but bitter fruit? 65
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be
at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length
of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of
the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I
knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she
speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was
to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the
love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for-
evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is
truth the poet sings,³ 75
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy
heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain
is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art
staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the
shadows rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to
his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears
that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whis-
per'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing
of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient
kindness on thy pain. 85
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to
thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender
voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

² Dante. "There is no greater pain than to recall a
happy time in misery." *Inf.*, v. 121.

¹ Tennyson is generally regarded as ultra-conservative, but on some points he differed widely from the accepted, upper-class opinion of the time. Like Ruskin, he was impressed with the danger of the modern money-getting spirit, and he protested in many poems against allowing a worship of wealth and social position to stand in the way of an otherwise desirable marriage. (Cf. *Aylmer's Field*, *Maud*, and *The Miller's Daughter*.)

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival
brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the
mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a dear-
ness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of
the two.

O, I see thee, old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a
daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she
herself was not exempt— 95
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy
self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore
should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting
upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but
to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the mar-
kets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which
I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foe-
man's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the
winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt
that Honour feels, 105
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at
each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that
earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou won-
drous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the com-
ing years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his
father's field.

And at night along the dusky highway near and
nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like
a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
before him then, 115
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the
throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever
reaping something new:⁴
That which they have done but earnest of the
things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye
could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of
magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there
rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the
central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-
wind rushing warm, 125
With the standards of the peoples plunging
thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the
battle-flags were fur'd,
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a
fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in
universal law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro'
me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with
the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here
are out of joint:
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on
from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creep-
ing nigher, 135
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the
process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of
his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat forever
like a boy's? 140

⁴The system of railroad transportation in England
dates from about 1830; the electric telegraph was pat-
ented in 1837, and steam-communication between Eng-
land and the United States began in the following year.
The increasing application of steam and electricity worked
a great and inevitable change in social conditions.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he
bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the still-
ness of his rest.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I
linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is
more and more.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on
the bugle-horn, 145
They to whom my foolish passion were a target
for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved
so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's
pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in
a shallower brain: 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,
match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water
unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing.
Ah for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life
began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle⁵ fell my father,
evil-starr'd;— 155
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish
uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander
far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of
the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons
and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,
knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an Euro-
pean flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings
the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the
heavy-fruit'd tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple
spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than
in this march of mind, 165
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts
that shake mankind.

⁵ i. e. in a battle with the *Mahrattas*, a Hindoo race in India, engaged in frequent conflicts with the British. They were decisively beaten in 1816-18.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have
scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear
my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive,
and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their
lances in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the
rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know*
my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains, 175
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast
with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were
sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish
one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like
Joshua's moon in Ajalon! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,
forward let us range,
Let the great world spin forever down the ring-
ing grooves of change.⁷

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the
younger day:
[Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of
Cathay. >

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as
when life begun: 185
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the
lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath
not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my
fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to
Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me
the roof-tree fall. 190

⁶ *Joshua*, x., 12.

⁷ Tennyson tells us: "When I went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester (1830), I thought that the wheels ran in a groove. It was black night and there was such a vast crowd round the train at the station that we could not see the wheels. Then I made this line." H. Tennyson, *Memoirs*, I. 195.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening
over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail,
or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward,
and I go.

ULYSSES¹

(From *Poems*, 1842)

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
me. 5

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades² 10
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all; 15
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin
fades 20

Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me 25
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay

¹ This poem is a contrast study to the *Lotus Eaters*. Hallam Tennyson tells us (*Memoirs*, I., 196) that it was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and that it gave Tennyson's "feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." The immediate source of the poem is a passage in Dante's *Inf.*, xxvi., 90.

² A group of stars in the constellation of Taurus, their rising at a certain time of the year was associated with the beginning of the rainy season. Cf. Vergil, *Æneid*, I., 744.

Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd and wrought, and thought
with me— 45

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; 50
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the
deep 55

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' 65
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are,
we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

SIR GALAHAD

(From *Poems*, 1842)

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high, 6
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands, 10
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end, 15
To save from shame and thrall:

But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes, 25
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns:
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice but none are there: 30
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings, 35
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark;
 I leap on board: no helmsmen steers:
 I float till all is dark. 40
 A gentle sound, an awful light!
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God! 45
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow. 50
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail. 55
 I leave the plain, I climb the height;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease, 65
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my dreams;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear, 70
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls. 75
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
 "O just and faithful knight of God!
 Ride on! the prize is near."
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange; 80
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide
 Until I find the holy Grail.

THE EPIC

(INTRODUCTION TO MORTE D'ARTHUR)

(From *Poems*, 1842)

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
 The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
 Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
 The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl, 5
 Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
 How all the old honour had from Christmas
 gone,

Or gone or dwindled down to some old games
 In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
 With cutting eights that day upon the pond, 10
 Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
 I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
 Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
 The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
 Now harping on the church-commissioners, 15
 Now hawking at Geology and schism;
 Until I woke, and found him settled down
 Upon the general decay of faith
 Right thro' the world, "at home was little left,
 And none abroad: there was no anchor, none, 20
 To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
 On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."
 "And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-
 bowl."

"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way
 At college: but another which you had, 25
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
 What came of that?" "You know," said Frank,
 "he burnt
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
 books"—

And then to me demanding why? "Oh, sir,
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
 God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
 It pleased me well enough." "Nay, nay," said
 Hall,

"Why take the style of those heroic times? 35
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
 Nor we those times; and why should any man
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth" . . .

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord, 75
 King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him, 6
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 "The sequel of to-day unsolders all

The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls 20
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,¹
 Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In after time, this also shall be known: 35
 But now delay not: take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere:
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
 word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept 45
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping
 down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt: 55
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
 This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60
 In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted waterflags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
 So strode he back slow to the wounded King. 65
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 "Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
 What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, 70
 And the wild water lapping on the crags."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
 "Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd

Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight: 75
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt, 85
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud,
 "And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note
 Should thus be lost forever from the earth, 90
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many
 men."

What good should follow this, if this were done?
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand 95
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept, 100
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake. 104
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were
 lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit, 110
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
 "What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 115
 "I heard the water lapping on the crag
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
 wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me! 120
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all, 125
 Thou would'st betray me for the precious hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee
 hence: 130

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the
 sword, 135

¹ King Arthur's magic sword, given to him by the Lady of the Lake. For the passage in Malory which was Tennyson's original for the greater part of this Idyll, *s. supra*, p. 108, l. 25, etc.

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in
an arch,

Shot like a steamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 140
By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him 145

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?" 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir king, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men, 155
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him 160

Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard:

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear 165
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed 177
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the
king,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick,
quick:

I fear it is too late, and I shall die." 180
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a
goad. 185

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels— 190
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were
ware 195

That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by
these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from
them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony 200
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the
barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three
Queens 205

Put forth their hands, and took the king, and
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow 211
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white

And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops 215

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with
dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips. 220

So like a shatter'd column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings. 225

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead, 229
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that
led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world; 235
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to
new, 240
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?

I have lived my life, and that which I have
done

May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again, 246

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats 250

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. 255

But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go—

(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island valley of Avilion:²

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail 265

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull 270

Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared

and fell: 274

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,

And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but
we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;

I know not: but we sitting, as I said, 281

The cock crew loud; as at that time of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:

Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

"There now—that's nothing!" drew a little
back, 285

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:

And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd

To sail with Arthur under looming shores,

Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams,

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day, 291

To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore

² In Celtic legend the *Island of Avilion*, or *Avalon*, was thought to be an earthly paradise for great heroes, in the western seas. Glastonbury was at one time called Avalon, and in Henry II's reign a tomb, which was supposed to be Arthur's, was discovered there.

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried, 295

"Arthur is come again; he cannot die."

Then those that stood upon the hills behind

Repeated—"Come again, and thrice as fair;"

And, further inland, voices echoed—"Come

With all good things, and war shall be no
more. 300

At this a hundred bells began to peal,

That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-
morn.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK¹

(From *Poems*, 1842)

Break, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy, 5

That he shouts with his sister at play!

O well for the sailor lad,

That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on

To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand 10

And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,

At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!

But the tender grace of a day that is dead 15

Will never come back to me.

A FAREWELL

(From *Poems*, 1842)

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,

Thy tribute wave deliver;

No more by thee my steps shall be,

For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea, 5

A rivulet, then a river;

Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,

For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,

And here thine aspen shiver; 10

And here by thee will hum the bee,

For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,

A thousand moons will quiver;

But not by thee my steps shall be, 15

For ever and for ever.

¹ Tennyson says that this poem was "made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges."

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

(Song from *The Princess*, ed. 1850)

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. 5

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more." 10

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more." 15

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more." 20

IN MEMORIAM¹

(1850)

v

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain, 5
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold; 10
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

ix

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Saillest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains, 15
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

¹ This poem was written in memory of the poet's dearest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, who died suddenly at Vienna, in 1833, in his twenty-third year. Hallam, the son of Henry Hallam, the historian, became intimate with Tennyson at Cambridge. He was a brilliant debater, and (as Tennyson thought) a promising poet. *In Memoriam* records the effect of this crushing sorrow on the poet during a number of critical years. The first "jottings" for the poem were written as early as 1833.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn. 20

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above; 25
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run; 30
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

x

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright; 35
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou brings't the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life. 40

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod, 45
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine, 50
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

xviii

'Tis well; 'tis something we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made 55
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth. 60

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be, 65
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again. 70

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood; 75

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete; 80

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything; 85
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry. 90

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year, delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more. 95

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons? 100

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spires
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long, 105
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown; 110
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fances
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake 115
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about 120

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and iast
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door. 125
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art, 130
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring, 135
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free 140

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow 145
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?¹

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light; 150
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go; 155
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind. 160

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin, 165
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite; 170
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

¹ "Michael Angelo had a strong bar of bone over his eyes." (Tennyson to Gatty).

- Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old, 175
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.
- Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be. 180
- CXIV
- Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper: Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.
- But on her forehead sits a fire; 185
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.
- Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
 She cannot fight the fear of death. 190
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain
- Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place; 195
 She is the second, not the first.
- A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain, and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With Wisdom, like the younger child; 200
- For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul,
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind.
- I would the great world grew like thee, 205
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.
- CKV
- Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick¹ 210
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.
- Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue 215
 The lark becomes a sightless song.
- Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea; 220
- Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood, that live their lives
- ¹ A growing hedge, usually of hawthorn.
- From land to land; and in my breast 225
 Spring wakens too, and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.
- CXVIII
- Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant laboring in his youth; 230
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;
- But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say, 235
 The solid earth whereon we tread
- In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man; 240
- Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time
- Within himself, from more to more; 245
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,
- But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears, 250
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom
- To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
 Move upward, working out the beast, 255
 And let the ape and tiger die.
- CXXI
- Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with him,
 Thou watchest all things ever dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done. 260
- The team is loosen'd from the wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the shore;
 Thou listenest to the closing door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.
- Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night, 265
 By thee the world's great work is heard
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
 Behind thee comes the greater light.
- The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the brink; 270
 Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
 And see'st the moving of the team.
- Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my past 275
 Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

XXXX

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust 281
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control, 285
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE¹

from the original

I
 Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns!" he said.
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

5

II
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldier knew
 Some one had blunder'd.
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die.
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

10

III
 Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the six hundred.

20

IV
 Flash'd all their sabres bare,
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd.

30

Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke 35
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not,
 Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them, 40
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well 45
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
 Back from the mouth of hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade? 50
 O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honor the charge they made!
 Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred! 55

MAUD

(From *Maud*, 1855)

from the original
general lyrics

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
 There is none like her, none. 600
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood
 And sweetly, on and on
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
 Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

15

II

None like her, none. 605
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering
 talk
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
 And shook my heart to think she comes once
 more;
 But even then I heard her close the door,
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is
 gone. 610

III

There is none like her, none.
 Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
 In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
 East,
 Sighing for Lebanon, 615
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South, and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head 620

¹ The original version of this poem appeared in the London "Examiner," Dec. 9, 1854. Tennyson "wrote the poem in a few minutes" after reading an account in the "Times" of the gallant charge at Balaclava of the English cavalry under Lord Cardigan against the Russian artillery. The poet was struck by the phrase "some one had blundered" in the newspaper account, "and this was the origin of the metre of his poem." H. Tennyson's *Memoirs*.

Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there 625
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom
she came.

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Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn, 630
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies, 635
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

V

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl 640
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

VI

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was 645
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea. 650

VII

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss, 655
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more
dear."

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell 660
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight 665
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell 670
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell

Beat to the noiseless music of the night! 675
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?
I have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can
tell, 680

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

SONG—LATE, LATE, SO LATE

(From *Guinevere*, 1859)

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and
chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent. 5
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!
O, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
sweet? 10
O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

(From *The Holy Grail and Other Poems*, 1869)

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills
and the plains,—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who
reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not that which
he seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not
live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and
limb, 5
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division
from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason
why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to
feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou
fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled
splendor and gloom. 10

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit
with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

"FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE!"

(Included in *Teresias and Other Poems*, 1885)

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—"O venusta Sirmio!"
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale"¹ of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
"Frater Ave atque Vale"—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island,⁴ olive-silvery Sirmio!

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER¹ (1887)

Late, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

¹ This poem was composed in 1880, after a day's ramble over the peninsula of Sirmio, which stretches, almost cut off from the mainland, into the Lake of Garda, Italy. Catullus, the Latin lyric poet, had a villa on Sirmio, and the region is full of memories of him and his poems. Tennyson was rowed out to Sirmio from Desenzano, a town at the southern end of the lake.

² "O delightful Sirmio," from Cat. Carm. 31.

³ "Brother, hail and then farewell!" the solemn words of farewell to the dead. The reference is to Catullus's tribute to his dead brother, Carm. 101.

⁴ An echo of Catullus'. Carm. vii. 31. "Paene insularum, Sirmio, insularumque Ocellae." (Sirmio, scarcely an island, a little darling of an island.)

¹ Tennyson believed that the "two Locksley Halls" were likely to be in the future two of the most historically interesting of his poems, as descriptive of the tone of the age at two distant periods of his life." H. Tennyson's *Memoir*, ii. 329.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine;
And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

"Curse him!" curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amorist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith—but your worldling—she had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows "till death shall part us," she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,
Even the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

¹ A sign that he had fought against the heathen in the Holy Land.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering
aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder
of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old
we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the
shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if
she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead the
mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged
husband now—
I, this old white-headed dreamer, stooped and
kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies,
curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of
the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent
ashes fallen away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of
dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below
the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white
above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in
fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all
on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in
golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all
the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so
lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her
tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing
body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain that
bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wan-
der'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the
slightest ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early
lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine are
left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to
be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had
beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worship't, being
true as he was brave;
Good, for good is good, he follow'd, yet he
look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren
Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain
is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death,
but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking
with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying
race began
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of
man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave,
and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the
second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting
grounds beyond the night;
Even the black Australian dying hopes he shall
return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The good,
the true, the pure, the just—
Take the charm "For ever" from them, and
they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost
within a growing gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of
a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over
time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into
commonest commonplace!

"Forward" rang the voices then, and of the
many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten
thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian
kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-
hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild
Moguls,
Timur³ built his ghastly tower of eighty thou-
sand human skulls;

³i. e. Tamerlane, v. p. 159, n. 1. Some accounts repre-
sent Timur as an oriental conqueror of the most cruel
type.

Then, and here in Edward's⁴ time, an age of
 noblest English names,⁵
 Christian conquerors took and flung the con-
 quer'd Christian into flames.⁶

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the
 Greatest of the great;⁸⁵
 Christian love among the Churches look'd the
 twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had
 coin'd himself a curse:
 Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was
 crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a
 Gospel, all men's good;
 Celtic Demos⁷ rose a Demon, shriek'd and
 slaked the light with blood.⁹⁰

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till
 the day begun—
 Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from
 the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of
 the primal clan?
 "Kill your enemy, for you hate him," still,
 "your enemy" was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the
 helpless horse, and drive⁹⁵
 Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the
 kindlier brutes alive.⁸

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—
 burnt at midnight, found at morn,
 Twisted hard in mortal agony with their
 offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils?
 are we men?
 Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would that he
 were here again,¹⁰⁰

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call
 the very flowers
 Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains
 are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell
 how all will end?
 Read the wide world's annals, you, and take
 their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal
 daughter of the Past,¹⁰⁵
 Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream
 not that the hour will last.

⁴ Edward III (1312-1377), a contemporary of Timur.
⁵ Here "Europe, as distinguished from Asia.

⁶ Chaucer, *Wyclif*, Langland, etc.

⁷ Probably the cruelties committed in the Peasant
 Revolt in France, as Tennyson refers to this later
 (p. 606, l. 187, and n.), or possibly those practised by the
 Black Prince in the French War. Horrible deeds are re-
 corded by Froissart in his account of the *Jaquerie*, e. g.
Chron., Chap. CLXXXII and CLXXXIV.

⁸ i. e. the French populace. *Demos* is the Greek word
 for the masses, the common people. The reference is to
 the French Revolution and the "Gospel," then preached,
 of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

⁹ An allusion to recent disturbances in Ireland.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage
 to be wise—
 When was age so cramm'd with menace? mad-
 ness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing
 sober fast to scorn,
 Cries to weakest as to strongest, "Ye are
 equals, equal-born."¹¹⁰

Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be level with
 the flat.
 Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger
 than the cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of overheated
 language loom
 Larger than the lion—Demos end in working
 its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight
 her? shall we yield?¹¹⁵
 Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the
 voices from the field.⁹

Those three hundred millions under one Im-
 perial sceptre now,
 Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take
 the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if
 only you and you,
 Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak
 were wholly true.¹²⁰

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found, and more
 than once, and still could find,
 Sons of God, and kings of men in utter noble-
 ness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the prac-
 tised hustings-liar;¹⁰
 So the higher yields the lower, while the lower
 is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by
 right divine;¹²⁵
 Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen
 or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again
 the sickening game;
 Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while
 they about her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to
 Europe, known to all;
 Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the
 tonguesters we may fall.¹³⁰

You that woo the Voices—tell them "old ex-
 perience is a fool,"
 Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who
 cannot read can rule.

¹¹ i. e. of those who work in the fields, or the laboring
 classes.

¹² Hustings, the platform from which a political orator
 addresses the people at a Parliamentary election.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no
meek ones in their place;¹¹
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal
at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling
with the yelling street,¹³⁵
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain
is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith,
without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and
roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist,
rhymester, play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the
living hues of art. 140

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own
foul passions bare;
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—
forward—naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the
drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream
should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs
of Zolaism,—¹² 145
Forward, forward, ay, and backward, down-
ward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the
rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back
into the beast again?

Only "dust to dust" for me that sicken at your
lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the
newer world begin. 150

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it
scarce becomes mine age—
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last
upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard
fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of
a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray
thoughts, for I am gray; 155
After all the stormy changes shall we find a
changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and
Jacquerie,¹³
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days
I shall not see?

¹¹ V. St. Luke, i. 52.

¹² i. e. the works (or certain notorious works) of *Emile Zola*, 1840–1902, the French novelist.

¹³ i. e. after terrible uprisings of the masses against organised authority; uprisings as violent, or as lawless, as that of the *Jacobins* in the French Revolution of 1789 or of the *Jacquerie*, the revolt of the peasants against the French nobles in 1358.

When the schemes and all the systems, king-
doms and republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each
and each for all? 160

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Jus-
tice, Love and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions
of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt,
or deaf, or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body,
larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a
single tongue— 165
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as
yet so young?

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent
passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing
desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole
she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless
isles. 170

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her
thousands millions, then—
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy
warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it
ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon
dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her.—On this
day and at this hour, 175
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you
see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty
years ago—
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro'
a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where
you see her now—
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the
seeming-deathless vow.— 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall,
the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun
himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this
earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of never fad-
ing flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd¹⁴ the Bringer
home of all good things— 185
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect
peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splen-
dor or in Mars,
We should see the globe we groan in, fairest of
their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and
madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of
peaceful light? 190

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star
so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur,
"Would to God that we were there?"

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the
immeasurable sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be
known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumer-
able man, 195
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner
or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every
peopled sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword
"Evolution" here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the
mud. 200

What are men that He should heed us? cried
the king of sacred song:¹⁵
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their
brother insect wrong.

While the silent heavens roll, and suns along
their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a
million miles a day.

Many an aeon moulded earth before her highest,
man, was born, 205
Many an aeon too may pass when earth is man-
less and forlorn.

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of
salt, and plots of land—
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of
mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us meant us to be might-
ier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens
within the human eye, 210

¹⁴ The Greek poetess Sappho. Cf. *Song to the Evening Star*, p. 605, and *Don Juan*, p. 618, Stan. CVII.

¹⁵ David; v. *Psalms*, viii. 4.

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless,
thro' the human soul;
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless out-
ward in the Whole.

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the
lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—
you, you come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a
shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy! 215
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it
well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science,
glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense
in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts
on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the
thousand on the street. 220

There the master scrimps his haggard semp-
stress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and
the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps
across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens
of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your "Forward," yours
are hope and youth, but I— 225
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to fol-
low with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing
now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager
for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even? light the glim-
mer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for
the gleam withdrawn. 230

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes
earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern
guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she
gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal
man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember, how the
course of Time will swerve, 235
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward
streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death
and Silence hold their own.
Leave the master in the first dark hour of his
last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and
honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful
jealousy is a liar. 240

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the
madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you that you
have not lived in vain.

Youthful youth and age are scholars yet but
in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved
himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and
Grace are less and less; 245
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of
slated hideousness!

There is one old hostel left us where they swing
the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the "lion pas-
sant" from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old
Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political
common-sense! 250

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that
have fled!
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are
on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom
disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of
eighty years.

In this hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er
his grave, 255
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused
the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles
all the mouldering bricks—
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child
of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of
driving showers—
Peep the winsome face of Edith like a flower
among the flowers. 260

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they
toll the chapel bell!
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, "I
have loved thee well?"

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has
come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd,
and started from my side—

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not
abuse your day, 265
Move among your people, know them, follow
him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his
homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised
the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd him? who
shall swear it cannot be?
Earth would never touch her worst, were one
in fifty such as he 270

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God must
mingle with the game,
Nay, there may be those about us whom we
neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good,
the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm or shedding poison in the foun-
tains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a desert path-
way, yours or mine, 275
Forward, till you see the Highest Human Na-
ture is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can
half-control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the
vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle
with the past.
I that loathed have come to love him. Love
will conquer at the last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age; and I and you
will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee lord and master, latest lord
of Locksley Hall.

THE THROSTLE

(Included in *Demeter and Other Poems*, 1889)

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again!"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue. 5
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young
again,"
Never a prophet so crazy! 10
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"

O warble unhidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear, 15
And all the winters are hidden.

CROSSING THE BAR

(*Demeter*, 1889)

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep, 5
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark! 10
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face 15
When I have crost the bar.

Robert Browning

(1812-1889)

SONG

(From *Pippa Passes*, 1841)

The year's at the spring
The day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world! 5

CAVALIER TUNES

(From *Dramatic Lyrics*, 1842)

II

GIVE A ROUSE

I

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

II

Who gave me the goods that went since? 5
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

Chorus

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now? 10
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

Chorus

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles! 20

III

BOOT AND SADDLE (From the same)

I

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

Chorus

Boot, saddle to horse, and away!

II

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say; 5
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—

Chorus

"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

III

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads'
array: 10
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

Chorus

"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

IV

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and
gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they? 16

Chorus

"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

MY LAST DUCHESS¹

FERRARA

(From *Dramatic Lyrics*, 1842)

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Frà Pandolf's² hand
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

¹ The Duke in this poem, like Browning's *Bishop* who ordered "his tomb at St. Praxed's Church," is a characteristic product of the Italy of the Renaissance. He exemplifies Browning's favorite doctrine that we are not saved by taste, and that a fine appreciation of art and letters is by no means incompatible with a small, ignoble, and worldly nature.

² An imaginary artist, as is *Claude of Innsbruck*,

Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said 5
 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so, not the
 first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps 15
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such
 stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made
 glad,

Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving
 speech, 30

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good!
 but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your
 will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping; and I
 choose

Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed with-
 out

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave com-
 mands;¹ 45
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she
 stands

As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat
 The Count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense 50
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for
 me!

¹ Many have supposed this to mean commands for the death of the Duchess, but Browning leaves the exact nature of these commands to our imagination.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"¹

(From *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, 1845)

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all
 three;

"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-
 bolts undrew;

"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping
 through;

Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to
 rest, 5

And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II

Not a word to each other: we kept the great
 pace

Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing
 our place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
 Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique
 right, 10

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the
 bit,

Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew
 near

Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned
 clear;

At Boom, a great yellow star came out to
 see; 15

At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could
 be;

And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the
 half-chime,

So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is
 time!"

IV

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
 And against him the cattle stood black every
 one, 20

To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
 And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
 With resolute shoulders, each butting away

The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear
 bent back 25

For my voice, and the other pricked out on his
 track;

And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that
 glance

O'er its white edge at me, his own master,
 askance!

And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye
 and anon

His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on. 30

¹ This poem has no historical foundation. Browning wrote it after a long sea voyage, when it appealed to him to describe a gallop on horseback.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris,
 "Stay spur!
 Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in
 her,
 We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the
 quick wheeze
 Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and
 staggering knees,
 And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,³⁵
 As down on her haunches she shuddered and
 sank.

VII

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
 Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the
 sky;
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble
 like chaff;
 Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in
 sight!"

VIII

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment
 his roan
 Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a
 stone;
 And there was my Roland to bear the whole
 weight
 Of the news which alone could save Aix from
 her fate,
 With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the
 brim,
 And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let
 fall,
 Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and
 all,
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his car,
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse
 without peer;
 Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any
 noise, bad or good,
 Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and
 stood.

X

And all I remember is—friends flocking
 round
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the
 ground;
 And no voice but was praising this Roland of
 mine,
 As I poured down his throat our last measure of
 wine,
 Which (the burgesses voted by common con-
 sent)
 Was no more than his due who brought good
 news from Ghent.

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD
 (From *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. VII., 1845)

I

Oh, to be in England now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England sees, some
 morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood
 sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard boughs
 In England—now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swal-
 lows!
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the
 hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover 10
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
 edge—
 That's the wise thrush; he sings each song
 twice over
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture!
 And though the fields look rough with hoary
 dew, 15
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA¹

(From the same)

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the north-
 west died away;
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into
 Cadiz Bay;
 Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face
 Trafalgar lay;
 In the dimmest northeast distance dawned
 Gibraltar grand and gray;
 "Here and here did England help me; how can
 I help England?"—say, 5
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to
 praise and pray,
 While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over
 Africa.

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL:¹

A PICTURE AT FANO

(From *Men and Women*, 1855)

I

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
 That child, when thou hast done with him,
 for me!

¹ The poet, near the scene of some of England's great-
 est naval victories, is stirred to even more than patriotic
 gratitude. Off *Cape St. Vincent*, at the southern ex-
 tremity of Portugal, an English fleet of 15 ships defeated
 a Spanish fleet of 27 ships, in 1797; off *Cape Trafalgar*,
 on the Spanish coast, and south-east of the *Gulf of Cadiz*
 and of *Cape St. Vincent*, Nelson won death and victory
 in 1805; while distant *Gibraltar*, triumphantly held for
 three years (1797–82) against the combined powers of
 France and Spain, stands as a monument to England's
 naval supremacy.

¹ *L'Angelo Custode*, the picture which inspired this

Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
 Shall find performed thy special ministry,
 And time come for departure, thou, suspending
 Thy flight, may'st see another child for tend-
 ing, 6
 Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

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II

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
 From where thou stand'st now, to where I
 gaze,
 And suddenly my head be covered o'er 10
 With those wings, white above the child who
 prays
 Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee
 guarding
 Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
 Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its
 door!

III

I would not look up thither past thy head 15
 Because the door opes, like that child, I
 know,
 For I should have thy gracious face instead,
 Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me
 low
 Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
 And lift them up to pray, and gently tether 20
 Me as thy lamb there, with thy garment's
 spread?

IV

If this was ever granted, I would rest
 My head beneath thine, while thy healing
 hands
 Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
 Pressing the brain which too much thought
 expands 25
 Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
 Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
 And all lay quiet, happy and supprest.

V

How soon all worldly wrong would be re-
 paired!
 I think how I should view the earth and skies
 And sea, when once again my brow was bared 31
 After thy healing, with such different eyes.
 O world, as God has made it! all is beauty;
 And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
 What further may be sought for or declared?

EVELYN HOPE

(From the same)

I

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
 Sit and watch by her side an hour.

poem, is in the Church of St. Augustine at Fano, a town
 on the Adriatic. It was painted by Guercino and "rep-
 resented an angel standing with outstretched wings by
 a little child. The child is half kneeling on a kind of
 pedestal, while the angel joins its hands in prayer; its
 gaze is directed upwards towards the sky, from which
 cherubs are looking down." I have omitted the last three
 verses, which are on a less exalted level and seem to add
 little to the poem.

That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
 She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
 Beginning to die too, in the glass; 5
 Little has yet been changed, I think:
 The shutters are shut, no light may pass
 Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

II

Sixteen years old when she died!
 Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name; 10
 It was not her time to love; beside,
 Her life had many a hope and aim,
 Duties enough and little cares,
 And now was quiet, now astir,
 Till God's hand beckoned unawares,— 15
 And the sweet white brow is all of her.

III

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
 What, your soul was pure and true,
 The good stars met in your horoscope,
 Made you of spirit, fire and dew— 20
 And, just because I was thrice as old
 And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
 Each was naught to each, must I be told?
 We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

IV

No, indeed! for God above 25
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
 And creates the love to reward the love:
 I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
 Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few: 30
 Much is to learn, much to forget
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

V

But the time will come,—at last it will,
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall
 say)
 In the lower earth, in the years long still, 35
 That body and soul so pure and gay?
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
 And your mouth of your own geranium's
 red—
 And what you would do with me, in fine,
 In the new life come in the old one's stead. 40

VI

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
 Given up myself so many times,
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope, 45
 Either I missed or itself missed me:
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
 What is the issue? let us see!

VII

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;
 My heart seemed full as it could hold— 50
 There was place and to spare for the frank
 young smile,
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's
 young gold.

So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
 There, that is our secret: go to sleep! 55
 You will wake, and remember, and under-
 stand.

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BY THE FIRESIDE

(From the same)

I
 How well I know what I mean to do
 When the long dark autumn evenings come:
 And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue?
 With the music of all thy voices, dumb
 In life's November too! 5

II
 I shall be found by the fire, suppose,
 O'er a great wise book, as beseeemeth age,
 While the shutters flap as the crosswind blows
 And I turn the page, and I turn the page,
 Not verse now, only prose! 10

III
 Till the young ones whisper, finger on lip,
 "There he is at it, deep in Greek:
 Now then, or never, out we slip
 To cut from the hazels by the creek
 A mainmast for our ship!" 15

IV
 I shall be at it indeed, my friends:
 Greek puts already on either side
 Such a branch-work forth as soon extends
 To a vista opening far and wide,
 And I pass out where it ends. 20

V
 The outside-frame, like your hazel-trees;
 But the inside-archway widens fast,
 And a rarer sort succeeds to these,
 And we slope to Italy at last
 And youth, by green degrees. 25

VI
 I follow wherever I am led,
 Knowing so well the leader's hand:
 O woman-country, wooed not wed,
 Loved all the more by earth's male-lands,
 Laid to their hearts instead! 30

VII
 Look at the ruined chapel again
 Half-way up in the Alpine gorge!¹
 Is that a tower, I point you plain,
 Or is it a mill, or an iron forge
 Breaks solitude in vain? 35

¹ Browning evidently has in mind a mountain gorge near the Baths of Lucca. The Brownings passed the summers of 1849 and 1853 at Bagni di Lucca, three mountain villages, some forty miles from Florence. Mrs. Browning writes: "I find myself able to climb the hills with Robert, and help him to lose himself in the forests."

VIII
 A turn, and we stand in the heart of things;
 The woods are round us, heaped and dim:
 From slab to slab how it slips and springs,
 The thread of water single and alim,
 Through the ravage some torrent brings! 40

IX
 Does it feed the little lake below?
 That speck of white just on its marge
 Is Pella; see, in the evening glow,
 How sharp the silver spear-heads charge
 When Alp meets heaven in snow! 45

X
 On our other side is the straight-up rock;
 And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it
 By boulder-stones where lichens mock
 The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit
 Their teeth to the polished block. 50

XI
 Oh the sense of the yellow mountain flowers,
 And thorny balls, each three in one,
 The chestnuts throw on our path in showers!
 For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,
 These early November hours, 55

XII
 That crimson the creeper's leaf across
 Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,
 O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss,
 And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped
 Elf-needed mat of moss, 60

XIII
 By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged
 Last evening—nay, in to-day's first dew
 Yon sudden coral nipple bulged,
 Where a freaked fawn-colored flaky crew
 Of toad-stools peep indulged. 65

XIV
 And yonder, at foot of the fronting ridge
 That takes the turn to a range beyond,
 Is the chapel reached by the one-arched bridge,
 Where the water is stopped in a stagnant
 pond
 Danced over by the midge. 70

XV
 The chapel and bridge are of stone alike,
 Blackish-gray and mostly wet;
 Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow dika.
 See here again, how the lichens fret
 And the roots of the ivy strike! 75

XVI
 Poor little place, where its one priest comes
 On a festa-day, if he comes at all,
 To the dozen folk from their scattered homes,
 Gathered within that precinct small
 By the dozen ways one roams— 80

XXVII

To drop from the charcoal-burners' huts,
 Or climb from the hemp-dresser's low shed,
 Leave the grange where the woodman stores
 his nuts,
 Or the wattled cote where the fowlers spread
 Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

XXVIII

It has some pretension too, this front,
 With its bit of fresco half-moonwise
 Set over the porch, Art's early wont:
 'Tis John in the Desert, I surmise,
 But has borne the weather's brunt—

XIX

Not from the fault of the builder though,
 For a pent-house properly projects
 Where three carved beams make a certain show,
 Dating—good thought of our architect's—
 'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

XX

And all day long a bird sings there,
 And a stray sheep drinks at the pond at
 times;
 The place is silent and aware;
 It has had its scenes, its joys and crimes,
 But that is its own affair.

XXI

My perfect wife, my Leonor,
 O heart, my own! O eyes, mine too!
 Whom else could I dare look backward for,
 With whom beside should I dare pursue
 The path gray heads abhor?

XXII

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with them;
 Youth, flowery all the way, there stops—
 Not they; age threatens and they condemn,
 Till they reach the gulf wherein youth drops,
 One inch from life's safe hem!

XXIII

With me, youth led . . . I will speak now,
 No longer watch you as you sit
 Reading by firelight, that great brow
 And the spirit-small hand propping it,
 Mutely my heart knows how—

XXIV

When, if I think but deep enough,
 You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme;
 And you, too, find without rebuff
 Response your soul seeks many a time
 Piercing its fine flesh-stuff.

XXV

My own, confirm me! If I tread
 This path back, is it not in pride
 To think how little I dreamed it led
 To an age so blest that, by its side,
 Youth seems the waste instead?

XXVI

My own, see where the years conduct!
 At first, 'twas something out two souls
 Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
 In each now: on, the new stream rolls,
 Whatever rocks obstruct.

XXVII

Think, when our one soul understands
 The great Word which makes all things new,
 When earth breaks up and heaven expands,
 How will the change strike me and you
 In the house not made with hands?

XXVIII

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,
 Your heart anticipate my heart,
 You must be just before, in fine,
 See and make me see, for your part,
 New depths of the divine!

XXIX

But who could have expected this
 When we two drew together first
 Just for the obvious human bliss,
 To satisfy life's daily thirst
 With a thing men seldom miss?

XXX

Come back with me to the first of all,
 Let us lean and love it over again,
 Let us now forget and now recall,
 Break the rosary in a pearly rain,
 And gather what we let fall!

XXXI

What did I say?—that a small bird sings
 All day long, save when a brown pair
 Of hawks from the wood float with wide wings
 Strained to a bell: 'gainst noonday glare
 You count the streaks and rings.

XXXII

But at afternoon or almost eve
 'Tis better; then the silence grows
 To that degree, you half believe
 It must get rid of what it knows,
 Its bosom does so heave.

XXXIII

Hither we walked then, side by side,
 Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,
 And still I questioned or replied,
 While my heart, convulsed to really speak,
 Lay choking in its pride.

XXXIV

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,
 And pity and praise the chapel sweet,
 And care about the fresco's loss,
 And wish for our souls a like retreat,
 And wonder at the moss.

XXXV

Stoop and kneel on the settle under,
 Look through the window's grated square:
 Nothing to see! For fear of plunder,
 The cross is down and the altar bare,
 As if thieves don't fear thunder. 175

XXXVI

We stoop and look in through the grate,
 See the little porch and rustic door,
 Read duly the dead builder's date;
 Then cross the bridge that we crossed before,
 Take the path again—but wait! 180

XXXVII

Oh moment one and infinite!
 The water slips o'er stock and stone;
 The West is tender, hardly bright:
 How gray at once is the evening grown—
 One star, its chrysolite! 185

XXXVIII

We two stood there with never a third,
 But each by each, as each knew well:
 The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,
 The lights and the shades made up a spell
 Till the trouble grew and stirred. 190

XXXIX

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!
 And the little less, and what worlds away!
 How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,
 Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,
 And life be a proof of this! 195

XL

Had she willed it, still had stood the screen
 So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her:
 I could fix her face with a guard between,
 And find her soul as when friends confer,
 Friends—lovers that might have been. 200

XLI

For my heart had a touch of the woodland
 time,
 Wanting to sleep now over its best.
 Shake the whole tree in the summer-prime,
 But bring to the last leaf no such test!
 "Hold the last fast!" runs the rhyme. 205

XLII

For a chance to make your little much,
 To gain a lover and lose a friend,
 Venture the tree and a myriad such,
 When nothing you mar but the year can
 mend:
 But a last leaf—fear to touch! 210

XLIII

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall
 Eddying down till it find your face
 At some slight wind—best chance of all!
 Be your heart henceforth its dwelling-place
 You trembled to forestall! 215

XLIV

Worth how well, those dark gray eyes,
 That hair so dark and dear, how worth
 That a man should strive and agonize,
 And taste a veriest hell on earth
 For the hope of such a prize! 220

XLV

You might have turned and tried a man,
 Set him a space to weary and wear,
 And prove which suited more your plan,
 His best of hope or his worst despair,
 Yet end as he began. 225

XLVI

But you spared me this, like the heart you are,
 And filled my empty heart at a word.
 If two lives join, there is oft a scar,
 They are one and one, with a shadowy third;
 One near one is too far. 230

XLVII

A moment after, and hands unseen
 Were hanging the night around us fast;
 But we knew that a bar was broken between
 Life and life: we were mixed at last
 In spite of the mortal screen. 235

XLVIII

The forests had done it; there they stood;
 We caught for a moment the powers at play:
 They had mingled us so, for once and good,
 Their work was done—we might go or stay,
 They relapsed to their ancient mood. 240

XLIX

How the world is made for each of us!
 How all we perceive and know in it
 Tends to some moment's product thus,
 When a soul declares itself—to wit,
 By its fruit, the thing it does! 245

L

Be hate that fruit or love that fruit,
 It forwards the general deed of man,
 And each of the Many helps to recruit
 The life of the race by a general plan;
 Each living his own, to boot. 250

LI

I am named and known by that moment's feat;
 There took my station and degree;
 So grew my own small life complete,
 As nature obtained her best of me—
 One born to love you, sweet! 255

LII

And to watch you sink by the fireside now
 Back again, as you mutely sit
 Musing by fire-light, that great brow
 And the spirit-small hand propping it,
 Yonder, my heart knows how! 260

LIII

So, earth has gained by one man the more,
 And the gain of earth must be heaven's gain too;
 And the whole is well worth thinking o'er
 When autumn comes: which I mean to do
 One day, as I said before. *libtool.com.ci265*

"DE GUSTIBUS—"¹

(From the same)

I

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
 (If our loves remain)
 In an English lane,
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
 Making love, say,—
 The happier they!
 Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
 And let them pass, as they will too soon,
 With the beanflower's boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

II

What I love best in all the world
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine
 (If I get my head from out the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's hands,
 And come again to the land of lands)—
 In a seaside house to the farther South,
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
 And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,
 Rough, iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er-crusted,
 My sentinel to guard the sands
 To the water's edge. For, what expands
 Before the house, but the great opaque
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?
 While, in the house, forever crumbles
 Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
 From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
 A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
 Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
 And says there's news to-day—the king
 Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
 Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling;
 —She hopes they have not caught the felons.
 Italy, my Italy!
 Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
 (When fortune's malice
 Lost her Calais)—
 Open my heart and you will see
 Graved inside of it, "Italy."
 Such lovers old are I and she:
 So it always was, so shall ever be!

¹ *De gustibus non disputandum*, there is no disputing about tastes.

ANDREA DEL SARTO¹

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

(From the same)

But do not let us quarrel any more,
 No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,
 Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
 And shut the money into this small hand
 When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
 Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love! 10
 I often am much wearier than you think,
 This evening more than usual, and it seems
 As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
 Here by the window with your hand in mine
 And look a half hour forth on Fiesole? 15
 Both of one mind, as married people use,
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,
 I might get up to-morrow to my work
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! 20
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require:
 It saves a model. So! keep looking so— 25
 My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!
 —How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
 Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
 You smile? why, there's my picture ready made
 There's what we painters call our harmony!
 A common grayness silvers every thing,— 35

¹ Andrea, called "del sarto,"—or, as we would say, the tailor's son,—was born at Florence in 1487. After working at goldsmithing, wood-carving, and drawing, and studying under several painters, he executed some frescoes for the Church of the Annunciation at Florence, with such accuracy and skill that he gained the name of "the faultless painter." At twenty-three he is said to have had no superior in Central Italy in technique. In 1512 he married Lucrezia, "a beautiful widow." "But," says Vasari, "he destroyed his own peace, as well as estranged his friends, by this act, seeing that he soon became jealous, and found that he had fallen into the hands of an artful woman, who made him do as she pleased in all things." In 1518 he went to Paris without Lucrezia, at the invitation of Francis I. This is the period of adulation and substantial rewards that he looks back upon in the poem as his long festal year, when he could "sometimes leave the ground." But Lucrezia wrote urging his return. The king granted him a brief leave of absence, and commissioned him to buy certain works of art in Italy. Andrea, beguiled by his wife, used the money which Francis had entrusted to him, to build a house for himself at Florence. His career in France being thus miserably interrupted, he remained in Florence, where he died of the plague in 1531.

² A small town on a hill-top about three miles to the west of Florence. Browning apparently makes Andrea build his house on the outskirts of Florence immediately facing the Convent of San Domenico, with Fiesole in the distant background.

All in a twilight, you and I alike
 —You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone, you know,)—but I, at every
 point;
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned
 down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole ^{ant. libtool.com.co}
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
 The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in every thing. 45
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.*
 How strange now looks the life he makes us
 lead; 50

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
 I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
 This chamber for example—turn your head—
 All that's behind us! You don't understand
 Nor care to understand about my art, 55
 But you can hear at least when people speak:
 And that cartoon, the second from the door
 —It is the thing, Love! so such things should
 be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
 I can do with my pencil what I know, 60
 What I see, what at bottom of my heart
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
 Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
 I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last week, 65
 And just as much they used to say in France.
 At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
 No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
 I do what many dream of all their lives,
 —Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70
 And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
 On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
 Who strive—you don't know how the others
 strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,— 75
 Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
 (I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
 Well, less is more,* Lucrezia: I am judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up
 brain, 80
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of
 mine.

Their works drop groundward, but themselves,
 I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough, 85

* This is not poetry, but Andrea's characteristic way of
 evading responsibility. Later he attributes his compara-
 tive failure to his wife (125), and then suddenly shifting
 to the other view, declares that after all "incentives come
 from the soul's self."

* Vasari says of Andrea: "Had this master possessed a
 somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been
 as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was
 for genius and depth of judgment in the art he practised,
 he would beyond all doubt have been without an equal."

Though they come back and cannot tell the
 world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
 The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
 I, painting from myself and to myself, 90
 Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
 Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
 Morello's¹ outline there is wrongly traced,
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
 Speak as they please, what does the mountain
 care? 96

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
 I know both what I want and what might
 gain; 100

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
 "Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world—"'
 No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
 The Urbinate² who died five years ago. 105
 ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
 Above and through his art—for it gives way; 110
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
 He means right—that, a child may understand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it: 115
 But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
 More than I merit, yes, by many times. 121
 But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare— 125
 Had you, with these the same, but brought a
 mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there
 urged,
 "God and the glory! never care for gain.
 The present by the future, what is that?
 Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo! 130
 Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
 I might have done it for you. So it seems:
 Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's self:
 The rest avail not. Why do I need you? 135
 What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
 In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
 And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
 Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the
 power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end, 140
 God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

¹ A mountain to the north of Florence.

² Raphael was so called from his birthplace, Urbino.

³ Michael Angelo.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the
truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords. 146

The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first
time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau! 150
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl

Over his mouth's good mark that made the
smile, 155

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of
souls 160

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days? 165
And had you not grown restless . . . but I
know—

'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct
said;

Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his
world. 170

How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was, to have ended there; then, if
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

Let my hands frame your face in your hair's
gold, 175

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

The Roman's⁹ is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—

Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge 180
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.

For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

To Rafael . . . I have known it all these
years . . . 185

(When the young man was flaming out his
thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend,¹⁰ there's a certain sorry little scrub

⁹ In the first edition of his *Lives of the Painters*, Vasari dwells at some length upon the complaining letter which Andrea's wife wrote to him from Florence. Her "bitter complaints" dressed up "with sweet words" ordered Andrea (as Vasari says) "to resume his chain."

¹⁰ Raphael, who left Florence to settle in Rome about 1508.

¹¹ In Bocchi's *Bellezze di Firenze*, Michael Angelo is reported to have spoken thus of Andrea to Raphael. "There is a bit of a manikin in Florence, who, if he

Goes up and down our Florence, none cares
how, 190

Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of
yours!"

To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, 195

Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should
go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,

(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?) 200

If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more
pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night 205
I should work better, do you comprehend?

I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;

Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls¹¹ speak the name we call them by.

Come from the window, Love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house 212

We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights

When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick 216

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!

Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside? 220

Must see you—you, and not with me? Those
loans?

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for
that?

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to
spend?

While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it
worth? 225

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,

Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,

One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side 231

To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.

Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor, 235

Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two

If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,

What's better and what's all I care about, 240
Get you the thirteen scudi¹² for the ruff!

chanced to be employed in great undertakings as you
have happened to be, would compel you to look well
about you."

¹¹ A name applied to the Scops-owl (*Scops Giv*). Its cry
is a clear, metallic, ringing *ki-ou*.

¹² Scudi, pl. of *scudo*, a silver coin of the Italian States,
about the value of the American dollar.

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does
he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more!

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less. 245
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.¹³ 250
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they
died:

And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance.

Yes, 257
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one
have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more
chance— 260

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard,¹⁴ Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose. 265

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE
OF KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN

(From the same)

Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork
(This man's flesh he hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space 5
That puff of vapor from his mouth, man's soul)
—To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and
strain, 10

Whereby the wily vapor fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term,—
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such:—
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home 15

¹³ Vaaari says on this point: "He (Andrea) abandoned his own poor father and mother, . . . and adopted the father and sisters of his wife in their stead; inasmuch that all who knew the facts mourned over him, and he soon began to be as much avoided as he had previously been sought after."

¹⁴ Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). While on earth, this great painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer came more than once into direct competition with Michael Angelo, who is said to have regarded his older rival with jealous dislike.

Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame
with peace)

Three samples of true snake-stone—rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped,
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than
drugs)

And writeth now the twenty-second time. 20

My journeyings were brought to Jericho:
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labor unrepaid?

I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone
On many a flinty furlong of this land. 25

Also, the country-side is all on fire
With rumors of a marching hitherward:

Some say Vespasian¹ cometh, some, his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;

Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls: 30
I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.

Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
And once a town declared me for a spy;

But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
Since this poor covert where I pass the night, 35

This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence
A man with plague-sores at the third degree

Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest
here!

'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip 40

And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
A viscid choler is observable

In tertians,² I was nearly bold to say;
And falling-sickness³ hath a happier cure

Than our school wots of: there's a spider here 45
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,

Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back;
Take five and drop them . . . but who knows
his mind,

The Syrian runagate I trust this to?
His service payeth me a sublimite 50

Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
Best wait: I reach Jerusalem at morn,

There set in order my experiences,
Gather what most deserves, and give thee all—

Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth 55
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,

Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,
In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease

Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy—
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar—

But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end. 61

Yet stay: my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price—

Suppose I write what harms not, though he
steal?

I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush, 65
What set me off a-writing first of all.

An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness,—or else

The Man had something in the look of him—

¹ Vespasian, was Emperor of Rome 70-79 A. D. By the allusion to him, and to the rumored advance of the Roman army against Jerusalem, Browning indicates the date of Karshish' letter. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, then imminent, took place in 70 A. D.

² A fever recurring every third day.

³ Epilepsy.

His case has struck me far more than 'tis worth.
 So, pardon if—(lest presently I lose, 71
 In the great press of novelty at hand,
 The care and pains this somehow stole from me)
 I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
 Almost in sight—for, wilt thou have the truth?
 The very man is gone from me but now, 76
 Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
 Thus then, and let thy better wit help all!

'Tis but a case of mania—sub-induced
 By epilepsy, at the turning-point 80
 Of trance prolonged unduly some three days:
 When, by the exhibition of some drug
 Or spell, exorcisation, stroke of art
 Unknown to me and which 'twere well to know,
 The evil thing, out-breaking, all at once 85
 Left the man whole and sound of body indeed,—
 But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
 Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
 The first conceit that entered might inscribe
 Whatever it was minded on the wall 90
 So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
 (First come, first served) that nothing subsequent

Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
 The just—returned and new-established soul
 Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart 95
 That henceforth she will read or these or none.
 And first—the man's own firm conviction rests
 That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
 —That he was dead and then restored to life
 By a Nazarene physician of his tribe: 100
 —'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did
 rise.

"Such cases are diurnal,"⁴ thou wilt cry.
 Not so this figment!—not, that such a fume,
 Instead of giving way to time and health,
 Should eat itself into the life of life, 105
 As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all!
 For see, how he takes up the after-life.
 The man—it is one Lazarus a Jew,
 Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
 The body's habit wholly laudable, 110
 As much, indeed, beyond the common health
 As he were made and put aside to show.
 Think, could we penetrate by any drug
 And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
 And bring it clear and fair, by three days' 115
 sleep!
 Whence has the man the balm that brightens
 all?

This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
 Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
 Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
 To bear my inquisition. While they spoke, 120
 Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—
 He listened not except I spoke to him,
 But folded his two hands and let them talk,
 Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.
 And that's a sample how his years must go. 125
 Look, if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
 Should find a treasure,—can he use the same
 With straitened habits and with tastes starved
 small,

⁴ i. e. of daily occurrence.

And take at once to his impoverished brain
 The sudden element that changes things, 130
 That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand
 And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
 Is he not such an one as moves to mirth—
 Warily parsimonious, when no need,
 Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times? 135
 All prudent counsel as to what befits
 The golden mean, is lost on such an one:
 The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
 So here—we call the treasure knowledge, say,
 Increased beyond the fleshy faculty— 140
 Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
 Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven:
 The man is witless of the size, the sum,
 The value in proportion of all things,
 Or whether it be little or be much. 145
 Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
 Assembled to besiege his city now,
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds—
 'Tis one! Then take it on the other side, 149
 Speak of some trifling fact,—he will gaze rapt
 With stupor at its very littleness
 (Far as I see) as if in that indeed
 He caught prodigious import, whole results;
 And so will turn to us the by-standers
 In ever the same stupor (note this point) 155
 That we too see not with his opened eyes.
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.
 Should his child sicken unto death,—why, look
 For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness, 160
 Or pretermission of the daily craft!
 While a word, gesture, glance from that same
 child

At play or in the school or laid asleep,
 Will startle him to an agony of fear,
 Exasperation, just as like. Demand 165
 The reason why—"tis but a word," object—
 "A gesture"—he regards thee as our lord
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
 Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being
 young,
 We both would unadvisedly recite 170
 Some charm's beginning, from that book of
 his,

Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
 All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
 Thou and the child have each a veil alike
 Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye
 both 175
 Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a
 match

Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!
 He holds on firmly to some thread of life—
 (It is the life to lead perforce)
 Which runs across some vast distracting orb 180
 Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
 Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
 The spiritual life around the earthly life:
 The law of that is known to him as this,
 His heart and brain move there, his feet stay
 here. 185

So is the man perplex with impulses
 Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
 Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,

And not along, this black thread through the
blaze—
"It should be" balked by "here it cannot
be." 190

And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him "Rise," and he did
rise.

Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes: then back he sinks at once 195
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows 200
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last 205
For that same death which must restore his
being

To equilibrium, body loosening soul
Divorced even now by premature full growth:
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God
please. 210

He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God
please.

Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be.
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do: 215
How can he give his neighbor the real ground,
His own conviction? Ardent as he is—
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
"Be it as God please" reassureth him.

I probed the sore as thy disciple should: 220
"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"
He merely looked with his large eyes on me. 225
The man is apathetic, you deduce?

Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognizes tools 230
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:

Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
An indignation which is promptly curbed: 235
As when in certain travel I have feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived design,
And happed to hear the land's practitioners
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance, 240
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object— Why have I not ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the
source, 245
Conferring with the frankness that befits?

Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused,—our learning's fate,—of wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule 250
And creed prodigious as described to me.
His death, which happened when the earth-
quake fell

(Prefiguring, as soon appeared the loss
To occult learning in our lord the sage
Who lived there in the pyramid alone) 255
Was wrought by the mad people—that's their
wont!

On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—
How could he stop the earthquake? That's
their way!

The other imputations must be lies; 260
But take one, though I loath to give it thee,
In mere respect for any good man's fame.

(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech 265
'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As—God forgive me! who but God himself,
Creator and sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it a while! 270
—'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own
house,

Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose
repeat,

And must have so avouched himself, in fact, 275
In hearing of this very Lazarus
Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool 280
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth! 285
Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus: 290
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met 295
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian—he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good. 300
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—305
So, through the thunder comes a human voice

Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine:
But love I gave thee, with myself to love, 310
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so: it is strange.

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A TOCCATA¹ OF GALUPPI'S

(From the same)

I

O Galuppi, Baldassaro,² this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove
me deaf and blind;
But, although I take your meaning, 'tis with
such a heavy mind!

II

Here you come with your old music, and here's
all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the
merchants were the kings, 5
Where Saint Mark's is, where the Doges used
to wed the sea with rings?

III

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis
arched by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where
they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it
all.

IV

Did young people take their pleasure when the
sea was warm in May? 10
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning
ever to mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the
morrow, do you say?

V

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and
lips so red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-
flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a
man might base his head? 15

VI

Well, and it was graceful of them—they'd
break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to
finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at
the clavichord?³

¹ *Toccata*, from Ital. *toccare* (to touch), is the name of a kind of instrumental composition originating in the 17th century; as its name implies it is intended to exhibit the touch and skilful execution of the performer.

² A Venetian composer (1706-1784); he was particularly noted for his comic operas, and was organist of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice.

³ An early and simpler form of the piano.

VII

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive,⁴ sixths
diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions,
those solutions—"Must we die?" 20
Those commiserating sevenths—"Life might
last! we can but try!"

VIII

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you
still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did I stop them,
when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be
answered to!

IX

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they
praised you, I dare say! 25
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at
grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a
master play!"

X

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due
time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some
with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly, and took them where
they never see the sun. 30

XI

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my
stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from
nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep
through every nerve.

XII

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where
a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice
spent what Venice earned. 35
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul
can be discerned.

XIII

"Yours for instance: you know physics, some-
thing of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise
in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you'll not
die, it cannot be!

XIV

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to
bloom and drop, 40
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth
and folly were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kiss-
ing had to stop?"

⁴ For a discussion of the character of Galuppi's music, and an explanation of the technical musical terms, see Porter and Clarke's ed. of Browning (Crowell) Vol. IV, 369. English Browning Society Papers, Part IX, and Part XI; *Poet Lore*, V, p. 280, and II., p. 646; the various handbooks on Browning may also be consulted.

XV
 "Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want
 the heart to scold.
 Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's
 become of all the gold
 Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel
 chilly and grown old. 45

SAUL¹

(From the same)

I
 Said Abner,² "At last thou art come! Ere I
 tell, ere thou speak,
 Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I³ wished
 it, and did kiss his cheek.
 And he, "Since the King, O my friend! for thy
 countenance sent,
 Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until
 from his tent
 Thou return with the joyful assurance the King
 liveth yet, 5
 Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the
 water be wet.
 For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space
 of three days,
 Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of
 prayer nor of praise,
 To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended
 their strife,
 And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch
 sinks back upon life. 10

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's
 child with his dew
 On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still
 living and blue
 Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as
 if no wild heat
 Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet, 15
 Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose
 on my feet,
 And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The
 tent was unlooped;
 I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under
 I stooped;
 Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch,
 all withered and gone,
 That extends to the second enclosure, I groped
 my way on 20
 Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then
 once more I prayed,
 And opened the foldskirts and entered, and
 was not afraid
 But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!"
 And no voice replied.

¹ This poem is founded on *I Samuel*, xvi. 14–23. The first nine sections of *Saul* appeared in 1845.

² First cousin of Saul, and commander-in-chief of the army.

³ i. e. David, who has been brought from tending the sheep to cast out the evil spirit which troubles Saul by playing to him on the harp.

At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but
 soon I descried
 A something more black than the blackness—
 the vast, the upright 25
 Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and
 slow into sight
 Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest
 of all.
 Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-
 roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms
 stretched out wide
 On the great cross-support in the centre, that
 goes to each side; 30
 He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as,
 caught in his pangs
 And waiting his change, the king serpent all
 heavily hangs,
 Far away from his kind, in the pine, till de-
 liverance come
 With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear
 and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we
 twine round its chords 35
 Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noon-
 tide—those sunbeams like swords!
 And I first played the tune all our sheep know,
 as, one after one,
 So docile they come to the pen-door till folding
 be done.
 They are white, and untorn by the bushes, for
 lo, they have fed
 Where the long grasses stifle the water within
 the stream's bed; 40
 And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star
 follows star
 Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue
 and so far!

VI

—Then the tune, for which quails on the corn-
 land will each leave his mate
 To fly after the player; then, what makes the
 crickets elate
 Till for boldness they fight one another; and
 then, what has weight 45
 To set the quick jerboa⁴ a-musing outside his
 sand house—
 There are none such as he for a wonder, half
 bird and half mouse!
 God made all the creatures and gave them our
 love and our fear,
 To give sign, we and they are his children, one
 family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers,
 their wine-song, when hand 50
 Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friend-
 ship, and great hearts expand

⁴ A rodent somewhat resembling a rat, or mouse, but fitted for jumping—like the kangaroo—by the disproportionate length of its hind legs.

And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—
 And then, the last song
 When the dead man is praised on his journey—
 "Bear, bear him along
 With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets!
 Are balm seeds not here
 To console us? The land has none left such as
 he on the bier" *www.libtool.com.cn* 55
 Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—
 And then, the glad chaunt
 Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens,
 next, she whom we vaunt
 As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And
 then, the great march
 Wherein man runs to man to assist him and
 buttress an arch
 Naught can break; who shall harm them, our
 friends?—Then, the chorus intoned 60
 As the Levites go up to the altar in glory en-
 throned.
 But I stopped here: for here in the darkness
 Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence,
 and listened apart;
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered:
 and sparkles 'gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban at once
 with a start 65
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies
 courageous at heart.
 So the head: but the body still moved not, still
 hung there erect.
 And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it
 unchecked,
 As I sang,—

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No
 spirit feels waste, 70
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew
 unbraced.
 Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from
 rock up to rock,
 The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree,
 the cool silver shock
 Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt
 of the bear,
 And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in
 his lair. 75
 And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with
 gold dust divine,
 And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the
 full draught of wine,
 And the sleep in the dried river-channel where
 bulrushes tell
 That the water was wont to go warbling so
 softly and well.
 How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit
 to employ 80
 All the heart and the soul and the senses forever
 in joy!
 Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father,
 whose sword thou didst guard
 When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for
 glorious reward?

Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother,
 held up as men sung
 The low song of the nearly departed, and hear
 her faint tongue 85
 Joining in while it could to the witness, "Let
 one more attest,
 I have lived, seen God's hand through a life-
 time, and all was for best!"
 Then they sung through their tears in strong
 triumph, not much, but the rest.
 And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the
 working whence grew
 Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the
 spirit strained true: 90
 And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood
 of wonder and hope,
 Present promise and wealth of the future be-
 yond the eye's scope,—
 Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is
 thine;
 And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on
 one head combine!
 On one head, all the beauty and strength, love
 and rage (like the throe 95
 That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets
 the gold go)
 High ambition and deeds which surpass it,
 fame crowning them,—all
 Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—
 King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart,
 hand, harp, and voice,
 Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each
 bidding rejoice 100
 Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as
 when, dare I say,
 The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains
 through its array,
 And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!"
 cried I, and stopped,
 And waited the thing that should follow. Then
 Saul, who hung propped
 By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was
 struck by his name. 105
 Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons
 goes right to the aim,
 And some mountain, the last to withstand her,
 that held (he alone,
 While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers)
 on a broad bust of stone
 A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—
 leaves grasp of the sheet?
 Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously
 down to his feet, 110
 And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive
 yet, your mountain of old,
 With his rents, the successive bequeathings of
 ages untold—
 Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles,
 each furrow and scar
 Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—
 all hail, there they are!
 —Now again to be softened with verdure, again
 hold the nest 115

Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the
 green on his crest
 For their food in the ardors of summer. One
 long shudder thrilled
 All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank
 and was stilled
 At the King's self left standing before me, re-
 leased and aware.
 What was gone, what remained? All to trav-
 erse 'twixt hope and despair. 120
 Death was past, life not come: so he waited. A
 while his right hand
 Held the brow, helped the eyes, left too vacant,
 forthwith to remand
 To their place what new objects should enter:
 'twas Saul as before.
 I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor
 was hurt any more
 Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye
 watch from the shore, 125
 At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's
 slow decline
 Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'er-
 lap and intertwine
 Base with base to knit strength more intensely:
 so, arm folded arm
 O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm 130
 (For, a while there was trouble within me),
 what next should I urge
 To sustain him where song had restored him?—
 Song filled to the verge
 His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all
 that it yields
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty:
 beyond, on what fields,
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to
 brighten the eye 135
 And bring blood to the lip, and commend them
 the cup they put by?
 He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he
 lets me praise life,
 Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
 Which had come long ago on the pasture, when
 round me the sheep 140
 Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled
 slow as in sleep;
 And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world
 that might lie
 'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip
 'twixt the hill and the sky.
 And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained
 to be passed with my flocks,
 Let me people at least, with my fancies, the
 plains and the rocks, 145
 Dream the life I am never to mix with, and
 image the show
 Of mankind as they live in those fashions I
 hardly shall know!
 Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the
 courage that gains,

And the prudence that keeps what men strive
 for." And now these old trains
 Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so,
 once more the string 150
 Of my harp made response to my spirit, as
 thus—

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
 I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere
 comforts that spring
 From the mere mortal life held in common by
 man and by brute:
 In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our
 soul it bears fruit. 155
 Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—
 how its stem trembled first
 Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler;
 then safely outburst
 The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest
 when these too, in turn
 Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed per-
 fect: yet more was to learn,
 E'en the good that comes in with the palm-
 fruit. Our dates shall we slight, 160
 When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow?
 or care for the plight
 Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced
 them? Not so! stem and branch
 Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while
 the palm-wine shall stanch
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour
 thee such wine.
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the
 spirit be thine! 165
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee,
 thou still shalt enjoy
 More indeed, than at first when, unconscious,
 the life of a boy.
 Crush that life, and behold its wine running!
 Each deed thou hast done
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world: until
 e'en as the sun
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil
 him, though tempests efface, 170
 Can find nothing his own deed produced not,
 must everywhere trace
 The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each
 ray of thy will,
 Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long
 over, shall thrill
 Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till
 they too give forth
 A like cheer to their sons: who in turn, fill the
 South and the North 175
 With the radiance thy deed was the germ of.
 Carouse in the past!
 But the license of age has its limit: thou diest at
 last.
 As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose
 at her height,
 So with man—so his power and his beauty
 forever take flight.
 No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine!
 Look forth o'er the years! 180
 Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual;
 begin with the seer's!

Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make
 his tomb—bid arise
 A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square,
 till, built to the skies,
 Let it mark where the great First King slum-
 bers: whose fame would ye know?
 Up above see the rock's naked face, where the
 record shall go 185
 In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such
 was Saul, so he did;
 With the sages directing the work, by the
 populace chid,—
 For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there!
 Which fault to amend,
 In the grove with his kind grows the cedar,
 whereon they shall spend
 (See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their
 praise, and record 190
 With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—
 the statesman's great word
 Side by side with the poet's sweet comment.
 The river's a-wave
 With smooth paper—reads grazing each other
 when prophet-winds rave:
 So the pen gives unborn generations their due
 and their part
 In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank
 God that thou art!" 195

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who
 didst grant me, that day,
 And, before it, not seldom hast granted thy
 help to essay,
 Carry on and complete an adventure,—my
 shield and my sword
 In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy
 word was my word,—
 Still be with me, who then at the summit of
 human endeavor 200
 And scaling the highest, man's thought could,
 gazed hopeless as ever
 On the new stretch of heaven above me—till,
 mighty to save,
 Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—
 God's throne from man's grave!
 Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice
 to my heart
 Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels
 last night I took part, 205
 As this morning I gather the fragments, alone
 with my sheep!
 And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like
 sleep,
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while
 Hebron¹ upheaves
 The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder,
 and Kidron² retrieves
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine. 210

¹ The ancient city of Hebron was situated on a hill among the mountains of Judah, some seven miles south of Jerusalem. Browning refers here to the hill on which the city stands.

² A dry ravine near Jerusalem, it was often the channel of winter torrents, and is usually called the *Brook of Iron*.

XV

I say then,—my song
 While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and,
 ever more strong
 Made a proffer of good to console him—he
 slowly resumed
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The
 right hand replumed⁷
 His black locks to their wonted composure,
 adjusted the swathes 215
 Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his
 countenance bathes,
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now
 his loins as of yore,
 And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the
 clasp set before.
 He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error
 had bent
 The broad brow from the daily communion;
 and still, though much spent 220
 Be the life and the bearing that front you, the
 same, God did choose,
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate,
 never quite lose.
 So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed
 by the pile
 Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he
 leaned there a while,
 And sat out my singing—one arm round the
 tent-prop, to raise 225
 His bent head, and the other hung slack—till
 I touched on the praise
 I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man
 patient there;
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward.
 Then first I was 'ware
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just above
 his vast knees
 Which were thrust out on each side around me,
 like oak-roots which please 230
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked
 up to know
 If the best I could do had brought solace: he
 spoke not, but slow
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he
 laid it with care
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my
 brow: through my hair
 The large fingers were pushed, and he bent
 back my head, with kind power— 235
 All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men
 do a flower.
 Thus held he me there with his great eyes that
 scrutinized mine—
 And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but
 where was the sign?
 I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father,
 inventing a bliss,
 I would add, to that life of the past, both the
 future and this; 240
 I would give thee new life altogether, as good,
 ages hence,
 As this moment,—had love but the warrant,
 love's heart to dispense!"

⁷ Rearranged, as a bird preens its feathers.

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp
more—no song more! outbroke—

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I
saw and I spoke: *www.libtool.com.cn*
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, re-
ceived in my brain 245
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—
returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I
saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work—all's
love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a
dewdrop was asked. 250
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at
Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank,
to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more
and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God 255
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul
and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever
renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending
upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to
God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to
his feet. 260
Yet with all this abounding experience, this
deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some
gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to
hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I
think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot
ye, I worst 265
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could
love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may
o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I
abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther?
when doors great and small,
Nine and ninety flew ope at our touch, should
the hundredth appal? 270
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in
the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's
ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it?
Here the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the
end, what Began?

Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for
this man, 275
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him,
who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare
will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the
marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to
make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for in-
sphering the whole? 280
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm
tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and
give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, main-
tain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's dayspring,
death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul
the mistake, 285
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and
bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to
find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new
harmony yet
To be run and continued, and ended—who
knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough, by life's dream, of the
rest to make sure; 290
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning
intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the
struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I
who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to
believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as
prompt to my prayer 295
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these
arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life and
nature, thy dread Sabaoth:^{*}
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am
I not loth
To look that, even that in the face too? Why
is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What
stops my despair? 300
This;—'tis not what man Does which exalts
him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot,
the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow
poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—
knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak
through me now! 305

^{*} *Sabaoth*, from the Hebrew word for armies or hosts.
Life and nature are here called the hosts of God.

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst
 thou—so wilt thou!
 So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest,
 uttermost crown—
 And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave
 up nor down
 One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by
 no breath,
 Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins
 issue with death! 310
 As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty
 be proved
 Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being
 Beloved!
 He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest
 shall stand the most weak.
 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for!
 my flesh, that I seek
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul,
 it shall be 315
 A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man
 like to me,
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a
 Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
 See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home
 in the night.
 There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left
 and to right, 320
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
 alive, the aware:
 I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as
 strugglingly there,
 As a runner beset by the populace famished for
 news—
 Life or death. The whole earth was awakened,
 hell loosed with her crews;
 And the stars of night beat with emotion, and
 tingled and shot 325
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge:
 but I fainted not,
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and
 supported, suppressed
 All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and
 holy behest,
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the
 earth sank to rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered
 from earth— 330
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's
 tender birth;
 In the gathered intensity brought to the gray
 of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the
 sudden wind-thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each
 with eye sidling still
 Though averted with wonder and dread; in the
 birds stiff and chill 335
 That rose heavily as I approached them, made
 stupid with awe:
 E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he
 felt the new law.

The same stared in the white humid faces up-
 turned by the flowers;
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar and
 moved the vine-bowers:
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
 persistent and low, 340
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—
 "E'en so, it is so!"

PROSPICE¹

(From *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864)

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the pres of the storm, 5
 The post of the foe;
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
 form,
 Yet the strong man must go;
 For the journey is done and the summit at-
 tained, 10
 And the barriers fall,
 Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be
 gained,
 The reward of it all.
 I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and
 forebore, 15
 And bade me creep past.

No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my
 peers,
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's
 arrears
 Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the
 brave,
 The black minute's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that
 rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a peace out of
 pain, 25
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest!

RABBI BEN EZRA¹

(From the same)

I

Grow old along with me!
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made:

¹ *Prospice* (Look forward) was written in the autumn of 1861, shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning. The passage from Dante that Browning wrote in his wife's *Testament* might be taken as an expression of the essence of this poem: "Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better, there, where the lady lives of whom my soul was enamoured."

¹ Rabbi Ben Ezra is but a mouthpiece for Browning

Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned, 5
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor
be afraid!"

II
Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars, 10
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, trans-
cends them all!"

III
Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate; folly wide the mark! 15
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV
Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed 20
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the
maw-crammed beast?

V
Rejoice we are allied 25
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must
believe. 30

VI
Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain; 35
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge
the throe!

VII
For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be, 40
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink
i' the scale.

himself. Nevertheless the Jewish teacher who is sup-
posed to be imparting to youth the ultimate wisdom of
age is not an imaginary person, but a man whose views,
so far as we can judge, were really similar to those the
poet has put into his mouth. *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, whose
real name is said to have been *Abraham ben Meir ben*
Ezra, was one of the most distinguished Jewish scholars
and Old Testament commentators of the Middle Ages.
His view of life was lofty: to him the only reality was
spirit, and he regarded material things as of very minor
importance.

VIII
What is he but a brute
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want
play? 45
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone
way?

IX
Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse 50
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to
live and learn?"

X
Not once beat "Praise be Thine! 55
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:²
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake complete,—I trust what Thou
shalt do!" 60

XI
For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold 65
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did
best!

XII
Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the
whole!"
As the bird wings and sings, 70
Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
flesh helps soul!"

XIII
Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term: 75
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the
germ.

XIV
And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone 80
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.³

² This idea that Love as well as Power is to be dis-
cerned as a motive force in the universe, more than once
alluded to by Browning, is made the main theme of
"Reverie" in *Asolando*.

³ In the original sense of *to put on*.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire-ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being
old. 90

XVI

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest, 95
Take it and try its worth: here dies another
day."

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main, 100
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the
Past."

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day: 105
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's
true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth, 110
Toward making, than repose on aught found
made!

So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death, nor
be afraid!

XX

Enough now, if the Right 115
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine
own,

With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee
feel alone. 120

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained, 125
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us
peace at last!

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;

Ten, who in ears and eyes 130
Match me: we all surmise,
They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my
soul believe?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the
price; 135
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in
a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb, 140
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the
man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed 145
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and es-
caped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the
pitcher shaped. 150

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,⁴
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round, 155
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone,
seize to-day!"

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee, 160
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and
clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain
arrest: 165
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently im-
pressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves 170
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner
stress?

⁴ Cf. *Is.* lxiv. 8, and *Jer.* xviii. 2-6.

XXX

Look not thou down but up! 175
 To uses of a cup,
 The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's
 peal,
 The new wine's foaming flow,
 The Master's lips aglow!
 Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst
 thou with earth's wheel? 180

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
 Thee, God, who moldest men;
 And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
 Did I—to the wheel of life
 With shapes and colors rife, 185
 Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy
 thirst:

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work:
 Amend what flaws may lurk,
 What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past
 the aim!
 My times be in Thy hand! 190
 Perfect the cup as planned!
 Let age approve of youth, and death complete
 the same!

MARTIN RELPH

(From *Dramatic Idylls*, First Series, 1879)

*My grandfather says he remembers he saw, when
 a youngster long ago,
 On a bright May day, a strange old man, with a
 beard as white as snow,
 Stand on the hill outside our town like a monument
 of woe,
 And, striking his bare bald head the while, sob
 out the reason—so!*

If I last as long as Methuselah I shall never for-
 give myself: 5
 But—God forgive me, that I pray, unhappy
 Martin Relph,
 As coward, coward I call him—him, yes, him!
 Away from me!
 Get you behind the man I am now, you man
 that I used to be!

What can have sewed my mouth up, set me
 a-stare, all eyes, no tongue?
 People have urged "You visit a scare too hard
 on a lad so young! 10
 You were taken aback, poor boy," they urge,
 "no time to regain your wits:
 Besides it had maybe cost you life." Ay, there
 is the cap which fits!

So, cap me, the coward,—thus! No fear! A
 cuff, on the brow does good:
 The feel of it hinders a worm inside which bores
 at the brain for food.

* See *Psalms*, xiv. 15, "My times are in thy hand."

See now, there certainly seems excuse: for a
 moment, I trust, dear friends, 15
 The fault was but folly, no fault of mine, or if
 mine, I have made amends!

For, every day that is first of May, on the hill-
 top here stand I,
 Martin Relph, and I strike my brow, and pub-
 lish the reason why,
 When there gathers a crowd to mock the fool.
 No fool, friends, since the bite
 Of a worm inside is worse to bear: pray God I
 have balked him quite! 20

I'll tell you. Certainly much excuse! It came
 of the way they cooped
 Us peasantry up in a ring just here, close hudd-
 ling because tight-hooped
 By the red-coats round us villagers all: they
 meant we should see the sight
 And take the example,—see, not speak, for
 speech was the Captain's right.

"You clowns on the slope, beware!" cried he:
 "This woman about to die 25
 Gives by her fate fair warning to such acquaint-
 ance as play the spy.
 Henceforth who meddle with matters of state
 above them perhaps will learn
 That peasants should stick to their plough-tail,
 leave to King the King's concern.

"Here's a quarrel that sets the land on fire,
 between King George and his foes:¹
 What call has a man of your kind—much less, a
 woman—to interpose? 30
 Yet you needs must be meddling, folk like you,
 not foes—so much the worse!
 The many and loyal should keep themselves
 unmixed with the few perverse.

"Is the counsel hard to follow? I gave it you
 plainly a month ago,
 And where was the good? The rebels have
 learned just all that they need to know.
 Not a month since in we quietly marched: a
 week and they had the news, 35
 From a list complete of our rank and file to a
 note of our caps and shoes.

"All about all we did and all we were doing and
 like to do!
 Only, I catch a letter by luck, and capture who
 wrote it, too.
 Some of you men look black enough, but the
 milk-white face demure
 Betokens the finger foul with ink: 'tis a woman
 who writes, be sure! 40

"Is it 'Dearie, how much I miss your mouth!'—
 good natural stuff, she pens?
 Some sprinkle of that, for a blind, of course:
 with talk about cocks and hens,

¹ This may mean either George I (1714–1727), or
 George II (1727–1760), since there were Jacobite up-
 risings in both of those reigns, the first in 1715, the second
 in 1745.

How 'robin has built on the apple-tree, and our
 creeper which came to grief
 Through the frost, we feared, is twining afresh
 round casement in famous leaf.'

"But all for a blind! She soon glides frank into
 'Horrid the place is grown 45
 With Officers here and Privates there, no nook
 we may call our own:
 And Farmer Giles has a tribe to house, and
 lodging will be to seek
 For the second Company sure to come ('tis
 whispered) on Monday week.'

"And so to the end of the chapter! There! The
 murder, you see, was out:
 Easy to guess how the change of mind in the
 rebels was brought about! 50
 Safe in the trap would they now lie snug, had
 treachery made no sign:
 But treachery meets a just reward, no matter if
 fools malign!

"That traitors had played us false, was proved
 —sent news which fell so pat:
 And the murder was out—this letter of love,
 the sender of this sent that!
 'Tis an ugly job, though, all the same—a hate-
 ful, to have to deal 55
 With a case of the kind, when a woman's in
 fault: we soldiers need nerves of steel!

"So I gave her a chance, despatched post-haste
 a message to Vincent Parkes
 Whom she wrote to; easy to find he was, since
 one of the King's own clerks,
 Ay, kept by the King's own gold in the town
 close by where the rebels camp:
 A sort of lawyer, just the man to betray our
 sort—the scamp! 60

"If her writing is simple, and honest and only
 the lover-like stuff it looks,
 And if you yourself are a loyalist, nor down in
 the rebels' books,
 Come quick,' said I, 'and in person prove you
 are each of you clear of crime,
 Or martial law must take its course: this day
 next week's the time!'

"Next week is now: does he come? Not he!
 Clean gone, our clerk, in a trice! 65
 He has left his sweetheart here in the lurch: no
 need of a warning twice!
 His own neck free, but his partner's fast in the
 noose still, here she stands
 To pay for her fault. 'Tis an ugly job: but
 soldiers obey commands.

"And hearken wherefore I make a speech!
 Should any acquaintance share
 The folly that led to the fault that is now to be
 punished, let fools beware! 70
 Look black, if you please, but keep hands white:
 and above all else, keep wives
 Or sweethearts or what they may be—from ink!
 Not a word now, on your lives!"

Black? but the Pit's own pitch was white to the
 Captain's face—the brute
 With the bloated cheeks and the bulgy nose and
 the bloodshot eyes to suit!
 He was muddled with wine, they say: more
 like, he was out of his wits with fear; 75
 He had but a handful of men, that's true,—a
 riot might cost him dear.

And all that time stood Rosamund Page, with
 pinioned arms, and face
 Bandaged about, on the turf marked out for the
 party's firing-place.
 I hope she was wholly with God: I hope 'twas
 His angel stretched a hand
 To steady her so, like the shape of stone you see
 in our church-aisle stand. 80

I hope there was no vain fancy pierced the
 bandage to vex her eyes,
 No face within which she missed without, no
 questions and no replies—
 "Why did you leave me to die?"—"Be-
 cause . . ." Oh, fiends, too soon you grin
 At merely a moment of hell, like that—such
 heaven as hell ended in!

Let mine end too! He gave the word, up went
 the guns in a line. 85
 Those heaped on the hill were blind as dumb,—
 for, of all eyes, only mine
 Looked over the heads of the foremost rank.
 Some fell on their knees in prayer,
 Some sank to the earth, but all shut eyes, with
 a sole exception there.

That was myself, who had stolen up last, had
 sidled behind the group:
 I am highest of all on the hill-top, there stand
 fixed while the others stoop! 90
 From head to foot in a serpent's twine am I
 tightened: I touch ground?
 No more than a gibbet's rigid corpee which the
 fetters rust around!

Can I speak, can I breathe, can I burst—aught
 else but see, see, only see?
 And see I do—for there comes in sight—a man,
 it sure must be!—
 Who staggering, stumbly, rises, falls,
 rises, at random flings his weight 95
 On and on, anyhow onward—a man that's mad
 he arrives too late!

Else why does he wave a something white high-
 flourished above his head?
 Why does not he call, cry,—curse the fool!—
 why throw up his arms instead?
 O take this fist in your own face, fool! Why
 does not yourself about "Stay!
 Here's a man comes rushing, might and main,
 with something he's mad to say?" 100

And a minute, only a moment, to have hell-
 fire boil up in your brain,
 And ere you can judge things right, choose
 heaven,—time's over, repentance vain!

They level: a volley, a smoke and the clearing of
 smoke: I see no more
 Of the man smoke hid, nor his frantic arms, nor
 the something white he bore.

But stretched on the field, some half-mile off, is
 an object. Surely dumb, ¹⁰⁵
 Deaf, blind were we struck, that nobody heard,
 not one of us saw him come!
 Has he fainted through fright? One may well
 believe! What is it he holds so fast?
 Turn him over, examine the face! Heyday!
 What, Vincent Parkes at last?

Dead! dead as she, by the self-same shot: one
 bullet has ended both,
 Her in the body and him in the soul. They
 laugh at our plighted troth. ¹¹⁰
 "Till death us do part?" Till death us do join
 past parting—that sounds like:
 Retrothal indeed! O Vincent Parkes, what
 need has my fist to strike?

I helped you: thus were you dead and wed: one
 bound and your soul reached hers!
 There is clenched in your hand the thing,
 signed, sealed, the paper which plain avers
 She is innocent, innocent, plain as print, with
 the King's Arms broad engraved: ¹¹⁵
 No one can hear, but if any one high on the hill
 can see, she's saved!

And torn his garb and bloody his lips with
 heart-break—plain it grew
 How the week's delay had been brought about:
 each guess at the end proved true.
 It was hard to get at the folks in power: such
 waste of time! and then
 Such pleading and praying, with, all the while,
 his lamb in the lion's den! ¹²⁰

And at length when he wrung their pardon out,
 no end to the stupid forms—
 The license and leave: I make no doubt—what
 wonder if passion warms
 The pulse in a man if you play with his heart?—
 he was something hasty in speech;
 Anyhow, none would quicken the work; he had
 to beseech, beseech!

And the thing once signed, sealed, safe in his
 grasp,—what followed but fresh delays?
 For the floods were out, he was forced to take
 such a roundabout of ways! ¹²³
 And 'twas "Halt there!" at every turn of the
 road, since he had to cross the thick
 Of the red-coats: what did they care for him
 and his: "Quick, for God's sake, quick!"

Horse? but he had one: had it how long? till the
 first knave smirked "You brag
 Yourself a friend of the King's? then lend to a
 King's friend here your nag!" ¹³⁰
 Money to buy another? Why, piece by piece
 they plundered him still,
 With their "Wait you must—no help: if aught
 can help you, a guinea will!"

And a borough there was—I forget the name—
 whose Mayor must have the bench
 Of Justices ranged to clear a doubt: for "Vin-
 cent," thinks he, sounds French!
 It well may have driven him daft, God knows!
 all man can certainly know ¹³⁵
 Is—rushing and falling and rising, at last he
 arrived in a horror—so!

When a word, cry, gasp, would have rescued
 both! Ay, bite me! The worm begins
 At his work once more. Had cowardice
 proved—that only—my sin of sins!
 Friends, look you here! Suppose . . . sup-
 pose . . . But mad I am, needs must be!
 Judas the Damned would never have dared
 such a sin as I dream! For, see! ¹⁴⁰

Suppose I had sneakingly loved her myself, my
 wretched self, and dreamed
 In the heart of me "She were better dead than
 happy and his!"—while gleamed
 A light from hell as I spied the pair in a perfect-
 est embrace,
 He the saviour and she the saved,—bliss born
 of the very murder-place!

No! Say I was scared, friends! Call me fool and
 coward, but nothing worse! ¹⁴⁵
 Jeer at the fool and jibe at the coward! 'Twas
 ever the coward's curse:
 That fear breeds fancies in such: such take
 their shadow for substance still,
 —A fiend at their back. I liked poor Parkes,—
 loved Vincent, if you will!

And her—why, I said "Good morrow" to her,
 "Good even," and nothing more:
 The neighborly way! She was just to me as
 fifty had been before. ¹⁵⁰
 So, coward it is and coward shall be! There's a
 friend, now! Thanks! A drink
 Of water I wanted: and now I can walk, get
 home by myself, I think.

O LYRIC LOVE

(From *The Ring and the Book*, Bk. I, 1868)

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird
 And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
 Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
 Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
 And sang a kindred soul out to his face,— ⁵
 Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
 When the first summons from the darkling
 earth
 Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched
 their blue,
 And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
 To toil for man, to suffer or to die,— ¹⁰
 This is the same voice: can thy soul know
 change?
 Hail then, and harken from the realms of help!
 Never may I commence my song, my due
 To God who best taught song by gift of thee,

Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark, 16
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head 20
Thither where eyes that cannot reach, yet
yearn

For all hope, all sustenance, all reward,
Their utmost, up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy
home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes
proud, 25
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may
fall!

EPILOGUE

(From *Asolando*, 1890)

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think,
imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you
loved so,
—Pity me? 5

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the un-
manly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless did I drivel
—Being—who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake. 15

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-
time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either
should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on,
fare ever
There as here!" 20

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1809–1861

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

(From *Poems*, 1844)

I

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat 5
With the dragon-fly on the river.

II

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay. 10
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

III

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can, 15
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

IV

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
(How tall it stood in the river!), 20
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

V

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan 25
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river. 30

VI

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly 35
Came back to dream on the river.

VII

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,— 40
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

SONNETS

CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON

I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might grow faint 5
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls; but since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road, 10
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said,
"Because the way is short, I thank thee, God,"

THE PROSPECT

Methinks we do as fretful children do,
Leaning their faces on the window-pane
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's

stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their
view:

And thus, alas, since God the maker drew 5
A mystic separation 'twixt those twain,
The life beyond us, and our souls in pain.

We miss the prospect which we are called
unto

By grief we are fools to use. Be still and
strong,

O man, my brother! hold thy sobbing breath, 10
And keep thy soul's large window pure from
wrong

That so, as life's appointment issueth,
Thy vision may be clear to watch along
The sunset consummation-lights of death.

WORK

What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work
assail.

God did anoint thee with His odorous oil, 5
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystalline,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and
hand,

From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave
cheer, 11

And God's grace fructify through thee to
all.

The least flower, with a brimming cup may
stand,

And share its dew-drop with another near.

(From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 1850)

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for
years,

Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue, 5
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,

Those of my own life, who by turns had
flung

A shadow across me. Straightway I was
'ware,

So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move 10
Behind me, and drew me backward by the
hair;

And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—

"Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I
said. But, there,
The silver answer rang,—“Not Death, but
Love.”

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand 15
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore

Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand

Serenely in the sunshine as before, 20
Without the sense of that which I forbore—

Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in
mine

With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine 25
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I
sue

God for myself, He hears that name of
thine,

And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

XXXV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss 30

Home-talk and blessing and the common
kiss

That comes to each in turn, nor count it
strange

When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?

Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is 35
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know
change?

That's hardest. If to conquer love, has
tried,

To conquer grief, tries more, as all things
prove;

For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love. 40

Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart
wide,

And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the
ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and
height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight 45
For the ends of Being, and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise. 50

I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's
faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the
breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God
choose, 55

I shall but love thee better after death.

Matthew Arnold

(1822-1888)

THYRSIS

(A Monody, to commemorate the author's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough,¹ who died at Florence, 1861)

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!

In the two Hinkseys² nothing keeps the same;

The village street its haunted mansion lacks,

And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks— 5

Are ye too changed, ye hills?

Sec, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men

Tonight from Oxford up your pathway strays!

Here came I often, often in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then. 10

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth's Farm,

Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns

The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?

The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone wears, the youthful Thames?— 15

This winter-eve is warm,

Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briars!

And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,

She needs not June for beauty's heightening, 20

Lovely all times, she lies, lovely to-night!—

Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.

Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him. 25

That single elm-tree bright

Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?

We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,

¹ A. H. Clough (1819-1861), a man of brilliant gifts and attractive personality, holds an honorable, if subordinate place among the Victorian poets. (See p. 663). He attended Rugby where he was a favorite pupil of Dr. Arnold; he went to Oxford in 1837, and became a fellow of Oriel College in 1842. Matthew Arnold entered Oxford in 1841 and was made a fellow of Oriel College in 1845. Immediately after Clough's death Arnold referred to him as "one of the few people who ever made a deep impression upon me," and hinted at his intention of expressing in some form his feeling for his dead friend. (V. Arnold's *Letters* I. 177).

² Two villages near Oxford. The poem gains in sincerity and definiteness by its numerous references to neighboring localities, intimately associated with the days which Clough and Arnold spent together at the University.

Our friend the Gipsy-Scholar,³ was not dead;

While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here, 31
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;

And with the country folk acquaintance made

By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd. 35

Ah me! this many a year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!

Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart

Into the world and wave of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went away. 40

It irk'd him here, he could not rest.

He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,

For that a shadow lower'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep. 45

Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd 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. 50

So some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,

Before the roses, and the longest day—

When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,
With blossoms red and white of fallen May, 55

And chestnut-flowers are strewn—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,

Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:

The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I! 60

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?

Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,

Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,

Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell, 65

And stocks in fragrant blow;

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,

And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,

And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,

And the full-moon, and the white evening star.

³ Arnold was much impressed by the old story of an Oxford student who, it was said, had been forced by poverty to leave the University, and who joined a company of wandering gipsies. Arnold made this story the basis of his poem *The Scholar-Gipsy*.

He hearkens not! light comes, he is flown! 71
 What matters it? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet
 spring-days,

With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling
 fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-
 ways, 75

And scent of hay new-mown.

But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
 See him come back, and cut a smoother
 reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall
 heed—

For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon, no rival now!— 81

But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,

Some good survivor with his flute would go

Piping a ditty sad for Bion's⁴ fate;

And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow, 85

And relax Pluto's brow,

And make leap up with joy the beauteous
 head

Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair

Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,

And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the
 dead. 90

O easy access to the hearer's grace

When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!

For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,

She knew the Dorian water's gush divine, 94

She knew each lily white which Enna⁵ yields,

Each rose with blushing face;

She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.

But ah, of our poor Thames she never
 heard!

Her foot the Cumnor cowslips never
 stirr'd;

And we should tease her with our plaint in
 vain! 100

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will
 be,

Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd
 hill!

Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?

I know the wood which hides the daffodil,

I know the Fyfield tree, 106

I know what white, what purple fritillaries

The grassy harvest of the river-fields,

Above by Ensham, down by Sanford,
 yields,

And what sedged brooks are Thames's trib-
 utaries; 110

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?

But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,

With thorns once studded, old, white-
 blossom'd trees,

⁴ *Bion* (cir. 280 B. C.), a Greek poet, the author of *A Lament for Adonis*. Bion himself was made the subject of a famous elegy by Moschus (cir. 200 B. C.), a Greek poet of Sicily.

⁵ A plain in Sicily, where Proserpine was gathering flowers when she was carried off by Pluto to the lower world.

Where thick the cowslips grew, and far
 descried

High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
 Hath since our day put by 116

The coronals⁶ of that forgotten time;

Down each green bank hath gone the
 plough-boy's team,

And only in the hidden brookside gleam
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime. 120

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,
 Unmoor'd our skiff when through the
 Wytham flats,

Red loosestrife and blond meadow sweet
 among

And darting swallows and light water-
 gnats, 125

We track'd the shy Thames shore?

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell

Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,

Stood with suspended scythe to see us
 pass?—

They all are gone, and thou art gone as
 well! 130

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the
 night

In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.

I see her veil draw soft across the day,

I feel her slowly chilling breath invade

The cheek grown thin, the brown hair
 sprent with grey; 135

I feel her finger light

Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—

The foot less prompt to meet the morning
 dew,

The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring
 again. 140

And long the way appears, which seem'd so
 short

To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
 And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy
 air,

The mountain-tops where is the throne of
 Truth,

Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and
 bare! 145

Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;

And strange and vain the earthly turmoil
 grows,

And near and real the charm of thy repose,
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall. 150

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss

Of quiet!—Look adown the dusk hillside

A troop of Oxford hunters going home,

As in old days, jovial, and talking, ride!

From hunting with the Berkshire hounds
 they come. 155

Quick! let me fly, and cross

⁶ i. e. in many a dingle, the trees, crowned with blossoms, have put by their coronals, or garlands of bloom.

Into yon farther field!—"Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree! 160

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush
about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow
bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come
out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night, 165
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids
keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale,) 170

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland
dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded
That lone sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled, 175
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train
divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine, 180

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityreses-song again
Young Daphnis^a with his silver voice doth
sing; 185
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a celestial call round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink
he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies. 190

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the soft canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear, 196

^a i. e. the "signal elm," the tree on the hill-top in "the old haunt," which Arnold has referred to several times before. It was evidently a favorite meeting place of the two friends, and associated with memories of the Scholar-Gipsy, whose spiritual presence typified the indestructible nature of the ideal.

^b "Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Pippa, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityreses. Lityreses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityreses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityreses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry and used to be sung by corn-reapers." Arnold.

Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the
hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks, 201
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.

This does not come with houses or with
gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering
crew;

'Tis not in the world's market bought and
sold— 205

But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house
alone;

Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired. 210

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wert bound!
Thou wanderest with me for a little hour!

Men gave thee nothing; but this happy
quest,

If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee
rest. 215

And this rude Cumnor ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet
fields,

Here can'st thou in thy jocund youthful
time,

Here was thine height of strength, thy
golden prime!

And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields. 220

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;

Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy
note

Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired
thy throat— 225

It fail'd and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst
not stay,

And soon thy foot resumed its wandering
way,

Left human haunt, and on alone till night. 230

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!

'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my
home.

—Then through the great town's harsh,
heart-wearying roar,

Let in thy voice a whisper often come, 235
To chase fatigue and fear:

Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining
still.

Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the
hill,

Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside. 240

TO MARGUERITE

(From *Switzerland*)

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
 With echoing straits between us thrown,
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
 We mortal millions live alone.
 The islands feel the encircling flow,
 And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollow lights,
 And they are swept by balms of spring,
 And in their glens, on starry nights,
 The nightingales divinely sing;
 And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
 Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh, then a longing like despair
 Is to their farthest caverns sent;
 For surely once, they feel, we were
 Parts of a single continent!
 Now round us spreads the watery plain
 Oh might our marges meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
 Should be as soon as kindled, cool'd?
 Who renders vain their deep desire?—
 A God, a God their severance ruled!
 And bade betwixt their shores to be
 The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

ABSENCE

(From the same)

In this fair stranger's eyes of grey
 Thine eyes, my love! I see.
 I shiver; for the passing day
 Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life! that not
 A nobler, calmer train
 Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
 Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust
 Our soon-choked souls to fill,
 And we forget because we must
 And not because we will.

I struggle towards the light and ye,
 Once-long'd-for storms of love!
 If with the light ye cannot be,
 I bear that ye remove.

I struggle towards the light—but oh,
 While yet the night is chill,
 Upon time's barren, stormy flow,
 Stay with me, Marguerite, still!

SELF-DEPENDENCE

(From the same)

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
 What I am, and what I ought to be,
 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
 Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
 O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
 "Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd
 me,
 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!"

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
 On my heart your mighty charm renew;
 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
 Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of
 heaven,
 Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
 In the rustling night-air came the answer:
 "Wouldst thou be as these are? Live as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
 Undistracted by the sights they see,
 These demand not that the things without
 them
 Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
 And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
 For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
 All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
 In what state God's other works may be,
 In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
 These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
 A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
 "Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he
 Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

DOVER BEACH

(From *New Poems*, 1867)

The sea is calm to-night.
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
 Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and
 fling,
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's
 shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, 25
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which seems 30
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and
 flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

SHAKESPEARE

(From *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems*,
 1849)

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
 We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
 Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
 Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea, 5
 Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-
 place,
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base
 To the foil'd searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams
 know,
 Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-
 secure, 10
 Didst tread on earth unguess'd at.—Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
 All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow
 Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

WORLDLY PLACE

*Even in a palace, life may be led well!*¹
 So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
 Marcus Aurelius. But the stifling den
 Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

Our freedom for a little bread we sell, 5
 And drudge under some foolish master's ken
 Who rates us if we peer outside our pen—
 Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell?

¹ "I was subject to the emperor my father, and bred under him, who was the most proper person living to put me out of conceit with pride, and to convince me that it is possible to live in a palace without the ceremony of guards, without richness and distinction of habit, without torches, statues, or such other marks of royalty and state; and that a prince may shrink himself almost into the figure of a private gentleman, and yet act, nevertheless, with all the force and majesty of his character when the common weal requires it." *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, Bk. I.

Even in a palace! On his truth sincere,
 Who spake these words, no shadow ever came; 10
 And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
 I'll stop and say: "There is no succour here:
 The aids to nobler life are all within."

GEIST'S GRAVE

(January, 1881)

Four years!—and didst thou stay above
 The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
 And all that life, and all that love,
 Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways, 5
 Which make me for thy presence yearn,
 Call'd us to pet thee or to praise,
 Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
 Had they indeed no longer span, 10
 To run their course, and reach their goal,
 And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
 From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
 Seem'd surging the Virgilian cry,¹ 15
 The sense of tears in mortal things—

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
 By spirits gloriously gay,
 And temper of heroic mould—
 What, was four years their whole short day? 20

Yes, only four!—and not the course
 Of all the centuries yet to come,
 And not the infinite resource
 Of nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fulness vast 25
 Of new creation evermore,
 Can ever quite repeat the past,
 Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
 Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear, 30
 And builds himself I know not what
 Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
 On us, who stood despondent by,
 A meek last glance of love didst throw, 35
 And humbly lay thee down to die.

Yet would we keep² thee in our heart—
 Would fix our favourite on the scene,
 Nor let thee ut' rly depart
 And be as if thou ne'er hadst been. 40

¹ "Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalibus tangunt." *Æn.* I. 462. This famous passage, which it is almost impossible to render adequately into English, is exquisitely paraphrased by Arnold in the succeeding lines.

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now;
While to each other we rehearse:
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou!

We stroke thy broad brown paws again, 45
We bid thee to thy vacant chair;
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair;

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go; 50
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow!

Nor to us only art thou dear
Who mourn thee in thine English home;
Thou hast thine absent master's tear, 55
Dropt by the far Australian foam.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we.
And after that—thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee. 60

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own
We strive to carry down thy name,
By mounded turf, and graven stone.

We lay thee, close within our reach, 65
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watch'd thy couchant form,

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travellers on the Portsmouth road;— 70
There choose we thee, O guardian dear,
Mark'd with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay, 75
Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
And stop before the stone, and say—

*People who lived here long ago
Did by this stone, it seems, intend
To name for future times to know
The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend.* 80

LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS¹

(From *Empedocles in Etna and Other Poems*,
1852)

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees
stand!

¹ *Kensington Gardens*, a beautiful and wonderfully secluded park in the midst of London, west of Hyde Park and not far from Piccadilly. When Arnold wrote his *Lines*, the beauty and seclusion of the Gardens was increased by many fine old trees.

Birds here make song, each bird has his, 5
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy; 10
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass! 15
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout. 20

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I on men's impious uproar hurl'd, 25
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!
When I who watch them am away, 30
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day,

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass, 35
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine
Man did not make, and cannot mar. 40

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

1828-1882

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL¹

(Third Version, from *Poems*, 1870)

The blessed² damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand. 5
And the stars in her hair were seven.

¹ Rossetti wrote this poem in his nineteenth year, or in 1847. W. M. Rossetti remarks that *The Blessed Damozel* "ranks as highly remarkable among the works of juvenile writers," especially when its "total unlikeness to any other poem then extant is taken into account." It was published in the second number of *The Germ*, 1850; it appeared next in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, 1856, and finally in the *Poems* of 1870.

² i. e. one of the blest in paradise.

Her robe ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed¹ she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
... Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace).

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the world. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,

¹It seemed to her. Cf. *messemed* and *v. Shaks.*
Rich. III., II. ii. 120.

Fain to be harkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?) 65

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?" 70

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight." 75

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud." 80

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree"
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His name audibly. 90

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know." 95

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?) 100

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys." 105

⁴This may have been suggested by the Tree of Life (*Gen. ii.*, 9), or by the tree Yggdrasil of the Scandinavian mythology, the tree of existence, which bound together heaven, earth, and hell. In the latter case, it may have been intended to symbolize the mystic union of spiritual existence, as Rossetti represents *every leaf*, or utmost part, responding in praise to the influence of the Divine Spirit. In Rossetti's picture founded on this poem, "a glimpse is caught (above the figure of the Blessed Damosel) of the groves of paradise, wherein, beneath the shade of the spreading branches of a vast tree, the newly-met lovers embrace and rejoice with each other, on separation over and union made perfect at last." *V. Sharp's Rossetti*, p. 251.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded; 110
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb: 115
Then will I lay my choek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak. 120

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing 125
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be, 130
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased. 135
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile). But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres: 140
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears).

THE SEA-LIMITS

(From the same)

Consider the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible—
The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass 5
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife. 10
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods; 15
Those voices of twin solitudes

Shall have one sound alike to thee:
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
Surge and sink back and surge again,— 20
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips: they sigh
The same desire and mystery, 25
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not any thing but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

SONNETS

SIBYLLA PALMIFERA

(For a Picture)

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze
struck awe, 130
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath, 5
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can
draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known
to thee 10
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

SILENT NOON

(From, *The House of Life*, in *Ballads and Sonnets*, 1881)

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
The finger-points look through like rosy
blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams
and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass. 5
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass, 5
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-
hedge.
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-
fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the
sky:— 10
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.

INCLUSIVENESS

(From the same)

The changing guests, each in a different mood,
Sit at the roadside table and arise:

And every life among them in likewise
Is a soul's board set daily with new food.

What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to
brood 5

How that face shall watch his when cold it
lies?

Or thought, as his own mother kissed his
eyes,

Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?

May not this ancient room thou sit'st in dwell
In separate living souls for joy or pain? 10

Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
Where Heaven shows pictures of some life
spent well;

And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
Upon the sight of lidless eyes in Hell.

A SUPERScription

(From the same)

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-
been;

I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell

Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen 5

Which had Life's form and Love's, but by
my spell

Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me how still I am! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft sur-
prise 10

Of that winged Peace which hulls the breath
of sighs,—

Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart

Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

1830-1894

UP-HILL

(From *Goblin Market*, 1862)

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting place? 5

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before. 10

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that
door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek? 15

Yea, beds for all who come.

SYMBOLS

(From *Devotional Pieces*)

I watched a rosebud very long

Brought on by dew and sun and shower,

Waiting to see the perfect flower;

Then, when I thought it should be strong, 5

It opened at the matin hour

And fell at even-song.

I watched a nest from day to day,

A green nest full of pleasant shade,

Wherein three speckled eggs were laid:

But when they should have hatched in May, 10

The two old birds had grown afraid

Or tired, and flew away.

Then in my wrath I broke the bough

That I had tended so with care,

Hoping its scent should fill the air; 15

I crushed the eggs, not heeding how

Their ancient promise had been fair:

I would have vengeance now.

But the dead branch spoke from the sod,

And the eggs answered me again: 20

Because we failed dost thou complain?

Is thy wrath just? And what if God,

Who waiteth for thy fruits in vain,

Should also take the rod?

SONNET

(From "Monna Innominata," in *A Pageant and Other Poems*, 1881)

Thou Who didst make and knowest whereof we
are made,

Oh bear in mind our dust and nothingness,

Our wordless tearless dumbness of distress:

Bear Thou in mind the burden Thou hast laid
Upon us, and our feebleness unstayed 5

Except Thou stay us: for the long long race

Which stretches far and far before our face
Thou knowest,—remember Thou whereof we
are made.

If making makes us Thine, then Thine we are;

And if redemption, we are twice Thine own:

If once Thou didst come down from heaven
afar 11

To seek us and to find us, how not save?

Comfort us, save us, leave us not alone,

Thou Who didst die our death and fill our

grave.

William Morris

1834-1896

AN APOLOGY

(From *The Earthly Paradise*, 1868-1870)

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
 I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
 Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
 Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
 Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears, 5
 Or hope again for aught that I can say,
 The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather when aweary of your mirth,
 From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
 And, feeling kindly unto all the earth, 10
 Grudge every minute as it passes by,
 Made the more mindful that the sweet days
 die—
 Remember me a little then I pray,
 The idle singer of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due
 time, 15
 Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
 Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
 Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,¹
 Telling a tale not too importunate
 To those who in the sleepy region stay, 20
 Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
 At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did
 show,
 That through one window men beheld the
 spring, 25
 And through another saw the summer glow,
 And through a third the fruited vines a-row,
 While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
 Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
 If ye will read aright and pardon me, 30
 Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
 Midmost the beating of a steely sea,
 Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
 Whose ravening monsters men of might shall
 slay,
 Not the poor singer of an empty day. 35

PROLOGUE

(From the same)

Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
 Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
 Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
 Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,
 And dream of London, small, and white and
 clean, 5
 The clear Thames bordered by its gardens
 green;

¹ One of the two semi-transparent gates of the house of Sleep, the other being of horn. The dreams which came through the ivory gate were fair but deceitful, while true visions came through the gate of horn. V. Vergil, *Æn.* vi. 893.

Think, that below bridge the green lapping
 waves
 Smite some few keels that bear Levantine
 staves,
 Cut from the yew wood on the burnt-up hill, 9
 And pointed jars that Greek hands toiled to fill,
 And treasured scanty spice from some far sea,
 Florence gold cloth, and Ypres napery,
 And cloth of Bruges, and hogsheads of Guienne;
 While nigh the thronged wharf Geoffrey
 Chaucer's pen
 Moves over bills of lading,—'mid such times 15
 Shall dwell the hollow puppets of my rhymes.

THE SON OF CRÆSUS

(From the same)

ARGUMENT

Cræsus, King of Lydia, dreamed that he saw
 his son slain by an iron weapon, and though by
 every means he strove to avert this doom from
 him, yet thus it happened, for his son was slain
 by the hand of the man who seemed least of all
 likely to do the deed.

Of Cræsus tells my tale, a king of old
 In Lydia, ere the Mede fell on the land,
 A man made mighty by great heaps of gold,
 Feared for the myriads strong of heart and hand
 That 'neath his banners wrought out his com-
 mand, 5
 And though his latter ending happened on ill,
 Yet first of every joy he had his fill.

Two sons he had, and one was dumb from
 birth;
 The other one, that Atys had to name,
 Grew up a fair youth, and of might and worth, 10
 And well it seemed the race wherefrom he came
 From him should never get reproach or shame:
 But yet no stroke he struck before his death,
 In no war-shout he spent his latest breath.

Now Cræsus, lying on his bed at night, 15
 Dreamed that he saw his dear son laid a-low,
 And folk lamenting he was slain outright,
 And that some iron thing had dealt the blow;
 By whose hand guided he could nowise know,
 Or if in peace by traitors it were done, 20
 Or in some open war not yet begun.

Three times one night this vision broke his
 sleep,
 So that at last he rose up from his bed,
 That he might ponder how best he might keep
 The threatened danger from so dear a head; 25
 And, since he now was old enough to wed,
 The King sent men to search the lands around,
 Until some matchless maiden should be found;

That in her arms this Atys might forget
 The praise of men, and fame of history, 30
 Whereby full many a field has been made wet
 With blood of men, and many a deep green sea
 Been reddened therewithal, and yet shall be;
 That her sweet voice might drown the people's
 praise,
 Her eyes make bright the uneventful days. 35

So when at last a wonder they had brought,
 From some sweet land down by the ocean's rim,
 Than whom no fairer could by man be thought,
 And ancient dames, scanning her limb by limb,
 Had said that she was fair enough for him, 40
 To her was Atys married with much show,
 And looked to dwell with her in bliss enow.

And in meantime afield he never went,
 Either to hunting or the frontier war,
 No dart was cast, nor any engine bent 45
 Anigh him, and the Lydian men afar
 Must rein their steeds, and the bright blossoms
 mar
 If they have any lust of tourney now;
 And in fair meadows must they bend the bow.

And also through the palace everywhere 50
 The swords and spears were taken from the
 wall
 That long with honour had been hanging there,
 And from the golden pillars of the hall;
 Lest by mischance some sacred blade should
 fall,
 And in its falling bring revenge at last 55
 For many a fatal battle overpast.

And every day King Croesus wrought with
 care
 To save his dear son from that threatened end,
 And many a beast he offered up with prayer
 Unto the gods, and much of wealth did
 spend, 60
 That they so prayed might yet perchance de-
 fend
 That life, until at least that he were dead,
 With earth laid heavy on his unseeing head.

But in the midst even of the wedding feast
 There came a man, who by the golden hall 65
 Sat down upon the steps, and man or beast
 He heeded not, but there against the wall
 He leaned his head, speaking no word at all,
 Till, with his son and son's wife, came the King,
 And then unto his gown the man did cling. 70

"What man art thou?" the King said to him
 then,
 "That in such guise thou prayest on thy knee;
 Hast thou some fell foe here among my men?
 Or hast thou done an ill deed unto me?
 Or hast thy wife been carried over sea? 75
 Or hast thou on this day great need of gold?
 Or say, why else thou now art grown so bold."

"O King," he said, "I ask no gold to-day,
 And though indeed thy greatness drew me here,
 No wrong have I that thou couldst wipe
 away; 80
 And nought of mine the pirate folk did bear
 Across the sea; none of thy folk I fear:
 But all the gods are now mine enemies,
 Therefore I kneel before thee on my knees.

"For as with mine own brother on a day 85
 Within the running place at home I played,
 Unwittingly I smote him such-a-way

That dead upon the green grass he was laid;
 Half-dead myself I fled away dismayed,
 Wherefore I pray thee help me in my need, 90
 And purify my soul of this sad deed.

"If of my name and country thou wouldst
 know,
 In Phrygia yet my father is a king,
 Gordius, the son of Midas, rich enow
 In corn and cattle, golden cup and ring; 95
 And mine own name before I did this thing
 Was called Adrastus, whom, in street and hall,
 The slayer of his brother men now call."

"Friend," said the King, "have thou no fear
 of me;
 For though, indeed, I am right happy now, 100
 Yet well I know this may not always be,
 And I may chance some day to kneel full low,
 And to some happy man mine head to bow
 With prayers to do a greater thing than this,
 Dwell thou with us, and win again thy bliss. 105

"For in this city men in sport and play
 Forget the trouble that the gods have sent;
 Who therewithal send wine, and many a may
 As fair as she for whom the Trojan went;
 And many a dear delight besides have lent, 110
 Which, whoso is well loved of them shall keep
 Till in forgetful death he falls asleep.

"Therefore to-morrow shall those rites be
 done
 That kindred blood demands that thou hast
 shed,
 That if the mouth of thine own mother's son 115
 Did hap to curse thee ere he was quite dead,
 The curse may lie the lighter on thine head,
 Because the flower-crowned head of many a
 beast
 Has fallen voiceless in our glorious feast."

Then did Adrastus rise and thank the
 King, 120
 And the next day when yet low was the sun,
 The sacrifice and every other thing
 That unto these dread rites belonged, was done;
 And there Adrastus dwelt, hated of none,
 And loved of many, and the King loved him, 125
 For brave and wise he was and strong of limb.

But amongst all did Atys love
 The luckless stranger, whose fair tales of war
 The Lydian's heart abundantly did move,
 And much they talked of wandering out afar 130
 Some day, to lands where many marvels are,
 With still the Phrygian through all things to be
 The leader unto all felicity.

Now at this time folk came unto the King
 Who on a forest's borders dwelling were, 135
 Wherein there roamed full many a dangerous
 thing,
 As wolf and wild bull, lion and brown bear;
 But chiefly in that forest was the lair
 Of a great boar that no man could withstand,
 And many a woe he brought upon the land. 140

Since long ago that men in Calydon
 Held chase, no beast like him had once been
 seen.
 He ruined vineyards lying in the sun,
 After his harvesting the men must glean
 What he had left; right glad they had not
 been
 Among the tall stalks of the ripening wheat,
 The fell destroyer's fatal tusks to meet.

For often would the lonely man entrapped,
 In vain from his dire fury strive to hide
 In some thick hedge, and other whiles it
 happened
 Some careless stranger by his place would ride,
 And the tusks smote his fallen horse's side,
 And what help then to such a wretch could
 come
 With sword he could not draw, and far from
 home?

Or else girls, sent their water-jars to fill, 155
 Would come back pale, too terrified to cry,
 Because they had but seen him from the hill;
 Or else again with side rent wretchedly,
 Some hapless damsel midst the brake would lie.
 Shortly to say, there neither man nor maid 160
 Was safe afield whether they wrought or played.

Therefore were come these dwellers by the
 wood
 To pray the King brave men to them to send,
 That they might live; and if he deemed it good,
 That Atys with the other knights should
 wend, 165
 They through their grief the easier should have
 end;
 For both by gods and men they knew him loved,
 And easily by hope of glory moved.

"O Sire," they said, "thou know'st how
 Hercules
 Was not content to wait till folk asked aid, 170
 But sought the pests among their guarded
 trees;
 Thou know'st what name the Theban Cadmus
 made,
 And how the bull of Marathon was laid
 Dead on the fallows of the Athenian land,
 And how folk worshipped Atlanta's hand. 175

"Fair would thy son's name look upon the
 roll
 Wherein such noble deeds as his are told;
 And great delight shall surely fill thy soul,
 Thinking upon his deeds when thou art old,
 And thy brave heart is waxen faint and cold: 180
 Dost thou not know, O King, how men will
 strive
 That they, when dead, still in their sons may
 live?"

He shuddered as they spoke, because he
 thought,
 Most certainly a winning tale is this
 To draw him from the net where he is caught,

For hearts of men grow weary of all bliss; 186
 Nor is he one to be content with his,
 If he should hear the trumpet-blast of fame
 And far-off people calling on his name.

"Good friends," he said, "go, get ye back
 again, 190
 And doubt not I will send you men to slay
 This pest ye fear: yet shall your prayer be vain
 If ye with any other speak to-day;
 And for my son, with me he needs must stay,
 For mighty cares oppress the Lydian land. 195
 Fear not, for ye shall have a noble band."

And with that promise must they be content,
 And so departed, having feasted well.
 And yet some god or other ere they went,
 If they were silent, this their tale must tell 200
 To more than one man; therefore it befell,
 That at the last Prince Atys knew the thing,
 And came with angry eyes unto the King

"Father," he said, "since when am I grown
 vile?
 Since when am I grown helpless of my hands?
 Or else what folk, with words enwrought with
 guile, 206
 Thine ears have poisoned; that when far-off
 lands
 My fame might fill, by thy most strange com-
 mands

I needs must stay within this slothful home,
 Whereunto would God that I had never come?

"What! wilt thou take mine honour quite
 away? 211
 Wouldst thou, that, as with her I just have wed
 I sit among thy folk at end of day,
 She should be ever turning round her head
 To watch some man for war apparelled, 215
 Because he wears a sword that he may use,
 Which grace to me thou ever wilt refuse?

"Or, dost thou think, when thou hast run thy
 race
 And thou art gone, and in thy stead I reign,
 The people will do honour to my place, 220
 Or that the lords leal men will still remain,
 If yet my father's sword be sharp in vain?
 If on the wall his armour still hang up,
 While for a spear I hold a drinking cup?"

"O Son!" quoth Cræsus, "well I know thee
 brave, 225
 And worthy of high deeds of chivalry;
 Therefore the more thy dear life would I save,
 Which now is threatened by the gods on high;
 Three times one night I dreamed I saw thee die,
 Slain by some deadly pointed thing, 230
 While weeping lords stood round thee in a ring."

Then loud laughed Atys, and he said again,
 "Father, and did this ugly dream tell thee
 What day it was on which I should be slain?
 As may the gods grant I may one day be, 235
 And not from sickness die right wretchedly,
 Groaning with pain my lords about my bed
 Wishing to God that I were fairly dead;

"But slain in battle, as the Lydian kings
Have died ere now, in some great victory, 240
While all about the Lydian shouting rings
Death to the beaten foemen as they fly.
What death but this, O father! should I die?
But if my life by iron shall be done,
What steel to-day shall glitter in the sun? 245

"Yea, father, if to thee it seemeth good
To keep me from the bright steel-bearing
throng,
Let me be brave at least within the wood;
For surely if thy dream be true, no wrong
Can hap to me from this beast's tushes strong:
Unless perchance the beast is grown so wise, 251
He haunts the forest clad in Lydian guise."

Then Cræsus said: "O Son, I love thee so,
That thou shalt do thy will upon this tide:
But since unto this hunting thou must go, 255
A trusty friend along with thee shall ride,
Who not for anything shall leave thy side.
I think, indeed, he loves thee well enow
To thrust his heart 'twixt thee and any blow.

"Go then, O Son, and if by some short span
Thy life be measured, how shall it harm thee, 261
If while life last thou art a happy man?
And thou art happy; only unto me
Is trembling left, and infelicity:
The trembling of the man who loves on earth;
But unto thee is hope and present mirth. 266

"Nay, be thou not ashamed, for on this day
I fear not much: thou read'st my dream aright,
No teeth or claws shall take thy life away.
And it may chance, ere thy last glorious fight,
I shall be blinded by the endless night; 271
And brave Adrastus on this day shall be
Thy safeguard, and shall give good heart to
me.

"Go then, and send him hither, and depart;
And as the heroes did, so mayst thou do, 275
Winning such fame as well may please thy
heart."

With that word from the King did Atys go,
Who, left behind, sighed, saying, "May it be so
Even as I hope; and yet I would to God
These men upon my threshold ne'er had trod."

So when Adrastus to the King was come 281
He said unto him, "O my Phrygian friend,
We in this land have given thee a home,
And 'gainst all foes your life will we defend:
Wherefor for us that life thou shouldest spend,
If any day there should be need therefor; 286
And now a trusty friend I need right sore.

"Doubtless ere now thou hast heard many
say
There is a doom that threatens my son's life;
Therefore this place is stript of arms to-day, 290
And therefore still bides Atys with his wife,
And tempts not any god by raising strife;
Yet none the less by no desire of his,
To whom would war be most abundant bliss.

"And since to-day some glory he may
gain 295
Against a monstrous bestial enemy
And that the meaning of my dream is plain;
That saith that he by steel alone shall die,
His burning wish I may not well deny,
Therefore afield to-morrow doth he wend 300
And herein mayst thou show thyself my
friend.—

"For thou as captain of his band shalt ride,
And keep a watchful eye of everything,
Nor leave him, whatsoever may betide:
Lo, thou art brave, the son of a great king, 305
And with thy praises doth this city ring,
Why should I tell thee what a name those gain,
Who dying for their friends, die not in vain?"

Then said Adrastus, "Now were I grown base
Beyond all words, if I should spare for
aught 310
In guarding him; so sit with smiling face,
And of this matter take no further thought,
Because with my life shall his life be bought,
If ill should hap; and no ill fate it were,
If I should die for what I hold so dear." 315

Then went Adrastus, and next morn all
things
That 'longed unto the hunting were well dight,
And forth they went clad as the sons of kings.
Fair was the morn, as through the sunshine
bright
They rode, the Prince half wild with great
delight, 320
The Phrygian smiling on him soberly,
And ever looking round with watchful eye.

So through the city all the rout rode fast,
With many a great black-muzzled yellow hound;
And then the teeming country-side they
passed, 325
Until they came to sour and rugged ground,
And there rode up a little heathy mound,
That overlooked the scrubby woods and low,
That of the beast's lair somewhat they might
know.

And there a good man of the country-side 330
Showed them the places where he mostly lay;
And they descending through the wood did
ride,
And followed on his tracks for half the day.
And at the last they brought him well to bay,
Within an oozy space amidst the wood, 335
About the which a ring of alders stood.

So when the hounds' changed voices clear
they heard
With hearts aflame on towards him straight
they drew
Atys the first of all, of nought afraid,
Except that folk should say some other slew
The beast; and lustily his horn he blew, 341
Going afoot; then, mighty spear in hand,
Adrastus headed all the following band.

Now when they came unto the plot of ground
 Where stood the boar, hounds dead about him
 lay 345
 Or sprawled about, bleeding from many a
 wound,
 But still the others held him well at bay,
 Nor had he been bestead thus ere that day.
 But yet, seeing Atys, straight he rushed at
 him,
 Speckled with foam, bleeding in flank and limb.

Then Atys stood and cast his well-steeled
 spear 351
 With a great shout, and straight and well it flew;
 For now the broad blade cutting through the
 ear
 A stream of blood from out the shoulder drew.
 And therewithal another, no less true, 355
 Adrastus cast, whereby the boar had died:
 But Atys drew the bright sword from his side,

And to the tottering beast he drew anigh:
 But as the sun's rays ran adown the blade:
 Adrastus threw a javelin hastily, 360
 For of the mighty beast was he afraid,
 Lest by his wounds he should not yet be strayed,
 But with a last rush cast his life away,
 And dying there, the son of Croesus slay.

But even as the feathered dart he hurled,
 His strained, despairing eyes, beheld the end,
 And changed seemed all the fashion of the
 world, 367
 And past and future into one did blend,
 As he beheld the fixed eyes of his friend,
 That no reproach had in them, and no fear, 370
 For Death had seized him ere he thought him
 near.

Adrastus shrieked, and running up he caught
 The falling man, and from his bleeding side
 Drew out the dart, and seeing that death had
 brought
 Deliverance to him, he thereby had died; 375
 But ere his hand the luckless steel could guide;
 And he the refuge of poor souls could win,
 The horror-stricken huntsmen had rushed in.

And these, with blows and cries he heeded
 nought,
 His unresisting hands made haste to bind; 380
 Then of the alder-boughs a bier they wrought,
 And laid the corpse thereon, and 'gan to wind
 Homeward amidst the tangled wood and blind,
 And going slowly, at the eventide,
 Some leagues from Sardis did that day abide.

Onward next morn the slaughtered man they
 bore; 386
 With him that slew him, and at end of day
 They reached the city, and with mourning
 sore
 Toward the King's palace did they take their
 way.
 He in an open western chamber lay 390
 Feasting, though inwardly his heart did burn
 Until that Atys should to him return.

And when those walls first smote upon his
 ear
 He set the wine-cup down, and to his feet
 He rose, and bitter all-consuming fear 395
 Swallowed his joy, and nigh he went to meet
 That which was coming through the weeping
 street:
 But in the end he thought it good to wait,
 And stood there doubting all the ills of fate.

But when at last up to that royal place 400
 Folk brought the thing he once had held so dear,
 Still stood the King, staring with ghastly face:
 As they brought forth Adrastus and the bier,
 But spoke at last slowly without a tear,
 "O Phrygian man, that I did purify, 405
 Is it through thee that Atys came to die?"

"O King," Adrastus said, "take now my life,
 With whatso torment seemeth good to thee,
 As my word went, for I would end this strife,
 And underneath the earth lie quietly; 410
 Nor is it my will here alive to be:
 For as my brother, so Prince Atys died,
 And this unlucky hand some god did guide."

Then as a man constrained, the tale he told
 From end to end, nor spared himself one
 whit: 415
 And as he spoke the wood did still behold,
 The trodden grass, and Atys dead on it;
 And many a change o'er the King's face did flit
 Of kingly rage and hatred and despair,
 As on the slayer's face he still did stare. 420

At last he said, "Thy death avails me nought,
 The gods themselves have done this bitter deed,
 That I was all too happy was their thought,
 Therefore thy heart is dead and mine doth
 bleed,
 And I am helpless as a trodden weed: 425
 Thou art but as the handle of the spear,
 The caster sits far off from any fear.

"Yet, if thy hurt they meant, I can do
 this,—
 —Loose him and let him go in peace from me—
 I will not slay the slayer of all my bliss; 430
 Yet go, poor man, for when thy face I see
 I curse the gods for their felicity.
 Surely some other slayer they would have
 found,
 If thou hadst long ago been underground.

"Alas, Adrastus! in my inmost heart 435
 I knew the gods would one day do this thing
 But deemed indeed that it would be thy part
 To comfort me amidst my sorrowing;
 Make haste to go, for I am still a King!
 Madness may take me, I have many hands 440
 Who will not spare to do my worst commands."

With that Adrastus' bonds were done away,
 And forthwith to the city gates he ran,
 And on the road where they had been that day
 Rushed through the gathering night; and some
 lone man 445

Beheld next day his visage wild and wan,
Peering from out a thicket of the wood
Where he had spilt that well-beloved blood.

And now the day of burial pomp must be,
And to those rites all lords of Lydia came 450
About the King, and that day, they and he
Cast royal gifts of rich things on the flame;
But while they stood and wept, and called by
name

Upon the dead, amidst them came a man
With raiment rent, and haggard face and wan.

Who when the marshalls would have thrust
him out 458

And men looked strange on him, began to say,
"Surely the world has changed since ye have
doubt

Of who I am; nay, turn me not away,
For ye have called me princely ere to-day— 460
Adrastus, son of Gordius, a great king,
Where unto Pallas Phrygian maidens sing.

"O Lydians, many a rich thing have ye cast
Into this flame, but I myself will give
A greater gift, since now I see at last 465
The gods are wearied for that still I live,
And with their will, why should I longer strive?
Atys, O Atys, thus I give to thee.
A life that lived for thy felicity."

And therewith from his side a knife he drew,
And, crying out upon the pile he leapt, 471
And with one mighty stroke himself he slew.
So there these princes both together slept,
And their light ashes, gathered up, were kept
Within a golden vessel wrought all o'er 475
With histories of this hunting of the boar.

L'ENVOI

(From the same)

"Death have we hated, knowing not what it
meant;
Life have we loved through green leaf and
through sere,
Though still the less we know of its intent:
The Earth and Heaven through countless year
on year,
Slow changing, were to us but curtains fair 5
Hung round about a little room, where play
Weeping and laughter, of man's empty day.

"O Master,¹ if thine heart could love us yet,
Spite of things left undone, and wrongly done,
Some place in loving hearts then should we
get, 10
For thou, sweet-souled, didst never stand
alone,
But knew'st the joy and woe of many an one—
By lovers dead, who live through thee, we pray,
Help thus us singers of an empty day!"

¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, to whom Morris has commended his book in a preceding stanza. This was more than a general tribute to Chaucer's genius; Chaucer was Morris's actual master and model, and the *Earthly Paradise* shows its author's debt to the poet of *The Canterbury Tales*.

Fearest thou, Book, what answer thou mayst
gain, 15
Lest he should scorn thee, and thereof thou die?
Nay, it shall not be.—Thou mayst toil in vain,
And never draw the House of Fame anigh;
Yet he and his shall know whereof we cry,
Shall call it not ill done to strive to lay, 20
The ghosts that crowd about life's empty day.

Then let the others go! and if indeed
In some old garden thou and I have wrought,
And made fresh flowers spring up from hoarded
seed,
And fragrance of old days and deeds have
brought 25
Back to folk weary; all was not for nought.
—No little part it was for me to play—
The idle singer of an empty day.

DRAWING NEAR THE LIGHT

(From *Poems by the Way*, 1892)

Lo, when we wade the tangled wood,
In haste and hurry to be there,
Nought seem its leaves and blossoms good,
For all that they be fashioned fair.

But looking up, at last we see 5
The glimmer of the open light,
From o'er the place where we would be:
Then grow the very brambles bright.

So now, amidst our day of strife,¹
With many a matter glad we play, 10
When once we see the light of life
Gleam through the tangle of to-day.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

1837-1909

CHORUS

(From *Atalanta in Calydon*, 1865)

When the bounds of spring are on winter's
traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lip of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous 5
Is half assuaged for Itylus,¹
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of
quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light, 10
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamour of waters, and with might:
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Ever the splendour and speed of thy feet;

¹ Here evidently used for *Itys*; v. *Philomela*, *Progne*, or *Tereus*, in *Class-Dict.* and cf. Swinburne's poem *Itylus*.

For the faint east quickens, the wan west
shivers, 15
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the
night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to
her,
Fold our hands round her knees and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could
spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that
spring! 20
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind
sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over, 25
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten, 30
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot, 34
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and from flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root. 40

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;²
And soft as lips that laugh and hide 45
The laughing leaves of the tree divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes; 50
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare 55
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

CHORUS

(From the same)

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair; thou
art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of
a dove.

² *Bassarid* (Gr. *βασσάρδα*), and *Mænad*, are names for a bacchant, — a priestess of Bacchus, or a woman who joined in the festivals of Bacchus and who was inspired with the bacchic frenzy.

Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of
the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment
of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame
of fire; 5
Before thee laughter, behind thee the tears of
desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a
maid;
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride, whom delight
makes afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal
breath:
But fate is the name of her: and his name is
Death. 10

For an evil blossom was born
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
And the seed of it laughter and tears,
And the leaves of it madness and scorn: 15
A bitter flower from the bud,
Sprung of the sea without root,
Sprung without graft from the years. . . .

What hadst thou to do being born,
Mother, when winds were at ease, 20
As a flower of the springtime of corn,
A flower of the foam of the seas?
For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
For before thee some rest was on earth, 25
A little respite from tears,
A little pleasure of life:
For life was not then as thou art,
But as one that waxeth in years
Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife; 30
Earth had no thorn and desire
No sting, neither death any dart;
What hadst thou to do amongst these,
Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
Thou girt with sorrow of heart 35
Thou sprung of the seed of the seas
As an ear from a seed of corn,
As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
As a ray shed forth of the morn,
For division of soul and disease, 40
For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
Mother, and anguish on earth
Born with a man at his birth, 45
Wastes underfoot, and above
Storm out of heaven, and dearth
Shaken down from the shining thereof,
Wrecks from afar over seas
And peril of shallow and firth, 50
And tears that spring and increase
In the barren places of mirth,
That thou having wings as a dove,
Being girt with desire for a girth,
That thou must come after these, 55
That thou must lay on him love?

- Thou shouldst not so have been born:
 But death should have risen with thee,
 Mother, and visible fear,
 Grief, and wringing of hands, 60
 And noise of many that mourn;
 The smitten bosom, the knee
 Bowed, and in each man's ear
 A cry as of perishing lands;
 A moan as of people in prison, 65
 A tumult of infinite griefs;
 And thunder of storm on the sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs, 70
 Fierce air and violent light;
- Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness, and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword, 75
 Clamour of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth;
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree, 80
 And blind things dead in their birth:
 Famine and blighting of corn,
 When thy time was come to be born.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE¹

(From *Laus Veneris*, 1866)

- Here where the world is quiet;
 Here, where all trouble seems
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dream of dreams;
 I watch the green field growing 5
 For reaping folk and sowing,
 For harvest time and mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.
- I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep, 10
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:
 I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers 15
 And everything but sleep.
- Here life hath death for neighbour,
 And far from eye or ear
 Wan waves and wet winds labour,
 Weak ships and spirits steer; 20
- They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither;
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.
- No growth of moor or coppice,
 No heather-flower or vine, 25
 But bloomless buds of poppies,²
 Green grapes of Proserpine,
 Pale beds of blowing rushes
 Where no leaf blooms or blushes 30
 Save this whereout she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.
- Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,
 They bow themselves and slumber 35
 All night till light is born;
 And like a soul belated,
 In hell and heaven unmated,
 By clouds and mist abated
 Comes out of darkness morn. 40
- Though one were strong as seven,
 He too with death shall dwell,
 Nor wake with wings in heaven,
 Nor weep for pains in hell;
 Though one were fair as roses, 45
 His beauty clouds and closes;
 And well though love reposes,
 In the end it is not well.
- Pale, beyond porch or portal,
 Crowned with calm leaves, she stands 50
 Who gathers all things mortal
 With cold immortal hands;
 Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than love's who fears to greet her
 To men that mix and meet her 55
 From many times and lands.
- She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,
 The life of fruits and corn; 60
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow
 And flowers are put to scorn.
- There go the loves that wither, 65
 The old loves with wearier wings;
 And all dead years draw thither;
 And all disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of things forsaken,
 Blind buds that snows have shaken, 70
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,
 Red strays of ruined springs.
- We are not sure of sorrow
 And joy was never sure;
 To-day will die to-morrow; 75
 Time stoops to no man's lure;

¹ *Proserpine* was the child of Demeter, the mother-earth. While gathering flowers in the Sicilian fields, she was caught up and carried off by Pluto, king of the Infernal regions, who made her queen of the lower realm, of darkness and death. She was afterwards permitted to leave the Shades for a part of each year and to visit Olympus. She typifies the corn, or grain, which passes from the dark prison in the earth to light, and leaves the light to return again to darkness. In this poem, Swinburne pictures the world as her garden, a place presided over by the Queen of the kingdom of darkness, a spot from which life is continually being carried off to the dark region of oblivion.

² The poppy, the flower of oblivion, was associated with Proserpine. She is often represented with a garland of poppies on her head.

And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives forever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

After mine.

PASTICHE¹

(From *Poems and Ballads*, 1878)

Now the days are all gone over
Of our singing, love by lover,
Days of summer-coloured seas
Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over
Of our dreaming, dreams that hover
In a mist of fair false things,
Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,
Now the fears with hope for brother,
Scarce are with us as strange words,
Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is
As the smell of last year's roses,
And the radiance in our eyes
Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen
Seems no god come forth of prison,
But a bird of plume plucked wing,
Pale with thought of evening.

Now hath hope, outraced in running
Given the torch up of his cunning
And the palm he thought to wear
Even to his own strong child—despair.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN¹

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and
highland,

At the sea-down's edge between windward
and lee

Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.

¹ *Pastiche* (or *pasticcio*) is the French word for a medley, or a work in imitation of the style of several masters.

¹ The scene of this poem is said to be East Dene, Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight.

A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses 5
The steep square slope of the blossomless
bed

Where the weeds that grew green from the
graves of its roses 80
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land. 10

If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's
hand? 85

So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make
way, 90

He shall find no life but the sea-wind's restless
Night and day. 16

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have
rifled 95

Of all but the thorns that are touched not by
time. 20

The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain;
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls
not; 25

As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are
dry;

From the thicket of thorns whence the night-
ingale calls not,

Could she call, there were never a rose to
reply.

Over the meadows that blossom and wither, 10
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song. 30

Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath. 15
Only the wind here hovers and revels 35

In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was
weeping,

Haply of lovers none ever will know, 20
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago. 40

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look
hither,"

Did he whisper? "Look forth from the
flowers to the sea;

For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-
blossoms wither,

And men that love lightly may die—But
we?"

And the same wind sang, and the same waves
whitened, 45

And or ever the garden's last petals were
shed,

In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that
had lightened,

Love was dead.

Or they loved their life, through, and then
went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who
knows? 50

Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the
rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the dead to
love them?

What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above
them

Or the wave. 56

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the
sea.

Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with summer to be. 60

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons
hereafter

Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or
weep,

When as they that are free now of weeping and
laughter

We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever; 65
Here change may come not till all change
end.

From the graves they have made they shall
rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and
rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground
growing,

While the sun and the rain live, these shall
be; 70

Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crum-
ble,

Till the terrace and meadow the deep gulfs
drink,

Till the strength of the waves the high tides
humble 75

The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things fal-
ter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand
spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead. 80

UPON A CHILD

Of such is the kingdom of heaven,
No glory that ever was shed
From the crowning star of the seven
That crown the north world's head,¹

¹ i. e. the North-star, or Pole-star, the brightest star in the Little Bear (*Ursa Minor*), a constellation composed of seven stars.

No word that ever was spoken
Of human or godlike tongue,
Gave ever such godlike token
Since human harps were strung. 8

No sign that ever was given
To faithful or faithless eyes 10
Showed ever beyond clouds riven
So clear a paradise.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven
And blood have defiled each creed:
If of such be the kingdom of heaven, 15
It must be heaven indeed.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

If childhood were not in the world,
But only men and women grown;
No baby-locks in tendrils curled,
No baby-blossoms blown;

Though men were stronger, women fairer, 5
And nearer all delights in reach,
And verse and music uttered rarer
Tones of more godlike speech;

Though the utmost life of life's best hours
Found, as it cannot now find words; 10
Though desert sands were sweet as flowers,
And flowers could sing like birds,

But children never heard them, never
They felt a child's feet leap and run;
This were a drearier star than ever 15
Yet looked upon the sun.

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with
wonder:

The stormy sophist with his mouth of
thunder,
Clothed with loud words and mantled in the
might

Of darkness and magnificence of night; 5
And one whose eye could smite the night in
sunder,

Searching if light or no light were there-
under,

And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep de-
sire 10

Shone stern and firm before her and above
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthy
feet,—

The light of little children and their love.

OTHER POETS OF THE
VICTORIAN AGE

Hartley Coleridge¹

1796-1849

SONG

(From *Poems*, 1833)

She is not fair to outward view
As many maidens be,
Her loveliness I never knew
Until she smiled on me;
Oh! then I saw her eye was bright, 5
A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold,
To mine they ne'er reply,
And yet I cease not to behold
The love-light in her eye: 10
Her very frowns are fairer far,
Than smiles of other maidens are.

SONNET ON PRAYER

There is an awful quiet in the air,
And the sad earth, with moist imploring eye,
Looks wide and wakeful at the pondering sky,
Like Patience slow subsiding to Despair.
But see, the blue smoke as a voiceless prayer, 5
Sole witness of a secret sacrifice,
Unfolds its tardy wreaths, and multiplies
Its soft chameleon breathings in the rare
Capacious ether,—so it fades away,
And naught is seen beneath the pendant blue, 10
The undistinguishable day.
So have I dream'd!—Oh! may the dream be
true!—
That praying souls are purged from mortal hue,
And grow as pure as He to whom they pray.

Thomas Hood

1798-1845

THE DEATH BED

(From *Poems*, 1825)

We watched her breathing thro' the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak, 5
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

¹ Hartley Coleridge was the eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. As a child he was shy, dreamy, and sensitive; like his father he had a vivid imagination, and like his father he was hampered (but in even greater measure) by weakness of will. He published several volumes of prose. As a poet, he belongs to the school of Wordsworth, and he is probably at his best in the sonnet.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied— 10
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had 15
Another morn than ours.

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

("Drowned! drowned!"—*Hamlet*)

(First published in *Hood's Magazine*, 1844)

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly, 5
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cements; 10
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully; 15
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly. 20

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her 25
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily. 30

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home? 35

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one 40
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world.

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth, and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast.

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

Thomas Babington Macaulay

1800-1859

THE BATTLE OF IVRY¹

(1842)

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all
glories are!
And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry
of Navarre!

Now let there be the merry sound of music and
the dance;

Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny
vines, O pleasant land of France!

And thou, Rochelle,² our own Rochelle, proud
city of the waters,

Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourn-
ing daughters.

As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous
in our joy;

For cold and stiff and still are they who wrought
thy walls annoy.

Hurrah! hurrah! a single field hath turned the
chance of war!

Hurrah! hurrah! for Ivry, and King Henry of
Navarre.

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the
dawn of day,

We saw the army of the League drawn out in
long array;

With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel
peers,

And Appenzel's³ stout infantry, and Egmont's⁴
Flemish Spears;

There rode the blood of false Lorraine,⁵ the
curses of our land;

And dark Mayenne⁶ was in the midst, a trun-
cheon⁷ in his hand;

And, as we look'd on them, we thought of
Seine's empurpled flood,

And good Coligni's⁸ hoary hair all dabbled with
his blood;

¹ A village in France, where the battle was fought
in 1590, between Henry of Navarre the Champion of
Protestantism, and the forces of the Roman Catholic
"League."

² A fortified sea-port in France, a stronghold of the
Protestants.

³ Appenzel is a double canton in Switzerland, half
Protestant, half Roman Catholic. In this passage it is
obvious that the Roman Catholics are meant.

⁴ Count Philip of Egmont, a foremost man in the
Spanish army, who commanded a body of Flemish troops.

⁵ Henry of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, a spy, and agent
of Philip II of Spain.

⁶ Duke of Mayenne, lieutenant-general for the League.

⁷ A commander's staff.

⁸ Gaspard of Coligni, the great commander of the
Huguenots, was murdered by the Roman Catholics on
St. Bartholomew's Eve. The remembrance of that
massacre always aroused the opposite party to action.

And we cried unto the living God, who rules
the fate of war,
To fight for His own holy name, and Henry of
Navarre. 20

The King is come to marshal us, in all his
armor drest; www.libtool.com.cn
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his
gallant crest.
He look'd upon his people, and a tear was in
his eye!
He look'd upon the traitors, and his glance was
stern and high.
Right graciously he smil'd on us, as roll'd from
wing to wing, 25
Down all our line, in deafening shout: "God
save our lord, the King!"
"And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full
well he may,
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody
fray,
Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst
the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme⁹ to-day the helmet of
Navarre." 30

Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the
mingled din,
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and
roaring culverin.
The fiery duke is pricking fast across St.
Andre's plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders¹⁰ and
Almayne.¹¹
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen
of France, 35
Charge for the golden lilies,¹²—upon them with
the lance!
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand
spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind
the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while,
like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet
of Navarre. 40

Now, God be praised, the day is ours. Mayenne
hath retired his rein;
D'Aumale¹³ hath cried for quarter; the Flemish
count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before
a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and
flags, and cloven mail.
And then we thought on vengeance, and, all
along our van, 45
"Remember Saint Barthomolew!" was passed
from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry, "No Frenchman
is my foe:

Down, down with every foreigner, but let your
brethren go."
Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship
or in war,
As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry, the soldier
of Navarre? 50
Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought
for France to-day;
And many a lordly banner God gave them for a
prey.
But we of the religion have borne us best in
fight;
And the good Lord of Rosny¹⁴ hath ta'en the
cornet white.
Our own true Maximilian the cornet white
hath ta'en, 55
The cornet white with crosses black, the flag
of false Lorraine.
Up with it high; unfurl it wide; that all the host
may know
How God hath humbled the proud house which
wrought His Church such woe.
Then on the ground, while trumpets sound
their loudest point of war,
Fling the red shreds, a footcloth meet for
Henry of Navarre. 60

Ho! maidens of Vienna; ho! matrons of Lucerne;
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who
never shall return.
Ho! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican
pistoles,¹⁵
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy
poor spearmen's souls.
Ho! gallant nobles of the League, look that
your arms be bright; 65
Ho! burghers of St. Genevieve,¹⁶ keep watch
and ward to-night;
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God
hath raised the slave,
And mocked the counsel of the wise, and the
valor of the brave.
Then glory to his holy name, from whom all
glories are;
And glory to our Sovereign Lord, King Henry
of Navarre. 70

John Henry Newman

(1801–1890)

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

(1833)

Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see 5
The distant scene: one step enough for me.

¹⁴ Maximilian de Bethune Sully, Baron de Rosny and duc de Sully, fought with the squadron which met Egmont's first onset, and received seven wounds.

¹⁵ An allusion to the moneys received from the Spanish conquest of Mexico. A *pistole* was a common name in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere for coins of differing values.

¹⁶ i. e. citizens of Paris, as *St. Genevieve* was the patron saint of that city.

⁹ The banner of France.

¹⁰ A Dutch province half Protestant and half Roman Catholic.

¹¹ Germany. ¹² The lily is the emblem of France.

¹³ Charles de Lorraine, Duke d'Aumale, an ardent partisan of the "League."

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on. 10
I loved the garish day; and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.
So long thy power hath ~~blest~~ ^{led} me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone; 16
And with the morn those Angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Robert Stephen Hawker

1803-1875

THE SONG OF THE WESTERN MEN

(Written in 1852)

A good sword and a trusty hand!
A merry heart and true!
King James's men shall understand
What Cornish lads can do!
And have they fixed the where and when? 5
And shall Trelawney¹ die?
Here's twenty thousand Cornish men
Will know the reason why!
Out spake their Captain brave and bold:
A merry wight was he:— 10
"If London Tower were Michael's² hold,
We'd set Trelawney free!
"We'll cross the Tamar, land to land:
The Severn is no stay:
With 'one and all,' and hand in hand; 15
And who shall bid us nay?
"And when we come to London wall,
A pleasant sight to view,
Come forth! come forth! ye cowards all; 20
Here's men as good as you.
"Trelawney he's in keep and hold:
Trelawney he may die:
But here's twenty thousand Cornish bold
Will know the reason why!"

Richard Chevenix Trench

1807-1886

"SOME MURMUR WHEN THEIR SKY IS CLEAR"

I

Some murmur when their sky is clear,
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.

¹ James II issued a "Declaration of Indulgence," the object of which was to give the Roman Catholics greater power. He ordered it to be read in the churches. Many of the clergy refused to read this "declaration" and the King threatened to put them in the Tower. Among those who refused was Trelawney, Bishop of Bristol, a native of Cornwall.

² A small, precipitous, and rocky island, crowned by a castle, off the coast of Cornwall.

And some with thankful love are filled, 5
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

II

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride, 10
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied.
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love has in their aid
(Love that not ever seems to tire) 15
Such rich provision made.

Edward Fitzgerald¹

1809-1883

(From his translation of *The Rubaiyat*,² 1859)

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of repentance fling: 5
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the bird is on the Wing. 1

VIII

Whether at Naishapur³ or Babylon, 5
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday? 10
And this first Summer month that brings the
Rose
Shall take Jamshyd⁴ and Kaikobad away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobad the Great, or Kaikhosrú?
Let Zál and Rustum⁵ thunder as they will, 15
Or Hatim⁶ call to Supper—heed not you. . . .

¹ Edward Fitzgerald, a man of wide and curious learning and fastidious taste, held a unique position among the poets of his time. His original productions were few, and comparatively unimportant; his reputation rests on his work as a translator, and it rests largely on his translation of a single poem. He translated six plays of the Spanish dramatist Calderon; he translated several poems from the Persian, and then, in 1859, he astounded and delighted innumerable readers by his rendering of the "quatrains" of Omar Khayyam. While Fitzgerald lived a most secluded life, he was the warm friend of Tennyson, Thackeray, Spedding, and other eminent men. Tennyson, in dedicating his *Tiresias* to "Old Fitz," as he calls his life-long friend, declared that he knew no translation in English done "more divinely well" than Fitzgerald's *Omar*.

² A poem by Omar Khayyam (i. e. Omar, the Tent-maker) a Persian poet and astronomer of the 11th and 12th centuries. The title of his most famous poem refers simply to its poetic form. *Rubaiyat* is the technical name for a quatrain of a certain metrical character.

³ The birthplace of Omar, in the province of Khorasin, northern Persia.

⁴ Jamshyd, Kaikobad, and Kaikhosrú, were early Persian kings in Firdusi's poem *Shahnamah*, or epic of kings.

⁵ Heroes in Firdusi's great epic. Zál is Rustum's father. The tragic error of Rustum, who unwittingly kills his son Sohrab, is the theme of Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*.

⁶ Hatim Tai, a type of oriental generosity.

XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow! 20

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XIII

Some for the Glories of this World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum. . . .

XVII

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai 25
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way. . . .

XXI

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears: 30
To-morrow!—Why, *To-morrow* I may be
Myself with Yesterday's sev'n thousand
Years. . . .

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie, 35
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans
End!

Sir Francis Hastings Charles Doyle
1810–1888

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS

(1866)

Last night, among his fellow roughs,
He jested, quaff'd, and swore:
A drunken Private of the Buffs,
Who never look'd before.
To-day, beneath the foeman's frown, 5
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught, 10
Bewilder'd, and alone,
A heart with English instinct fraught,
He yet can call his own.
Ay, tear his body limb from limb,
Bring cord, or axe, or flame:
He only knows, that not through him 15
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seem'd,
Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleam'd,
One sheet of living snow; 20

The smoke, above his father's door,
In grey soft eddyings hung:
Must he then watch it rise no more,
Doom'd by himself, so young?

Yes, honour calls!—with strength like steel 25
He put the vision by.
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;
An English lad must die.
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
With knee to man unbent, 30
Unflinching on its dreadful brink,
To his red grave he went.

Vain, mightiest fleets, of iron fram'd;
Vain, those all-shattering guns;
Unless proud England keep, untam'd, 35
The strong heart of her sons.
So let his name through Europe ring—
A man of mean estate,
Who died as firm as Sparta's king,¹
Because his soul was great. 40

William Makepeace Thackeray

1811–1863

AT THE CHURCH GATE

(From *Pendennis*, 1849–1850)

Although I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover:
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait, 5
Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout,
And noise and humming:
They've hushed the Minster bell: 10
The organ 'gins to swell:
She's coming, she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid, and stepping fast,
And hastening hither, 15
With modest eyes downcast:
She comes—she's here—she's past—
May heaven go with her.

Kneel undisturbed, fair Saint!
Pour out your praise or plaint!
Meekly and duly; 20
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace 25
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute
Like outcast spirits who wait
And see through heaven's gate
Angels within it. 30

¹ Leonidas, King of Sparta who died at Thermopylae, after rejecting the offer of the Persian king to make him the ruler of all Greece.

THE END OF THE PLAY

(From *Dr. Birch and His Young Friends*,
1848-1849)

The play is done; the curtain drops,
Slow falling to the prompter's bell:
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around, to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task 5
And, when he's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
A face that's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends,
Let's close it with a parting rhyme, 10
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas time.
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That Fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good night! with honest gentle hearts
A kindly greeting go away!

Good night!—I'd say, the griefs, the joys,
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
Are but repeated in our age. 20
I'd say, your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain, than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I'd say, we suffer and we strive, 25
Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
As erst at twelve in corduroys.
And if, in time of sacred youth,
We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray Heaven that early Love and Truth
May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
I'd say, how fate may change and shift; 35
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
The race not always to the swift.
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down. 40

Who knows the inscrutable design?
Blessed be He who took and gave!
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
Be weeping at her darling's grave?
We bow to Heaven that will'd it so, 45
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That's free to give, or to recall.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit:
Who brought him to that mirth and state? 50
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we'll kneel, 55
Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfilled. 60
Amen! whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter's snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill, 65
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize.
Go, lose or conquer as you can; 70
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old, or young!
(Bear kindly with my humble lays); 75
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days:
The shepherds heard it overhead—
The joyful angels raised it then:
Glory to God, on high, it said, 80
And peace on earth to gentle men.

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and joy, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth, 85
Be this, good friends, our carol still—
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

William C. Aptoun

1813-1865

THE WIDOW OF GLENCOE¹

I

Do not lift him from the bracken,
Leave him lying where he fell—
Better bier ye cannot fashion:
None beseems him half so well
As the bare and broken heather, 5
And the hard and trampled sod,
Whence his angry soul ascended
To the judgment-seat of God!
Winding sheet we cannot give him—
Seek no mantle for the dead, 10
Save the cold and spotless covering
Showered from heaven upon his head.
Leave his broadsword as we found it,
Bent and broken with the blow,
Which before he died, avenged him 15
On the foremost of the foe.
Leave the blood upon his bosom—
Wash not off that sacred stain;

¹ The Clan of Macdonald, in the Highland valley of Glencoe, were late in taking the required oath of loyalty to King William III. Under royal warrant a regiment was sent to Glencoe and many of the Macdonalds were treacherously killed.

Let it stiffen on the tartan,
 Let his wounds unclosed remain, 20
 Till the day when he shall show them
 At the throne of God on high,
 When the murderer and the murdered
 Meet before the judge's eye.

II

Nay—ye should not weep, my children! 25
 Leave it to the faint and weak;
 Sobs are but a woman's weapon—
 Tears befit a maiden's cheek.
 Weep not, children of Macdonald!
 Weep not, thou his orphan heir— 30
 Not in shame, but stainless honour,
 Lies thy slaughtered father there.
 Weep not—but when years are over,
 And thine arm is strong and sure,
 And thy foot is swift and steady 35
 On the mountain and the muir—
 Let thy heart be hard as iron,
 And thy wrath as fierce as fire,
 Till the hour when vengeance cometh
 For the race that slew thy sire! 40
 Till in deep and dark Glenlyon
 Rise a louder shriek of woe,
 Than at midnight, from their eyrie,
 Scared the eagles of Glencoe:
 Louder than the screams that mingled 45
 With the howling of the blast,
 When the murderer's steel was clashing,
 And the fires were rising fast;
 When thy noble father bounded
 To the rescue of his men, 50
 And the slogan of our kindred
 Pealed throughout the startled glen!
 When the herd of frantic women
 Stumbled through the midnight snow,
 With their fathers' houses blazing, 55
 And their dearest dead below!
 Oh, the horror of the tempest,
 As the flashing drift was blown,
 Crimsoned with the conflagration,
 And the roofs went thundering down! 60
 Oh, the prayers—the prayers and curses
 That together winged their flight
 From the maddened hearts of many
 Through that long and woful night!
 Till the fires began to dwindle, 65
 And the shots grew faint and few,
 And we heard the foeman's challenge
 Only as a far halloo.
 Till the silence once more settled
 O'er the gorges of the glen 70
 Broken only by the Cona
 Plunging through its naked den.
 Slowly from the mountain summit
 Was the drifting veil withdrawn,
 And the ghastly valley glimmered 75
 In the grey December dawn.
 Better had the morning never
 Dawned upon our dark despair!
 Black amidst the common whiteness
 Rose the spectral ruins there: 80
 But the sight of these was nothing
 More than wrings the wild dove's breast,

When she searches for her offspring
 Round the relics of her nest. 85
 For in many a spot the tartan
 Peered above the wintry heap,
 Marking where a dead Macdonald
 Lay within his frozen sleep.
 Tremblingly we scooped the covering
 From each kindred victim's head, 90
 And the living lips were burning
 On the cold ones of the dead.
 And I left them with their dearest—
 Dearest charge had every one—
 Left the maiden with her lover, 95
 Left the mother with her son.
 I alone of all was mateless—
 Far more wretched I than they,
 For the snow would not discover
 Where my lord and husband lay. 100
 But I wandered up the valley,
 Till I found him lying low,
 With the gash upon his bosom
 And the frown upon his brow—
 Till I found him lying murdered, 105
 Where he wooed me long ago!

III

Woman's weakness shall not shame me—
 Why should I have tears to shed?
 Could I rain them down like water,
 O my hero! on thy head— 110
 Could the cry of lamentation
 Wake thee from thy silent sleep,
 Could it set thy heart a-throbbing,
 It were mine to wail and weep!
 But I will not waste my sorrow, 115
 Lest the Campbell women say
 That the daughters of Clanranald
 Are as weak and frail as they.
 I had wept thee hadst thou fallen,
 Like our fathers, on thy shield, 120
 When a host of English foemen
 Camped upon a Scottish field—
 I had mourned thee, hadst thou perished
 With the foremost of thy name,
 When the valiant and the noble 125
 Died around the dauntless Graeme!
 But I will not wrong thee, husband!
 With my unavailing cries,
 Whilst thy cold and mangled body
 Stricken by the traitor lies; 130
 Whilst he counts the gold and glory
 That this hideous night has won,
 And his heart is big with triumph
 At the murder he has done.
 Other eyes than mine shall glisten, 135
 Other hearts be rent in twain,
 Ere the heathbells on thy hillock
 Wither in the autumn rain.
 Then I'll seek thee where thou sleepest,
 And I'll veil my weary head, 140
 Praying for a place beside thee,
 Dearer than my bridal bed:
 And I'll give thee tears, my husband!
 If the tears remain to me,
 When the widows of the foeman 145
 Cry the coronach for thee!

Charles Kingsley

1819-1875

SONG

(From *The Saint's Tragedy*, 1848)

Oh! that we two were Maying
Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;
Like children with violets playing
In the shade of the whispering trees.

Oh! that we two sat dreaming 5
On the sward of some sheep-trimmed down
Watching the white mist steaming
Over river and mead and town.

Oh! that we two lay sleeping
In our nest in the churchyard sod, 10
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's
breast,
And our souls at home with God.

THE SANDS OF DEE

(From *Allan Locke*, 1849)

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank with
foam 5
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand, 10
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair 15
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam, 20
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle
home
Across the sands of Dee.

THE THREE FISHERS

(1851)

Three fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him
the best,

And the children stood watching them out of
the town,
For men must work, and women must weep, 5
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went
down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked
at the shower, 10
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged
and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands 15
In the morning gleam as the tide went
down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their
hands
For those who will never come home to the
town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep; 20
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

CLEAR AND COOL

(Song from *The Water Babies*, 1863)

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming wear;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings, 5
And the ivied wall where the church-bell
rings,
Undefined, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl; 10
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled? 15
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and
child.

Strong and free, strong and free;
The floodgates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong.
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along 20
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned
again.
Undefined, for the undefiled; 25
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

George Eliot

(Mary Ann Evans)

1819-1880

"O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE"

(1867)

Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis
me movet, quam hoc exiguum.—*Cicero, ad*
Au., xii. 18.¹

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirr'd to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn 5
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like
stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's
search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven: 10
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggl'd, fail'd, and agoniz'd 15
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolv'd;
Its discords, quench'd by meeting harmonies, 20
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobb'd religiously in yearning song,
That watch'd to ease the burthen of the
world,
Laboriously tracing what must be; 25
And what may yet be better,—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shap'd it forth before the multitude,
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mix'd with love,— 30
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb,
Unread forever.

This is life to come, 35
Which martyr'd men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love, 40
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffus'd,
And in diffusion ever more intense!
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world. 45

¹ That long time, when I shall not be, moves me
more than this brief, mortal life.

Arthur Hugh Clough

1819-1861

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

(From *Ambarvalia*, 1843)

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried;
When fell the night, upsprung the breeze, 5
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:
E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those, whom year by year unchanged, 10
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?
At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered—
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed, 15
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!
To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true. 20
But O blithe breeze! and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.
One port, methought, alike they sought, 25
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there.

"WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS,
NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING"¹

(From the same)

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change. 5
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip Thou dost not fall.

SAY NOT, THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT
AVAILETH

(From the same)

Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.
If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars; 5
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fiers,
And, but for you, possess the field.
For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain, 10
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

¹ V. note on Arnold's *Thyrsis*, p. 636, *supra*.

¹ *St. James*, i. 17.

George Meredith

1828-1909

JUGGLING JERRY

(From *Modern Love and Poems of the English Roadside*, 1862)

I

Pitch here the tent, while the old horse grazes:
 By the old hedge-side we'll halt a stage.
 It's nigh my last above the daisies:
 My next leaf'll be man's blank page.
 Yes, my old girl! and it's no use crying: 5
 Juggler, constable, king, must bow.
 One that outjuggles all's been spying
 Long to have me, and he has me now.

II

We've travelled times to this old common:
 Often we've hung our pots in the gorse. 10
 We've had a stirring life, old woman!
 You, and I, and the old grey horse.
 Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,
 Found us coming to their call:
 Now they'll miss us at their stations: 15
 There's a Juggler outjuggles all!

III

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
 Over the duck-pond the willow shakes.
 Easy to think that grieving's folly,
 When the hand's firm as driven stakes! 20
 Ay, when we're strong, and braced, and manful,
 Life's a sweet fiddle: but we're a batch
 Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful:
 Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

IV

Here's where the lads of the village cricket: 25
 I was a lad not wide from here:
 Couldn't I whip off the bale from the wicket?
 Like an old world those days appear!
 Donkey, sheep, geese, and thatched ale-
 house—I know them!
 They are old friends of my halts, and seem, 30
 Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe them:
 Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

V

Juggling's no sin, for we must have victual:
 Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
 Holding one's own makes us juggle no little; 35
 But, to increase it, hard juggling's the rule.
 You that are sneering at my profession,
 Haven't you juggled a vast amount?
 There's the Prime Minister, in one Session,
 Juggles more games than my sins 'll count. 40

VI

I've murdered insects with mock thunder:
 Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.
 I've made bread from the bump of wonder:
 That's my business, and there's my tale.

Fashion and rank all praised the professor: 45
 Ay! and I've had my smile from the Queen:
 Bravo, Jerry! she meant: God bless her!
 Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

VII

I've studied men from my topsy-turvey
 Close, and I reckon, rather true. 50
 Some are fine fellows: some, right scurvy:
 Most, a dash between the two.
 But it's a woman, old girl, that makes me
 Think more kindly of the race:
 And it's a woman, old girl, that shakes me 55
 When the Great Juggler I must face.

VIII

We two were married, due and legal:
 Honest we've lived since we've been one.
 Lord! I could then jump like an eagle:
 You danced bright as a bit o' the sun. 60
 Birds in a May-bush, we were! right merry!
 All night we kiss'd, we juggled all day.
 Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!
 Now from his old girl he's juggled away.

IX

It's past parsons to console us: 65
 No, nor no doctor fetch for me:
 I can die without my bolus;¹
 Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
 Parson and Doctor!—don't they love rarely,
 Fighting the devil in other men's fields! 70
 Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
 Then see how the rascal yields!

X

I, lass, have lived no gypsy, flaunting
 Finery while his poor helpmate grubs:
 Coin I've stored, and you won't be wanting: 75
 You sha'n't beg from the troughs and tubs.
 Nobly you've stuck to me, though in his
 kitchen
 Many a Marquis would hail you Cook!
 Palaces you could have ruled and grown rich in,
 But your old Jerry you never forsook. 80

XI

Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it;
 Let's have comfort and be at peace.
 Once a stout draught made me light as a linnet.
 Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
 May be—for none see in that black hollow— 85
 It's just a place where we're held in pawn,
 And when the Great Juggler makes as to
 swallow,
 It's just the sword trick—I ain't quite gone!

XII

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
 Gold-like and warm: it's the prime of May. 90
 Better than mortar, brick and putty,
 Is God's house on a blowing day.
 Lean me more up the mound; now I feel it:
 All the old heath-smells! Ain't it strange?
 There's the world laughing, as if to conceal it, 95
 But He's by us, juggling the change.

¹ Pill.

XIII

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
 Once—it's long gone—when two gulls we
 beheld,
 Which, as the moon got up, were flying
 Down a big wave that sparkled and swelled.
 Crack, went a gun: one fell: the second 101
 Wheeled round him twice, and was off for
 new luck:
 Where in the dark her white wing beckon'd:—
 Drop me a kiss—I'm the bird dead-struck!

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

(From *Poems and Lyrics*, 1883)

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
 Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
 Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
 Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose.
 Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those. 5
 And now upon his western wing he leaned,
 Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
 Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
 Soaring through wider zones that pricked his
 scars
 With memory of the old revolt from Awe, 10
 He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
 Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and
 sank.
 Around the ancient track marched, rank on
 rank,
 The army of unalterable law.

LOVE IN THE VALLEY

(From the same)

Under yonder beech-tree single on the green-
 sward,
 Couched with her arms behind her golden
 head,
 Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
 Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
 Had I the heart to slip an arm beneath her, 5
 Press her parting lips as her waist I gather
 slow,
 Waking in amazement she could not but
 embrace me:
 Then would she hold me and never let me
 go? . . .
 Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swal-
 low,
 Swift as the swallow along the river's light 10
 Circling the surface to meet his mirrored
 winglets,
 Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her
 flight.
 Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine
 tops,
 Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of
 sun,
 She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
 Hard, but O the glory of the winning were
 she won! . . . 16

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
 Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
 Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle note unvaried,
 Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown
 eve-jar. 20
 Darker grows the valley, more and more for-
 getting;
 So were it with me if forgetting could be
 willed.
 Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling
 well-spring,
 Tell it to forget the source that keeps it
 filled. . . .

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
 Clipped by naked hills, on violet shaded
 snow: 26
 Eastward large and still lights up a bower of
 moonrise,
 Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
 Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-
 tree
 Gazes in this whiteness: nightlong could I. 30
 Here may life on death or death on life be
 painted.
 Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!
 Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
 I would speak my heart out: heaven is my
 need.
 Every woodland tree is flushing like the dog-
 wood, 35
 Flashing like the whitebeam,¹ swaying like
 the reed.
 Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October;
 Streaming like the flag-reed South-West
 blown;
 Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted white-
 beam:
 All seem to know what is for heaven alone. 40

Henry Austin Dobson

1840

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

(From *Old World Idylls*, 1883)

He lived in that past Georgian day
 When men were less inclined to say
 That "Time is Gold," and overlay
 With toil their pleasure;
 He held some land, and dwelt thereon,— 5
 Where, I forget,—the house is gone;
 His Christian name, I think was John,—
 His surname, Leisure.

Reynolds¹ has painted him,—a face
 Filled with a fine, old-fashioned grace, 10
 Fresh-colored, frank, with ne'er a trace
 Of trouble shaded;
 The eyes are blue, the hair is drest
 In plainest way,—one hand is prest
 Deep in a flapped canary vest, 15
 With buds brocaded.

¹ A small tree, whose leaves are silvery underneath.¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds, a famous English portrait painter. Cf. p. 435, *supra*.

He wears a brown old Brunswick coat,
With silver buttons,—round his throat,
A soft cravat;—in all you note

An elder fashion,—
A strangeness, which, to us who shine
In shapely hats,—whose coats combine
All harmonies of hue and line,
Inspires compassion.

He lived so long ago, you see!
Men were untravelled then, but we,
Like Ariel, post o'er land and sea
With careless parting;
He found it quite enough for him
To smoke his pipe in "garden trim,"
And watch about the fish tank's brim,
The swallows darting.

He liked the well-wheel's creaking tongue,—
He liked the thrush that stopped and sung,—
He liked the drone of flies among
His netted peaches;
He liked to watch the sunlight fall
Athwart his ivied orchard wall;
Or pause to catch the cuckoo's call
Beyond the beeches.

His were the times of Paint and Patch,
And ye no Ranelagh² could match
The sober doves that round his thatch
Spread tails and sidled;
He liked their ruffling, puffed content,—
For him their drowsy wheelings meant
More than a Mall of Beaus that bent,
Or Belles that bridled.

Not that, in truth, when life began,
He shunned the flutter of the fan;
He too had maybe "pinked his man"
In Beauty's quarrel;
But now his "fervent youth" had flown
Where lost things go; and he was grown
As staid and slow-paced as his own
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held
That no composer's score excelled
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled
Its jovial riot;
But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—
His idly meditative days,—
His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose
Beyond a sunny summer doze;
He never troubled his repose
With fruitless prying;
But held, as law for high and low,
What God withholds no man can know,
And smiled away inquiry so,
Without replying.

We read—alas, how much we read!
The jumbled strifes of creed and creed
With endless controversies feed
Our groaning tables;
His books—and they sufficed him—were
Cotton's "Montaigne," "The Grave" of Blair,
A "Walton" much the worse for wear—
And "Æsop's Fables."

One more,—*"The Bible."* Not that he
Had searched its pages as deep as we;
No sophistries could make him see
Its slender credit;
It may be that he could not count
The sires and sons to Jesse's fount,—
He liked the "Sermon on the Mount,"—
And more, he read it.

Once he had loved, but failed to wed,
A red-cheeked lass who long was dead;
His ways were far too slow, he said,
To quite forget her;
And still when time had turned him gray,
The earliest hawthorn buds in May
Would find his lingering feet astray,
Where first he met her.

*"In Cælo Quies"*³ heads the stone
On Leisure's grave,—now little known,
A tangle of wild-rose has grown
So thick across it;
The "Benefactions" still declare
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,
And "twelve Pence Yearly to Prepare
A Christmas Posset."

Lie softly, Leisure! Doubtless you
With too serene a conscience drew
Your easy breath, and slumbered through
The gravest issue;
But we to whom our age allows
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
Look down upon your narrow house,
Old friend, and miss you!

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE"

"Hark! I hear the sound of Coaches!"
*Beggar's Opera.*¹

Seventeen hundred and thirty-nine:—
That was the date of this tale of mine.

First Great George was buried and gone:
George the Second was plodding on.

London then as the "Guides" aver,
Shared its glories with *Westminster*;

And people of rank, to correct their "tone,"
Went out of town to *Marybone*.

² At rest in Heaven.

¹ An opera by John Gay: the characters are highway-men, pickpockets, etc.

³ Pleasure gardens in Chelsea, near London, famous for their entertainments in the 18th century.

- Those were the days of the war with *Spain*,
Porto-Bello would soon be ta'en; 10
- Whitefield preached to the colliers grim,
Bishops in lawn sleeves preached at him;
- Walpole talked of "a man and his price;"
Nobody's virtue was over-nice;—
- Those, in fine, were the brave days when 15
Coaches were stopped by . . . *Highwaymen!*
- And of all the knights of the gentle trade
Nobody bolder than "BEAU BROCADE."
- This they knew on the whole way down;
Best,—maybe,—at the "*Oak and Crown.*" 20
- (For timorous citis² on their pilgrimage
Would "club" for a "Guard" to ride the stage;
- And the Guard that rode on more than one
Was the Host of this hostel's sister's son.)
- Open we here on a March-day fine, 25
Under the oak with the hanging sign.
- There was Barber DICK with his basin by;
Cobbler JOE with the patch on his eye:
- Portly product of Beef and Beer,
JOHN the host he was standing near. 30
- Straining and creaking, with wheels awry,
Lumbering came the "*Plymouth Fly.*"
- Lumbering up from *Bagshot Heath*,
Guard in the basket armed to the teeth;
- Passengers heavily armed inside; 35
Not the less surely the coach had been tried!
- Tried!—but a couple of miles away,
By a well-dressed man!—in the open day!
- Tried successfully, never a doubt,—
Pockets of passengers all turned out! 40
- Cloak-bags rifled and cushions ripped,—
Even an Ensign's wallet stripped!
- Even a Methodist hosier's wife
Offered the choice of her Money or Life!
- Highwayman's manners no less polite, 45
Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right;—
- Sorry to find the company poor,
Hoped that next time they'd travel with more;—
- Plucked them all at his ease, in short:—
Such was the "*Plymouth Fly's*" report. 50
- Sympathy! horror! and wonderment!
"Catch the Villain!" (But Nobody went.)
- Hosier's wife led into the Bar;
(That's where the best strong waters are!)
- Followed the tale of the hundred-and-one 55
Things that Somebody ought to have done.
- Ensign (of Bragg's) made a terrible clangour:
But for the Ladies had drawn his hanger!
- Robber, of course, was "Beau Brocade;"
Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid. 60
- Devonshire DOLLY, plump and red,
Spoke from the gallery overhead;—
- Spoke it out boldly, staring hard:—
"Why didn't you shoot then, GEORGE the Guard?"
- Spoke it out bolder, seeing him mute:— 65
"GEORGE the Guard, why didn't you shoot?"
- Portly JOHN grew pale and red,
(John was afraid of her, people said;)
- Gasped that "DOLLY was surely cracked,"
(John was afraid of her—that's a fact!) 70
- GEORGE the Guard grew red and pale,
Slowly finished his quart of ale:—
- "Shoot? Why—Rabbit him!—didn't he shoot?"
Muttered—"The Baggage was far too 'cute!'"
- "Shoot? Why he'd flashed the pan in his eye!" 75
Muttered—"She'd pay for it by and by!"
Further than this he made no reply.
- Nor could a further reply be made,
For George was in league with "Beau Brocade!"
- And John the Host, in his wakefullest state, 80
Was not—on the whole—immaculate.
- But nobody's virtue was over-nice
When Walpole talked of "a man and his price;"
- And wherever Purity found abode,
'Twas certainly not on a posting road. 85
- II
- "Forty" followed to "thirty-nine."
Glorious days of the *Hanover* line!
- Princes were born, and drums were banged;
Now and then batches of Highwaymen hanged.
- "Glorious news!"—from the *Spanish Main*; 90
PORTO-BELLO at last was ta'en.

² Citizens.

"Glorious news"—for the liquor trade;
Nobody dreamed of "Beau Brocade."

People were thinking of *Spanish Crowns*;
Money was coming from seaport towns! 95

Nobody dreamed of "Beau Brocade,"
(Only DOLLY the Chambermaid!)

Blessings on Vernon! Fill up the cans;
Money was coming in "*Flys*" and "*Vans*."

Possibly John the Host had heard; 100
Also, certainly, GEORGE the Guard.

And DOLLY had possibly tidings, too,
That made her rise from her bed anew,

Plump as ever, but stern of eye,
With a fixed intention to warn the "Fly." 105

Lingering only at John his door,
Just to make sure of a jerky snore;

Saddling the grey mare, *Dumpling Star*,
Fetching the pistol out of the bar;

(The old horse-pistol that, they say, 110
Came from the battle of Malplaquet;)

Loading with powder that maids would use,
Even in "Forty," to clear the flues;

And a couple of silver buttons, the Squire
Gave her, away in *Devonshire*. 115

These she wadded—for want of better—
With the B-sh-p of L-nd-n's "Pastoral Letter;"

Looked to the flint, and hung the whole,
Ready to use, at her pocket-hole.

Thus equipped and accoutred, DOLLY 120
Clattered away to "*Exciseman's Folly*;"—

Such was the name of a ruined abode,
Just on the edge of the *London* road.

Thence she thought she might safely try,
As soon as she saw it, to warn the "Fly." 125

But, as chance fell out, her rein she drew,
As the BEAU came cantering into view.

By the light of the moon she could see him drest
In his famous gold-sprigged tambour vest;

And under his silver-gray surtout, 130
The laced, historical coat of blue,

That he wore when he went to *London-Spaw*,
And robbed Sir MUNGO MUCKLETHRAW.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Trembling a little, but not afraid.) 135
"Stand and Deliver, O BEAU BROCADE!"

But the BEAU drew nearer and would not
speak,
For he saw by the moonlight a rosy cheek;

And a spavined mare with a rusty hide;
And a girl with her hand at her pocket-side. 140

So never a word he spoke as yet,
For he thought 'twas a freak of MEG or BET;—
A freak of the "*Rose*" or the "*Rummer*" set.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Tremulous now, and sore afraid), 145
"Stand and Deliver, O 'Beau Brocade'!"

Firing then, out of sheer alarm,
Hit the BEAU in the bridle-arm.

Button the first went none knows where,
But it carried away his *solitaire*; 150

Button the second a circuit made,
Glanced in under the shoulder blade;—
Down from the saddle fell "BEAU BROCADE!"

Down from the saddle and never stirred!—
DOLLY grew white as a *Windsor* curd, 155

Slipped not less from the mare, and bound
Strips of her kirtle about her wound.

Then, lest his Worship should rise and flee,
Fettered his ankles—tenderly.

Jumped on his chestnut, BET the fleet 160
(Called after BET of *Portugal Street*);

Came like the wind to the old Inn-door;—
Roused fat JOHN from a three-fold snore;—

Vowed she'd 'peach if he misbehaved . . . 165
Briefly, the "*Plymouth Fly*" was saved!

Staines and *Windsor* were all on fire:—
DOLLY was wed to a *Yorkshire* squire;
Went to Town at the K-g's desire!

But whether His M-j-ssty saw her or not,
HOGARTH jotted her down on the spot; 170

And something of DOLLY one still may trace
In the fresh contours of his "*Milkmaid's*" face.

George the Guard fled over the sea:
John had a fit—of perplexity;

Turned King's evidence, sad to state;— 175
But John was never immaculate.

As for the BEAU, he was duly tried,
When his wound was healed, at *Whitsuntide*;

Served—for a day—as the last of "sights,"
To the world of *St. James's Street* and "*White's*."

Went on his way to TYBURN TREE 181
With a pomp befitting his high degree.

Every privilege rank confers:—
Bouquet of pinks at *St. Sepulchre's*;

Flagon of ale at *Holborn Bar*; 185
Friends (in mourning) to follow his Car—
("t" is omitted where our Heroes are!)

Every one knows the speech he made;
Swore that he "rather admired the Jade!"

Waved to the crowd with his gold-laced hat: 190
Talked to the Chaplain after that;

Turned to the Topsman undismayed . . .
This was the finish of "BEAU BROCADE!"

And this is the Ballad that seemed to hide;
In the leaves of a dusty "Londoners' Guide;" 195

"*Humbly Inscríb'd (with curls and tails)*
By the Author to Frederick, Prince of Wales:—

"*Published by FRANCIS and OLIVER PINE;*
Ludgate-Hill, at the Blackmoor Sign.
Seventeen-Hundred-and-Thirty-Nine." 200

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

A SONG OF THE ROAD

(From *Underwoods*, 1887)

The gauger walked with willing foot,
And aye the gauger played the flute;
And what would Master Gauger play
But *Over the hills and far away!*

Whene'er I buckle on my pack 5
And foot it gaily in the track
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,
I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the self-same way— 10
The self-same air for me you play;
For I do think and so do you
It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face
To go to this or t'other place?
There's nothing under heav'n so blue 15
That's fairly worth the travelling to.

On every hand the roads begin,
And people walk with zeal therein;
But wheresoe'er the highways tend,
Be sure there's nothing at the end. 20

Then follow you wherever hie
The travelling mountains of the sky.
Or let the streams of civil mode
Direct your choice upon the road;

For one and all, or high or low, 25
Will lead you where you wish to go;
And one and all go night and day
Over the hills and far away!

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

(From the same)

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes 5
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake; 10
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

THE COUNTERBLAST—1886

(From the same)

My bonny man, the warld, it's true,
Was made for neither me nor you;
It's just a place to warstle¹ through,
As Job confessed o't; 5
And aye the best that we'll can do
Is mak the best o't.

There's rowth² o' wrang, I'm free to say:
The simmer brunt,³ the winter blae,⁴
The face of earth a' fyled⁵ wi' clay
An' dour wi' chuckies,⁶ 10
An' life a rough an' land'art play
For country buckies.

An' food's anither name for clart;⁷
An' beasts and brambles bite an' scart;⁸
An' what would WE be like, my heart! 15
If bared o' claethin'?⁹
—Aweel, I cannae mend your cart:
It's that or naethin'.

A feck¹⁰ o' folk frae first to last 19
Have through this queer experience passed:
Twa-three, I ken, just damn an' blast!¹¹
The hale transaction;
But twa-three ithers, east an' wast,
Fand satisfaction.

Whaur braid¹² the briery muirs¹³ expand, 25
A waefu' an' a weary land,
The bumblebees, a gowden band,
Are blithely hingin';
An' there the canty¹⁴ wanderer fand
The laverock¹⁵ singin'. 30

¹ Wrestle.

² Abundance.

³ Cold, with east winds.

⁴ Hard with stones.

⁵ Scare.

⁶ Curse.

⁷ Lively.

⁸ Clothing.

⁹ Broad.

¹⁰ Quantity.

¹¹ Moors.

¹² Lark.

¹³ Burnt, hot.

¹⁴ Dirtied.

¹⁵ Grease or dirt.

Trout in the burn¹⁶ grow great as herr'n;
The simple sheep can find their fair'n';¹⁷
The wind blows clean about the cairn

Wi' caller¹⁸ air;

The muircook¹⁹ an' the barefit bairn 35
Are happy there.

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Sic-like, the howes²⁰ o' life to some:
Green loans²¹ whaur they ne'er fash their thumb,
But mark the muckle winds that come,
Soo-pin'²² and cool, 40
Or hear the powrin' burnie drum²³
In the shilfa's²⁴ pool.

The evil wi' the guid they tak;
They ca' a gray thing gray, no black;
To a steigh brag,²⁵ a stubborn back 45
Addressin' daily;
An' up the rude, unbieldy²⁶ track
O' life, gang gaily.

What you would like's a palace ha',
Or Sinday parlour dink²⁷ and braw' 50
Wi' a' things ordered in a raw
By denty leddies.
Weel, than, ye cannae hae't, that's a'
That to be said is.

An' since at life ye've ta'en the grue,²⁸ 55
An' winnae blithely hirstle²⁹ through,
Ye've fund the very thing to do—
That's to drink speerit;
An' shùne³⁰ we'll hear the last o' you—
An' blithe³¹ to hear it! 60

The shoon ye coft,³² the life ye lead,
Ithers will heir when aince ye're deid;
They'll heir your tasteless bite o' breid,
An' find it sappy;³³ 65
They'll to your dulefù' house succeed,
An' there be happy.

An' whan a glum an' fractious wean
Has sat an' sullened by his lane
Till, wi' a rowstin' skelp,³⁴ he's taen
An' shoo'd to bed— 70
The ither bairns a' fa' to play'n,
As gleg's a gleg.³⁵

A LAD THAT IS GONE

(From the same)

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

¹⁶ Brook. ¹⁷ Fodder. ¹⁸ Cold. ¹⁹ Moor-cock.
²⁰ Valleys. ²¹ An open space between fields of corn.
²² Sweeping. ²³ Pouring brook beat rhythmically.
²⁴ Chaffinch. ²⁵ Steep hill. ²⁶ Uncomfortable.
²⁷ Nest. ²⁸ Grudge.
²⁹ To push one's self along over a rough surface.
³⁰ Soon. ³¹ Glad. ³² The shoes you cast off.
³³ Tasty. ³⁴ Rough slap. ³⁵ As quickly as a hawk.

Mull was astern, Rum¹ on the port, 5
Egg² on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul:
Where is that glory now?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I? 10
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul, 15
Give me the lad that's gone!

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day 20
Over the sea to Skye.

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is one.

REQUIEM

(From the same)

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live, and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me: 5
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Thomas Carlyle

1795–1881

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES¹

(From *Sartor Resartus*, 1831)

"Well sang the Hebrew Psalmist:² "If I
take the wings of the morning and dwell in
the uttermost parts of the universe, God is
there." Thou thyself, O cultivated reader,

¹ Two small islands in the Hebrides.

² The "Philosophy of Clothes" by which Carlyle meant the true significance of the relations in which outward, visible, and material things stand to the inner or underlying world of reality or spirit, is the theme of the book *Sartor Resartus* (the tailor patched or restored). Carlyle regarded the whole world of the senses—Nature, man's history, institutions, and customs—as the vesture, or clothes, of the spirit beneath. This philosophy he puts in the mouth of an imaginary German professor, Herr Teufelsdröckh, whose "Life and Opinions" are supposed to be set forth by his friend the editor. "A young and enthusiastic Englishman" Teufelsdröckh is described as professor of *Allerlei Wissenschaft* (all sorts of knowledge) at Weissenichtwo (Don't know where), a name which is the equivalent of Sir Thomas More's Utopia.
³ *Psalms*, cxxxix. 9–10.

who too probably art no psalmist, but a Prosaist, knowing God only by tradition, knowest thou any corner of the world where at least Force is not? The drop which thou shakest from thy wet hand, rests not where it falls, but tomorrow thou findest it swept away; already on the wings of the North-wind, it is nearing the Tropic of Cancer. How came it to evaporate, and not lie motionless? Thinkest thou there is aught motionless; without Force, and utterly dead?

"As I rode through the Schwarzwald,* I said to myself: That little fire which glows star-like across the dark growing (*nachtende*) moor, where the sooty smith bends over his anvil, and thou hopest to replace thy lost horse-shoe,—is it a detached, separated speck, cut off from the whole Universe; or indissolubly joined to the whole? Thou fool, that smithy-fire was primarily kindled at the Sun; is fed by air that circulates from before Noah's Deluge, from beyond the Dog-star; therein, with Iron Force, and Coal Force, and the far stranger Force of Man, are cunning affinities and battles and victories of Force brought about; it is a little ganglion, or nervous centre, in the great vital system of Immensity. Call it, if thou wilt, an unconscious Altar, kindled on the bosom of the All; whose iron sacrifice, whose iron smoke and influence, reach quite through the All; whose dingy Priest, not by word, yet by brain and sinew, preaches forth the mystery of Force; nay, preaches forth (exoterically⁴ enough) one little textlet from the Gospel of Freedom, the Gospel of Man's Force, commanding, and one day to be all-commanding.

"Detached, separated! I say there is no such separation: nothing hitherto was ever stranded, cast aside; but all, were it only a withered leaf, works together with all; is borne forward on the bottomless, shoreless flood of Action, and lives through perpetual metamorphoses. The withered leaf is not dead and lost, there are Forces in it and around it, though working in inverse order; else how could it rot? Despise not the rag from which man makes Paper, or the litter from which the earth makes Corn. Rightly viewed no meanest object is insignificant; all objects are as windows, through which the philosophic eye looks into infinitude itself."

Again leaving that wondrous Schwarzwald Smithy-Altar, what vacant, high-sailing airships are these, and whither will they sail with us?

"All visible things are emblems; what thou

seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, is not there at all: Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea, and *body* it forth. Hence Clothes, as despicable as we think them, are so unspeakably significant. Clothes, from the King's mantle downwards, are emblematic, not of want only, but of a manifold cunning Victory over Want. On the other hand, all Emblematic things are properly Clothes, thought-woven or hand-woven: must not the Imagination weave Garments, visible Bodies, wherein the else invisible creations and inspirations of our Reason, are, like Spirits, revealed, and first become all-powerful;—the rather if, as we often see, the Hand too aid her, and (by wool Clothes or otherwise) reveal such even to the outward eye?

"Men are properly said to be clothed with Authority, clothed with Beauty, with Curses, and the like. Nay, if you consider it, what is Man himself, and his whole terrestrial life, but an Emblem; a Clothing or visible Garment for that divine Me of his, cast hither, like a light-particle, down from Heaven? Thus is he said also to be clothed with a Body.

"Language is called the Garment of Thought: however, it should rather be, Language is the Flesh-Garment, the Body of Thought. I said that Imagination wove this Flesh-Garment; and does not she? Metaphors are her stuff: examine Language; what, if you except some primitive elements (of natural sound), what is it all but Metaphors, recognized as such, or no longer recognized; still fluid and florid, or now solid-grown and colorless? If those same primitive elements are the osseous fixtures in the Flesh-Garment, Language,—then are Metaphors its muscles and tissues, and living integuments. An unmetaphorical style you shall in vain seek for; is not your very *Attention* a *Stretching-to*? The difference lies here: some styles are lean, adust,⁵ wiry, the muscle itself seems osseous; some are even quite pallid, hunger-bitten, and dead-looking; while others again glow in the flush of health and vigorous self-growth, sometimes (as in my own case) not without an apoplectic tendency. Moreover, there are sham Metaphors, which overhanging that same Thought's Body (best naked), and deceptively bedizening, or bolstering it out, may be called its false stuffings, superfluous show-cloaks (*Putz-Mantel*), and tawdry woolen rags: whereof he that runs and reads may gather whole hampers,—and burn them."

Than which paragraph on Metaphors did the reader ever chance to see a more surpris-

* The Black Forest.

⁴ In a manner intelligible to the uninitiated, the public.

⁵ Dried up with heat, dry-as-dust.

ingly metaphorical? However, that is not our chief grievance; the Professor continues:—

"Why multiply instances? It is written, the Heavens and the earth shall fade away like a Vesture,* which indeed they are: the Time-vesture of the Eternal. Whatsoever sensibly exists, whatsoever represents Spirit to Spirit, is properly a Clothing, a suit of Raiment, put on for a season, and to be laid off. Thus in this one pregnant subject of Clothes, rightly understood, is included all that men have thought, dreamed, done, and been: the whole External Universe and what it holds is but Clothing; and the essence of all Science lies in the Philosophy of Clothes."

NATURAL SUPERNATURALISM

(From the same)

It is in his stupendous Section, headed *Natural Supernaturalism*, that the Professor first becomes a Seer; and, after long effort, such as we have witnessed, finally subdues under his feet this refractory Clothes-Philosophy, and takes victorious possession thereof. Phantasms enough he has had to struggle with; "Cloth-webs and Cobwebs," of Imperial Mantles, Superannuated Symbols, and what not: yet still did he courageously pierce through. Nay, worst of all, two quite mysterious, world-embracing Phantasms, TIME and SPACE, have ever hovered round him, perplexing and bewildering: but with these also he now resolutely grapples, these also he victoriously rends asunder. In a word, he has looked fixedly on Existence, till, one after the other, its earthly hulls and garnitures have all melted away; and now, to his rapid vision, the interior celestial Holy of Holies lies disclosed.

Here, therefore, properly it is that the Philosophy of Clothes attains to Transcendentalism;¹ this last leap, can we but clear it, takes us safe into the promised land, where *Palingenesia*,² in all senses, may be considered as beginning. "Courage, then!" may our Diogenes³ exclaim, with better right than Diogenes the First once did. This stupendous Section we, after long painful meditation, have found not to be unintelligible; but on the contrary to grow clear, nay radiant, and all-illuminating. Let the reader, turning on it what utmost force of speculative intellect is in him, do his part; as we, by judicious se-

lection and adjustment, shall study to do ours:

"Deep has been, and is, the significance of Miracles," thus quietly begins the Professor; "far deeper perhaps than we imagine. Meanwhile the question of questions were: What specially is a Miracle? To that Dutch King of Siam, an icicle had been a miracle; whose had carried with him an air-pump, and phial of vitriolic ether, might have worked a miracle. To my Horse again who unhappily is still more unscientific, do not I work a miracle, and magical 'Open sesame' every time I please to pay twopence, and open for him an impassable *Schlagbaum*, or shut Turnpike?"

"But is not a real Miracle simply a violation of the Laws of Nature?" ask several. Whom I answer by this new question: What are the Laws of Nature? To me perhaps the rising of one from the dead were no violation of these Laws, but a confirmation; were some far deeper Law, now first penetrated into, and by Spiritual Force, even as the rest have all been, brought to bear on us with its Material Force.

"Here too may some inquire, not without astonishment: On what ground shall one, that can make Iron swim,* come and declare that therefore he can teach Religion? To us, truly, of the Nineteenth Century, such declaration were inept enough; which nevertheless to our fathers, of the First Century, was full of meaning.

"But is it not the deepest Law of Nature that she be constant?" cries an illuminated class: 'Is not the Machine of the Universe fixed to move by unalterable rules?' Probable enough, good friends: nay, I too must believe that the God, whom ancient, inspired men, assert to be 'without variableness or shadow of turning,' does indeed never change; that Nature, that the Universe, which no one whom it so pleases can be prevented from calling a Machine, does move by the most unalterable rules. And now of you, too, I make the inquiry: What those same unalterable rules, forming the complete Statute-Book of Nature, may possibly be?

"They stand written in our Works of Science, say you; in the accumulated records of man's Experience?—Was Man with his Experience present at the Creation, then, to see how it all went on? Have any deepest scientific individuals yet dived down to the foundations of the Universe, and gauged everything there? Did the Maker take them into His counsel; that they read His ground-plan of the incom-

* In the tale of Ali Baba, in *The Arabian Nights*, *Open Sesame*, was the magic phrase by which the robbers' cavern was opened.

¹ V. II *Kings*, vi. 6.

* *Palm.*, cii. 26-27.

¹ i. e. succeeds in passing beyond the world of appearance woven by the senses on the loom of "Time and Space," to the world of the Real, the Essential which transcends the visible and tangible.

² The new birth, the regeneration.

³ Diogenes Teufelsdröckh.

prehensible All; and can say, This stands marked therein, and no more than this? Alas, not in any wise! These scientific individuals have been nowhere but where we also are; have seen some handbreadths deeper than we see into the Deep that is infinite, without bottom as without shore.

"Laplace's Book on the Stars," wherein he exhibits that certain Planets, with their Satellites, gyrate round our worthy Sun, at a rate and in a course, which, by greatest good fortune, he and the like of him have succeeded in detecting,—is to me as precious as to another. But is this what thou namest 'Mechanism of the Heavens,' and 'System of the World;' this, wherein Sirius and the Pleiades, and all Herschel's Fifteen-thousand Suns' per minute, being left out, some paltry handful of Moons, and inert Balls, had been—looked at, nicknamed, and marked in the Zodiacal way-bill; so that we can now prate of their Whereabout; their How, their Why, their What, being hid from us, as in the signless Inane?

"System of Nature! To the wisest man, wide as is his vision, Nature remains of quite infinite depth, of quite infinite expansion; and all Experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries, and measured square-miles. The course of Nature's phases, on this our little fraction of a Planet, is partially known to us; but who knows what deeper courses these depend on; what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little Epicycle⁸ revolves on? To the Minnow every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident, of its little native Creek may have become familiar: but does the Minnow understand the Ocean Tides and periodic Currents, the Trade-winds, and Monsoons, and Moon's Eclipses; by all which the condition of its little Creek is regulated, and may, from time to time, (unmiraculously enough), be quite upset and reversed? Such a minnow is man; his Creek this Planet Earth; his Ocean the immeasurable All; his Monsoons and periodic Currents the mysterious Course of Providence through Aeons of Aeons.

"We speak of the Volume of Nature: and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God. To read it! Dost thou, does man, so much as well know the Alphabet thereof? With its Words, Sentences, and grand

descriptive Pages, poetical and philosophical, spread out through Solar Systems, and Thousands of Years, we shall not try thee. It is a Volume written in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing; of which even Prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line. As for your Institutes, and Academies of Science they strive bravely; and from amid the thick-crowded, inextricably intertwined hieroglyphic writing, pick out by dexterous combination, some Letters in the vulgar Character,⁹ and therefrom put together this and the other economic Recipe, of high avail in Practice. That Nature is more than some boundless Volume of such Recipes, or huge well-nigh inexhaustible Domestic-Cookery Book, of which the whole secret will in this manner one day evolve itself, the fewest dream.

"Custom," continues the Professor, "doth make dotards of us all. Consider well, thou wilt find that Custom is the greatest of Weavers; and weaves air-raidment for all the Spirits of the Universe; whereby indeed these dwell with us visibly, as ministering servants, in our houses and workshops; but their spiritual nature becomes, to the most, for ever hidden. Philosophy complains that Custom has hoodwinked us, from the first; that we do everything by Custom, even Believe by it; that our very Axioms, let us boast of Free-thinking as we may, are oftentimes simply such Beliefs as we have never heard questioned. Nay, what is Philosophy throughout but a continual battle against Custom; an ever-renewed effort to transcend the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental?

"Innumerable are the illusions and legerdemain-tricks of Custom; but of all these, perhaps the cleverest is her knack of persuading us that the Miraculous, by simple repetition, ceases to be Miraculous. True, it is by this means we live: for man must work as well as wonder: and herein is Custom so far a kind nurse, guiding him to his true benefit. But she is a fond foolish nurse, or rather we are false foolish nurslings, when, in our resting and reflecting hours, we prolong the same deception. Am I to view the Stupendous with stupid indifference, because I have seen it twice, or two hundred or two-million times? There is no reason in Nature or in Art why I should: unless, indeed, I am a mere Work-Machine, for whom the divine gift of Thought were no other than the terrestrial gift of Steam is to the Steam-engine; a power whereby cotton might be spun, and money and money's worth realised.

"Notable enough too, here as elsewhere,

⁹ i. e. the common writing, legible to all.

⁸ Laplace, a noted French astronomer (1749–1827), wrote *Mécanique Céleste*, and *Exposition du Système du Monde*, to which Carlyle refers in the next sentence.

⁹ Sir William Herschel (1738–1822), the discoverer of the planet Saturn, erected a great telescope (completed in 1789), by means of which he greatly extended our knowledge of the heavens and enlarged our conception of the vastness of the universe. Carlyle means, that in every minute of time, 15,000 stars rise and begin their westward course across the sky.

⁸ A cycle moving upon another cycle.

wilt thou find the potency of Names; which indeed are but one kind of such custom-woven, wonder-hiding Garments. Witchcraft, and all manner of Spectre-work, and Demonology, we have now named Madness, and Diseases of the Nerves. Seldom reflecting that still the new question comes upon us: What is Madness, what are Nerves? Ever, as before, does Madness remain a mysterious-terrific, altogether infernal boiling-up of the Nether Chaotic Deep, through this fair-painted Vision of Creation, which swims thereon, which we name the Real. Was Luther's Picture of the Devil¹⁰ less a Reality, whether it were formed within the bodily eye, or without it? In every, the wisest Soul, lies a whole world of internal Madness, an authentic Demon-Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of Wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth-rind.

"But deepest of all illusory Appearances, for hiding Wonder, as for many other ends, are your two grand fundamental world-enveloping Appearances, SPACE and TIME. These, as spun and woven for us before Birth itself, to clothe our celestial me for dwelling here, and yet to blind it,—lie all-embracing, as the universal canvas, or warp and woof, whereby all minor Illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves. In vain, while here on Earth, shall you endeavour to strip them off; you can at best but rend them asunder for moments, and look through.

"Fortunatus had a wishing Hat, which when he put on, and wished himself Anywhere, behold he was There. By this means had Fortunatus triumphed over Space, he had annihilated Space; for him there was no Where, but all was Here. Were a Hatter to establish himself in the Wahngasse¹¹ of Weissnichtwo, and make felts of this sort for all mankind, what a world we should have of it! Still stranger, should, on the opposite side of the street, another Hatter establish himself; and, as his fellow-craftsman made Space-annihilating hats, make Time-annihilating! Of both would I purchase, were it with my last groshen;¹² but chiefly of this latter. To clap on your felt, and, simply by wishing that you were Anywhere, straightway to be There! Next to clap on your other felt, and, simply by wishing that you were Anywhen, straightway to be Then! This were indeed the grander: shooting at will from the Fire-Creation of the World, to its Fire-Consummation; here his-

torically present in the First Century, conversing face to face with Paul and Seneca; there prophetically in the Thirty-first, conversing also face to face with other Pauls and Senecas, who as yet stand hidden in the depth of that late time!

"Or thinkest thou, it were impossible, unimaginable? Is the Past annihilated, then, or only past; is the Future non-extant, or only future? Those mystic faculties of thine, Memory and Hope, already answer: already through those mystic avenues, thou the Earth-blinded summonest both Past and Future, and communest with them, though as yet darkly, and with mute beckonings. The curtains of Yesterday drop down, the curtains of Tomorrow roll up; but Yesterday and Tomorrow both are. Pierce through the Time-Element, glance into the Eternal. Believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of Man's Soul, even as all Thinkers, in all ages, have devoutly read it there: that Time and Space are not God, but creations of God; that with God as it is a universal HERE, so is it an everlasting NOW.

"And seest thou therein any glimpse of IMMORTALITY? O Heaven! Is the white Tomb of our Loved One, who died from our arms, and had to be left behind us there, which rises in the distance, like a pale, mournfully receding Milestone, to tell how many toilsome uncheered miles we have journeyed on alone,—but a pale spectral Illusion! Is the lost Friend still mysteriously Here, even as we are Here mysteriously with God!—Know of a truth that only the Time-shadows have perished, or are perishable; that the real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, is even now and for ever. This, should it unhappily seem new, thou mayest ponder at thy leisure; for the next twenty years, or the next twenty centuries: believe it thou must; understand it thou canst not.

"That the Thought-forms, Space and Time, wherein, once for all, we are sent into this Earth to live, should condition and determine our whole Practical reasonings, conceptions, and imagings or imaginings, seems altogether fit, just and unavoidable. But that they should furthermore, usurp such sway over pure spiritual Meditation, and blind us to the wonder everywhere lying close on us, seems nowise so. Admit Space and Time to their due rank as Forms of Thought; nay, even if thou wilt, to their quite undue rank of Realities: and consider, then, with thyself, how their thin disguises hide from us the brightest God-effulgences! Thus, were it not miraculous, could I stretch forth my hand and clutch the Sun?

¹⁰ The devil was so real to Luther, that according to the story, he once threw his ink pot at him.

¹¹ "Illusion Street."

¹² A small German coin.

Yet thou seest me daily stretch forth my hand, and therewith clutch many a thing, and swing it hither and thither. Art thou a grown Baby, then, to fancy that the Miracle lies in miles of distance, or in pounds avoirdupois of weight; and not to see that ~~the true inexplicable~~ God-revealing Miracle lies in this, that I can stretch forth my hand at all; that I have free Force to clutch aught therewith? Innumerable other of this sort are the deceptions, and wonder-hiding stupefactions, which Space practises on us.

"Still worse is it with regard to Time. Your grand anti-magician and universal wonder-hider, is this same lying Time. Had we but the Time-annihilating Hat, to put on for once only, we should see ourselves in a World of Miracles, wherein all fabled or authentic Thaumaturgy, and feats of Magic, were out-done. But unhappily we have not such a Hat; and man, poor fool that he is, can seldom and scantily help himself without one.

"Were it not wonderful, for instance, had Orpheus, or Amphion, built the walls of Thebes by the mere sound of his Lyre?¹³ Yet tell me, Who built these walls of Weissnichtwo; summoning out all the sandstone rocks, to dance along from the *Steinbruch*¹⁴ (now a huge Troglodyte Chasm,¹⁵ with frightful green-mantled pools); and shape themselves into Doric and Ionic pillars, squared ashlar houses, and noble streets? Was it not the still higher Orpheus, or Orpheuses, who, in past centuries, by the divine Music of Wisdom, succeeded in civilizing Man? Our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen-hundred years ago: his sphere-melody, flowing in wild native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men; and being of a truth sphere-melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousandfold Accompaniments, and rich symphonies, through all our hearts; and modulates and divinely leads them. Is that a wonder, which happens in two hours; and does it cease to be wonderful, if happening in two million? Not only was Thebes built, by the Music of an Orpheus; but without the music of some inspired Orpheus, was no city ever built, no work that man glories in ever done.

"Sweep away the Illusion of Time; glance, if thou have eyes, from the near moving-cause to its far distant Mover: The stroke that came transmitted through a whole galaxy

¹³ "Were the stories of Orpheus and of Amphion true, would they not be miraculous?" Orpheus gathered the wild creatures of the forest about him to listen to his lyre; and Amphion, by the mere power and beauty of his music, built the walls of Thebes.

¹⁴ A quarry.

¹⁵ A hole or cavern, like those once occupied by the Troglodytes, or pre-historic cave-dwellers.

of elastic balls, was it less a stroke than if the last ball only had been struck, and sent flying? Oh, could I (with the Time-annihilating Hat) transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder! Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed, the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grassblade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish.

"Again, could anything be more miraculous than an actual authentic Ghost? The English Johnson¹⁶ longed, all his life, to see one; but could not, though he went to Cock Lane, and thence to the church-vaults, and tapped on coffins. Foolish Doctor! Did he never with the Mind's eye, as well as with the body's, look round him into that full tide of human Life he so loved; did he never so much as look into Himself? The good Doctor was a Ghost, as actual and authentic as heart could wish; wellnigh a million of Ghosts were travelling the streets by his side. Once more I say, sweep away the illusion of Time: compress the three-score years into three minutes: what else was he, what else are we? Are we not Spirits, shaped into a Body, into an Appearance; and that fade away again into air, and Invisibility? This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific fact: we start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions; round us, as round the veriest spectre, is Eternity; and to Eternity minutes are as years and eons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beatified Souls? And again, do not we squeak and gibber (in our discordant screech-owlish debatings and recriminations); and glide, bodeful, and feeble, and fearful; or uproar (*pollern*), and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead,¹⁷—till the scent of the morning-air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day? Where now is Alexander of Macedon: does the steel Host, that yelled in fierce battle-shouts at Issus and Arbela, remain behind him; or have they all vanished utterly, even as perturbed Goblins must? Napoleon too, and his Moscow Retreats and Austerlitz Campaigns! Was it all other than the veriest Spectre-Hunt; which has now, with its

¹⁶ For the story of Dr. Johnson and the Cock Lane Ghost, see Boswell's *Johnson*.

¹⁷ The Dance of Death was a medieval allegory of Death; a skeleton musician leads the dance, in which all men join.

howling tumult that made Night hideous, flitted away?—Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand-million walking the earth openly at noontide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.

"O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him; but are in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart; but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if it were a firm substance: fool! the Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

"So has it been from the beginning, and so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night,¹⁸ on heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends: one grinding in the mill of Industry; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow:—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are levelled, and her seas filled up, in our passage: can the Earth which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adamant some foot-print of us is stamped-in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence?—O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

"We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep!"¹⁹

BOSWELL THE HERO-WORSHIPPER

(From *Essay on Johnson*, 1832)

We have a word to say of James Boswell.¹ Boswell has already been much commented upon; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety; of which latter as he gained far more than was his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board in the British islands, this man has provided us a greater pleasure than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves; perhaps has done us a greater service than can be especially attributed to more than two or three: yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. Men are unwiser than children; they do not know the hand that feeds them.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled; not recognizable therefore by every one; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and gross liver; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler; had much of the Sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the tailor, by a court-suit, had made a new man of him; that he appeared at the Shakespeare Jubilee with a ribbon, imprinted "Corsica Boswell,"² round his hat; and in short, if you will, lived no day

¹⁸ *Tempest*, IV. 157.

¹⁹ See p. 424, *supra*.

² An allusion to his adoption of the cause of Corsican independence and to his *Account of Corsica*, pub. 1768.

¹⁸ A proverbial expression for utter darkness. The Cimmerians are mentioned by Homer as living beyond the ocean-stream in a land where no sun ever shines.

of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious ineptitude: all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more; in that coarsely protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dew-lapped chin: in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *funky*), though it had been more natural there? The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) "took on with Paoli;"⁸ and then being off with "the Corsican landloup,"⁹ took on with a schoolmaster,¹⁰ "ane that keeped a schule, and ca'd it an academy;" that he did all this, and could not help doing it, had an "open sense," an open loving heart, which so few have: where excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of excellence had not only such as evil nature to triumph over; but also what an education and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English dominie! Your Scottish laird, says an English naturalist of these days, may be defined as the hungriest and vainest

of all bipeds yet known. Boswell too was a Tory;⁷ of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatical⁸ temper; had been nurtured in an atmosphere of heraldry, at the feet of a very Gamaliel⁹ in that kind; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, that a laird was a laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood: old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species. Scottish advocates will tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of "hereditary jurisdiction"¹⁰) by royal authority, was wont, in dull-snuffing pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench with these words: "I, the first king's sheriff in Scotland."

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please—with wood, with rubbish, with brass: it matters not, the two feel each other, they struggle restlessly towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and "gigmanity,"¹¹ The magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious: nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling of discipleship (such as brought men from far countries with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the prophets) had passed utterly away from men's practical experience, and was no longer surmised to exist (as it does), perennial, indestructible, in man's inmost heart—James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering and, for a long while, laughing and unrecognized world. It has been commonly said, "The man's vulgar vanity

⁷ A member of the Tory party, which was the ultra-conservative party of the time.

⁸ Self-important, busy; engrossed with every-day business, and hence commonplace.

⁹ A member of the Sanhedrin, and St. Paul's instructor in the law. V. Acts v. 34-39; xxii. 3. Boswell's Gamaliel presumably was his father.

¹⁰ In Scotland the Sheriff was the judge of the county. After 1748, the office, which had been hereditary, was filled by royal appointment.

¹¹ *Gulosity* is gluttony, voracity; *gigmanity* is narrow-minded respectability. The latter word was invented by Carlyle (gig and man) to indicate the character of "one whose respectability is measured by his keeping a gig." N. E. D.

⁸ Boswell's father, Alexander Boswell, who had the title of Lord Auchinleck from the name of his property in Ayrshire. He was one of the Judges of the Court of Session. Carlyle calls him "Touchwood" in allusion to his explosive irascibility.

⁹ Pasquale Paoli (1725-1807), a Corsican patriot, to whom Boswell was introduced by a letter from Rousseau, and with whom he contracted a warm and lasting friendship.

¹⁰ An adventurer, a vagabond.

¹¹ i. e. Johnson himself, who set up an "academy" near Litchfield, where "young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages," (1736).

was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. At the same time, ask yourself; whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted: but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated "scholar," dwelling in Temple-lane,¹² and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honor-giving noblemen; dinner-giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gowmsmen, quacks and realities of all hues—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissive-ness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the envy of surrounding lickspittles; pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well cooked viands and wines of rich red vintage; in each case, also, shone-on by some glittering reflex of renown or notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted, yet enthusiastic man, doffing his advocate's wig, regularly take post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his sage chiefly; as to a feast of tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber dives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man and a sour-tempered blind old woman¹³ (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger); and patiently endures contradictions without end; too happy so he may be but allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to

Johnson. Mr. Croker¹⁴ says, Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honor, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied: his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden but only leaden opinions. His devout discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty "constellation," or sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchmen to a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine¹⁵ could hand him a shilling "for the sight of his bear." Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity; to be filled with good things is that of sensuality: for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintanceship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again.

In fact, the so copious terrestrial dross that welters chaotically, as the outer sphere of this man's character, does but render for us more remarkable, more touching, the celestial spark of goodness, of light, and reverence for wisdom which dwelt in the interior, and could struggle through such encumbrances, and in some degree illuminate and beautify them. There is much lying yet undeveloped in the love of Boswell for Johnson. A cheering proof, in a time which else utterly wanted and still wants such, that living wisdom is quite *infinitely* precious to man, is the symbol of the god-like to him, which even weak eyes may discern; that loyalty, discipleship, all that was ever meant by *hero-worship*, lives perennially in the human bosom, and waits, even in these dead days, only for occasions to unfold it, and inspire all men with it, and make again the world alive! James Boswell we can regard as a practical witness, or real *martyr*, to this high everlasting truth. A wonderful martyr, if you will; and in a time

¹² John Wilson Croker, editor of Boswell's *Johnson*, 1831, which Carlyle is reviewing. Macaulay reviewed the same work. V. p. 687.

¹³ *Henry Erskine*, a brother of Lord Buchan and Lord Erskine, was presented to Johnson by Boswell, while on a visit to the Parliament House at Edinburgh in 1773. The incident mentioned occurred on that occasion.

¹² V. selection, p. 425, *supra*.

¹³ Mrs. Anna Williams, who at this time had lodgings in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, had formerly found an asylum in Johnson's house.

which made such martyrdom doubly wonderful: yet the time and its martyr perhaps suited each other. For a decrepit, death-sick era, when Cant had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same, that life was a *lie*, and the earth Beelzebub's, which the *Supreme Quack* should inherit, and so all things were fallen into the yellow leaf, and fast hastening to noisome corruption: for such an era, perhaps no better prophet than a parti-colored zany¹⁶-prophet, concealing, from himself and others, his prophetic significance in such unexpected vestures, was deserved, or would have been in place. A precious medicine lay hidden in floods of coarsest, most composite treacle; the world swallowed the treacle, for it suited the world's palate; and now, after half a century, may the medicine also begin to show itself! James Boswell belonged, in his corruptible part, to the lowest classes of mankind; a foolish, inflated creature, swimming in an element of self-conceit: but in his corruptible there dwelt an incorruptible, all the more impressive and indubitable for the strange lodging it had taken.

Consider, too, with what force, diligence, and vivacity he has rendered back all this which, in Johnson's neighborhood, his "open sense" had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking work of his is as a picture by one of nature's own artists; the best possible remembrance of a reality; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was: let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love, and the recognition which love can lend, epitomizes nightly the words of wisdom, the deeds and aspects of wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad*¹⁷ a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled; indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of heroic poem. The fit "*Odyssey*" of our unheroic age was to be written, not sung; of a thinker, not of a fighter; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer—looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowment great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome; though, here too, there is not wanting a light ingenuity, a figurativeness and fanciful sport, with glimpses of in-

sight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was, as such ever is, an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach, and significance than logic; and showed itself in the whole, not in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, "The heart sees further than the head."

Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed, is man's life generally but a kind of beast godhood; the god in us triumphing in us more and more over the beast; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet? Did not the ancients, in their wise, perennially-significant way, figure nature itself, in their sacred ALL, or PAN, as a portentous commingling of these two discords; as musical, humane, oracular in its upper part, yet ending below in the cloven hairy feet of a goat? The union of melodious, celestial free-will and reason with foul irrationality and lust; in which, nevertheless, dwelt a mysterious unspeakable fear and half mad *panic* awe; as for mortals there well might! And is not man a microcosm, or epitomized mirror of that same universe; or rather, is not that universe even himself, the reflex of his own fearful and wonderful being, "the waste fantasy of his own dream?" No wonder that man, that each man, and James Boswell like the others, should resemble it! The peculiarity in his case was the unusual defect of amalgamation and subordination: the highest lay side by side with the lowest; not morally combined with it and spiritually transfiguring it, but tumbling in half-mechanical juxtaposition with it, and from time to time, as the mad alternation chanced, irradiating it, or eclipsed by it.

The world, as we said, has been but unjust to him; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret; and thus figuring him nowise as a god Pan, but simply of the bestial species, like the cattle on a thousand hills. Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing*; whatsoever enables us to do anything is by its very nature *good*. Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good book because he had a heart and

¹⁶ A jester who mimicked the professional jester.

¹⁷ An epic of Johnson. Cf. *Iliad*, *Æneid*.

an eye to discern wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent—above all, of his love and open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his book, which still disturb us in its clearness; wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not sycophancy, which is the lowest, but reverence, 10 which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors, showed itself also as 15 worship for apparent tailor-made superiors, even as hollow interested mouth-worship for such—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us 20 cling to this last article of faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worthy the name: That neither James Boswell's good book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is, or can be performed by 25 any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof.

THE HERO

(From *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 1841)

You remember that fancy of Plato's,¹ of a man who had grown to maturity in some dark 35 distance, and was brought on a sudden into the upper air to see the sun rise. What would his wonder be, his rapt astonishment at the sight we daily witness with indifference! With the free open sense of a child, yet with the ripe 40 faculty of a man, his whole heart would be kindled by that sight, he would discern it well to be Godlike, his soul would fall down in worship before it. Now, just such a childlike greatness was in the primitive nations. The 45 first Pagan Thinker among rude men, the first man that began to think, was precisely this child-man of Plato's. Simple, open as a child, yet with the depth and strength of a man. Nature had as yet no name to him; he 50 had not yet united under a name the infinite variety of sights, sounds, shapes and motions, which we now collectively name Universe, Nature, or the like—and so with a name dismiss it from us. To the wild deep-hearted 55 man all was yet new, not veiled under names or formulas; it stood naked, flashing-in on him there, beautiful, awful, unspeakable. Nature

was to this man, what to the Thinker and Prophet it forever is, *preternatural*. This green flowery rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas;— 5 that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what is it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all. It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty; it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our *want* of insight. It is by *not* thinking that we cease to wonder at it. Hardened round us, encasing 15 wholly every notion we form, is a wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere *words*. We call that fire of the black thunder cloud "electricity," and lecture learnedly about it, and grind the like of it out of glass and silk; but 20 *what* is it? What made it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on 25 which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, *magical* and more, to whosoever will *think* of it.

30 That great mystery of Time, were there no other; the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called Time, rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing ocean-tide, on which we and all the Universe swim like exhalations, like apparitions which *are*, and then *are not*; this is forever very literally a miracle; a thing to strike us dumb,—for we have no word to speak about it. This Universe, ah me— 40 what could the wild man know of it; what can we yet know? That it is a Force, and thousandfold Complexity of forces; a Force which is *not we*. That is all; it is not we, it is altogether different from *us*. Force, Force, everywhere Force; we ourselves a mysterious 45 Force in the centre of that. "There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has Force in it: how else could it rot?" Nay, surely, to the Atheistic Thinker, if such a one were possible, it must be a miracle too, this huge illimitable whirlwind of Force, which envelopes us here; never-resting whirlwind, high as Immensity, old as Eternity. What is it? God's creation, the religious people answer; it is the Almighty God's! Atheistic science babbles poorly of it, with scientific nomenclatures, experiments 50 and what-not, as if it were a poor dead thing, to be bottled-up in Leyden jars and sold over counters: but the natural sense of man, in all times, if he will honestly apply his sense, pro-

¹ See Plato's *Republic*, Bk. VII.

claims it to be a living thing,—ah, an unspeakable, godlike thing; towards which the best attitude for us, after never so much science, is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship if not in words, then in silence.

But now I remark farther: What in such a time as ours it requires a Prophet or Poet to teach us, namely, the stripping off of those poor undevout wrappings, nomenclatures and scientific hearsays,—this, the ancient earnest soul, as yet unencumbered with these things, did for itself. The world, which is now divine only to the gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it. He stood bare before it face to face. "All was Godlike or God!"—Jean Paul¹ still finds it so; the giant Jean Paul, who has power to escape out of hearsays; but there then were no hearsays. Canopus,² shining-down over the desert, with its blue diamond brightness (that wild blue spirit-like brightness, far brighter than we ever witness here), would pierce into the heart of the wild Ishmaelitic man, whom it was guiding through the solitary waste there. To his wild heart, with all feelings in it, with no *speech* for any feeling, it might seem a little eye, that Canopus, glancing-out on him from the great deep Eternity; revealing the inner splendour to him. Cannot we understand how these men *worshipped* Canopus; became what we call Sabeans,³ worshipping the stars? Such is to me the secret of all forms of Paganism. Worship is transcendent wonder; wonder for which there is now no limit or measure; that is worship. To these primeval men, all things and everything they saw exist beside them were an emblem of the Godlike, of some God.

And look what perennial fibre of truth was in that. To us also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not a God made visible, if we will open our minds and eyes? We do not worship in that way now: but is it not reckoned still a merit, proof of what we call a "poetic nature," that we recognize how every object has a divine beauty in it; how every object still verily is "a window through which we may look into Infinitude itself." He that can discern the loveliness of things, we call him Poet, Painter, Man of Genius, gifted, loveable. These poor Sabeans did even what he does,—in their own fashion. That they did it, in what fashion soever, was a merit: better than what the entirely stupid man

did, what the horse and camel did,—namely, nothing!

But now if all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. You have heard of St. Chrysostom's⁴ celebrated saying in reference to the Shekinah, or Ark of Testimony, visible Revelation of God, among the Hebrews: "The true Shekinah⁵ is Man!" Yes, it is even so: this is no vain phrase, it is veritably so. The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I,"—ah, what words have we for such things?—is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? "There is but one Temple in the Universe," says the devout Novalis,⁶ "and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body." This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact; the expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles,—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know it, if we like, that it is verily so.

Well, these truths were once more readily felt than now. The young generations of the world, who had in them the freshness of young children, and yet the depth of earnest men, who did not think that they had finished off all things in Heaven and Earth by merely giving them scientific names, but had to gaze direct at them there, with awe and wonder: they felt better what of divinity is in man and Nature;—they, without being mad, could *worship* Nature, and man more than anything else in Nature. Worship, that is, as I said above, admire without limit: this, in the full use of their faculties, with all sincerity of heart, they could do. I consider Hero-worship to be the grand modifying element in that ancient system of thought. What I called the perplexed jungle of Paganism sprang, we may say, out of many roots: every admiration, adoration of a star or natural object, was a

¹ St. John Chrysostom ("mouth of gold," so named, because of his eloquence) was one of the greatest of the early Fathers of the Church, especially famous for his *Homilies*.

² A term in Jewish and early Christian theology, expressing the divine presence either in heaven or upon the earth, among the people of Israel or in the sanctuary.

³ A name assumed by Friederich von Hardenberg (1772–1801), a German romantic writer.

¹ Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825), one of the most widely known of the German humorists and satirists.

² A very brilliant star of the Southern hemisphere, in the constellation of the ship *Argo*. According to Plutarch, it was named from *Canopus*, the pilot of Menelaus.

³ A people of Southern Arabia, formerly supposed to be worshippers of the stars.

root, or fibre of a root; but Hero-worship is the deepest root of all; the tap-root, from which in a great degree all the rest were nourished and grown.

And now if worship even of a star had some meaning in it, how much more might that of a Hero! Worship of a Hero is transcendent admiration of a great Man! I say great men are still admirable; I say, there is at bottom, nothing else admirable! No nobler feeling 10 than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man's life. Religions I find stand upon it; not paganism only, but far higher and 15 truer religions,—all religion hitherto known. Hero-worship, 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 20 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 history on earth.

Or 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. And what 30 therefore is loyalty proper, the life-breath of all society, but an effluence of Hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great? Society is founded on Hero-worship. All dignities of rank, on which human association rests, are what we may call a *Heroarchy* (Gov- 35 ernment of Heroes),—or a *Hierarchy*,^a for it is "sacred" enough withal! The Duke means *Dux*, Leader; King is *Kon-ning*, *Kan-ning*, Man that *knows* or *can*.^b Society everywhere is some representation, not insupportably 40 inaccurate, of a graduated Worship of Heroes:—reverence and obedience done to men really great and wise. Not insupportably inaccurate, I say! They are all as bank-notes, these social dignitaries, all representing gold;—and several 45 as to calling him forth!—Those are critics of small vision, I think, who cry: "See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?" No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There is no 50 sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning, with faith only in the heap of barren dead fuel. It is the last consummation of unbelief. In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch:—the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt. The History of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men.

it was always and everywhere, and cannot cease till man himself ceases.

I am well aware that in these days Hero-worship, the thing I call Hero-worship, professes to have gone out, and finally ceased. This, for reasons which it will be worth while sometime to inquire into, is an age that as it were denies the existence of great men; denies the desirableness of great men. Show our 5 critics a great man, a Luther for example, they begin to what they call "account" for him; not to worship him, but take the dimensions of him,—and bring him out to be a little kind of man! He was the "creature of the 10 Time," they say; the Time called him forth, the Time did everything, he nothing—but what we the little critic could have done too! This seems to me but melancholy work. The Time call forth? Alas, we have known Times call 15 loudly enough for their great man; but not find him when they called! He was not there; Providence had not sent him; the Time, calling its loudest, had to go down to confusion and wreck because he would not come when called.

25 For if we think of it, no Time need have gone to ruin, could it have found a man great enough, a man wise and good enough: wisdom to discern truly what the Time wanted, valour to lead it on the right road thither; these are the salvation of any Time. But I liken common languid Times, with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, with their languid doubting characters and embarrassed circumstances, im- 30 potently crumbling down into ever worse distress towards final ruin:—all this I liken to dry dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it. The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. His word is the wise healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when he has once 35 struck on it, into fire like his own. The dry mouldering sticks are thought to have called him forth. They did want him greatly; but as to calling him forth!—Those are critics of small vision, I think, who cry: "See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?" No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There is no 40 sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning, with faith only in the heap of barren dead fuel. It is the last consummation of unbelief. In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch:—the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt. The History of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men.

^a From the Greek *hieros*, sacred, and *archo*, I rule. Here used as "government by the holy or sacred ones."
^b This derivation of *king* from *can* is a mistaken etymology. *King* comes from O. E. *cynig*, and is related to English *kin*.

BURNS

(From the same)

It was a curious phenomenon, in the withered, unbelieving, secondhand Eighteenth Century, that of a hero starting up, among the artificial pasteboard figures and productions, in the guise of a Robert Burns. Like a little well in the rocky desert places,—like a sudden splendour of Heaven in the artificial Vauxhall! People knew not what to make of it. They took it for a piece of the Vauxhall fireworks; alas, it *let* itself be so taken, though struggling half-blindly, as in bitterness of death, against that! Perhaps no man had such a false reception from his fellowmen. Once more a very wasteful life-drama was enacted under the sun.

The tragedy of Burns' life is known to all of you. Surely we may say if discrepancy between place held and place merited constitute perverseness of lot for a man, no lot could be more perverse than Burns's. Among those secondhand acting-figures, *mimes* for most part, of the Eighteenth Century, once more a giant Original Man; one of those men who reach down to the perennial Deep, who take rank with the Heroic among men: and he was born in a poor Ayrshire hut. The largest soul of all the British lands came among us in the shape of a hard-handed Scottish Peasant.

His Father, a poor toiling man, tried various things; did not succeed in any; was involved in continual difficulties. The Steward, Factor as the Scotch call him, used to send letters and threatenings, Burns says, "which threw us all into tears." The brave, hard-toiling, hard-suffering Father, his brave heroine of a wife; and those children, of whom Robert was one! In this Earth, so wide otherwise, no shelter for them. The letters "threw us all into tears:" figure it. The brave Father, I say always;—a *silent* Hero and Poet; without whom the son had never been a speaking one! Burns's school-master¹ came afterwards to London, learnt what good society was; but declares that in no meeting of men did he ever enjoy better discourse than at the hearth of this peasant. And his poor "seven acres of nursery-ground,"—not that, nor the miserable patch of clay-farm, nor anything he tried to get a living by, would prosper with him; he had a sore unequal battle all his days. But he stood to it valiantly; a wise, faithful, unconquerable man;—swallowing down how many sore sufferings daily into silence; fighting like an unseen Hero,—nobody publishing newspaper paragraphs about

his nobleness; voting pieces of plate to him! However, he was not lost; nothing is lost. Robert is there; the outcome of him,—and indeed of many generations of such as him.

This Burns appeared under every disadvantage; uninstructed, poor, born only to hard manual toil; and writing, when it came to that, in a rustic special dialect, known only to a small province of the country he lived in. Had he written, even what he did write, in the general language of England, I doubt not he had already become universally recognized as being, or capable to be, one of our greatest men. That he should have tempted so many to penetrate through the rough husk of that dialect of his, is proof that there lay something far from common within it. He has gained a certain recognition, and is continuing to do so over all quarters of our wide Saxon world: wheresoever a Saxon dialect is spoken, it begins to be understood, by personal inspection of this and the other, that one of the most considerable Saxon men of the Eighteenth Century was an Ayrshire Peasant named Robert Burns. Yes, I will say, here too was a piece of the right Saxon stuff: strong as the Harz-rock,² rooted in the depths of the world;—rock, yet with wells of living softness in it! A wild impetuous whirlwind of passion and faculty slumbered quiet there; such heavenly melody dwelling in the heart of it. A noble rough genuineness; homely, rustic, honest; true simplicity of strength; with its lightning-fire, with its soft dewy pity;—like the old Norse Thor,³ the Peasant-god!

Burns's brother Gilbert, a man of much sense and worth, has told me that Robert, in his young days, in spite of their hardship, was usually the gayest of speech; a fellow of infinite frolic, laughter, sense and heart; far pleasanter to hear there, stript, cutting peats in the bog, or suchlike, than he ever afterwards knew him. I can well believe it. The basis of mirth ("*fond gaillard*," as old Marquis Mirabeau calls it), a primal-element of sunshine and joyfulness, coupled with his other deep and earnest qualities, is one of the most attractive characteristics of Burns. A large fund of Hope dwells in him; spite of his tragical history, he is not a mourning man. He shakes his sorrows gallantly aside; bounds forth victorious over them. It is as the lion shaking "dew-drops from his mane;" as the swift-bounding horse, that laughs at the shaking of the spear.—But indeed, Hope, Mirth, of the sort like Burns's, are they not the outcome

¹ Vauxhall Gardens on the outskirts of London, a place of public amusement.

² John Murdoch, who was instrumental in guiding Burns's early reading.

³ Rocky mountains in Germany, the highest peak the Brocken is the scene of the witches in Goethe's *Faust*.

⁴ The Scandinavian god of Thunder.

properly of warm generous affection,—such as is the beginning of all to every man?

You would think it strange if I called Burns the most gifted British soul we had in all that century of his: and yet I believe the day is coming when there will be little danger in saying so. His writings, all that he *did* under such obstructions are only a poor fragment of him. Professor Stewart¹ remarked very justly, what indeed is true of all Poets good for much, that his poetry was not any particular faculty; but the general result of a naturally vigorous original mind expressing itself in that way. Burns's gifts, expressed in conversation, are the theme of all that ever heard him. All kinds of gifts: from the gracefulst utterances of courtesy, to the highest fire of passionate speech; loud floods of mirth, soft wailings of affection, laconic emphasis, clear piercing insight; all was in him. Witty duchesses celebrate him as a man whose speech "led them off their feet." This is beautiful: but still more beautiful that which Mr. Lockhart² has recorded, which I have more than once alluded to, How the waiters and ostlers at inns would get out of bed, and come crowding to hear this man speak! Waiters and ostlers:—they too were men, and here was a man! I have heard much about his speech; but one of the best things I ever heard of it was, last year, from a venerable gentleman long familiar with him. That it was speech distinguished by *always having something in it*. "He spoke rather little than much," this old man told me; "sat rather silent in those early days, as in the company of persons above him; and always when he did speak, it was to throw new light on the matter." I know not why any one should ever speak otherwise!—But if we look at his general force of soul, his healthy robustness every way, the rugged downright-ness, penetration, generous valour and manfulness that was in him,—where shall we readily find a better-gifted man?

Among the great men of the Eighteenth Century, I sometimes feel as if Burns might be found to resemble Mirabeau³ more than any other. They differ widely in vesture; yet look at them intrinsically. There is the same burly thick-necked strength of body as of soul;—built, in both cases, on what the old Marquis calls a *fond gaillard*. By nature, by course of breeding, indeed by nation, Mirabeau has much more of bluster; a noisy, forward,

unresting man. But the characteristic of Mirabeau too is veracity and sense, power of true *insight*, superiority of vision. The thing that he says is worth remembering. It is a flash of insight into some object or other: so do both these men speak. The same raging passions; capable too in both of manifesting themselves as the tenderest noble affections. Wit, wild laughter, energy, directness, sincerity: these were in both. The types of the two men are not dissimilar. Burns too could have governed, debated in National Assemblies; policised, as few could. Alas, the courage which had to exhibit itself in capture of smuggling schooners in the Solway Frith;⁴ in keeping *silence* over so much, where no good speech, but only inarticulate rage was possible: this might have bellowed forth Ushers de Brézé⁵ and the like; and made itself visible to all men, in managing of kingdoms, in ruling of great, ever-memorable epochs! But they said to him reprovingly, his Official Superiors said, and wrote: "You are to work, not to think." Of your *thinking*-faculty, the greatest in this land, we have no need; you are to gauge beer there; for that only are *you* wanted. Very notable;—and worth mentioning, though we know what is to be said and answered! As if thought, Power of Thinking, were not at all times, in all places and situations of the world, precisely the thing that *was* wanted. The fatal man, is he not always the *unthinking* man, the man who cannot think and *see*; but only grope, and hallucinate; and *missee* the nature of the thing he works with? He misses it, *mistakes* it as we say; takes it for one thing, and it is another thing,—and leaves him standing like a Futility there! He is the fatal man; unutterably fatal, put in the high places of men.—"Why complain of this?" say some: "Strength is mournfully denied its arena; that was true from of old." Doubtless; and the worse for the *arena*, answer I! *Complaining* profits little; stating of the truth may profit. That a Europe, with its French Revolution just breaking out, finds no need of a Burns except for gauging beer,—is a thing I, for one, cannot *rejoice* at.

Once more we have to say here, that the chief quality of Burns is the *sincerity* of him. So in his Poetry, so in his life. The Song he

¹ An allusion to Burns' occupation as excise officer and gauger of ale at Dumfries, where it sometimes became his duty to board and seize a smuggling brig, as was the case on Feb. 27, 1792.

² The Marquis de Brézé was Chief Usher to the Court at the time of the French Revolution. On one occasion, June 22, 1789, when de Brézé attempted to diamis the National Deputies by the King's orders, Mirabeau defied him in the name of the will of the people, and thus held the deputies in session. V. Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Vol. I., Bk. V., chap. II.

³ Dugald Stewart (1753–1828), professor of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh.

⁴ John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law and biographer of Scott, wrote also a *Life of Burns*, 1828.

⁵ A famous French writer, orator, and statesman (1749–91). The "old Marquis," mentioned later, is his father.

sings is not of fantasticalities; it is of a thing felt, really there; the prime merit of this, as of all in him, and of his life generally, is truth. The life of Burns is what we may call a great tragic sincerity. A sort of savage sincerity,—not cruel, far from that; but wild, wrestling naked with the truth of things. In that sense, there is something of the savage in all great men.

Hero-worship,—Odin, Burns?¹⁰ Well: These Men of Letters too were not without a kind of Hero-worship; but what a strange condition has that got into now! The waiters and ostlers of Scotch inns, prying about the door, eager to catch any words that fell from Burns, were doing unconscious reverence to the Heroic. Johnson had his Boswell for worshipper, Rousseau¹¹ had his worshippers enough; princes calling on him in his mean garret; the great, the beautiful doing reverence to the poor moon-struck man. For himself a most portentous contradiction; the two ends of his life not to be brought into harmony. He sits at the tables of grandees; and has to copy music for his own living. He cannot even get his music copied: "By dint of dining out," says he, "I run the risk of dying by starvation at home." For his worshippers too a most questionable thing! If doing Hero-worship well or badly be the test of vital wellbeing or illbeing to a generation, can we say that these generations are very first-rate?—And yet our heroic Men of Letters do teach, govern, are kings, priests, or what you like to call them; intrinsically there is no preventing it by any means whatever. The world *has* to obey him who thinks and sees in the world. The world can alter the manner of that; can either have it as blessed continuous summer sunshine, or as unblest black thunder and tornado,—with unspeakable difference of profit for the world! The manner of it is very alterable; the matter and fact of it is not alterable by any power under the sky. Light; or, failing that, lightning: the world can take its choice. Not whether we call an Odin god, prophet, priest, or what we call him; but whether we believe the word he tells us: there it all lies. If it be a true word, we shall have to believe it; believing it, we shall have to do it. What *name* or welcome we give him or it, is a point that concerns ourselves mainly. *It*, the new Truth, new deeper revealing of the Secret of this Universe, is verily of the nature of a

message from on high; and must and will have itself obeyed.

My last remark is on that notablest phasis of Burns's history,—his visit to Edinburgh.¹² Often it seems to me as if his demeanour there were the highest proof he gave of what a fund of worth and genuine manhood was in him. If we think of it, few heavier burdens could be laid on the strength of a man. So sudden; all common *Lionism*, which ruins innumerable men, was as nothing to this. It is as if Napoleon had been made a King of, not gradually, but at once from the Artillery Lieutenantcy in the Regiment La Fère. Burns, still only in his twenty-seventh year, is no longer even a ploughman; he is flying to the West Indies to escape disgrace and jail. This month he is a ruined peasant, his wages seven pounds a year, and these gone from him: next month he is in the blaze of rank and beauty, handing down jewelled Duchesses to dinner; the cynosure of all eyes! Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity. I admire much the way in which Burns met all this. Perhaps no man one could point out, was ever so sorely tried, and so little forgot himself. Tranquil, unastonished; not abashed, not inflated, neither awkwardness nor affectation: he feels that *he* there is the man Robert Burns; that the "rank is but the guinea-stamp;" that the celebrity is but the candle-light, which will show *what* man, not in the least make him a better or other man! Alas, it may readily, unless he look to it, make him a *worse* man; a wretched inflated wind-bag,—inflated till he *burst*, and become a *dead* lion; for whom, as some one has said, "there is no resurrection of the body;" worse than a living dog!—Burns is admirable here.

And yet, alas, as I have observed elsewhere, these Lion-hunters were the ruin and death of Burns. It was they that rendered it impossible for him to live! They gathered round him in his Farm; hindered his industry; no place was remote enough from them. He could not get his *Lionism* forgotten, honestly as he was disposed to do so. He falls into discontents, into miseries, faults; the world getting ever more desolate for him; health, character, peace of mind, all gone;—solitary enough now. It is tragical to think of! These men came but

¹⁰ Carlyle began his series of lectures on *Heroes and Hero Worship*, with that on "The Hero as Divinity," in which he first considered the Norse god Odin.

¹¹ Rousseau (1712-78), was one of the greatest French writers of the pre-revolutionary period. Johnson, Rousseau, and Burns, are the three illustrations of the "Hero as Man of Letters" used by Carlyle in this lecture.

¹² The winter of 1796-7, Burns spent in Edinburgh, where he became the lion of the season and was courted by the witty, the fashionable, and the learned. Just before this he was on the point of leaving the country "to escape disgrace, or jail," and "of flying to the West Indies." News of the success of his poems, however, determined him to go to Edinburgh to publish a second edition.

to see him; it was out of no sympathy with him, nor no hatred to him. They came to get a little amusement: they got their amusement;—and the Hero's life went for it!

Richter says, in the Island of Sumatra there is a kind of "Lightchasers," large Fire-flies, which people stick upon spits, and illuminate the ways with at night. Persons of condition can thus travel with a pleasant radiance, which they much admire. Great honour to the Fire-flies! But!—

THE GOSPEL OF WORK

(From *Past and Present*, 1843)

A High Class without duties to do is like a tree planted on precipices; from the roots of which all the earth has been crumbling. Nature owns no man who is not a Martyr withal. Is there a man who pretends to live luxuriously housed up; screened from all work, from want, danger, hardship, the victory over which is what we name work,—he himself to sit serene, amid down-bolsters and appliances, and have all his work and battling done by other men? And such man calls himself a *noble-man*? His fathers worked for him, he says; or successfully gambled for him: here *he* sits; professes, not in sorrow but in pride, that he and his have done no work, time out of mind. It is the law of the land, and is thought to be the law of the Universe, that he, alone of recorded men, shall have no task laid on him, except that of eating his cooked victuals, and not flinging himself out of window. Once more I will say, there was no stranger spectacle ever shown under this Sun. A veritable fact in our England of the Nineteenth Century. His victuals he does eat: but as for keeping in the inside of the window—have not his friends, like me, enough to do? Truly, looking at his Corn-Laws, Game-Laws, Chandos-Clauses, Bribery-Elections¹ and much else, you do shudder over the tumbling and plunging he makes, held back by the lapels and coat-skirts; only a thin fence of window-glass before him,—and in the streets mere horrid ironspikes! My sick brother, as in hospital-maladies men do, thou dreamest of Paradises and Eldorados,

which are far from thee. "Cannot I do what I like with my own?" Gracious Heaven, my brother, this that thou seest with those sick eyes is no firm Eldorado, and Corn-Law Paradise of Donothings, but a dream of thy own fevered brain. It is a glass-window, I tell thee, so many stories from the street; where are iron spikes and the law of gravitation!

What is the meaning of nobleness, if this be "noble?" In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie. The chief of men is he who stands in the van of men; fronting the peril which frightens back all others; which, if it be not vanquished, will devour the others. Every noble crown is, and on Earth will forever be, a crown of thorns. The Pagan Hercules, why was he accounted a hero? Because he had slain Nemean Lions, cleaned Augean Stables, undergone Twelve Labors² only not too heavy for a god. In modern, as in ancient and in all societies, the Aristocracy, doing them or not, have taken the post of honor; which is the post of difficulty, the post of danger,—of death, if the difficulty be not overcome. *Il faut payer de sa vie.*³ Why was our life given us, if not that we should manfully give it? Descend, O Donothing Pomp; quit thy down-cushions; expose thyself to learn what wretches feel, and how to cure it? The czar of Russia⁴ became a dusty toiling shipwright; worked with his axe in the docks of Saardam; and his aim was small to thine. Descend thou: undertake this horrid "living chaos of Ignorance and Hunger" weltering round thy feet; say, "I will heal it, or behold I will die foremost in it." Such is verily the law. Everywhere and everywhen a man has to "*pay with his life*;" to do his work, as a soldier does, at the expense of life. In no Pie-powder⁵ earthly court can you sue an Aristocracy to do its work, at this moment: but in the Higher Court, which even it calls "Court of Honor," and which is the Court of Necessity withal, and the eternal Court of the Universe, in which all Fact comes to plead, and every Human Soul is an apparitor,⁶—the Aristocracy is answerable, and even now answering, *there*. . . .

¹ The killing of the Nemean Lion, and the cleansing of the Augean stable were two of the twelve labors of Hercules.

² One must pay with one's life.

³ Peter the Great (1672-1725), who, in his desire to create a Russian navy, visited among other countries, Holland, and worked as a common shipwright at Amsterdam and Saardam.

⁴ The Pie powder courts of the middle ages in England had jurisdiction for the trial of controversies arising at fairs, markets, etc. The phrase is an English version of the French *piepoudre* (pied poudre), "dusty foot" which probably referred to the dusty-footed tradesmen, pedlars, etc., who resorted to these courts.

⁵ An official who serves the summons and executes the process of an ecclesiastical court.

¹ The Corn laws were a source of great agitation in the early 19th century. They were laws passed in the interests of the land-owners; they restricted the importation of grain by imposing a heavy tax on the imports. They were not repealed until 1846. The Game laws were very strict and cruel and were in the interests of the landed gentry. The *Chandos Clauses* proposed by Lord Chandos in 1831, as an alteration of the First Reform Bill, extended the county suffrage to all tenants-at-will of £50 rental, and thus aimed to strengthen the aristocracy and in a measure to check the cause of Reform. *Bribery Elections* refers to the extensive practice of bribing voters at elections, which was partly corrected by the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act passed in 1854.

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so mammonish, mean, is in communion with Nature: the real desire to get work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. "Know thyself:" long enough has that poor "self" of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to "know" it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, "an endless significance lies in Work!" a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seed-fields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor day-worker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valor against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labor in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself by mere force of gravity, into strata, spherical courses; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted World. What would become of the Earth, did she cease to revolve? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities, disperse themselves; all irregularities are incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel,—one of the venerablest objects; old as the Prophet Ezekiel and far older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel; reduced to making dishes, or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease; that would not work

and spin! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch; let her spend on him what expensive coloring, what gilding and enamelling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch,—a mere enamelled vessel of dishonor! Let the idle think of this.

10 Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows;—draining off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labor is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart 25 awakens him to all nobleness,—to all knowledge, "self-knowledge" and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone."

Thomas Babington Macaulay

1800-1859

BOSWELL

(From Review of *Croker's Boswell's Johnson*, 1831)

The "Life of Johnson" is assuredly a great, a very great work. Homer is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all his competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place 55 them. Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.

We are not sure that there is in the whole history of the human intellect so strange a phenomenon as this book. Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography.

Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was, if we are to give any credit to his own account or to the united testimony of all who knew him, a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect. Johnson described him as a fellow who had missed his only chance of immortality by not having been alive when the "Dunciad" was written. Beauclerk¹ used his name as a proverbial expression for a bore. He was the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greater part of its fame. He was always laying himself at the feet of some eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled upon. He was always earning some ridiculous nickname, and the "binding it as a crown unto him," not merely in metaphor, but literally. He exhibited himself, at the Shakespeare Jubilee, to all the crowd which filled Stratford-on-Avon, with a placard round his hat bearing the inscription of Corsica Boswell.² In his Tour, he proclaimed to all the world that at Edinburgh he was known by the appellation of Paoli Boswell.³ Servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot, bloated with family pride, and eternally blustering about the dignity of a born gentleman, yet stooping to be a talebearer, and eavesdropper, a common butt in the taverns of London, so curious to know everybody that was talked about, that, Tory and High Churchman as he was, he manoeuvred, we have been told, for an introduction to Tom Paine;⁴ so vain of the most childish distinctions, that when he had been to Court, he drove to the office where his book was printing without changing his clothes, and summoned all the printer's devils to admire his new ruffles and sword; such was this man, and such he was content and proud to be. Everything which another man would have hidden, everything the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind. What silly things he said, what bitter retorts he provoked, how at one place he was troubled with evil presentiments which came to nothing, how at another place, on waking from a drunken doze, he read the prayer-book and took a hair of the dog that had bitten him, how he went to see men hanged and came away maudlin, how he added five hundred pounds to the fortune of one of his babies because she was not scared at Johnson's ugly face, how he was 55

frightened out of his wits at sea, and how the sailors quieted him as they would have quieted a child, how tipsy he was at Lady Cork's one evening and how much his merriment annoyed the ladies, how impertinent he was to the Duchess of Argle and with what stately contempt she put down his impertinence, how Colonel Macleod sneered to his face at his impudent obtrusiveness, how his father, and the very wife of his bosom laughed and fretted at his fooleries—all these things he proclaimed to all the world, as if they had been subjects for pride and ostentatious rejoicing. All caprices of his temper, all the illusions of his vanity, all his hypochondriac whimsies, all his castles in the air, he displayed with a cool self-complacency, a perfect unconsciousness that he was making a fool of himself, to which it is impossible to find a parallel in the whole history of mankind. He had used many people ill; but assuredly he has used nobody so ill as himself.

That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no superior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. Goldsmith was very justly described by one of his contemporaries as an inspired idiot,⁵ and by another as a being.

"Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll."⁶

La Fontaine⁷ was in society a mere simpleton. His blunders would not come in amiss among the stories of Hierocles.⁸ But these men attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. Without all the qualities which made him the jest and the torment of those among whom he lived, without the officiousness, the inquisitiveness, the effrontery, the toad-eating, the insensibility to all reproof, he never could have produced so excellent a book. He was a slave proud of his servitude, a Paul Pry,⁹ convinced that his own curiosity and garrulity were virtues, an unsafe companion who never scrupled to repay the most liberal hospitality

¹ A remark of Horace Walpole's. Cf. Johnson's remark on Goldsmith, as reported by Boswell, "No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had."

² Garrick's impromptu epitaph:

"Here lies poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll. Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll."

³ Jean de La Fontaine (1621-95), a famous French poet, noted for his tales and fables.

⁴ A very old collection of jokes and amusing stories in Greek, told under the name of *Hierocles*.

⁵ An inquisitive character in a comedy, *Paul Pry*, by John Poole, 1825.

¹ Topham Beauclerk, a young aristocrat who was the intimate friend of Johnson.

² V. p. 676, and n. 2.

³ V. p. 677, and n. 4.

⁴ The Anglo-American patriot and political philosopher, author of *Common Sense* and *The Rights of Man*.

by the basest violation of confidence, a man without delicacy, without shame, without sense enough to know when he was hurting the feelings of others or when he was exposing himself to derision; and because he was all this, he has, in an important department of literature, immeasurably surpassed such writers as Tacitus, Clarendon, Alfieri, and his own idol¹⁰ Johnson.

Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. There is not in all his books a single remark of his own on literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd. His dissertations on hereditary gentility, on the slave-trade, and on the entailing of landed estates, may serve as examples. To say that these passages are sophistical would be to pay them an extravagant compliment. They have no pretense to argument, or even to meaning. He has reported innumerable observations made by himself in the course of conversation. Of those observations we do not remember one which is above the intellectual capacity of a boy of fifteen. He has printed many of his own letters, and in these letters he is always ranting or twaddling. Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all those things which are generally considered as making a book valuable were utterly wanting to him. He had, indeed, a quick observation and a retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue would scarcely of themselves have sufficed to make him conspicuous; but because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal.

Those parts of his book which, considered abstractedly, are most utterly worthless, are delightful when we read them as illustrations of the character of the writer. Bad in themselves, they are good dramatically, like the nonsense of Justice Shallow, the clipped English of Dr. Caius, or the misplaced consonants of Fluellen.¹¹ Of all confessors, Boswell is the most candid. Other men who have pretended to lay open their own hearts, Rousseau, for example, and Lord Byron, have evidently written with a constant view to effect, and are to be then most distrusted when they seem to be most sincere. There is scarcely any man who would not rather accuse himself of great crimes and of dark and tempestuous

passions than proclaim all his little vanities and wild fancies. It would be easier to find a person who would avow actions like those of Cæsar Borgia¹² or Danton,¹³ than one who would publish a day-dream like those of Alnaschar¹⁴ and Malvolio.¹⁵ Those weaknesses which most men keep covered up in the most secret places of the mind, not to be disclosed to the eye of friendship or of love, were precisely the weaknesses which Boswell paraded before all the world. He was perfectly frank, because the weakness of his understanding and the tumult of his spirits prevented him from knowing when he made himself ridiculous. His book resembles nothing so much as the conversation of the inmates of the Palace of Truth.

His fame is great; and it will, we have no doubt, be lasting; but it is fame of a peculiar kind, and indeed marvellously resembles infamy. We remember no other case in which the world has made so great a distinction between a book and its author. The case of Boswell is an exception, we think the only exception, to this rule. His work is universally allowed to be interesting, instructive, eminently original; yet it has brought him nothing but contempt. All the world reads it; yet we do not remember ever to have read or ever to have heard any expression of respect and admiration for the man to whom we owe so much instruction and amusement. While edition after edition of his book was coming forth, his son, as Mr. Croker¹⁶ tells us, was ashamed of it, and hated to hear it mentioned. This feeling was natural and reasonable. Sir Alexander saw that, in proportion to the celebrity of the work, was the degradation of the author. The very editors of this unfortunate gentleman's books have forgotten their allegiance, and like those Puritan casuists who took arms by the authority of the king against his person, have attacked the writer while doing homage to his writings. Mr. Croker, for example, has published two thousand five hundred notes on the life of Johnson, and yet scarcely ever mentions the biographer whose performance he has taken such pains to illustrate without some expression of contempt.

An ill-natured man Boswell certainly was not; yet the malignity of the most malignant satirist could scarcely cut deeper than his thoughtless loquacity. Having himself no

¹⁰ Tacitus' *Agricola*, one of his most famous works, is a masterpiece of biography. The earl of Clarendon (1609-74) wrote among other things a famous biography. Vittorio, Count Alfieri (1749-1803), an Italian dramatic poet, wrote an *Autobiography* of absorbing interest. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, is well known.

¹¹ Justice Shallow is the weak-minded country justice of Shakespeare's *Merry Wives* and *II Henry IV.*; Dr. Caius is a physician in *Merry Wives*, and Fluellen is a Welsh Captain in *Henry V.*

¹² One of the most cruel and unscrupulous Italian dukes of the 15th century, was guilty of treachery and murder in the furthering of his ambition.

¹³ One of the leaders of the French Revolution.

¹⁴ A character in the *Arabian Nights*, proverbial as a dreamer.

¹⁵ The steward in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, who aspires to the hand of his mistress.

¹⁶ The editor of the edition of *Boswell's Johnson* which Macaulay is reviewing.

sensibility to derision and contempt, he took it for granted that all others were equally callous. He was not ashamed to exhibit to the whole world as a common spy, a common tattler, a humble companion without the excuse of poverty, and to tell a hundred stories of his own pertness and folly, and of the insults which his pertness and folly brought upon him. It was natural that he should show little discretion in cases in which the feelings or the honor of others might be concerned. No man, surely, ever published such stories respecting persons whom he professed to love and revere. He would infallibly have made his hero as contemptible as he has made himself, had not his hero really possessed some moral and intellectual qualities of a very high order. The best proof that Johnson was really an extraordinary man is that his character, instead of being degraded, has, on the whole, been decidedly raised by a work in which all his vices and weaknesses are exposed more unsparingly than they ever were exposed by Churchill or by Kenrick.¹⁷

Johnson grown old, Johnson in the fulness of his fame and in the enjoyment of a competent fortune, is better known to us than any other man in history. Everything about him, his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish sauce and veal pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates, old Mr. Levett¹⁸ and blind Mrs. Williams,¹⁹ the cat Hodge²⁰ and the negro Frank, all are as familiar to us as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood.

THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS¹ (1841)

In the meantime the preparations for the trial had proceeded rapidly; and on the thir-

¹⁷ Churchill attacked Dr. Johnson and his circle in *The Ghost*; Kenrick attacked Johnson's edition of Shakespeare.

¹⁸ Johnson's "humble friend, Mr. Robert Levett, an obscure practitioner in physic amongst the lower people."

¹⁹ V. p. 678, n. 13.

²⁰ For a description of these pensioners of Johnson see Macaulay's *Essay on Johnson*.

¹ Warren Hastings (1732-1818), was created Governor

General of India in 1774. He made a capable ruler, though his methods were sometimes open to question. On returning to England in 1785, he was impeached for various alleged acts of tyranny. He was tried before the bar at the House of Lords in Westminster Hall. The trial opened February 13, 1788, and closed with Hastings's acquittal seven years later, 1795. V. p. 403, *supra*, and notes.

teenth of February, 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilization were now displayed, with every advantage which could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon² and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms.³ The judges in

² Lord Bacon was tried on the charge of bribery and found guilty in 1621. John, Lord Somers, Chancellor under William and Mary, was tried and absolved in 1700. Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, one of the trusted advisers of Charles I, was tried and condemned on a charge of treason in 1641. Charles I himself was tried and condemned in January, 1649.

³ An officer of the Order of the Garter, and the Chief Herald of England, one of whose duties it is to assign lords their seats in Parliament.

their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior Baron presented the way, George Elliot, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshall of the realm, by the great dignitaries and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulations of an orator. There were gathered together from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the House of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons,⁴ in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire⁵ thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa.⁶ There were seen side by side the greatest painter⁷ and the greatest scholar of the age.⁸ The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still, precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith.⁹ There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint

Cecilia, whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society, which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague.¹⁰ And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone around Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire.

The Serjeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar, and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high places had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the Court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis*;¹¹ such was the aspect with which the great Proconsul presented himself to his judges.

His counsel accompanied him, men all of whom were afterwards raised by their talents and learning to the highest post in their profession, the bold and strong-minded Law, afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench; the more humane and eloquent Dallas, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Plomer who, near twenty years later, successfully conducted in the same high court the defence of Lord Melville,¹² and subsequently became Vice-chancellor and Master of the Rolls.

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery, a space had been fitted up with green benches and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full

⁴ Sarah Siddons, a great English actress (1755-1831).

⁵ Edward Gibbon (1737-94), author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

⁶ Marius Præcius, pro-consul of Africa, was charged with extortion, and successfully prosecuted by Tacitus and Pliny the Younger.

⁷ Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92).

⁸ Dr. Samuel Parr (1747-1825), a man of vast learning.

⁹ The Prince of Wales (afterward George III), had married Mrs. Fitzherbert in 1785.

¹⁰ Elisabeth Montague (1720-1800), a writer of some note in her day, and a leader of London society, who numbered among her visitors Walpole, Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and Reynolds.

¹¹ A calm mind in the midst of troubles.

¹² Melville, who had been largely responsible for the investigation of Indian affairs which led to the impeachment of Hastings, was tried in 1806 for "gross malversation and breach of duty," while acting as treasurer of the Navy.

dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt¹³ had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North¹⁴ for the duties of a public prosecutor; and his friends were left without the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But, in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There were Fox and Sheridan, the English Demosthenes and the English Hyperides.¹⁵ There was Burke, ignorant indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham.¹⁶ Nor, though surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguish themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college, he had won for himself a conspicuous place in parliament. No advantage of fortune or connection was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents, and his unblemished honor. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the Delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone, culprit, advocates, accusers.¹⁷ To the generation which is now in the vigor of life, he is the sole representative of a great age which has passed away. But those who, within the last ten years, have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty

and animated eloquence of Charles, Earl Grey,¹⁷ are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.

The charges and the answers of Hastings were first read. The ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less tedious than it otherwise would have been by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relation of the amiable poet. On the third day Burke rose. Four sittings were occupied by his opening speech, which was intended to be a general introduction to all the charges. With an exuberance of thought and a splendor of diction which more than satisfied the highly raised expectation of the audience, he described the character and institutions of the natives of India, recounted the circumstances in which the Asiatic empire of Britain had originated, and set forth the constitution of the Company¹⁸ and of the English presidencies. Having thus attempted to communicate to his hearers an idea of Eastern society, as vivid as that which existed in his own mind, he proceeded to arraign the administration of Hastings as systematically conducted in defiance of morality and public law. The energy and pathos of the great orator extorted expressions of unwonted admiration from the stern and hostile Chancellor, and, for a moment seemed to pierce even the resolute heart of the defendant. The ladies in the galleries, unaccustomed to such displays of eloquence, excited by the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps not unwilling to display their taste and sensibility, were in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Handkerchiefs were pulled out; smelling bottles were handed round; hysterical sobs and screams were heard; and Mrs. Sheridan¹⁹ was carried out in a fit. At length the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded, "Therefore," said he, "hath it with all confidence been ordered, by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors. I impeach him in the name of the Commons' House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honor he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the

¹³ William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), Prime Minister of England.

¹⁴ Prime Minister from 1770-82, he may be remembered by his obstinate adherence to the policy of oppression with respect to America.

¹⁵ An Athenian orator of the fourth century B. C., who although a friend of Demosthenes was chosen to prosecute him on a charge of bribery.

¹⁶ William Windham, a member of Parliament, and afterwards a member of the Ministry of the Pitt and Grenville administration.

¹⁷ Grey later became Prime Minister, and did much toward the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832.

¹⁸ The East India Company.

¹⁹ The wife of the dramatist and statesman Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all!"²⁰

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(1856)

Oliver Goldsmith was one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century. He was of a Protestant and Saxon family which had been long settled in Ireland, and which had, like most other Protestant and Saxon families, been, in troubled times, harassed and put in fear by the native population. His father, Charles Goldsmith, studied, in the reign of Queen Anne, at the diocesan school of Elphin, became attached to the daughter of the school-master, married her, took orders, and settled at a place called Pallas, in the county of Longford. There he with difficulty supported his wife and children on what he could earn, partly as a curate and partly as a farmer.

At Pallas, Oliver Goldsmith was born in November, 1728. That spot was then, for all practical purposes, almost as remote from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed, as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even at this day those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from any high-road, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. The lanes would break any jaunting-car to pieces; and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly built wheels cannot be dragged.

When Oliver was still a child, his father was presented to a living, worth about two hundred pounds a year, in the county of Westmeath. The family accordingly quitted their cottage in the wilderness for a spacious house on a frequented road, near the village of Lissoy. Here the boy was taught his letters by a maid-servant, and was sent, in his seventh year, to a village school kept by an old quarter-master on half pay, who professed to teach nothing but reading, writing and arithmetic, but who had an inexhaustible fund of stories about ghosts, banishes, and fairies, about the great Rapparee chiefs, Baldearg O'Donnell and galloping Hogan and about the exploits of Peterborough and Stanhope, the surprise of Monjuich, and the glorious disaster of Brihuega. This man must have been of the Protestant religion, but he was of the aboriginal race, and not only spoke the Irish language, but could pour forth unpremeditated Irish verses. Oliver early be-

came, and through life continued to be, a passionate admirer of the Irish music, and especially of the compositions of Carolan,¹ some of the last notes of whose harp he heard. It ought to be added that Oliver, though by birth one of the Englishry, and though connected by numerous ties with the Established Church, never showed the least sign of that contemptuous antipathy with which, in his days, the ruling minority in Ireland too generally regarded the subject majority. So far, indeed, was he from sharing in the opinions and feelings of the caste to which he belonged, that he conceived an aversion to the Glorious and Immortal Memory, and, even when George the Third was on the throne, maintained that nothing but the restoration of the banished dynasty could save the country.

From the humble academy kept by the old soldier Goldsmith was removed in his ninth year. He went to several grammar-schools, and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. His life at this time seems to have been far from happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is shown to personal defects; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the play-ground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-room. When he had risen to eminence, those who once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of a century later, to indicate the powers which produced the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the "Deserted Village."

In his seventeenth year Oliver went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizars² paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging; but they had to perform some menial services from which they have long been relieved. They swept the court; they carried up the dinner to the fellows' table, and changed the plates and poured out the ale of the rulers of the society. Goldsmith was quartered, not alone, in a garret, on the

¹ Turloch O'Carolan (1670-1738). One of the last of the Irish bards, who spent his days wandering about Ireland, singing, and playing on his harp.

² At Cambridge, and at Trinity College, Dublin, a sizar was a student allowed free commons, and other gratuities, in return for services rendered.

window of which his name, scrawled by himself, is still read with interest. From such garrets many men of less parts than his have made their way to the wool-sack³ or to the episcopal bench. But Goldsmith, while he suffered all the humiliations, threw away all the advantages of his situation. He neglected the studies of the place, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture-room, was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable, and was caned by a brutal tutor for giving a ball in the attic story of the college to some gay youths and damsels from the city.

While Oliver was leading at Dublin a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation, his father died, leaving a mere pittance. The youth obtained his bachelor's degree, and left the university. During some time the humble dwelling to which his widowed mother had retired was his home. He was now in his twenty-first year; it was necessary that he should do something; and his education seemed to have fitted him to do nothing but to dress himself in gaudy colors, of which he was as fond as a magpie, to take a hand at cards, to sing Irish airs, to play the flute, to angle in summer, and to tell ghost stories by the fire in winter. He tried five or six professions in turn without success. He applied for ordination; but, as he applied in scarlet clothes, he was speedily turned out of the episcopal palace. He then became tutor in an opulent family, but soon quitted his situation in consequence of a dispute about play. Then he determined to emigrate to America. His relations, with much satisfaction, saw him set out for Cork on a good horse, with thirty pounds in his pocket. But in six weeks he came back on a miserable hack, without a penny, and informed his mother that the ship in which he had taken his passage, having got a fair wind while he was at a party of pleasure, had sailed without him. Then he resolved to study the law. A generous kinsman advanced fifty pounds. With this sum Goldsmith went to Dublin, was enticed into a gaming-house, and lost every shilling. He then thought of medicine. A small purse was made up; and in his twenty-fourth year he was sent to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh he passed eighteen months in nominal attendance on lectures, and picked up some superficial information about chemistry and natural history. Thence he went to Leyden still pretending to study physic. He left that celebrated university—the third uni-

versity at which he had resided—in his twenty-seventh year, without a degree, with the merest smattering of medical knowledge, and with no property but his clothes and his flute. His flute, however, proved a useful friend. He rambled on foot through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, playing tunes which everywhere set the peasantry dancing, and which often procured for him a supper and a bed. He wandered as far as Italy. His musical performances, indeed, were not to the taste of the Italians; but he contrived to live on the alms which he obtained at the gates of convents. It should, however, be observed, that the stories which he told about this part of his life ought to be received with great caution; for strict veracity was never one of his virtues, and a man who is ordinarily inaccurate in narration is likely to be more than ordinarily inaccurate when he talks about his own travels. Goldsmith, indeed, was so regardless of truth as to assert in print that he was present at a most interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, and that this conversation took place at Paris. Now, it is certain that Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time which Goldsmith passed on the continent.

In 1756 the wanderer landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had, indeed, if his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the University of Padua a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request: there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill suited to the boards even of the humblest theatre. He pounded drugs and ran about London with phials for charitable chemists. He joined a swarm of beggars, which made its nest in Axe Yard.⁴ He was for a time usher of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly, that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place. Then he presented himself at Surgeons' Hall for examination, as mate to a

³ i. e. the office of Lord High Chancellor, who sat upon a cushion of wool.

⁴ Probably Axe and Bottle Yard (now King Street), an open space near the old Marshalsea Prison in Southwark.

naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for a morsel of food and the third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature. Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flag-stones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners well remember both. Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley-slave.

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived, and many which have perished. He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers; children's books, which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once famous shop at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard; "An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe," which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a "Life of Beau Nash," which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so; a superficial and incorrect, but very readable, "History of England," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing "Sketches of London Society," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveller to his friends.⁵ All these works were anonymous; but some of them were well known to be Goldsmith's; and he gradually rose in the estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was, indeed, emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education. He knew nothing accurately: his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But, though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect. There have been many greater writers; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humor rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a

certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among thieves and beggars, street-walkers, and merry-andrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers; to Reynolds, the first of English painters; and to Burke, who had not yet entered Parliament, but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his conversation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763 he was one of the nine original members of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilized region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Toward the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrear that his landlady one morning called in the help of a sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, despatched a messenger to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily.⁶ He came, and found that Goldsmith had changed the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira. Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds, and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid, and the sheriff's officer withdrew. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another, he insisted on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was the "Vicar of Wakefield."

But before the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in print came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week, 1764, he published a poem, entitled the "Traveller." It was the first work to which he had put his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skilful critics was that nothing finer had

⁵ V. p. 307, *supra*.

⁶ For an account of this incident, s. p. 427, *supra*.

appeared in verse since the fourth book of the "Dunciad." In one respect, the "Traveller" differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general, his designs were bad, and his execution good. In the "Traveller," the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of the "Traveller" was on the counters of the booksellers, the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language. The fable is indeed one of the worst that ever was constructed. It wants not merely that probability which ought to be found in a tale of common English life, but that consistency which ought to be found even in the wildest fiction about witches, giants, and fairies. But the earlier chapters have all the sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. Moses and his spectacles, the Vicar and his monogamy, the Sharper and his cosmogony, the Squire proving from Aristotle that relatives are related, Olivia preparing herself for the arduous task of converting a rakish lover by studying the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the great ladies with their scandal about Sir Tomkyn's amours and Dr. Burdock's verses, and Mr. Burchell with his *Fudgel* have caused as much harmless mirth as has ever been caused by matter packed into so small a number of pages. The latter part of the tale is unworthy of the beginning. As we approach the catastrophe, the absurdities lie thicker and thicker, and the gleams of pleasantry become rarer and rarer.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He wrote the "Good-natured Man," a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, not less than five hundred pounds—five times as much as he had

made by the "Traveller" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" together. The plot of the "Good-natured Man" is, like almost all Goldsmith's plots, very ill constructed. But some passages are exquisitely ludicrous; much more ludicrous, indeed, than suited the taste of the town at that time. A canting, mawkish play, entitled "False Delicacy," had just had an immense run. Sentimentality was all the mode. During some years, more tears were shed at comedies than at tragedies; and a pleasantry which moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was reprobated as low. It is not strange, therefore, that the very best scene in the "Good-natured Man"—that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and the bailiff's follower in full court-dresses—should have been mercilessly hissed, and should have been omitted after the first night.

In 1770 appeared the "Deserted Village." In mere diction and versification, this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior, to the "Traveller;" and it is generally preferred to the "Traveller" by that large class of readers who think, with Bayes in the "Rehearsal," that the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things. More discerning judges, however, while they admire the beauty of the details, are shocked by one unpardonable fault which pervades the whole. The fault we mean is not that theory about wealth and luxury which has so often been censured by political economists. The theory is indeed false; but the poem, considered merely as a poem, is not necessarily the worse on that account. The finest poem in the Latin language,¹ indeed the finest didactic poem in any language, was written in defense of the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy. A poet may easily be pardoned for reasoning ill; but he cannot be pardoned for describing ill—for observing the world in which he lives so carelessly that his portraits bear no resemblance to the originals—for exhibiting as copies from real life monstrous combinations of things which never were, and never could be, found together. What would be thought of a painter who should mix August and January in one landscape? Who should introduce a frozen river into a harvest scene? Would it be a sufficient defense of such a picture to say that every part was exquisitely colored, that the

¹ A character in *The Rehearsal*, a play by the Duke of Buckingham, meant to satirize Dryden.

² The *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, a Roman poet of the first century B. C. In this poem (*On the Nature of Things*) Lucretius aspired to explain the origin of the universe by philosophical theories, and to attack and denounce all religion and the belief in immortality.

green hedges, the apple-trees loaded with fruit, the wagons reeling under the yellow sheaves, and the sunburnt reapers wiping their foreheads were very fine, and that the ice and the boys sliding were also very fine? To such a picture the "Deserted Village" bears a great resemblance. It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close together belong to two different countries, and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content, and tranquillity, as his Auburn. He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day, and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent; the ejection he had probably seen in Munster; but by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world.

In 1773 Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play—"She Stoops to Conquer." The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece out. The sentimental comedy still reigned, and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. The "Good-natured Man" had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of the "Good-natured Man" was sober when compared with the rich drollery of "She Stoops to Conquer," which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelly and Cumberland⁹ ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of, "Turn him out!" or "Throw him over!" Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While Goldsmith was writing the "Deserted Village" and "She Stoops to Conquer," he was employed on works of a very different kind—works from which he derived little reputation, but much profit. He compiled for the use of schools a "History of Rome," by which he made three hundred pounds; a "History of England," by which he made six hundred pounds; a "History of Greece," for which he received two hundred and fifty pounds; a "Natural History," for which the booksellers

⁹ Hugh Kelly was the author of *False Delicacy*, the "canting, mawkish play" mentioned above. Richard Cumberland was a novelist and dramatist, whose best play is *The West Indian*.

covenanted to pay him eight hundred guineas. These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language, what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls. He committed some strange blunders, for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus, in his "History of England" he tells us that Naseby¹⁰ is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was reprinted. He was very nearly hoaxed into putting into the "History of Greece" an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his "Animated Nature" he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagonians, monkeys that preach sermons, nightingales that repeat long conversations. "If he can tell a horse from a cow," said Johnson, "that is the extent of his knowledge of zoölogy." How little Goldsmith was qualified to write about the physical sciences is sufficiently proved by two anecdotes. He on one occasion denied that the sun is longer in the northern than in the southern signs. It was vain to cite the authority of Maupertuis. "Maupertuis!" he cried; "I understand those matters better than Maupertuis." On another occasion he, in defiance of the evidence of his own senses, maintained obstinately, and even angrily, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

Yet, ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary book-makers. He was a great, perhaps an unequalled master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgments of these histories, well deserve to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome: but the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children not as a task, but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great, and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplish-

¹⁰ Naseby, where the battle was fought between Charles I and Cromwell's army is in Northamptonshire.

ment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four. He aspired to share in their colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took a part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. "Noll," said Garrick, "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." Chamier¹¹ declared that it was a hard exercise of faith to believe that so foolish a chatterer could have really written the "Traveller." Even Boswell could say, with contemptuous compassion, that he liked very well to hear honest Goldsmith run on. "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "but he should not like to hear himself." Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal and delicious to the taste if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment; and such a river is a type of the mind of Goldsmith. His first thoughts on every subject were confused even to absurdity, but they required only a little time to work themselves clear. When he wrote they had that time, and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius; but when he talked, he talked nonsense, and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation; he felt every failure keenly; yet he had not sufficient judgment and self-command to hold his tongue. His animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing which he could not do. After every attempt, he felt that he had exposed himself, and writhed with shame and vexation; yet the next moment he began again.

His associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His

heart was soft, even to weakness; he was so generous, that he quite forgot to be just; he forgave injuries so readily, that he might be said to invite them, and was so liberal to beggars that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him—envy. But there is not the least reason to believe that this bad passion, though it sometimes made him wince and utter fretful exclamations, ever impelled him to injure by wicked arts the reputation of any of his rivals. The truth probably is, that he was not more envious, but merely less prudent, than his neighbors. His heart was on his lips. All those small jealousies, which are but too common among men of letters, but which a man of letters who is also a man of the world does his best to conceal, Goldsmith avowed with the simplicity of a child. When he was envious, instead of affecting indifference, instead of damning with faint praise, instead of doing injuries slyly and in the dark, he told everybody that he was envious. "Do not, pray do not, talk of Johnson in such terms," he said to Boswell; "you harrow up my very soul." George Steevens¹² and Cumberland were men far too cunning to say such a thing. They would have echoed the praises of the man whom they envied, and then have sent to the newspapers anonymous libels upon him. Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character was to his associates a perfect security that he would never commit such villany. He was neither ill-natured enough, nor long-headed enough, to be guilty of any malicious act which required contrivance and disguise.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But after his name had appeared on the title-page of the "Traveller" he had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income during the last seven years of his life certainly exceeded four hundred pounds a year, and four hundred pounds a year ranked, among the incomes of that day, at least as high as eight hundred pounds a year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple with four hundred pounds a year might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who

¹¹ Anthony Chamier, was one of the original members of the Literary Club founded by Reynolds and Johnson.

¹² A Shakespearean commentator. He was a friend of Johnson, and he made some valuable additions to Dr. Johnson's work on Shakespeare.

were studying the law there had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He wore fine clothes, gave dinners of several courses, paid court to venal beauties. He had also, it should be remembered to the honor of his heart, though not of his head, a guinea, or five, or ten, according to the state of his purse, ready for any tale of distress, true or false. But it was not in dress or feasting, in promiscuous amours or promiscuous charities, that his chief expense lay. He had been from boyhood a gambler, and at once the most sanguine and the most unskilful of gamblers. For a time he put off the day of inevitable ruin by temporary expedients. He obtained advances from booksellers by promising to execute works which he never began. But at length this source of supply failed. He owed more than two thousand pounds, and he saw no hope of extrication from his embarrassments. His spirits and health gave way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat. It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients. "I do not practise," he once said; "I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends." "Pray, dear Doctor," said Beauclerk, "alter your rule, and prescribe only for your enemies." Goldsmith now, in spite of this excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians, and they at one time imagined that they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep; he could take no food. "You are worse," said one of his medical attendants, "than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?" "No, it is not," were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith. He died on the 3d of April, 1774, in his forty-sixth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple; but the spot was not marked by any inscription, and is now forgotten. The coffin was followed by Burke and Reynolds. Both these great men were sincere mourners. Burke, when he heard of Goldsmith's death, had burst into a flood of tears. Reynolds had been so much moved by the news, that he had flung aside his brush and palette for the day.

A short time after Goldsmith's death, a little poem¹³ appeared, which will, as long as

¹³ Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

our language lasts, associate the names of his two illustrious friends with his own. It has already been mentioned that he sometimes felt keenly the sarcasm which his wild, blundering talk brought upon him. He was, not long before his last illness, provoked into retaliating. He wisely betook himself to his pen, and at that weapon he proved himself a match for all his assailants together. Within a small compass he drew with a singularly easy and vigorous pencil the characters of nine or ten of his intimate associates. Though this little work did not receive his last touches, it must always be regarded as a master-piece. It is impossible, however, not to wish that four or five likenesses which have no interest for posterity were wanting to that noble gallery, and that their places were supplied by sketches of Johnson and Gibbon, as happy and vivid as the sketches of Burke and Garrick.

Some of Goldsmith's friends and admirers honored him with a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey. Nollekens¹⁴ was the sculptor, and Johnson wrote the inscription. It is much to be lamented that Johnson did not leave to posterity a more durable and a more valuable memorial of his friend. A life of Goldsmith would have been an inestimable addition to the "Lives of the Poets." No man appreciated Goldsmith's writings more justly than Johnson; no man was better acquainted with Goldsmith's character and habits; and no man was more competent to delineate with truth and spirit the peculiarities of a mind in which great powers were found in company with great weaknesses. But the list of poets to whose works Johnson was requested by the booksellers to furnish prefaces ended with Lyttleton, who died in 1773. The line seems to have been drawn expressly for the purpose of excluding the person whose portrait would have most fitly closed the series. Goldsmith, however, has been fortunate in his biographers. Within a few years his life has been written by Mr. Prior, by Mr. Washington Irving, and by Mr. Forster. The diligence of Mr. Prior deserves great praise; the style of Mr. Washington Irving is always pleasing; but the highest place must in justice be assigned to the eminently interesting work of Mr. Forster.

THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1685

(From *History of England*, 1848-1860)

I intend, in this chapter to give a description of the state in which England was at the time

¹⁴ Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), a sculptor who executed busts of Garrick, Sterne, Goldsmith, etc.

when the crown passed from Charles the Second to his brother. Such a description, composed from scanty and dispersed materials, must necessarily be very imperfect. Yet it may perhaps correct some false notions which would make the subsequent narrative unintelligible or uninteresting.

If we would study with profit the history of our ancestors, we must be constantly on our guard against the delusions which the well known names of families, places, and offices naturally produce, and must never forget that the country of which we read was a very different country from that in which we live. In every experimental science there is a tendency towards perfection. In every human being there is a wish to ameliorate his own condition. These two principles have often sufficed, even when counteracted by great public calamities and by bad institutions, to carry civilisation rapidly forward. No ordinary misfortune, no ordinary misgovernment, will do so much to make a nation wretched, as the constant progress of physical knowledge and the constant effort of every man to better himself will do to make a nation prosperous. It has often been found that profuse expenditure, heavy taxation, absurd commercial restrictions, corrupt tribunals, disastrous wars, seditions, persecutions, conflagrations, inundations, have not been able to destroy capital so fast as the exertions of private citizens have been able to create it. It can easily be proved that, in our own land, the national wealth has, during at least six centuries, been almost uninterruptedly increasing; that it was greater under the Tudors than under the Plantagenets; that it was greater under the Stuarts than under the Tudors; that, in spite of battles, sieges and confiscations, it was greater on the day of the Restoration than on the day when the Long Parliament met; that, in spite of maladministration, of extravagance, of public bankruptcy, of two costly and unsuccessful wars, of the pestilence and of the fire, it was greater on the day of the death of Charles the Second than on the day of his Restoration. This progress, having continued during many ages became at length about the middle of the eighteenth century, portentously rapid, and has proceeded, during the nineteenth, with accelerated velocity. In consequence partly of our geographical and partly of our moral position, we have, during several generations, been exempt from evils which have elsewhere impeded the efforts and destroyed the fruits of industry. While every part of the Continent, from Moscow to Lisbon, has been the theatre of bloody and devastating

wars, no hostile standard has been seen here but as a trophy. While revolutions have taken place all around us, our government has never once been subverted by violence. During more than a hundred years there has been in our island no tumult of sufficient importance to be called an insurrection; nor has the law been once borne down either by popular fury or by regal tyranny: public credit has been held sacred: the administration of justice has been pure: even in times which by Englishmen might be justly called evil times, we have enjoyed what almost every other nation in the world would have considered as an ample measure of civil and religious freedom. Every man has felt entire confidence that the state would protect him in the possession of what had been earned by his diligence and hoarded by his self-denial. Under the benignant influence of peace and liberty, science has flourished, and has been applied to practical purposes on a scale never before known. The consequence is that a change to which the history of the old world furnishes no parallel has taken place in our country. Could the England of 1685 be, by some magical process, set before our eyes, we should not know one landscape in a hundred or one building in ten thousand. The country gentleman would not recognize his own fields. The inhabitant of the town would not recognise his own street. Everything has been changed, but the great features of nature, and a few massive and durable works of human art. We might find out Snowdon and Windermere, the Cheddar Cliffs and Beachy Head. We might find out here and there a Norman minster, or a castle which witnessed the wars of the Roses. But with such rare exceptions, everything would be strange to us. Many thousands of square miles which are now rich corn land and meadow, intersected by green hedgerows, and dotted with villages and pleasant country seats, would appear as moors overgrown with furze, or fens abandoned to wild ducks. We should see straggling huts built of wood and covered with thatch, where we now see manufacturing towns and seaports renowned to the farthest ends of the world. The capital itself would shrink to dimensions not much exceeding those of its present suburb on the south of the Thames. Not less strange to us would be the garb and manners of the people, the furniture and the equipages, the interior of the shops and dwellings. Such a change in the state of a nation seems to be at least as well entitled to the notice of a historian as any change of the dynasty or of the ministry.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SQUIRE

(From the same)

We should be much mistaken if we pictured to ourselves the squires of the seventeenth century as men bearing a close resemblance to their descendants, the county members and chairmen of quarter sessions with whom we are familiar. The modern country gentleman generally receives a liberal education, passes from a distinguished school to a distinguished college, and has ample opportunity to become an excellent scholar. He has generally seen something of foreign countries. A considerable part of his life has generally been passed in the capital; and the refinements of the capital follow him into the country. There is perhaps no class of dwellings so pleasing as the rural seats of the English gentry. In the parks and pleasure grounds, nature, dressed yet not disguised by art, wears her most alluring form. In the buildings, good sense and good taste combine to produce a happy union of the comfortable and the graceful. The pictures, the musical instruments, the library, in any other country would be considered as proving the owner to be an eminently polished and accomplished man. A country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about a fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his posterity. He was, therefore, as compared with his posterity, a poor man, and was generally under the necessity of residing, with little interruption, on his estate. To travel on the Continent, to maintain an establishment in London, or even to visit London frequently, were pleasures in which only the great proprietors could indulge. It may be confidently affirmed that of the squires whose names were then in the Commissions of Peace and Lieutenancy not one in twenty went to town once in five years, or had ever in his life wandered so far as Paris. Many lords of manors had received an education differing little from that of their menial servants. The heir of an estate often passed his boyhood and youth at the seat of his family with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign his name to a *Mittimus*. If he went to school and to college, he generally returned before he was twenty to the seclusion of the old hall, and there, unless his mind were very happily constituted by nature, soon forgot his academical pursuits in rural business and pleasures. His chief serious employment was the care of his property. He examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and, on market days, made bargains over a

tankard with drovers and hop merchants. His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to hear only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, scurrilous terms of abuse, were uttered with the broadest accent of his province. It was easy to discern from the first words which he spoke, whether he came from Somersetshire or Yorkshire. He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and, if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity. The litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall door. His table was loaded with coarse plenty; and guests were cordially welcomed to it. But as the habit of drinking to excess was general in the class to which he belonged, and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large assemblies daily with claret or canary, strong beer was the ordinary beverage. The quantity of beer consumed in those days was indeed enormous. For beer then was to the lower and middle classes, not only all that beer is, but all that wine, tea, and ardent spirits now are. It was only at great houses, or on great occasions, that foreign drink was placed upon the board. The ladies of the house, whose business it had commonly been to cook the repast, retired as soon as the dishes had been devoured, and left the gentlemen to their ale and tobacco. The coarse jollity of the afternoon was often prolonged till the revellers were laid under the table.

It was very seldom that the country gentleman caught glimpses of the great world; and what he saw of it tended rather to confuse than to enlighten his understanding. His opinions respecting religion, government, foreign countries and former times, having been derived, not from study, from observation, or from conversation with enlightened companions, but from such traditions as were current in his own small circle, were the opinions of a child. He adhered to them, however, with the obstinacy which is generally found in ignorant men accustomed to be fed with flattery. His animosities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews. Towards London and Londoners he felt an aversion which more than once produced important political effects. His wife and daughter were in tastes and acquirements below a housekeeper or a stillroom maid of the present day. They stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry

wine, cured marigolds, and made the crust for the venison pasty.

From this description it might be supposed that the English esquire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alchouse keeper of the present time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted, which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some 10 most important points a gentleman. He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy, and was distinguished by many both of the good and of the bad qualities which belong to aristocrats. His family pride was beyond that 15 of a Talbot or a Howard. He knew the genealogies and coats of arms of all his neighbors, and could tell which of them had assumed supporters without any right, and which of them were so unfortunate as to be grandsons 20 of aldermen. He was a magistrate, and, as such, administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice, which, in spite of innumerable blunders, and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better 25 than no justice at all. He was an officer of the trainband;¹ and his military dignity, though it might move the mirth of gallants who had served a campaign in Flanders, raised his character in his own eyes and in the eyes of 30 his neighbors. Nor indeed was his soldiership justly a subject of derision. In every county there were elderly gentlemen who had seen service which was no child's play. One had been knighted by Charles the First, after the 35 battle of Edgehill. Another still wore a patch over the scar which he had received at Naseby. A third had defended his old house till Fairfax had blown in the door with a petard. The presence of these old Cavaliers, with their 40 old swords and holsters, and with their old stories about Goring and Lunsford,² gave to the musters of the militia an earnest and warlike aspect which would otherwise have been wanting. Even those country gentlemen who were 45 too young to have themselves exchanged blows with the cuirassiers of the Parliament had, from childhood, been surrounded by the traces of recent war, and fed with stories of the martial exploits of their fathers and their uncles. 50 Thus the character of the English esquire of the seventeenth century was compounded of two elements which we seldom or never find united. His ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases, would, in our 55 time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was

essentially a partisan, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and the vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and used to respect themselves and to be respected by others. It is not easy for a generation accustomed to find chivalrous sentiments only in company with liberal studies and polished manners, to image to himself a man with the deportment, the vocabulary, and the accent of a carter, yet punctilious on matters of genealogy and precedence, and ready to risk his life rather than see a stain cast on the honor of his house. It is, however, only by thus joining together things seldom or never found together in our own experience, that we can form a just idea of that rustic aristocracy which constituted the main strength of the armies of Charles the First, and which long supported, with 20 strange fidelity, the interest of his descendants.

THE COFFEE HOUSE

(From the same)

The coffee house must not be dismissed with a cursory mention. It might indeed at that time have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No Parliament had sat for years. The municipal council of the City had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into 35 fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances the coffee houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself.

The first of these establishments had been set up by a Turkey merchant, who had acquired among the Mahometans a taste for their favorite beverage. The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee house to learn the news and to discuss it. Every coffee house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became, what the journalists of our time have been called, a fourth Estate of the realm.¹ The Court had 50 long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been

¹ The militia.

² Two unprincipled Royalist leaders.

¹ Edmund Burke on one occasion referring to the Reporters' Gallery, said "Yonder sits the Fourth Estate, more important than them all."

made, during Danby's administration, to close the coffee houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was an universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten years had elapsed, and during those years the number and influence of the coffee houses had been constantly increasing. Foreigners remarked that the coffee house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee house was the Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the Grecian or the Rainbow. Nobody was excluded from these places who laid down his penny at the bar. Yet every rank and profession, and every shade of religious and political opinion, had its own headquarters. There were houses near St. James's Park where fops congregated, their heads and shoulders covered with black or flaxen wigs, not less ample than those which are now worn by the Chancellor and by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The wig came from Paris and so did the rest of the fine gentleman's ornaments, his embroidered coat, his fringed gloves, and the tassel which upheld his pantaloon. The conversation was in that dialect which, long after it had ceased to be spoken in fashionable circles, continued in the mouth of Lord Foppington,² to excite the mirth of theatres. The atmosphere was like that of a perfumer's shop. Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination. If any clown, ignorant of the usages of the house, called for a pipe, the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters soon convinced him that he had better go somewhere else. Nor, indeed, would he have had far to go. For, in general the coffee rooms reeked with tobacco like a guard room: and strangers sometimes expressed their surprise that so many people should leave their own firesides to sit in the midst of eternal fog and stench. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will's. That celebrated house, situated between Covent Garden and Bow Street, was sacred to polite letters. There the talk was about poetical justice and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault³ and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients. One group debated

whether *Paradise Lost* ought not to have been in rhyme. To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that *Venice Preserved*⁴ ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were Earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert Templars, sheepish lads from the Universities, translators and index makers in ragged coats of frieze. The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sate. In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the Laureate, and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry,⁵ was thought a privilege. A pinch from his snuff box was an honour sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast. There were coffee houses where the first medical men might be consulted. Doctor John Radcliffe, who, in the year 1685, rose to the largest practice in London, came daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, from his house in Bow Street, then a fashionable part of the capital, to Garraway's, and was to be found, surrounded by surgeons and apothecaries, at a particular table. There were Puritan coffee houses where no oath was heard and where lankhaired men discussed election, and reprobation through their noses; Jew coffee houses where dark eyed money changers from Venice and Amsterdam greeted each other; and Popish coffee houses where, as good Protestants believed, Jesuits planned, over their cups, another great fire, and cast silver bullets to shoot the King. These gregarious habits had no small share in forming the character of the Londoner of that age. He was, indeed, a different being from the rustic Englishman. There was not then the intercourse which now exists between the two classes. Only very great men were in the habit of dividing the year between town and country. Few esquires came to the capital thrice in their lives. Nor was it yet the practice of all citizens in easy circumstances to breathe the fresh air of the fields and woods during some weeks of every summer. A cockney, in a rural village, was stared at as much as if he had intruded into a Kraal of Hottentots. On the other hand, when the lord of a Lincolnshire or Shropshire manor appeared in Fleet Street, he was as easily distinguished from the resident population as a Turk or a Lascar. His dress, his gait, his accent, the manner in which he

² A character in *The Relapse* by Vanbrugh.

³ Charles Perrault (1628-1703), a distinguished French critic, precipitated the long dispute on the relative merits of the ancient and modern writers. Nicholas Boileau

(1636-1711) defended the ancients against Perrault's support of the moderns.

⁴ *Venice Preserved* was a play by Otway, 1682.

⁵ René Le Bossu (1631-1690), who published his *Traité du poëme épique* in 1675.

gazed at the shops, stumbled into the gutters, ran against the porters, and stood under the waterspouts, marked him out as an excellent subject for the operations of swindlers and banterers. Bullies jostled him into the kennel.⁴ Hackney coachmen splashed him from head to foot. Thieves explored with perfect security the huge pockets of his horseman's coat, while he stood entranced by the splendour of the Lord Mayor's show. Moneydroppers,⁷ sore from the cart's tail, introduced themselves to him, and appeared to him the most honest friendly gentlemen he had ever seen. Painted women, the refuse of Lewkner Lane and Whetstone Park, passed themselves on him for countesses and maids of honour. If he asked his way to St. James's, his informants sent him to Mile End. If he went into a shop, he was instantly discerned to be a fit purchaser of everything that nobody else would buy, of second-hand embroidery, copper rings, and watches that would not go. If he rambled into any fashionable coffee house, he became a mark for the insolent derision of fops and the grave waggy of Templars. Enraged and mortified, he soon returned to his mansion, and there, in the homage of his tenants and the conversation of his boon companions, found consolation for the vexations and humiliations which he had undergone. There he was once more a great man, and saw nothing above himself except when at the assizes he took his seat on the bench near the Judge, or when at the muster of the militia he saluted the Lord Lieutenant.

John Henry Newman

1801-1890

KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER

(From *Discussions and Arguments*, 1841)

A distinguished Conservative statesman tells us from a town-hall of Tamworth that "in becoming wiser a man will become better;" meaning by wiser more conversant with the facts and theories of physical science; and that such a man will "rise at once in the scale of intellectual and moral existence." "That," he adds, "is my belief." He avows, also, that the fortunate individual whom he is describing, by being "accustomed to such contemplations,

⁴ The drainage gutter, which ran through the middle of the street.

⁷ Sharpers who pretended to find a coin, which they themselves had dropped, and return it to the owner in order to win his confidence. They were frequently punished by being tied to a cart and whipped through the streets.

will feel the *moral dignity of his nature exalted*." He speaks also of physical knowledge as "being the means of useful occupation and rational recreation;" of "the pleasures of knowledge" superseding "the indulgence of sensual appetite," and of its "contributing to the intellectual and moral improvement of the community." Accordingly, he very consistently wishes it to be set before "the female as well as the male portion of the population;" otherwise, as he truly observes, "great injustice would be done to the well-educated and virtuous" women of the place. They are to "have equal power and equal influence with others." It will be difficult to exhaust the reflections which rise in the mind on reading avowals of this nature.

The first question which obviously suggests itself is *how* these wonderful moral effects are to be wrought under the instrumentality of the physical sciences. Can the process be analyzed and drawn out, or does it act like a dose or a charm which comes into general use empirically? Does Sir Robert Peel mean to say, that whatever be the occult reasons for the result, so it is; you have but to drench the popular mind with physics, and moral and religious advancement follows on the whole, in spite of individual failures? Yet where has the experiment been tried on so large a scale as to justify such anticipations? Or rather, does he mean, that, from the nature of the case, he who is imbued with science and literature, unless adverse influences interfere, cannot but be a better man? It is natural and becoming to seek for some clear idea of the meaning of so dark an oracle. To know is one thing, to do is another; the two things are altogether distinct. A man knows he should get up in the morning,—he lies a-bed; he knows he should not lose his temper, yet he cannot keep it. A labouring man knows he should not go to the ale-house and his wife knows she should not flich when she goes out charing, but, nevertheless, in these cases, the consciousness of a duty is not all one with the performance of it. There are then, large families of instances, to say the least, in which men may become wiser, without becoming better; what, then, is the meaning of this great maxim in the mouth of its promulgators?

Mr. Bentham would answer, that the knowledge which carries virtue along with it, is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and prevents the other. An uneducated man is ever mistaking his own interest, and standing in the way of his own true enjoyments. Use-

ful Knowledge is that which tends to make us more useful to ourselves;—a most definite and intelligible account of the matter, and needing no explanation. But it would be a great injustice, both to Lord Brougham and to Sir Robert, to suppose, when they talk of Knowledge being Virtue, that they are Benthamizing. Bentham had not a spark of poetry in him; on the contrary, there is much of high aspiration, generous sentiment, and impassioned feeling in the tone of Lord Brougham and Sir Robert. They speak of knowledge as something “pulchrum,” fair and glorious, exalted above the range of ordinary humanity, and so little connected with the personal interest of its votaries, that, though Sir Robert does *obiter*¹ talk of improved methods of draining, and the chemical properties of manure, yet he must not be supposed to come short of the lofty enthusiasm of Lord Brougham, who expressly panegyrizes certain ancient philosophers who gave up riches, retired into solitude, or embraced a life of travel, smit with a sacred curiosity about physical or mathematical truth.

Here Mr. Bentham, did it fall to him to offer a criticism, doubtless would take leave to inquire whether such language was anything better than a fine set of words “signifying nothing,”—flowers of rhetoric, which bloom, smell sweet, and die. But it is impossible to suspect so grave and practical a man as Sir Robert Peel of using words literally without any meaning at all; and though I think at best they have not a very profound meaning, yet, such as it is, we ought to attempt to draw it out.

Now, without using exact theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, conflicting,—might rising against right, with the prospect of things getting worse. Under these circumstances, what is it that the School of philosophy in which Sir Robert has enrolled himself proposes to accomplish? Not a victory of the mind over itself—not the supremacy of the law—not the reduction of the rebels—not the unity of our complex nature—not an harmonizing of the chaos—but the mere lulling of the passions to rest by turning the course of thought; not a change of character, but a mere removal of temptation. This should be carefully observed. When a husband is gloomy, or an old woman peevish and fretful, those who are about them do all they can to keep dangerous topics and causes of offence out of the way, and think themselves lucky,

¹ Incidentally.

if, by such skilful management, they get through the day without an outbreak. When a child cries, the nurserymaid dances it about, or points to the pretty black horses out of window, or shows how ashamed poll-parrot or poor puss must be of its tantrums. Such is the sort of prescription which Sir Robert Peel offers to the good people of Tamworth. He makes no pretence of subduing the giant nature, in which we were born, of smiting the lions of the domestic enemies of our peace, of overthrowing passion and fortifying reason; he does but offer to bribe the foe for the nonce with gifts which will avail for that purpose just so long as they *will* avail, and no longer.

This was mainly the philosophy of the great Tully, except when it pleased him to speak as a disciple of the Porch. Cicero handed the recipe to Brougham, and Brougham has passed it on to Peel. If we examine the old Roman's meaning in “*O philosophia, vitæ dux*,”² it was neither more nor less than this;—that, *while* we were thinking of philosophy, we were not thinking of anything else; we did not feel grief, or anxiety, or passion, or ambition, or hatred all that time, and the only point was to keep thinking of it. How to keep thinking of it was *extra artem*. If a man was in grief, he was to be amused; if disappointed, to be excited; if in a rage, to be soothed; if in love, to be roused to the pursuit of glory. No inward change was contemplated, but a change of external objects; as if we were all White Ladies or Undines,³ our moral life being one of impulse and emotion, not subjected to laws, not consisting in habits, nor capable of growth. When Cicero was outwitted by Cæsar, he solaced himself with Plato;⁴ when he lost his daughter, he wrote a treatise on consolation. Such, too, was the philosophy of that Lydian city, mentioned by the historian,⁵ who in a famine played at dice to stay their stomachs.

And such is the rule of life advocated by Lord Brougham; and though, of course, he protests that knowledge “must invigorate the mind as well as entertain it, and refine and elevate the character, while it gives listlessness and weariness their most agreeable excitement and relaxation,” yet his notions of vigour and elevation, when analyzed, will be found to resolve themselves into a mere preternatural excitement under the influence

² “*O philosophy, guide of life.*”

³ *Undine* by La Motte Fouqué was a water nymph born without a soul.

⁴ After the overthrow of Pompey's cause at the Battle of Pharsalia (48 B. C.) Cicero who, after much vacillation, had supported Pompey, found his political career for the time at an end. In his enforced inactivity he turned to philosophy for consolation.

⁵ Heroditus, Bk. I. 94.

of some stimulating object, or the peace which is attained by there being nothing to quarrel with. . . .

In morals, as in physics, the stream cannot rise higher than its source. Christianity raises men from earth, for it comes from heaven; but human morality creeps, struts, or frets upon the earth's level, without wings to rise. The Knowledge School does not contemplate raising man above himself; it merely aims at disposing of his existing powers and tastes, as is most convenient, or is practicable under circumstances. It finds him, like the victims of the French Tyrant,* doubled up in a cage in which he can neither lie, stand, sit, nor kneel, and its highest desire is to find an attitude in which his unrest may be least. Or it finds him like some musical instrument, of great power and compass, but imperfect; from its very structure some keys must ever be out of tune, and its object, when ambition is highest, is to throw the *fault* of its nature where least it will be observed. It leaves a man where it found him—man, and not an Angel—a sinner, not a Saint; but it tries to make him look as much like what he is not as ever it can. The poor indulge in low pleasures; they use bad language, swear loudly and recklessly, laugh at coarse jests, and are rude and boorish. Sir Robert would open on them a wider range of thought and more intellectual objects, by teaching them science; but what warrant will he give us that, if his object could be achieved, what they would gain in decency they would not lose in natural humility and faith? If so, he has exchanged a gross fault for a more subtle one. "Temperance topics" stop drinking; let us suppose it; but will much be gained, if those who give up spirits take to opium? *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*,⁷ is at least a heathen truth, and universities and libraries which recur to heathenism may reclaim it from the heathen for their motto.

Nay, everywhere, so far as human nature remains hardly or partially Christianized, the heathen law remains in force; as is felt in a measure even in the most religious places and societies. Even there, where Christianity has power, the venom of the old Adam is not subdued. Those who have to do with our Colleges give us their experience, that in the case of the young committed to their care, external discipline may change the fashionable excess, but cannot allay the principle of sinning. Stop cigars, they will take to drinking parties; 55

stop drinking, they gamble; stop gambling, and a worse license follows. You do not get rid of vice by human expedients; you can but use them according to circumstances, and in their place, as making the best of a bad matter. You must go to a higher source for renovation of the heart and of the will. You do but play a sort of "hunt the slipper" with the fault of our nature, till you go to Christianity.

I say, you must use human methods in *their place*, and there they are useful; but they are worse than useless out of their place. I have no fanatical wish to deny to any whatever subject of thought or method of reason a place altogether, if it chooses to claim it, in the cultivation of the mind. Mr. Bentham may despise verse-making, or Mr. Dugald Stewart logic, but the great and true maxim is to sacrifice none—to combine, and therefore to adjust, all. All cannot be first, and therefore each has its place, and the problem is to find it. It is at least not a lighter mistake to make what is secondary first, than to leave it out altogether. Here then it is that the Knowledge Society, Gower Street College, Tamworth Reading Room, Lord Brougham and Sir Robert Peel, are all so deplorably mistaken. Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all education. Where it has been laid as the first stone, and acknowledged as the governing spirit, it will take up into itself, assimilate, and give a character to literature and science. Where Revealed Truth has given the aim and direction to Knowledge, Knowledge of all kinds will minister to Revealed Truth. The evidences of Religion, natural theology, metaphysics,—or, again, poetry, history, and the classics,—or physics and mathematics, may all be grafted into the mind of a Christian, and give and take by the grafting. But if in education we begin with nature before grace, with evidences before faith, with science before conscience, with poetry before practice, we shall be doing much the same as if we were to indulge the appetites and passions, and turn a deaf ear to the reason. In each case we misplace what in its place is a divine gift. If we attempt to effect a moral improvement by means of poetry, we shall but mature into a mawkish, frivolous, and fastidious sentimentalism;—if by means of argument, into a dry, unamiable longheadedness;—if by good society, into a polished outside, with hollowness within, in which vice has lost its grossness, and perhaps increased its malignity;—if by experimental science, into an upish, supercilious temper much inclined to scepticism. But reverse the order of things: put Faith first and Knowl-

* Louis XI (1461-83). Scott describes these cages in *Quentin Durward*, I. xv. "In point of fact these cages were eight feet long and about seven feet high."

⁷ "You may cast out nature with a pitchfork, but it will always return."

edge second; let the University minister to the Church, and then classical poetry becomes the type of Gospel truth, and physical science a comment on Genesis or Job, and Aristotle changes into Butler, and Arcesilaus into Berkeley.⁹

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SITE OF A UNIVERSITY

(From *The Office and Work of Universities*, 1854)

If we would know what a University is, considered in its elementary idea, we must betake ourselves to the first and most celebrated home of European literature and source of European civilization, to the bright and beautiful Athens,—Athens, whose schools drew to her bosom, and then sent back again to the business of life, the youth of the western world for a long thousand years. Seated on the verge of the continent, the city seemed hardly suited for the duties of a central metropolis of knowledge; yet, what it lost in convenience of approach, it gained in its neighbourhood to the traditions of the mysterious East, and of the loveliness of the regions in which it lay. Hither, then, as to a sort of ideal land, where all archetypes of the great and the fair were found in substantial being, and all departments of truth explored, and all diversities of intellectual power exhibited, where taste and philosophy were majestically enthroned as in a royal court, where there was no sovereignty but that of mind, and no nobility but that of genius, where professors were rulers, and princes did homage, hither flocked continually from the very corners of the *orbis terrarum*,¹ the many-tongued generation, just rising, or just risen into manhood, in order to gain wisdom.

Pisistratus² had in an early age discovered and nursed the infant genius of his people, and Cimon,³ after the Persian war, had given it a home. That war had established the naval supremacy of Athens; she had become an imperial state; and the Ionians, bound to her by the double chain of kindred and of subjection, were importing into her both their merchandise

and their civilization. The arts and philosophy of the Asiatic coast were easily carried across the sea, and there was Cimon, as I have said, with his ample fortune, ready to receive them with due honours. Not content with patronizing their professors, he built the first of those noble porticos, of which we hear so much in Athens, and he formed the groves, which in process of time became the celebrated Academy. Planting is one of the most graceful, as in Athens it was once the most beneficent, of employments. Cimon took in hand the wild wood, pruned and dressed it, and laid it out with handsome walks and welcome fountains. Nor, while hospitable to the authors of the city's civilization, was he ungrateful to the instruments of her prosperity. His trees extended their cool, umbrageous branches over the merchants, who assembled in the Agora,⁴ for many generations.

Those merchants certainly had deserved that act of bounty; for all the while their ships had been carrying forth the intellectual fame of Athens to the western world. Then commenced what may be called her University existence. Pericles, who succeeded Cimon both in the government and in the patronage of art, is said by Plutarch to have entertained the idea of making Athens the capital of federated Greece; in this he failed, but his encouragement of such men as Phidias and Anaxagoras led the way to her acquiring a far more lasting sovereignty over a far wider empire. Little understanding the sources of her own greatness, Athens would go to war: peace is the interest of a seat of commerce and the arts; but to war she went; yet to her, whether peace or war, it mattered not. The political power of Athens waned and disappeared; kingdoms rose and fell; centuries rolled away,—they did but bring fresh triumphs to the city of the poet and the sage. There at length the swarthy Moor and Spaniard were seen to meet the blue-eyed Gaul; and the Cappadocian, late subject of Mithridates, gazed without alarm at the haughty conquering Roman. Revolution after revolution passed over the face of Europe, as well as of Greece, but still she was there,—Athens, the city of mind,—as radiant, as splendid, as delicate, as young, as ever she had been.

Many a more fruitful coast or isle is washed by the blue Ægean, many a spot is there more beautiful or sublime to see, many a territory more ample; but there was one charm in Attica, which in the same perfection was nowhere else. The deep pastures of Arcadia, the plain

⁹ The two ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle, the profound thinker and logician, and Arcesilaus, a sceptical teacher of the fourth century, who declared that certain knowledge was unattainable by man, are here taken as types of those who put knowledge before faith; while Bishop Butler, who held in his *Analogy* that the revelation of God in nature confirmed the revelation of Him in the Bible, and Bishop Berkeley, who, denying the existence of matter, found in ideas, or spirit, the one reality,—are selected to represent those who give the first place to faith.

¹ "Of the circle of lands."

² Pisistratus' administration was famous for its encouragement of literature and the arts. He had a new edition of the Homeric poems prepared, and he built the Lyceum and several temples.

³ This commander, after defeating the Persians, spent much of his money on improving Athens.

⁴ The market place, used not only for buying and selling, but as a place of assembly for debating, elections, trials, etc.

of Argos, the Thessalian vale, these had not the gift; Bœotia, which lay to its immediate north, was notorious for its very want of it. The heavy atmosphere of that Bœotia might be good for vegetation, but it was associated in popular belief with the dulness of the Bœotian intellect: on the contrary, the special purity, elasticity, clearness, and salubrity of the air of Attica, fit concomitant and emblem of its genius, did that for it which earth did not;—it brought out every bright hue and tender shade of the landscape over which it was spread, and would have illuminated the face even of a more bare and rugged country.

A confined triangle, perhaps fifty miles its greatest length, and thirty its greatest breadth; two elevated rocky barriers, meeting at an angle; three prominent mountains, commanding the plain,—Parnes, Pentelicus, and Hymettus; an unsatisfactory soil; some streams, not always full;—such is about the report which the agent of a London company would have made of Attica. He would report that the climate was mild; the hills were limestone; there was plenty of good marble; more pasture land than at first survey might have been expected, sufficient certainly for sheep and goats; fisheries productive; silver mines once, but long since worked out; figs fair; oil first-rate; olives in profusion. But what he would not think of noting down, was, that the olive tree was so choice in nature and so noble in shape, that it excited a religious veneration; and that it took so kindly to the light soil, as to expand into woods upon the open plain, and to climb up and fringe the hills. He would not think of writing word to his employers, how that clear air, of which I have spoken, brought out, yet blended and subdued, the colours on the marble, till they had a softness and harmony, for all their richness, which in a picture looks exaggerated, yet is after all within the truth. He would not tell, how that same delicate and brilliant atmosphere freshened up the pale olive, till the olive forgot its monotony, and its cheek glowed like the arbutus or beech of the Umbrian hills. He would say nothing of the thyme and thousand fragrant herbs which carpeted Hymettus; he would hear nothing of the hum of its bees; nor take much account of the rare flavour of its honey, since Gozo and Minorra were sufficient for the English demand. He would look over the Ægean from the height he had ascended; he would follow with his eye the chain of islands, which, starting from the Sunian⁵ headland, seemed to offer the fabled divinities of Attica, when they

would visit their Ionian cousins, a sort of viaduct thereto across the sea; but that fancy would not occur to him, nor any admiration of the dark violet billows with their white edges down below; nor of those graceful, fan-like jets of silver upon the rocks, which slowly rise aloft like water spirits from the deep, then shiver, and break, and spread, and shroud themselves, and disappear, in a soft mist of foam; nor of the gentle, incessant heaving and panting of the whole liquid plain; nor of the long waves, keeping steady time, like a line of soldiery, as they resound upon the hollow shore,—he would not deign to notice that restless living element at all, except to bless his stars that he was not upon it. Nor the distinct detail, nor the refined colouring, nor the graceful outline and roseate golden hue of the jutting crags, nor the bold shadows cast from Otus or Laurium⁶ by the declining sun;—our agent of a mercantile firm would not value these matters even at a low figure. Rather we must turn for the sympathy we seek to yon pilgrim student, come from a semi-barbarous land to that small corner of the earth, as to a shrine, where he might take his fill of gazing on those emblems and coruscations of invisible unoriginate perfection. It was the stranger from a remote province, from Britain or from Mauritania, who in a scene so different from that of his chilly, woody swamps, or of his fiery choking sands, learned at once what a real University must be, by coming to understand the sort of country, which was its suitable home.

Nor was this all that a University required, and found in Athens. No one, even there, could live on poetry. If the students at that famous place had nothing better than bright hues and soothing sounds, they would not have been able or disposed to turn their residence there to much account. Of course they must have the means of living, nay, in a certain sense, of enjoyment, if Athens was to be an Alma Mater at the time, or to remain afterwards a pleasant thought in their memory. And so they had: be it recollected Athens was a port, and a mart of trade, perhaps the first in Greece; and this was very much to the point, when a number of strangers were ever flocking to it, whose combat was to be with intellectual, not physical difficulties, and who claimed to have their bodily wants supplied, that they might be at leisure to set about furnishing their minds. Now, barren as was the soil of Attica, and bare the face of the country, yet it had only too many resources for an elegant,

⁵ A promontory forming the extreme southern point of the province of Attica.

⁶ Laurium was a mountain range in Attica. Otus is apparently a misprint for Orus, the peak of Ægina.

nay luxurious abode there. So abundant were the imports of the place, that it was a common saying, that the productions, which were found singly elsewhere, were brought all together in Athens. Corn and wine, the staple of subsistence in such a climate, came from the isles of the Ægean; fine wool and carpeting from Asia Minor; slaves, as now, from the Euxine, and timber too; and iron and brass from the coasts of the Mediterranean. The Athenian did not condescend to manufactures himself, but encouraged them in others; and a population of foreigners caught at the lucrative occupation both for home consumption and for exportation. Their cloth, and other textures for dress and furniture, and their hardware—for instance, armour—were in great request. Labour was cheap; stone and marble in plenty; and the taste and skill, which at first were devoted to public buildings, as temples and porticos, were in course of time applied to the mansions of public men. If nature did much for Athens, it is undeniable that art did much more.

Here some one will interrupt me with the remark: "By the bye, where are we, and whither are we going?—what has all this to do with a University? at least what has it to do with education? It is instructive doubtless; but still how much has it to do with your subject?" Now I beg to assure the reader that I am most conscientiously employed upon my subject; and I should have thought every one would have seen this: however, since the objection is made, I may be allowed to pause awhile, and show distinctly the drift of what I have been saying, before I go farther. What has this to do with my subject! why, the question of the *site* is the very first that comes into consideration, when a *Studium Generale*¹ is contemplated; for that site should be a liberal and a noble one; who will deny it? All authorities agree in this, and very little reflection will be sufficient to make it clear. I recollect a conversation I once had on this very subject with a very eminent man. I was a youth of eighteen, and was leaving my University for the Long Vacation, when I found myself in company in a public conveyance with a middle-aged person, whose face was strange to me. However, it was the great academical luminary of the day, whom afterwards I knew very well. Luckily for me, I did not suspect it; and luckily too, it was a fancy of his, as his friends knew, to make himself on easy terms especially with stage-coach companions. So, what with my flippancy and his condescension, I managed to hear many things which were novel to me

¹ A university, or school of universal learning.

at the time; and one point which he was strong upon, and was evidently fond of urging, was the material pomp and circumstance which should environ a seat of learning. He considered it was worth the consideration of the government, whether Oxford should not stand in a domain of its own. An ample range, say four miles in diameter, should be turned into wood and meadow, and the University should be approached on all sides by a magnificent park, with fine trees in groups and groves and avenues, and with glimpses and views of the fair city, as the traveler drew near it. There is nothing surely absurd in the idea, though it would cost a round sum to realize it. What has a better claim to the purest and fairest possessions of nature, than the seat of wisdom? So thought my coach companion; and he did but express the tradition of ages and the instinct of mankind.

THE AIM OF A UNIVERSITY COURSE

(From *Idea of a University*, 1852)

To-day I have confined myself to saying that that training of the intellect, which is best for the individual himself, best enables him to discharge his duties to society. The Philosopher, indeed, and the man of the world differ in their very notion, but the methods by which they are respectively formed, are pretty much the same. The Philosopher has the same command of matters of thought, which the true citizen and gentleman has of matters of business and conduct. If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course; I say that it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life; and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind,

at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle; and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete, in its result.

William Makepeace Thackeray

1811-1863

THE RESTORATION DRAMA

(From "Congreve and Addison," in *The English Humourists*, written 1851)

There is life and death going on in everything: truth and lies are always at battle. Pleasure is always warring against self-restraint. Doubt is always crying Psha! and sneering. A man in life, a humourist in writing about life, sways over to one principle or the other, and laughs with the reverence for right and the love of truth in his heart, or laughs at these from the other side. Didn't I tell you that dancing was a serious business to Harlequin? I have read two or three of Congreve's plays over before speaking of him; and my feelings were

rather like those, which I dare say most of us here have had, at Pompeii, looking at Sallust's house² and the relics of an orgy: a dried wine-jar or two, a charred supper-table, the breast of a dancing-girl pressed against the ashes, the laughing skull of a jester: a perfect stillness round about, as the cicerone³ twangs his moral, and the blue sky shines calmly over the ruin. The Congreve Muse is dead, and her song choked in Time's ashes. We gaze at the skeleton, and wonder at the life which once revelled in its mad veins. We take the skull up, and muse over the frolic and daring, the wit, scorn, passion, hope, desire, with which that empty bowl once fermented. We think of the glances that allured, the tears that melted, of the bright eyes that shone in those vacant sockets; and of lips whispering love, and cheeks dimpling with smiles, that once covered yon ghastly yellow framework. They used to call those teeth pearls once. See, there's the cup she drank from, the gold-chain she wore on her neck, the vase which held the rouge for her cheeks, her looking-glass, and the harp she used to dance to. Instead of a feast we find a gravestone, and in place of a mistress, a few bones!

Reading in these plays now, is like shutting your ears and looking at people dancing. What does it mean? the measures, the grimaces, the bowing, shuffling and retreating, the cavalier seul⁴ advancing upon those ladies—those ladies and men twirling round at the end in a mad gallop, after which everybody bows and the quaint rite is celebrated. Without the music we can't understand that comic dance of the last century—its strange gravity and gaiety, its decorum or its indecorum. It has a jargon of its own quite unlike life; a sort of moral of its own quite unlike life too. I'm afraid it's a Heathen mystery, symbolizing a Pagan doctrine; protesting—as the Pompeians very likely were, assembled at their theatre and laughing at their games; as Sallust and his friends, and their mistresses, protested, crowned with flowers, with cups in their hands—against the new, hard, ascetic, pleasure-hating doctrine whose gaunt disciples, lately passed over from the Asian shores of the Mediterranean, were

² One of the houses laid bare by the excavations at Pompeii is commonly said to have belonged to Sallust. It is the contrast between the levity and licentiousness of Pompeii, jesting almost within the shadow of a volcano, and the inexorable and terrible doom that overtakes it, which suggests and gives point to Thackeray's comparison. The witty and immoral comedies of Congreve, like the relics of Pompeian orgies, speak of a dead generation of triflers, of a gaiety destined to be choked in ashes.

³ A name given to Italian guides for their volubility, in humorous allusion to the fluency of the great Roman orator Cicero.

⁴ The cavalier who dances alone.

¹ The stage buffoon, one of the regular character types in French comedy.

for breaking the fair images of Venus and flinging the altars of Bacchus down.

I fancy poor Congreve's theatre is a temple of Pagan delights, and mysteries not permitted except among heathens. I fear the theatre carries down that ancient tradition and worship, as masons have carried their secret signs and rites¹ from temple to temple. When the libertine hero carries off the beauty in the play, and the dotard is laughed to scorn for having the young wife: in the ballad, when the poet bids his mistress to gather roses while she may, and warns her that old Time is still a-flying: in the ballet, when honest Corydon courts Phillis under the treillage of the pasteboard cottage, and leers at her over the head of grandpapa in red stockings, who is opportunely asleep; and when seduced by the invitations of the rosy youth she comes forward to the footlights, and they perform on each other's tiptoes that *pas* which you all know, and which is only interrupted by old grandpapa awaking from his doze at the pasteboard châlet (whither he returns to take another nap in case the young people get an encore): when Harlequin, splendid in youth, strength, and agility, arrayed in gold and a thousand colours, springs over the heads of countless perils, leaps down the throat of bewildered giants, and, dauntless and splendid, dances danger down: when Mr. Punch, that Godless old rebel breaks every law and laughs at it with odious triumph, outwits his lawyer, bullies the beadle, knocks his wife about the head, and hangs the hangman—don't you see in the comedy, in the song, in the dance, in the ragged little Punch's puppet-show—the Pagan protest? Doesn't it seem as if Life puts in its plea and sings its comment? Look how the lovers walk and hold each other's hands and whisper! Sing the chorus—"There is nothing like love, there is nothing like youth, there is nothing like beauty of your springtime. Look! how old age tries to meddle with merry sport! Beat him with his own crutch, the wrinkled old dotard! There is nothing like youth, there is nothing like beauty, there is nothing like strength. Strength and valour win beauty and youth. Be brave and conquer. Be young and happy. Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy! Would you know the *Segreto per esser felice*? Here it is, in a smiling mistress and a cup of Falernian."²

¹ In the middle ages when skilled masons moved from place to place to work upon the great abbeys and cathedrals, it was important for them to have some sign by which they could be known as reliable workmen. Thus originated the secret organisation of free or *enfranchised operative masons*, from which modern Freemasonry derives its symbols and rites.

² "Secret of being happy."

³ A wine of southern Italy celebrated by the Latin poets.

As the boy tosses the cup and sings his song—hark! what is that chaunt coming nearer and nearer? What is that dirge which *will* disturb us? The lights of the festival burn dim—the cheeks turn pale—the voice quavers—and the cup drops on the floor. Who's there? Death and Fate are at the gate, and they *will* come in.

NIL NISI BONUM¹

(From *Roundabout Papers*, 1860–1862)

Almost the last words which Sir Walter spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were, "Be a good man, my dear!" and with the last flicker of breath on his dying lips, he sighed a farewell to his family, and passed away blessing them.

Two men,² famous, admired, beloved, have just left us, the Goldsmith and Gibbon of our time. Ere a few weeks are over, the critic's pen will be at work, reviewing their lives, and passing judgment on their works. This is no review, or history, or criticism: only a word in testimony of respect and regard from a man of letters, who owes to his own professional labour the honour of becoming acquainted with these two eminent literary men. One was the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born almost with the republic; the *pater patriæ* had laid his hand on the child's head.³ He bore Washington's name: he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling good-will. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also gratefully remembered? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thankful heart? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own? His books are read by millions of his countrymen, whom he has taught to love England, and why to love her. It would have been

¹ The Latin proverb runs *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, concerning the dead nothing but good.

² Washington Irving died Nov. 28, 1859; Lord Macaulay died Dec. 28, 1859.

³ During one of Washington's visits to New York a Scotch maid servant had presented the boy Irving to the great man with the words "Please your honour, here's a bairn was named after you." The president thereupon gave him his blessing. Cf. C. D. Warner's *Life of Irving*, p. 23.

easy to speak otherwise than he did: to inflame national rancours, which, at the time when he first became known as a public writer, war had just renewed: to cry down the old civilization at the expense of the new: to point out our faults, arrogance, short-comings, and give the republic to infer how much she was the parent state's superior. There are writers enough in the United States, honest and otherwise, who preach that kind of doctrine. But the good Irving, the peaceful, the friendly, had no place for bitterness in his heart, and no scheme but kindness. Received in England with extraordinary tenderness and friendship (Scott, Southey, Byron, a hundred others have borne witness to their liking for him), he was a messenger of good-will and peace between his country and ours. "See, friends!" he seems to say, "these English are not so wicked, rapacious, callous, proud, as you have been taught to believe them. I went amongst them a humble man; won my way by my pen; and, when known, found every hand held out to me with kindness and welcome. Scott is a great man you acknowledge. Did not Scott's King of England give a gold medal to him, and another to me, your countryman, and a stranger?"

Tradition in the United States still fondly retains the history of the feasts and rejoicings which awaited Irving on his return to his native country from Europe. He had a national welcome; he stammered in his speeches, hid himself in confusion, and the people loved him the better. He had worthily represented America in Europe. In that young community a man who brings home with him abundant European testimonials is still treated with respect (I have found American writers, of wide-world reputation, strangely solicitous about the opinions of quite obscure British critics, and elated or depressed by their judgments); and Irving went home medalled by the King, diplomatized by the University, crowned and honoured and admired. He had not in any way intrigued for his honours, he had fairly won them; and, in Irving's instance, as in others, the old country was glad and eager to pay them.

In America the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. Party wars are perpetually raging there, and are carried on by the press with a rancour and fierceness against individuals which exceed British, almost Irish, virulence. It seemed to me, during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hands from that harmless, friendly peacemaker. I had the good fortune to see him at

New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, and remarked how in every place he was honoured and welcomed. Every large city has its "Irving House." The country takes pride in the fame of its men of letters. The gate of his own charming little domain on the beautiful Hudson River was for ever swinging before visitors who came to him. He shut out no one. I had seen many pictures of his house, and read descriptions of it, in both of which it was treated with a not unusual American exaggeration. It was but a pretty little cabin of a place; the gentleman of the press who took notes of the place, whilst his kind old host was sleeping, might have visited the whole house in a couple of minutes.

And how came it that this house was so small, when Mr. Irving's books were sold by hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, when his profits were known to be large, and the habits of life of the good old bachelor were notoriously modest and simple? He had loved once in his life. The lady he loved died; and he, whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after life add to the pathos of that untold story? To grieve always was not in his nature; or, when he had his sorrow, to bring all the world in to condole with him and bemoan it. Deep and quiet he lays the love of his heart, and buries it; and grass and flowers grow over the scarred ground in due time.

Irving had such a small house and such narrow rooms, because there was a great number of people to occupy them. He could only afford to keep one old horse (which, lazy and aged as it was, managed once or twice to run away with that careless old horseman). He could only afford to give plain sherry to that amiable British paragraph-monger, who saw the patriarch asleep over his modest, blameless cup, and fetched the public into his private chamber to look at him. Irving could only live very modestly, because the wifeless, childless man had a number of children to whom he was as a father. He had as many as nine nieces, I am told—I saw two of these ladies at his house—with all of whom the dear old man had shared the produce of his labour and genius.

"Be a good man, my dear." One can't but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humoured, affectionate, self-

denying; in society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable to the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language; the constant friend to us and to our nation; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life:—I don't know what sort of testimonial will be raised to him in his own country, where generous and enthusiastic acknowledgment of American merit is never wanting: but Irving was in our service as well as theirs; and as they have placed a stone at Greenwich yonder in memory of that gallant young Bellot,⁴ who shared the perils and fate of some of our Arctic seamen, I would like to hear of some memorial raised by English writers and friends of letters in affectionate remembrance of the dear and good Washington Irving.

As for the other writer, whose departure many friends, some few most dearly-loved, and multitudes of admiring readers deplore, our republic has already decreed his statue, and he must have known that he had earned this posthumous honour. He is not a poet and man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a great Englishman. All sorts of successes are easy to him: as a lad he goes down into the arena with others, and wins all the prizes to which he has a mind. A place in the senate is straightway offered to the young man. He takes his seat there; he speaks, when so minded, without party anger or intrigue, but not without party faith and a sort of heroic enthusiasm for his cause. Still he is poet and philosopher even more than orator. That he may have leisure and means to pursue his darling studies, he absents himself for a while, and accepts a richly-remunerative post in the East.⁵ As learned a man may 50 live in a cottage or a college common-room; but it always seemed to me that ample means and recognized rank were Macaulay's as of

right. Years ago there was a wretched outcry raised because Mr. Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor Castle,⁶ where he was staying. Immortal gods! Was this man not a fit guest for any palace in the world? or a fit companion for any man or woman in it? I dare say, after Austerlitz, the old K. K.⁷ court officials and footmen sneered at Napoleon for dating from Schönbrunn.⁸ But that miserable "Windsor Castle" outcry is an echo out of fast-retreating old-world remembrances. The place of such a natural chief was amongst the first of the land; and that country is best, according to our British notion at least, where the man of eminence has the best chance of investing his genius and intellect.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-foot-six people might be angry in the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party; and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen? To remember the talk is to wonder: to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers,⁹ and what they had done in after life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801–2–3–4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory. It may be that he was not ill pleased that you should recognize it; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay, up to the day when the present lines are written (the 9th of January), the reader should not deny himself the pleasure

⁴ *Joseph René Bellot* (1826–53), a French naval officer and a volunteer in English Arctic expeditions, who lost his life in the search for Franklin. Bellot's Straits, in the North American Arctic, is named after him. He is commemorated by a red granite obelisk on the river terrace at Greenwich, seat of the Royal Naval College.

⁵ Macaulay was a member of the Supreme Council at Calcutta, 1834–38.

⁶ In 1839, when Macaulay became Secretary of War, he announced the fact to his constituents in a letter dated from Windsor Castle, the Royal Palace, as though it were his residence. The *London Times* attacked him, and among those who had their laugh at his expense was Thackeray himself. But Thackeray made ample amends for what Trevelyan calls "a very innocent and not ill-natured touch of satire," in this passage.

⁷ K. K. in German stands for *Kaiserlich Königlich*, i. e. Imperial Royal.

⁸ The Austrian Imperial residence, three miles south-west of Vienna.

⁹ In Cambridge University the student taking first place in the mathematical tripos or honor examination.

of looking especially at two. It is a good sign of the times when such articles as these (I mean the articles in *The Times* and *Saturday Review*) appear in our public prints about our public men. They educate us, as it were, to admire rightly. An uninstructed person in a museum or at a concert may pass by without recognizing a picture or a passage of music, which the connoisseur by his side may show him is a masterpiece of harmony, or a wonder of artistic skill. After reading these papers, you like and respect more the person you have admired so much already. And so with regard to Macaulay's style there may be faults of course—what critic can't point them out? But for the nonce we are not talking about faults: we want to say *nil nisi bonum*. Well—take at hazard any three pages of the "Essays" or "History;"—and, glimmering below the stream of the narrative, as it were, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Why is this epithet used? Whence is that simile drawn? How does he manage in two or three words, to paint an individual, or to indicate a landscape? Your neighbour, who has his reading, and his little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.

Many Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library. I speak *d cœur ouvert*,¹⁰ and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon,—what not?—and have been struck by none of them so much as by that Catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are housed. What peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked heaven for this my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I find there. Under the dome which held Macaulay's brain, and from which his solemn eyes looked out on the world but a fortnight since, what a vast, brilliant, and wonderful store of learning was ranged! what

strange lore would he not fetch for you at your bidding! A volume of law, or history, a book of poetry familiar or forgotten (except by himself who forgot nothing), a novel ever so old, and he had it at hand. I spoke to him once about "*Clarissa*."¹¹ "Not read '*Clarissa*'!" he cried out. "If you have once thoroughly entered on '*Clarissa*' and are infected by it, you can't leave it. When I was in India I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the Governor-General, and the Secretary of Government, and the Commander-in-Chief, and their wives. I had '*Clarissa*' with me: and, as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace! The Governor's wife seized the book, and the Secretary waited for it, and the Chief Justice could not read it for tears!" He acted the whole scene: he paced up and down the "Athenæum" library: I dare say he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others.

In this little paper let us keep to the text of *nil nisi bonum*. One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says "he had no heart." Why, a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself: and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned. He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he cheers heroic resistance; how he backs and applauds freedom struggling for its own; how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful; how he recognizes genius, though selfish villains possess it! The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none: and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender and generous, and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.

If any young man of letters reads this little sermon—and to him, indeed, it is addressed—I would say to him, "Bear Scott's words in your mind, and 'be good, my dear.'" Here are two literary men, gone to their account, and, *laus Deo*,¹² as far as we know, it is fair, and open, and clean. Here is no need of apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices which would have been virtues but for un-

¹¹ *Clarissa Harlowe*, Samuel Richardson's novel, published 1748. Lovelace, the principal male character in the book, is an unscrupulous libertine.

¹² Praise to God.

¹⁰ From an open heart.

avoidable &c. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted: each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honoured by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of each to give incalculable happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an immense kindness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother scribe, to be endowed with such merit, or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid to *our service*. We may not win the baton or epaulettes;¹² but God give us strength to guard the honour of the flag!

Charles Dickens

1812-1870

OUR SCHOOL

(From *Household Words*, 1852)

We went to look at it, only this last Midsummer, and found that the railway had cut it up root and branch. A great trunk-line had swallowed the play-ground, sliced away the schoolroom, and pared off the corner of the house, which thus curtailed of its proportions, presented itself, in a green stage of stucco, profilewise towards the road, like a forlorn flatiron without a handle, standing on end.

It seems as if our schools were doomed to be the sport of change. We have faint recollections of a Preparatory Day-School, which we have sought in vain, and which must have been pulled down to make a new street, ages ago. We have dim impressions, scarcely amounting to a belief, that it was over a dyer's shop. We know that you went up steps to it; that you frequently grazed your knees in doing so; that you generally got your leg over the scraper, in trying to scrape the mud off a very unsteady little shoe. The mistress of the establishment holds no place in our memory; but rampant on one eternal door-mat, in an eternal entry long and narrow, is a puffy pug-dog, with a personal animosity towards us, who triumphs over Time. The bark of that baleful Pug, a certain radiating way he had of snapping at our undefended legs, the ghastly grinning of his moist black muzzle and white teeth, and the insolence of his crisp tail curled like a pastoral crook, all live and flourish.

From an otherwise unaccountable association of him with a fiddle, we conclude that he was of French extraction, and his name Fidèle. He belonged to some female, chiefly inhabiting a back-parlour, whose life appears to us to have been consumed in sniffing, and in wearing a brown beaver bonnet. For her, he would sit up and balance cake upon his nose, and not eat it until twenty had been counted. To the best of our belief we were once called in to witness this performance; when, unable even in his milder moments, to endure our presence, he instantly made at us, cake and all.

Why a something in mourning, called "Miss Frost," should still connect itself with our preparatory school, we are unable to say. We retain no impression of the beauty of Miss Frost—if she were beautiful; or of the mental fascinations of Miss Frost—if she were accomplished; yet her name, and her black dress hold an enduring place in our remembrance. An equally impersonal boy, whose name has long since shaped itself unalterably into "Master Mawls," is not to be dislodged from our brain. Retaining no vindictive feeling towards Mawls—no feeling whatever, indeed—we infer that neither he nor we can have loved Miss Frost. Our first impression of Death and Burial is associated with this formless pair. We all three nestled awfully in a corner one wintry day, when the wind was blowing shrill, with Miss Frost's pinafore over our heads; and Miss Frost told us in a whisper about somebody being "screwed down." It is the only distinct recollection we preserve of these impalpable creatures, except a suspicion that the manners of Master Mawls were susceptible of much improvement. Generally speaking, we may observe that whenever we see a child intently occupied with its nose, to the exclusion of all other subjects of interest, our mind reverts in a flash to Master Mawls.

But, the School that was our School before the Railroad came and overthrew it, was quite another sort of place. We were old enough to be put into Virgil when we went there, and to get prizes for a variety of polishing on which the rust has long accumulated. It was a School of some celebrity in its neighbourhood—nobody could have said why—and we had the honour to attain and hold the eminent position of first boy. The master was supposed among us to know nothing, and one of the ushers was supposed to know everything. We are still inclined to think the first-named supposition perfectly correct.

We have a general idea that its subject had been in the leather trade, and had bought us—meaning our school—of another proprietor,

¹² May not become commanding generals or even of ficers. The baton is the field marshal's staff.

who was immensely learned. Whether this belief had any real foundation, we are not likely ever to know now. The only branches of education with which he showed the least acquaintance, were, ruling and corporally punishing. He was always ruling ciphering-books with a bloated mahogany ruler, or smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument, or viciously drawing a pair of pantaloons tight with one of his large hands, and caning the wearer with the other. We have no doubt whatever that this occupation was the principal solace of his existence.

A profound respect for money pervaded Our School, which was of course, derived from its Chief. We remember an idiotic goggle-eyed boy, with a big head, and half-crowns without end, who suddenly appeared as a parlour-boarder, and was rumoured to have come by sea from some mysterious part of the earth where his parents rolled in gold. He was usually called "Mr." by the Chief, and was said to feed in the parlour on steaks and gravy; likewise to drink currant wine. And he openly stated that if rolls and coffee were ever denied him at breakfast, he would write home to that unknown part of the globe from which he had come, and cause himself to be recalled to the regions of gold. He was put into no form or class, but learnt alone, as little as he liked—and he liked very little—and there was a belief among us that this was because he was too wealthy to be "taken down." His special treatment, and our vague association of him with the sea, and with storms, and sharks, and Coral Reefs occasioned the wildest legends to be circulated as his history. A tragedy in blank verse was written on the subject—if our memory does not deceive us, by the hand that now chronicles these recollections—in which his father figured as a Pirate, and was shot for a voluminous catalogue of atrocities: first imparting to his wife the secret of the cave in which his wealth was stored, and from which his only son's half-crowns now issued. Dumbledon (the boy's name) was represented as "yet unborn" when his brave father met his fate; and the despair and grief of Mrs. Dumbledon at that calamity was movingly shadowed forth as having weakened the parlour-boarder's mind. This production was received with great favour, and was twice performed with closed doors in the dining-room. But, it got wind, and was seized as libellous, and brought the unlucky poet into severe affliction. Some two years afterwards, all of a sudden one day, Dumbledon vanished. It was whispered that the Chief himself had taken him down to the Docks, and reshipped

him for the Spanish Main; but nothing certain was ever known about his disappearance. At this hour we cannot thoroughly disconnect him from California.

Our School was rather famous for mysterious pupils. There was another—a heavy young man, with a large double-cased silver watch, and a fat knife, the handle of which was a perfect tool-box—who unaccountably appeared one day at a special desk of his own, erected close to that of the Chief, with whom he held familiar converse. He lived in the parlour, and went out for walks, and never took the least notice of us—even of us, the first boy—unless to give us a depreciatory kick, or grimly to take our hat off and throw it away, when he encountered us out of doors, which unpleasant ceremony he always performed as he passed—not even condescending to stop for the purpose. Some of us believed that the classical attainments of this phenomenon were terrific, but that his penmanship and arithmetic were defective, and he had come there to mend them; others, that he was going to set up a school, and had paid the Chief "twenty-five pound down," for leave to see Our School at work. The gloomier spirits even said that he was going to buy US, against which contingency conspiracies were set on foot for a general defection and running away. However, he never did that. After staying for a quarter, during which period, though closely observed, he was never seen to do anything but make pens out of quills, write small-hand in a secret portfolio, and punch the point of the sharpest blade in his knife into his desk all over it, he too disappeared, and his place knew him no more.

There was another boy, a fair, meek boy, with a delicate complexion, and rich curling hair, who, we found out, or thought we found out (we have no idea now, and probably had none then, on what grounds, but it was confidentially revealed from mouth to mouth) was the son of a Viscount who had deserted his lovely mother. It was understood that if he had his rights, he would be worth twenty thousand a year. And that if his mother ever met his father, she would shoot him with a silver pistol, which she carried, always loaded to the muzzle, for that purpose. He was a very suggestive topic. So was a young mulatto, who was always believed (though very amiable) to have a dagger about him somewhere. But, we think they were both outshone, upon the whole, by another boy who claimed to have been born on the twenty-ninth of February, and to have only one birthday in five years. We suspect this to have been a fiction—but

he lived upon it all the time he was at Our School.

The principal currency of Our School was slate pencil. It had some inexplicable value, that was never ascertained, never reduced to a standard. To have a great hoard of it, was somehow to be rich. We used to bestow it in charity, and confer it as a precious boon upon our chosen friends. When the holidays were coming, contributions were solicited for certain boys whose relatives were in India, and who were appealed for under the generic names of "Holiday-stoppers," appropriate marks of remembrance that should enliven and cheer them in their homeless state. Personally, we always contributed these tokens of sympathy in the form of slate pencil, and always felt that it would be a comfort and a treasure to them.

Our School was remarkable for white mice. Red-polls, linnets, and even canaries, were kept in desks, drawers, hat-boxes, and other strange refuges for birds, but white mice were the favourite stock. The boys trained the mice, much better than the masters trained the boys. We recall one white mouse, who lived in the cover of a Latin dictionary, who ran up ladders, drew Roman chariots, shouldered muskets, turned wheels, and made even a very creditable appearance on the stage as the Dog of Montargis.¹ He might have achieved greater things, but for having the misfortune to mistake his way in a triumphal procession to the Capitol, when he fell into a deep ink-stand, and was dyed black and drowned. The mice were the occasion of some most ingenious engineering, in the construction of their houses and instruments of performance. The famous one belonged to a Company of proprietors, some of whom have since made Railroads, Engines, and Telegraphs; the chairman has erected mills and bridges in New Zealand.

The usher at Our School, who was considered to know everything, as opposed to the Chief, who was considered to know nothing, was a bony, gentle-faced, clerical-looking young man in rusty black. It was whispered that he was sweet upon one of Maxby's sisters (Maxby lived close by, and was a day pupil), and further that he "favoured Maxby." As we remember, he taught Italian to Maxby's sisters on half-holidays. He once went to the play with them, and wore a white waistcoat, and a rose; which was considered

among us as equivalent to a declaration. We were of opinion on that occasion, that to the last moment he expected Maxby's father to ask him to dinner at five o'clock, and therefore neglected his own dinner at half-past one, and finally got none. We exaggerated in our imaginations the extent to which he punished Maxby's father's cold meat at supper; and we agreed to believe that he was elevated with wine and water when he came home. But, we all liked him; for he had a good knowledge of boys, and would have made it a much better school if he had had more power. He was writing-master, mathematical master, English master, made out the bills, mended the pens, and did all sorts of things. He divided the little boys with the Latin master (they were smuggled through their rudimentary books, at odd times when there was nothing else to do), and always called at parents' houses to inquire after sick boys, because he had gentlemanly manners. He was rather musical, and on some remote quarter-day had bought an old trombone; but a bit of it was lost, and it made the most extraordinary sounds when he sometimes tried to play it of an evening. His holidays never began (on account of the bills) until long after ours; but, in the summer vacations he used to take pedestrian excursions with a knapsack; and at Christmas-time he went to see his father at Chipping Norton, who we all said (on no authority) was a dairy-fed-pork-butcher. Poor fellow! He was very low all day on Maxby's sister's wedding-day, and afterwards was thought to favour Maxby more than ever, though he had been expected to spite him. He has been dead these twenty years. Poor fellow!

Our remembrance of Our School, presents the Latin master as a colourless, doubled-up, near-sighted man with a crutch, who was always cold, and always putting onions into his ears for deafness, and always disclosing ends of flannel under all his garments, and almost always applying a ball of pocket-handkerchief to some part of his face with a screwing action round and round. He was a very good scholar, and took great pains where he saw intelligence and a desire to learn: otherwise, perhaps not. Our memory presents him (unless teased into a passion) with as little energy as colour—as having been worried and tormented into monotonous feebleness—as having had the best part of his life ground out of him in a Mill of boys. We remember with terror how he fell asleep one sultry afternoon with the little smuggled class before him, and awoke not when the foot-step of the Chief fell heavy on the floor; how the Chief aroused him, in the

¹ Aubrey of Montdidier was murdered in 1371. He had a dog, Dragon, who after the murder showed a marked dislike toward one, Richard of Macaire. Suspicion was aroused, and Richard of Macaire was condemned to judicial combat with the dog. He was mortally wounded, and before dying confessed the crime. A bronze group at Montargis, France, commemorates the dog.

midst of a dread silence, and said, "Mr. Blinkins, are you ill, sir?" how he blushing replied, "Sir, rather so;" how the Chief retorted with severity, "Mr. Blinkins, this is no place to be ill in" (which was very very true) and walked back, solemn as the ghost in Hamlet, until, catching a wandering eye, he caned that boy for inattention, and happily expressed his feelings towards the Latin master through the medium of a substitute.

There was a fat little dancing-master who used to come in a gig, and taught the more advanced among us hornpipes (as an accomplishment in great social demand in after-life); and there was a brisk little French master who used to come in the sunniest weather, with a handleless umbrella, and to whom the Chief was always polite, because (as we believed), if the Chief offended him he would instantly address the Chief in French, and forever con- found him before the boys with his inability to understand or reply.

There was besides a serving man, whose name was Phil. Our retrospective glance presents Phil as a shipwrecked carpenter, cast away upon the desert island of a school, and carrying into practice an ingenious inkling of many trades. He mended whatever was broken, and made whatever was wanted. He was general glazier, among other things, and mended all the broken windows—at the prime cost (as was darkly rumoured among us) of ninepence, for every square charged three-and-six to parents. We had a high opinion of his mechanical genius, and generally held that the Chief "knew something bad of him," and on pain of divulgence forced Phil to be his bondsman. We particularly remember that Phil had a sovereign contempt for learning: which engenders in us a respect for his sagacity, as it implies his accurate observation of the relative positions of the Chief and the ushers. He was an impenetrable man, who waited at table between whites, and throughout "the half" kept the boxes in severe custody. He was morose even to the Chief, and never smiled, except at breaking-up, when in acknowledgement to the toast, "Success to Phil! Hooray!" he would slowly carve a grin out of his wooden face, where it would remain until we were all gone. Nevertheless, one time, when we had the scarlet fever in the school, Phil nursed all the sick boys of his own accord, and was like a mother to them. There was another school not far off, and of course our school could have nothing to say to that school. It is mostly the way with schools, whether of boys or men. Well! the railway has swallowed up ours, and the locomotives now run smoothly over its ashes.

So fades and languishes, grows dim and dies,
All that this world is proud of,

—and is not proud of, too. It had little reason to be proud of Our School, and has done much better since in that way, and will do far better yet.

George Eliot

(Mary Ann Evans)

1819-1880

THE OLD COACH ROADS OF ENGLAND

(From the Introduction to *Felix Holt*, 1866)

Five-and-thirty years¹ ago the glory had not yet departed from the old coach roads: the great road-side inns were still brilliant with well polished tankards, the smiling glances of pretty barmaids, and the repartees of jocular hostlers; the mail still announced itself by the merry notes of the horn; the hedge-cutter or the rick-thatcher might still know the exact hour by the unfailing yet otherwise meteoric apparition of the pea-green Tally-ho or the yellow Independent; and elderly gentlemen in pony chaises, quartering² nervously to make way for the rolling, swinging swiftness, had not yet ceased to remark that times were finely changed since they used to see the pack-horses and hear the tinkling of their bells on this very highway.

In those days there were pocket-boroughs,³ a Birmingham unrepresented in Parliament and compelled to make strong representations out of it, unrepealed corn-laws,⁴ three-and-sixpenny letters,⁵ a brawny and many-breeding pauperism, and other departed evils; but there were some pleasant things, too, which have also departed. *Non omnia grandior ætas quæ fugiamus habet*,⁶ says the wise goddess: you have not the best of it in all things, oh youngsters! the elderly man has his enviable memories, and not the least of them is the memory of a long journey in midspring or autumn on the outside of a stage-coach. Posterity may be shot, like a bullet, through a tube, by atmospheric pressure from Winchester to New-castle: that is a fine result to have among our

¹ i. e. about 1830, when travel by the railway had but just begun.

² V. page 576, n. 3.

³ A borough controlled by one man, which, as it were, he carried in his pocket. There were many of them, and many important places like Birmingham that were unrepresented before the enactment of the Reform Bill in 1832.

⁴ V. page 686, n. 1.

⁵ i. e. at that time it cost three shillings and six pence to send a letter.

⁶ The older time does not hold all those things which we naturally avoid. The passage is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the "wise goddess" is Minerva.

hopes; but the slow, old-fashioned way of getting from one end of our country to the other is the better thing to have in the memory. The tube-journey can never lend much of a picture and narrative; it is as barren as an exclamatory O! Whereas the happy outside passenger seated on the box from the dawn to the gloaming gathered enough stories of English life, enough of English labors in town and country, enough aspects of earth and sky, to make episodes for a modern Odyssey. Suppose only that his journey took him through that central plain,⁷ watered at one extremity by the Avon, at the other by the Trent. As the morning silvered the meadows with their long lines of bushy willows marking the water-courses, or burnished the golden corn-ricks clustered near the long roofs of some midland homestead, he saw the full-uddered cows driven from their early pasture to the milking. Perhaps it was the shepherd, head-servant of the farm, who drove them, his sheep-dog following with a heedless, unofficial air as of a beadle in undress. The shepherd with a slow and slouching walk, timed by the walk of grazing beasts, moved aside, as if unwillingly, throwing out a monosyllabic hint to his cattle; his glance, accustomed to rest on things very near the earth, seemed to lift itself with difficulty to the coachman. Mail or stage coach for him belonged to that mysterious distant system of things called "Goverment," which, whatever it might be, was no business of his, any more than the most outlying nebula or the coal-sacks of the southern hemisphere; his solar system was the parish; the master's temper and the casualties of lambing-time were his region of storms. He cut his bread and bacon with his pocket-knife, and felt no bitterness except in the matter of pauper laborers and the bad luck that sent contrarious seasons and the sheep-rot. He and his cows were soon left behind, and the homestead too, with its pond overhung by elder-trees, its untidy kitchen-garden and cone-shaped yew-tree arbor. But everywhere the bushy hedgerows wasted the land with their straggling beauty, shrouded the grassy borders of the pastures with cat-kined⁸ hazels, and tossed their long blackberry branches on the corn-fields. Perhaps they were white with May,⁹ or starred with pale-pink dog-roses; perhaps the urchins were already nutting among them, or gathering the plenteous crabs. It was worth the journey only to see those hedgerows, the liberal homes of unmarketable beauty—of the purple-

blossomed, ruby-berried night-shade, of the wild convolvulus climbing and spreading in tendrilled strength till it made a great curtain of pale-green hearts and white trumpets, of the many-tubed honeysuckle, which, in its most delicate fragrance, hid a charge more subtle and penetrating than beauty. Even if it were winter the hedgerows showed their coral, the scarlet haws, the deep-crimson hips,¹⁰ with lingering brown leaves to make a resting place for the jewels of the hoar-frost. Such hedgerows were often as tall as the laborers' cottages dotted along the lanes, or clustered into a small hamlet, their little dingy windows telling, like thick-filmed eyes, of nothing but the darkness within. The passenger on the coach-box, bowled along above such a hamlet, saw chiefly the roofs of it: probably it turned its back on the road, and seemed to lie away from everything but its own patch of earth and sky, away from the parish church by long fields and green lanes, away from all intercourse except that of tramps. If its face could be seen it was most likely dirty; but the dirt was Protestant dirt, and the big, bold, gin-breathing tramps were Protestant tramps. There was no sign of superstition near, no crucifix or image near to indicate a misguided reverence: the inhabitants were probably so free from superstition that they were in much less awe of the parson than of the overseer. Yet they were saved from the excesses of Protestantism by not knowing how to read, and by the absence of hand-loom and mines to be the pioneers of Dissent, they were kept safely in the *via media*¹¹ of indifference, and could have registered themselves in the census by a big black mark as members of the Church of England.

But there were trim cheerful villages, too, with a neat or handsome parsonage and grey church set in the midst; there was the pleasant tinkle of the blacksmith's anvil, the patient cart-horses waiting at his door; the basket-maker peeling his willow wands in the sunshine; the wheelwright putting the last touch to a blue cart with red wheels; here and there a cottage with bright, transparent windows showing pots full of blooming balsams or geraniums, and little gardens in front, all double-daisies or dark wall-flowers; at the well clean and comely women carrying yoked buckets, and toward the free-school small Britons dawdling on, and handling their marbles in the pockets of unpatched corduroys adorned with brass buttons. The land round was rich and marly;¹² great

⁷ i. e. through the heart of England the Midlands, including Warwickshire, the county of Shakespeare and George Eliot.

⁸ Catkin.

⁹ Hawthorne.

¹⁰ Haws, the fruit of the hawthorne, and hips, the fruit of the rose.

¹¹ The middle way.

¹² A soil rich in the mixture of calcium carbonate, clay, and sand.

corn-stacks stood in the rick-yards—for the rick-burners¹³ had not found their way hither; the homesteads were those of rich farmers who paid no rent, or had the rare advantage of a lease, and could afford to keep their corn till prices had risen. The coach would be sure to overtake some of them on their way to their outlying fields or to the market town, sitting heavily on their well-groomed horses, or weighing down one side of an olive-green gig. They probably thought of the coach with some contempt, as an accommodation for people who had not their own gigs, or who, wanting to travel to London or such distant parts, belonged to the trading and less solid part of the nation. The passenger on the box could see that this was the district of protuberant optimists, sure that old England was the best of all countries, and that if there were any facts that had not fallen under their own observation, they were facts not worth observing: the district of clean little market towns without manufactures, of fat livings, an aristocratic clergy, and low poor-rates. But as the day wore on the scene would change: the land would begin to be blackened with coal-pits, the rattle of hand-loom to be heard in hamlets and villages. Here were powerful men walking queerly with knees bent outward from squatting in the mine, going home to throw themselves down in their blackened flannel and sleep through the daylight, then rise and spend much of their high wages at the ale-house with their fellows of the Benefit club; here the pale, eager faces of hand-loom weavers, men and women, haggard from sitting up late at night to finish the week's work, hardly begun till the Wednesday. Everywhere the cottagers and the small children were dirty, for the languid mothers gave their strength to the loom—pious Dissenting women, perhaps, who took life patiently, and thought that salvation depended chiefly on predestination, and not at all on cleanliness. The gables of Dissenting chapels now made a visible sign of religion, and of a meeting-place to counter-balance the ale-house, even in the hamlets; but if a couple of old termagants were seen tearing each other's caps, it was a safe conclusion that, if they had not received the sacraments of the Church, they had not at least given in to schismatic rites, and were free from the errors of Voluntarism.¹⁴ The breath of the manufacturing town, which made a cloudy day and a red gloom by night on the horizon, diffused itself

over all the surrounding country, filling the air with eager unrest. Here was a population not convinced that old England was as good as possible; here were multitudinous men and women aware that their religion was not exactly the religion of their rulers, who might therefore be better than they were, and who, if better, might alter many things which now made the world perhaps more painful than it need be, and certainly more sinful. Yet there were the grey steeples, too, and the church-yards, with their grassy mounds and venerable head-stones, sleeping in the sunlight; there were broad fields and homesteads, and fine old woods covering a rising ground, or stretching far by the road-side, and allowing only peeps at the park and mansion which they shut in from the working-day world. In these midland districts the traveller passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another; after looking down on a village dingy with coal-dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges, and deep-rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades-union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes into a rural region, where the neighborhood of the town was only felt in the advantages of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay, and where men with a considerable banking account were accustomed to say that "they never meddled with politics themselves." The busy scenes of the shuttle and the wheel, of the roaring furnace, of the shaft and the pulley, seemed to make but crowded nests in the midst of the large-spaced, slow-moving life of homesteads and far-away cottages and oak-sheltered parks. Looking at the dwellings scattered among the woody flats and the ploughed uplands, under the low grey sky which overhung them with an unchanging stillness as if Time itself were pausing, it was easy for the traveller to conceive that town and country had no pulse in common, except where the hand-loom made a far-reaching, straggling fringe about the great centres of manufacture; that till the agitation about the Catholics in '29,¹⁵ rural Englishmen had hardly known more of Catholics than of the fossil mammals; and that their notion of Reform was a confused combination of rick-burners, trades-unions, Nottingham riots,¹⁶ and in

¹³ During the autumn of 1830, especially in the southern counties of England, certain malcontents instituted a reign of terror by setting fire to the hay-ricks.

¹⁴ The system of those who believe in the separation of Church and State.

¹⁵ After much agitation a Roman Catholic Relief Bill was passed in 1829, removing many of the restrictions from Roman Catholics, and making it possible for them to sit in Parliament.

¹⁶ A reference to the popular agitation that arose when the House of Lords registered the Reform Bill in 1832. Nottingham was one of the important centres that was without representation.

general whatever required the calling out of the yeomanry. It was still easier to see that, for the most part, they resisted the rotation of crops and stood by their fallows: and the coachman would perhaps tell how in one parish an innovating farmer, who talked of Sir Humphrey Davy,¹⁷ had been fairly driven out by popular dislike, as if he had been a confounded Radical; and how, the parson having one Sunday preached from the words "Plough up the fallow ground of your hearts,"¹⁸ the people thought he had made the text out of his own head, otherwise it would never have come "so pat" on a matter of business; but when they found it in the Bible at home, some said it was an argument for fallows (else why should the Bible mention fallows?), but a few of the weaker sort were shaken, and thought it was an argument that fallows should be done away with, else the Bible would have said, "Let your hearts lie fallow;" and the next morning the parson had a stroke of apoplexy, which, as coincident with a dispute about fallows, so set the parish against the innovating farmer and the rotation of crops, that he could stand his ground no longer, and transferred his lease.

The coachman was an excellent travelling companion and commentator on the landscape; he could tell the name of sites and persons, and explain the meaning of groups, as well as the shade of Virgil in a more memorable journey;¹⁹ he had as many stories about parishes, and the men and women in them, as the Wanderer in the "Excursion,"²⁰ only his style was different. His views of life had originally been genial, and such as became a man who was well-warmed within and without, and held a position of easy, undisputed authority; but the recent initiation of Railways had embittered him: he now, as in a perpetual vision, saw the ruined country strewn with shattered limbs, and regarded Mr. Huskisson's death²¹ as a proof of God's anger against Stephenson.²² "Why, every inn on the road would be shut up!" and at that word the coachman looked before him with the blank gaze of one who had driven his coach to the outermost edge of the universe, and saw his leaders plunging

into the abyss. Still he would soon relapse from the high prophetic strain to the familiar one of narrative. He knew whose the land was wherever he drove; what noblemen had half ruined themselves by gambling; who made handsome returns of rent; and who was at daggers-drawn with his eldest son. He perhaps remembered the fathers of actual baronets, and knew stories of their extravagant or stingy housekeeping; whom they had married, whom they had horsewhipped, whether they were particular about preserving their game, and whether they had had much to do with canal companies. About any actual landed proprietor he could also tell whether he was a Reformer or an Anti-Reformer. That was a distinction which had "turned up" in later times, and along with it the paradox, very puzzling to the coachman's mind, that there were men of old family and large estate who had voted for the Bill.²³ He did not grapple with the paradox; he let it pass, with all the discreetness of an experienced theologian or learned scholiast, preferring to point his whip at some object which could raise no questions.

James Anthony Froude

1818-1894

THE EXECUTION OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

(From *History of England from the fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Armada, 1556-1570*)

The blow¹ when it came at last, therefore came suddenly. Beale rode hard—for unless, which is unlikely, he trusted the letter to Kent to a second hand he called at Wrest on his way down—and he arrived at Fotheringay on Sunday evening. The purpose of his coming was not made known in the castle. Early on Monday he went in search of Lord Shrewsbury, while a message was dispatched to the Sheriff of Northamptonshire, to be in attendance on Wednesday morning. On Monday evening the Earl of Kent came. Shrewsbury appeared on Tuesday before noon, and when the early castle dinner was over, they sent a servant to the Queen of Scots with a request to be admitted to her presence.

²³ The Reform Bill.

¹ i. e. the news of the arrival of the commission signed by Queen Elizabeth for her execution. Mary, deposed from the Scottish throne, had taken refuge in England in 1568. She became a prisoner of State and was placed under the care of Sir Amyas Paulet. In 1586 she was accused of complicity in the Babington plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and to usurp the throne. She was tried at Fotheringay Castle near Peterborough and condemned to death.

¹⁷ A great chemist. He lectured and wrote much on the subject of agricultural chemistry, and on the need of applying science to farming. The old-fashioned farmers who believed in the rotation of crops were opposed to these new ideas.

¹⁸ Cf. *Hæsan*, x. 12.

¹⁹ Dante's journey through Purgatory, under the guidance of the shade of Virgil.

²⁰ Wordsworth's poem of that name.

²¹ William Huskisson was a prominent public official, who died from injuries received at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway.

²² Stephenson was the inventor of the famous locomotive the "Rocket" and was the engineer who built the Liverpool and Manchester railway.

Shrewsbury had not seen her since she had passed from under his charge. He had not been on the Commission which tried her; illness had prevented him from attending the last Parliament, and he had taken no public part in the prosecution; and although he had signified privately as his personal opinion that her death was necessary, it could not have been without emotion that he was once more brought into a brief relation with her in so terrible a form. Kent was an austere Puritan, to whom she was merely a wicked woman overtaken at last by the punishment which she had too long deserved and escaped.

Briefly, solemnly, and sternly they delivered their awful message. They informed her that they had received a commission under the great seal to see her executed, and she was told that she must prepare to suffer on the following morning.

She was dreadfully agitated. For a moment she refused to believe them. Then, as the truth forced itself upon her, tossing her head in disdain and struggling to control herself, she called her physician and began to speak to him of money that was owed to her in France. At last it seems that she broke down altogether, and they left her with a fear either that she would destroy herself in the night, or that she would refuse to come to the scaffold, and that it might be necessary to drag her there by violence.

The end had come. She had long professed to expect it, but the clearest expectation is not certainty. The scene for which she had affected to prepare she was to encounter in its dread reality, and all her busy schemes, her dreams of vengeance, her visions of a revolution, with herself ascending out of the convulsion and seating herself on her rival's throne—all were gone. She had played deep, and the dice had gone against her.

Yet in death, if she encountered it bravely, victory was still possible. Could she but sustain to the last the character of a calumniated suppliant accepting heroically for God's sake and her creed's the concluding stroke of a long series of wrongs, she might stir a tempest of indignation which, if it could not save herself, might at least overwhelm her enemy. Persisting, as she persisted to the last, in denying all knowledge of Babington, it would be affectation to credit her with a genuine feeling of religion; but the imperfection of her motive exalts the greatness of her fortitude. To an impassioned believer death is comparatively easy.

Her chaplain was lodged in a separate part of the castle. The Commissioners, who were

as anxious that her execution should wear its real character as she was herself determined to convert it into a martyrdom, refused, perhaps unwisely, to allow him access to her, and offered her again the assistance of an Anglican Dean. They gave her an advantage over them which she did not fail to use. She would not let the Dean come near her. She sent a note to the chaplain telling him that she had meant to receive the sacrament, but as it might not be she must content herself with a general confession. She bade him watch through the night and pray for her. In the morning when she was brought out she might perhaps see him, and receive his blessing on her knees. She supped cheerfully, giving her last meal with her attendants a character of sacred parting; afterwards she drew aside her apothecary, M. Gorion, and asked him if she might depend upon his fidelity: when he satisfied her that she might trust him, she said she had a letter and two diamonds which she wished to send to Mendoza.¹ He undertook to melt some drug and conceal them in it where they would never be looked for, and promised to deliver them faithfully. One of the jewels was for Mendoza himself; the other and the largest was for Philip.² It was to be a sign that she was dying for the truth, and was meant also to bespeak his care for her friends and servants. Every one of them so far as she was able, without forgetting a name, she commended to his liberality. Arundel, Paget, Morgan, the Archbishop of Glasgow, Westmorland, Throgmorton, The Bishop of Ross, her two secretaries, the ladies who had shared the trials of her imprisonment, she remembered them all, and specified the sums which she desired Philip to bestow on them. And as Mary Stuart then and throughout her life never lacked gratitude to those who had been true to her, so then as always she remembered her enemies. There was no cant about her, no unreal talk of forgiveness of injuries. She bade Gorion tell Philip it was her last prayer that he should persevere, notwithstanding her death, in the invasion of England. It was God's quarrel, she said, and worthy of his greatness: and as soon as he had conquered it, she desired him not to forget how she had been treated by Cecil, and Leicester, and Walsingham; by Lord Huntingdon, who had ill-used her fifteen years before at Tutbury; by Sir Amyas Paulet, and Secretary Wade.

Her last night was a busy one. As she said herself there was much to be done and the

¹ The Spanish ambassador to England, who by reason of his intrigues against the government, had been sent out of England by Elizabeth in 1584.

² Philip II, King of Spain (1556-1598).

time was short. A few lines to the King of France were dated two hours after midnight. They were to insist for the last time that she was innocent of the conspiracy, that she was dying for religion, and for having asserted her right to the crown; and to beg that out of the sum which he owed her, her servants' wages might be paid, and masses provided for her soul. After this she slept for three or four hours, and then rose and with the most elaborate care prepared to encounter the end.

At eight in the morning the Provost-marshal knocked at the outer door which communicated with her suite of apartments. It was locked and no one answered, and he went back in some trepidation lest the fears might prove true which had been entertained the preceding evening. On his returning with the Sheriff, however, a few minutes later, the door was open, and they were confronted with the tall majestic figure of Mary Stuart standing before them in splendour. The plain grey dress had been exchanged for a robe of black satin; her jacket was of black satin also, looped and slashed and trimmed with velvet. Her false hair was arranged studiously with a coif, and over her head and falling down over her back was a white veil of delicate lawn. A crucifix of gold hung from her neck. In her hand she held a crucifix of ivory, and a number of jewelled Paternosters was attached to her girdle. Led by two of Paulet's gentlemen, the Sheriff walking before her, she passed to the chamber of presence in which she had been tried, where Shrewsbury, Kent, Paulet, Drury and others were waiting to receive her. Andrew Melville, Sir Robert's brother, who had been master of her household, was kneeling in tears. "Melville," she said, "you should rather rejoice than weep that the end of my troubles is come. Tell my friends I die a true Catholic. Commend me to my son. Tell him I have done nothing to prejudice his kingdom of Scotland, and so, good Melville, farewell." She kissed him, and turning asked for her chaplain Du Preau. He was not present. There had been a fear of some religious melodrama which it was thought well to avoid. Her ladies, who had attempted to follow her, had been kept back also. She could not afford to leave the account of her death to be reported by enemies and Puritans, and she required assistance for the scene which she meditated. Missing them she asked the reason of their absence, and said she wished them to see her die. Kent said he feared they might scream or faint, or attempt perhaps to dip their handkerchiefs in her blood. She undertook that they should be quiet and obedient. "The Queen," she

said, "would never deny her so slight a request," and when Kent still hesitated, she added with tears, "You know I am cousin to your Queen, of the blood of Henry the Seventh, a married Queen of France, and anointed Queen of Scotland."

It was impossible to refuse. She was allowed to take six of her own people with her, and select them herself. She chose her physician Burgoyne, Andrew Melville, the apothecary Gorion, and her surgeon, with two ladies, Elizabeth Kennedy and Curle's young wife Barbara Mowbray, whose child she had baptised.

"Allons donc," she then said—"Let us go," and passing out attended by the Earls, and leaning on the arm of an officer of the guard, she descended the great staircase to the hall. The news had spread far through the country. Thousands of people were collected outside the walls. About three hundred knights and gentlemen of the county had been admitted to witness the execution. The tables and forms had been removed, and a great wood fire was blazing in the chimney. At the upper end of the hall, above the fire-place, but near it, stood the scaffold, twelve feet square and two feet and a half high. It was covered with black cloth; a low rail ran round it covered with black cloth also, and the Sheriff's guard of halberdiers were ranged on the floor below on the four sides to keep off the crowd. On the scaffold was the block, black like the rest; a square black cushion was placed behind it, and behind the cushion a black chair; on the right were two other chairs for the Earls. The axe leant against the rail, and two masked figures stood like mutes on either side at the back. The Queen of Scots as she swept in seemed as if coming to take a part in some solemn pageant. Not a muscle of her face could be seen to quiver; she ascended the scaffold with absolute composure, looked round her smiling, and sat down. Shrewsbury and Kent followed and took their places, the Sheriff stood at her left hand, and Beale then mounted a platform and read the warrant aloud.

In all the assembly Mary Stuart appeared the person least interested in the words which were consigning her to death.

"Madam," said Lord Shrewsbury to her, when the reading was ended, "you hear what we are commanded to do."

"You will do your duty," she answered, and rose as if to kneel and pray.

The Dean of Peterborough, Dr. Fletcher, approached the rail. "Madam," he began, with a low obeisance, "the Queen's most excellent Majesty;" "Madam, the Queen's most

excellent Majesty"—thrice he commenced his sentence, wanting words to pursue it. When he repeated the words a fourth time, she cut him short.

"Mr. Dean," she said, "I am a Catholic, and must die a Catholic. It is useless to attempt to move me, and your prayers will avail me but little."

"Change your opinion, Madam," he cried, his tongue being loosed at last; "repent of your sins, settle your faith in Christ, by Him to be saved."

"Trouble not yourself further, Mr. Dean," she answered; "I am settled in my own faith, for which I mean to shed my blood."

"I am sorry, Madam," said Shrewsbury, "to see you so addicted to Popery."

"That image of Christ you hold there," said Kent, "will not profit you if he be not engraved in your heart."

She did not reply, and turning her back on Fletcher knelt for her own devotions.

He had been evidently instructed to impair the Catholic complexion of the scene, and the Queen of Scots was determined that he should not succeed. When she knelt he commenced an extempore prayer in which the assembly joined. As his voice sounded out in the hall she raised her own, reciting with powerful deep-chested tones the penitential Psalms in Latin, introducing English sentences at intervals, that the audience might know what she was saying, and praying with especial distinctness for her holy father the Pope.

From time to time, with conspicuous vehemence, she struck the crucifix against her bosom, and then, as the Dean gave up the struggle, leaving her Latin, she prayed in English wholly, still clear and loud. She prayed for the Church which she had been ready to betray, for her son, whom she had disinherited, for the Queen, whom she had endeavoured to murder. She prayed God to avert his wrath from England, that England which she had sent Philip a last message to beseech him to invade. She forgave her enemies, whom she had invited Philip not to forget, and then, praying to the saints to intercede for her with Christ, and kissing the crucifix and crossing her own breast, "Even as thy arms, O Jesus," she cried, "were spread upon the cross, so receive me into thy mercy and forgive my sins."

With these words she rose; the black mutes stepped forward, and in the usual form begged her forgiveness.

"I forgive you," she said, "for now I hope you shall end all my troubles." They offered their help in arranging her dress. "Truly, my lords," she said with a smile to the Earls, "I

never had such grooms waiting on me before." Her ladies were allowed to come up upon the scaffold to assist her; for the work to be done was considerable, and had been prepared with no common thought.

She laid her crucifix on her chair. The chief executioner took it as a perquisite; but was ordered instantly to lay it down. The lawn veil was lifted carefully off, not to disturb the hair, and was hung upon the rail. The black robe was next removed. Below it was a petticoat of crimson velvet. The black jacket followed, and under the jacket, was a body of crimson satin. One of her ladies handed her a pair of crimson sleeves, with which she hastily covered her arms; and thus she stood on the black scaffold with the black figures all around her, blood-red from head to foot.

Her reasons for adopting so extraordinary a costume must be left to conjecture. It is only certain that it must have been carefully studied, and that the pictorial effect must have been appalling.

The women, whose firmness had hitherto borne the trial, began now to give way, spasmodic sobs bursting from them which they could not check. "Ne criez vous,"⁴ she said, "j'ai promis pour vous." Struggling bravely, they crossed their breasts again and again, she crossing them in turn and bidding them pray for her. Then she knelt on the cushion. Barbara Mowbray bound her eyes with a handkerchief. "Adieu," she said, smiling for the last time and waving her hand to them, "Adieu, au revoir." They stepped back from off the scaffold and left her alone. On her knees she repeated the Psalm, *In te, Domine, confido*,⁵ "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust." Her shoulders being exposed, two scars became visible, one on either side, and the Earls being now a little behind her, Kent pointed to them with his white wand and looked enquiringly at his companion. Shrewsbury whispered that they were the remains of two abscesses from which she had suffered while living with him at Sheffield.

When the Psalm was finished she felt for the block, and laying down her head muttered: "In manus, Domine, tuas, commendo animam meam."⁶ The hard wood seemed to hurt her, for she placed her hands under her neck. The executioners gently removed them, lest they should deaden the blow, and then one of them holding her slightly, the other raised the axe and struck. The scene had been too trying even for the practised headsman of

⁴ Do not weep: I have promised that you would not.

⁵ In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." Ps., xxxi. 1.

⁶ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." St. Luke, xxiii. 46.

the Tower. His arm wandered. The blow fell on the knot of the handkerchief, and scarcely broke the skin. She neither spoke nor moved. He struck again, this time effectively. The head hung by a shred of skin, which he divided without withdrawing the axe, and at once a metamorphosis was witnessed, strange as was ever wrought by wand of fabled enchanter. The coif fell off, and the false plaits. The laboured illusion vanished. The lady who had knelt before the block was in the maturity of grace and loveliness. The executioner, when he raised the head, as usual, to shew it to the crowd, exposed the withered features of a grizzled, wrinkled old woman.

"So perish all enemies of the Queen," said the Dean of Peterborough. A loud Amen rose over the hall. "Such end," said the Earl of Kent, rising and standing over the body, "to the Queen's and the Gospel's enemies."

JOHN DAVIS¹

AN EXAMPLE OF THE TRUE HERO

(From *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 1867-77)

For the present, however, we are forced to content ourselves with a few sketches out of the north-west voyages. Here is one, for instance, which shows how an Englishman could deal with the Indians. Davis had landed at Gilbert Sound, and gone up the country exploring. On his return he found his crew loud in complaints of the thievish propensities of the natives, and urgent to have an example made of some of them. On the next occasion he fired a gun at them with blank cartridge; but their nature was still too strong for them.

"Seeing iron (he says), they could in no case forbear stealing; which, when I perceived, it did but minister to me occasion of laughter to see their simplicity, and I willed that they should not be hardly used, but that our company should be more diligent to keep their things, supposing it to be very hard in so short a time to make them know their evils. . . ."

Leaving Gilbert's Sound, Davis went on to the northwest, and in lat. 63° fell in with a barrier of ice, which he coasted for thirteen days without finding an opening. The very sight of an iceberg was new to all his crew; and the ropes and shrouds, though it was midsummer, becoming compassed with ice,—

¹ John Davis (c. 1550-1605), was an English navigator chiefly famous for three voyages he made in search of a north-west passage. In the first of these voyages he discovered the strait which bears his name.

"The people began to fall sick and faint-hearted—whereupon, very orderly, with good discretion, they entreated me to regard the safety of mine own life, as well as the preservation of theirs; and that I should not, through over-boldness, leave their widows and fatherless children to give me bitter curses.

"Whereupon seeking counsel of God, it pleased His Divine Majesty to move my heart to prosecute that which I hope shall be to His glory, and to the contentation² of every Christian mind."

He had two vessels—one of some burthen, the other a pinnace³ of thirty tons. The result of the counsel which he had sought was, that he made over his own large vessel to such as wished to return, and himself, "thinking it better to die with honour than to return with infamy," went on, with such volunteers as would follow him, in a poor leaky cutter, up the sea now in commemoration of that adventure called Davis's Straits. He ascended 4° North of the furthest known point, among storms and icebergs, when the long days and 25 twilight nights alone saved him from being destroyed, and, coasting back along the American shore, he discovered Hudson's Straits, supposed then to be the long-desired entrance into the Pacific. This exploit drew the attention of Walsingham,⁴ and by him Davis was presented to Burleigh,⁵ "who was also pleased to show him great encouragement." If either these statesmen or Elizabeth had been twenty years younger, his name would have filled a larger space in history than a small corner of the map of the world; but if he was employed at all in the last years of the century, no *vales sacer*⁶ has been found to celebrate his work, and no clue is left to guide us. He disappears; a cloud falls over him. He is known to have commanded trading vessels in the Eastern seas, and to have returned five times from India. But the details are all lost, and accident has only parted the clouds for a moment to show us the mournful setting with which he, too, went down upon the sea.

In taking out Sir Edward Michellthorne to India, in 1604, he fell in with a crew of Japanese, whose ship had been burnt, drifting at sea, without provisions, in a leaky junk. He supposed them to be pirates, but he did not choose to leave them to so wretched a death, and took them on board; and in a few hours,

² Contenting.

³ A small sailing ship capable of being propelled by oars.

⁴ A member of the Privy Council and, after Burleigh, Queen Elizabeth's most important minister.

⁵ Lord Burleigh, who as Secretary of State under Elizabeth originated the policy that made her reign famous.

⁶ Holy prophet.

watching their opportunity, they murdered him.

As the fool dieth, so dieth the wise, and there is no difference; it was the chance of the sea, and the ill reward of a humane action—a melancholy end for such a man-like the end of a warrior, not dying Epaminondas-like⁷ on the field of victory, but cut off in some poor brawl or ambushade. But so it was with all these men. They were cut off in the flower of their days, and few of them laid their bones in the sepulchres of their fathers. They knew the service which they had chosen, and they did not ask the wages for which they had not laboured. Life with them was no summer holiday, but a holy sacrifice offered up to duty, and what their Master sent was welcome. Beautiful is old age—beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich glorious summer. In the old man, Nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and surrounded by his children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings. God forbid we should not call it beautiful. It is beautiful, but not the most beautiful. There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol; a battle which no peace follows, this side the grave; which the grave gapes to finish, before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this. They to whom it has been given to do the really highest work in this earth—whoever they are, Jew or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, warriors, legislators, philosophers, priests, poets, kings, slaves—one and all, their fate has been the same—the same bitter cup has been given to them to drink. And so it was with the servants of England in the sixteenth century. Their life was a long battle, either with the elements or with men; and it was enough for them to fulfil their work, and to pass away in the hour when God had nothing more to bid them do. They did not complain, and why should we complain for them? Peaceful life was not what they desired, and an honourable death had no terrors for them. . . .

"Seeing," in Gilbert's⁸ own brave words, "that death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue is immortal; wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*."⁹

⁷ A great general and statesman of Thebes.

⁸ Sir Humphrey Gilbert the great explorer, who was lost in a storm off the Azores in 1583. V. p. 179, and n. 1, *supra*.

⁹ I scorn either to change or to fear.

John Ruskin

1819-1900

SOME SEA PICTURES OF TURNER

(From *Modern Painters*,¹ Part I, 1843)

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge; these are taken up in wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above (Section III. chap. vi., § 13), and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with the whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. Suppose the effect of the first sun-beam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842—the Snowstorm, one of

¹ *Modern Painters*, a book in five volumes, was undertaken as an answer to the critics of Turner's paintings, in it Ruskin desired to demonstrate Turner's essential truth to nature.

the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light, that has ever been put on canvas, even by Turner.¹ Of course it was not understood; his finest works never are; but there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have the courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.

But I think the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the *Slave Ship*, the chief Academy picture of the exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are partially moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendor which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamplike fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship² as it labors amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror,

¹ *J. M. W. Turner* (1775-1851), an English landscape painter.

² "She is a slave, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses."—Ruskin.

and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.⁴

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its color is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful; and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions—(completing the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea.

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

(From *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849)

I. Among the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain,¹ above the village of Champagnole,² in the Jura. It is a spot which has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps; where there is the sense of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained; and the far reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far off stormy sea. And there is a deep tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures; no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forest; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers send their rude and

⁴ "The multitudinous seas incarnadine." *Mach.* II. ii.

¹ A river in the eastern part of France, rising in the Jura mountains.

² A small town on the river Ain.

changeable ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was spring time, too; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love; there was room enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into nebula; and there was the oxalis, troop by troop, like virginal processions of the *Mois de Marie*,³ the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine; and, ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cowslip bells in sunny places; and in the more open ground, the vetch, and comfrey,⁴ and mezereon,⁵ and the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-coloured moss. I came out presently on the edge of the ravine: the solemn murmur of its waters rose suddenly from beneath, mixed with the singing of the thrushes among the pine boughs; and, on the opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was by grey cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his wings, and with the shadows of the pines flickering upon his plumage from above; but with the fall of a hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as he flew. It would be difficult to conceive a scene less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when he endeavoured, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it, for a moment, a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music; the hills became oppressively desolate; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more

precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers and ever flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue; and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux,⁶ and the four-square keep of Granson.⁷

II. It is as the centralisation and protectress of this sacred influence, that Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears!—how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another! The ambition of the old Babel builders⁸ was well directed for this world: there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality: it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles,⁹ and the day is coming when we shall confess, that we have learned more of Greece out of the crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians. And if indeed there be any profit in our knowledge of the past, or any joy in the thought of being remembered hereafter, which can give strength to present exertion, or patience to present endurance, there are two duties respecting national architecture whose importance it is impossible to overrate: the first, to render the architecture of the day, historical; and, the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.

SCIENCE AND MODERN PROGRESS

(From *Modern Painters*, Part IV, 1856)

The great mechanical impulses of the age, of which most of us are so proud, are a mere

³ The fort of *Joux* in the Jura, near the boundary of Switzerland.

⁷ An ancient village on the Lake of Neuchâtel in Switzerland.

⁸ Gen., xi. 4. "And they said one to another, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

⁹ Pericles became the ruler of Athens after he had ostracized Cimon. The Age of Pericles is noted for the adornment of the city and for its brilliant culture.

³ May (*Mouth of Mary*) held sacred to the Virgin.

⁴ A plant of the Borage family.

⁵ A shrub bearing fragrant flowers.

passing fever, half-speculative, half-childish. People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to, that if there were, it would that instant cease to be worth going to,—I mean so far as the things to be obtained are in any way estimable in terms of *price*. For there are two classes of precious things in the world: those that God gives us for nothing—sun, air, and life (both mortal life and immortal); and the secondarily precious things, worldly wine and milk, can only be bought for definite money; they can never be cheapened. No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of nature's "establishment" at half price. Do we want to be strong?—we must work. To be hungry?—we must starve. To be happy?—we must be kind. To be wise?—we must look and think. No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any sort of conquering; they wanted *using*. A fool always wants to shorten space and time; a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller: and as for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have originally nothing to say. We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.

"Well; but railroads and telegraphs are so useful for communicating knowledge to savage nations." Yes, if you have any to give them. If you know nothing *but* railroads, and can communicate nothing but aqueous vapor and gunpowder,—what then? But if you have any other thing than those to give, then the railroad is of use only because it communicates that other thing, and the question is,—what that other thing may be. Is it religion? I believe if we had really wanted to communi-

cate that, we could have done it in less than 1800 years, without steam. Most of the good religious communication that I remember has been done on foot; and it cannot easily be done faster than at foot pace. Is it science? But what science—of motion, meat, and medicine? Well; when you have moved your savage, and dressed your savage, fed him with white bread, and shown him how to set a limb,—what next? Follow out that question. Suppose every obstacle overcome; give your savage every advantage of civilization to the full: suppose that you have put the Red Indian in tight shoes; taught the Chinese how to make Wedgewood's ware, and to paint it with colors that will rub off; and persuaded all Hindoo women that it is more pious to torment husbands into graves than to burn themselves at the burial,—what next? Gradually, thinking on from point to point, we shall come to perceive that all true happiness and nobleness are near us, and yet neglected by us; and that till we have learned how to be happy and noble, we have not much to tell, even to Red Indians. The delights of horse-racing and hunting, of assemblies in the night instead of the day, of costly and wearisome music, of costly and burdensome dress, of chagrined contention for place or power, or wealth, or the eyes of the multitude; and all the endless occupation without purpose, and idleness without rest, of our vulgar world, are not, it seems to me, enjoyments we need be ambitious to communicate. And all real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him, since first he was made of the earth, as they are now; and they are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray,—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing these, they never *will* have power to do more. The world's prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.

And I am Utopian and enthusiastic enough to believe, that the time will come when the world will discover this. It has now made its experiments in every possible direction but the right one; and it seems that it must, at last, try the right one, in a mathematical necessity. It has tried fighting, and preaching, and fasting, buying and selling, pomp and parsimony, pride and humiliation,—every possible manner of existence in which it could conjecture there was any happiness or dignity; and all the while, as it bought, sold, and fought, and

fasted, and wearied itself with policies, and ambitions, and self-denials, God had placed its real happiness in the keeping of the little mosses of the wayside, and of the clouds of the firmament. Now and then a weary king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion. But the world would not believe their report, and went on trampling down the mosses, and forgetting the clouds, and seeking happiness in its own way, until, at last, blundering and late, came natural science; and in natural science not only the observation of things, but the finding out of new uses for them. Of course the world, having a choice left to it, went wrong as usual, and thought that these mere material uses were to be the sources of its happiness. It got the clouds packed into iron cylinders, and made it carry its wise self at their own cloud pace. It got weaveable fibres out of the mosses, and made clothes for itself, cheap and fine,—here was happiness at last. To go as fast as the clouds, and manufacture everything out of anything,—here was paradise, indeed!

And now, when in a little while it is unparadised again, if there were any other mistake that the world could make, it would of course make it. But I see not that there is any other; and, standing fairly well at its wits' end, having found that going fast, when it is used to it, is no more paradisiacal than going slow; and that all the prints and cottons in Manchester cannot make it comfortable in its mind, I do verily believe it will come, finally to understand that God paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work, and that in resting quietly beside Him, and watching His working, and—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants,—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.

MONEY

(From *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 1866)

The lawful basis of wealth is, that a man who works should be paid the fair value of his work; and that if he does not choose to spend it today, he should have free leave to keep it, and spend it tomorrow. Thus, an industrious man working daily, attains at last the possession of an accumulated sum of wealth, to which he has absolute right. The idle person who will

not work, and the wasteful person who lays nothing by, at the end of the same time will be doubly poor—poor in possession, and dissolute in moral habit; and he will then naturally covet the money which the other has saved. And if he is then allowed to attack the other, and rob him of his well earned wealth, there is no more any motive for saving, or any reward for good conduct; and all society is thereupon dissolved, or exists only in systems of rapine. Therefore the first necessity of social life is the clearness of national conscience in enforcing the law—that he should keep who has Justly Earned.

That law I say, is the proper basis of distinction between rich and poor. But there is also a false basis of distinction; namely, the power held over those who are earning wealth by those who already possess it, and only use it to gain more. There will be always a number of men who would fain set themselves to the accumulation of wealth as the sole object of their lives. Necessarily that class of men is an uneducated class, inferior in intellect, and more or less cowardly. It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts; just as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So all healthily-minded people, like making money—ought to like it, and to enjoy the sensation of winning it: but the main object of their life is not money; it is something better than money. A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay—very properly so, and justly grumbles when you keep him ten years without it—still, his main notion of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So of clergymen. They like pew-rents, and baptismal fees, of course; but yet, if they are brave and well-educated, the pew-rent is not the sole object of their lives, and the baptismal fee is not the sole purpose of the baptism; the clergyman's object is essentially to baptize and preach, not to be paid for preaching. So of doctors. They like fees no doubt,—ought to like them; yet if they are brave and well-educated the entire object of their lives is not fees. They, on the whole, desire to cure the sick; and,—if they are good doctors, and the choice were fairly put to them—would rather cure their patient, and lose their fee, than kill him, and get it. And so with all other brave and rightly trained men; their work is first, their fee second—very important always, but still, second. But in every nation, as I said, there are

a vast class who are ill-educated, cowardly, and more or less stupid. And with these people, just as certainly the fee is first, and the work second, as with the brave people the work is first, and the fee second. And this is no small distinction. It is between life and death in a man; between heaven and hell for him. You cannot serve two masters:—you *must* serve one or other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master, and the lord of work, who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the Devil; and not only the Devil, but the lowest of devils—the “least erected fiend that fell.”¹ So there you have it in brief terms; Work first—you are God’s servants; Fee first—you are the Fiend’s. And it makes a difference, now and ever, believe me, whether you serve him who has on His vesture and thigh written, “King of Kings,”² or him on whose vesture and thigh the name is written, “Slave of Slaves,” and whose service is perfect slavery.

However in every nation there are, and must always be, a certain number of these Fiend’s servants, who have it principally for the object of their life to make money. They are always, as I said, more or less stupid, and cannot conceive of anything else so nice as money. Stupidity is always the basis of the Judas bargain. We do great injustice to Iscariot, in thinking him wicked above all common wickedness. He was only a common money-lover, and, like all money-lovers, did not understand Christ;—could not make out the worth of Him, or meaning of Him. He never thought he would be killed. He was horror-struck when he found that Christ would be killed; threw his money away instantly, and hanged himself. How many of our present money-seekers, think you, would have the grace to hang themselves, whoever was killed? But Judas was a common, selfish, muddle-headed, pilfering fellow; his hand always in the bag of the poor, not caring for them. Helpless to understand Christ, he yet believed in Him, much more than most of us do; had seen Him do miracles, thought he was quite strong enough to shift for Himself, and he, Judas, might as well make his own little bye-perquisites out of the affair. Christ would come out of it well enough, and he have his thirty pieces. Now, that is the money-seeker’s idea, all over the world. He doesn’t hate Christ, but can’t understand Him—doesn’t care for Him—sees no good in

that benevolent business; makes his own little job out of it at all events, come what will. And thus, out of every mass of men, you have a certain number of bagmen—your “fee-first” men, whose main object is to make money. And they do make it—make it in all sorts of unfair ways, chiefly by the force and weight of money itself, or what is called the power of capital; that is to say, the power which money, once obtained, has over the labour of the poor, so that the capitalist can take all its produce to himself, except the labourer’s food. That is the modern Judas’s way of “carrying the bag,” and “bearing what is put therein.”

Nay, but (it is asked) how is that an unfair advantage? Has not the man who has worked for the money a right to use it as he best can? No, in this respect, money is now exactly what mountain promontories over public roads were in old times. The barons fought for them fairly;—the strongest and cunningest got them; then fortified them, and made every one who passed below pay toll. Well, capital now is exactly what crags were then. Men fight fairly (we will, at least, grant so much, though it is more than we ought) for their money; but, once having got it, the fortified millionaire can make everybody who passes below pay toll to his million, and build another tower of his money castle. And I can tell you, the poor vagrants by the roadside suffer quite as much from the bag-baron, as ever they did from the crag-baron. Bags and crags have just the same result on rags. I have no time however, to-night, to show you in how many ways the power of capital is unjust; but remember this one great principle—you will find it unailing—that whenever money is the principal object of life with either man or nation, it is both got ill, and spent ill; and does harm both in the getting and spending; but when it is not the principal object, it and all other things will be well got, and well spent.

TASTE

(From the same)

Now pardon me for telling you¹ frankly you cannot have good architecture merely by asking people’s advice on occasion. All good architecture is the expression of national life and character; and it is produced by a prevalent and eager national taste, or desire for

¹ This selection is from an address delivered in the Town Hall at Bradford, a prosperous manufacturing city of Yorkshire. Ruskin had been invited to lecture there on an Exchange which the city proposed to build. He said little of the Exchange, but spoke of the relation of industrial civilization to art. The address was afterwards included in *The Crown of Wild Olive*.

¹ “Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell.” Milton, *Par. Lost*, l. 679.

² Rev., xix. 16.

beauty. And I want you to think a little of the deep significance of this word "taste;" for no statement of mine has been more earnestly or oftener controverted than that good taste is essentially a moral quality. "No," say many of my antagonists, "taste is one thing, morality is another. Tell us what is pretty: we shall be glad to know that; but we need no sermons, even were you able to preach them, which may be doubted."

Permit me, therefore, to fortify this old dogma of mine somewhat. Taste is not only a part and an index of morality;—it is the ONLY morality. The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, "What do you like?" Tell me what you like, and I'll tell you what you are. Go out into the street, and ask the first man or woman you meet, what their "taste" is; and if they answer candidly, you know them, body and soul. "You, my friend in the rags, with the unsteady gait, what do you like?" "A pipe and a quarter of gin." I know you. "You, good woman, with the quick step and tidy bonnet, what do you like?" "A swept hearth, and a clean tea-table; and my husband opposite me, and a baby at my breast." Good, I know you also. "You, little girl with the golden hair and the soft eyes, what do you like?" "My canary, and a run among the wood hyacinths." "You, little boy with the dirty hands, and the low forehead, what do you like?" "A shy at the sparrows, and a game at pitch farthing." Good; we know them all now. What more need we ask?

"Nay," perhaps you answer; "we need rather to ask what these people and children do, than what they like. If they *do* right, it is no matter that they like what is wrong; and if they *do* wrong, it is no matter that they like what is right. Doing is the great thing; and it does not matter that the man likes drinking, so that he does not drink; nor that the little girl likes to be kind to her canary, if she will not learn her lessons; nor that the little boy likes throwing stones at the sparrows, if he goes to the Sunday school." Indeed for a short time, and in a provisional sense, this is true. For if, resolutely, people do what is right, in time to come they like doing it. But they only are in a right moral state when they *love* to come to like doing it; and as long as they don't like it, they are still in a vicious state. The man is not in health of body who is always thinking of the bottle in the cupboard, though he bravely bears his thirst; but the man who heartily enjoys water in the morning, and wine in the evening, each in its own proper time. And the entire object of true education

is to make people not merely *do* the right things, but *enjoy* the right things:—not merely industrious, but to love industry—not merely learned, but to love knowledge—not merely pure, but to love purity—not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice.

But you may answer or think, "Is the liking for outside ornaments,—for pictures, or statues, or furniture, or architecture, a moral quality?"

Yes, most surely, if a rightly set liking. Taste for any pictures or statues is not a moral quality, but taste for good ones is. Only here again we have to define the word "good," clever—or learned—or difficult in the doing. Take a picture by Teniers, of sots quarreling over their dice; it is an entirely clever picture; so clever that nothing in its kind has ever been done equal to it; but it is also an entirely base and evil picture. It is an expression of delight in the prolonged contemplation of a vile thing, and delight in that is an "unmannered," or "immoral" quality. It is "bad taste" in the profoundest sense—it is the taste of the devils. On the other hand, a picture of Titian's, or a Greek statue, or a Greek coin, or a Turner landscape, expresses delight in the perpetual contemplation of a good and perfect thing. That is an entirely moral quality—it is the taste of the angels. And all delight in fine art, and all love of it, resolve themselves into simple love of that which deserves love. That deserving is the quality which we call "loveliness" (we ought to have an opposite word, *hateliness*, to be said of the things which deserve to be hated); and it is not an indifferent nor optional thing whether we love this or that; but it is just the vital function of all our being. What we *like* determines what we *are*, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is to inevitably form character.

As I was thinking over this, in walking up Fleet Street the other day, my eye caught the title of a book standing open in a bookseller's window. It was—"On the necessity of the diffusion of taste among all classes." "Ah," I thought to myself, "my classifying friend, when you have diffused your taste, where will your classes be? The man who likes what you like, belongs to the same class with you, I think. Inevitably so. You may put him to other work if you choose; but, by the condition you have brought him into, he will dislike the work as much as you would yourself. You get hold of a scavenger or a costermonger, who enjoyed the *Newgate Calendar*² for literature, and "Pop goes the weasel" for music. You think you can make him like Dante and

² An account of famous criminals who had served terms in *Newgate* prison.

Beethoven? I wish you joy of your lessons; but if you do, you have made a gentleman of him: he won't like to go back to his costermongering."

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ART AND CHARACTER

(From *The Queen of the Air*, 1869)

I have now only a few words to say, bearing on what seems to me present need, respecting the third function of Athena, conceived as the directress of human passion, resolution, and labour.

Few words, for I am not yet prepared to give an accurate distinction between the intellectual rule of Athena and that of the Muses: but, broadly, the Muses, with their king, preside over meditative, historical, and poetic arts, whose end is the discovery of light or truth, and the creation of beauty: but Athena rules over moral passion, and practically useful art. She does not make men learned, but prudent and subtle: she does not teach them to make their work beautiful, but to make it right.

In different places of my writings, and through many years of endeavour to define the laws of art, I have insisted on this rightness in work, and on its connection with virtue of character, in so many partial ways, that the impression left on the reader's mind—if, indeed, it was ever impressed at all—has been confused and uncertain. In beginning the series of my corrected works, I wish this principle (in my own mind the foundation of every other) to be made plain, if nothing else is: and will try, therefore, to make it so, as far as, by any effort, I can put it into unmistakable words. And, first, here is a very simple statement of it, given lately in a lecture on the Architecture of the Valley of the Somme, which will be better read in this place than in its incidental connection with my account of the porches of Abbeville.

I had used, in a preceding part of the lecture, the expression, "by what faults" this Gothic architecture fell. We continually speak thus of works of art. We talk of their faults and merits, as of virtues and vices. What do we mean by talking of the faults of a picture, or the merits of a piece of stone?

The faults of a work of art are the faults of its workman, and its virtues his virtues.

Great art is the expression of the mind of a great man, and mean art, that of the want of mind of a weak man. A foolish person builds foolishly, and a wise one, sensibly; a virtuous one, beautifully; and a vicious one, basely.

If stone work is well put together, it means that a thoughtful man planned it, and a careful man cut it, and an honest man cemented it. If it has too much ornament, it means that its carver was too greedy of pleasure; if too little, that he was rude, or insensitive, or stupid, and the like. So that when once you have learned how to spell these most precious of all legends,—pictures and buildings,—you may read the characters of men, and of nations, in their art, as in a mirror;—nay, as in a microscope, and magnified a hundredfold; for the character becomes passionate in the art, and intensifies itself in all its noblest or meanest delights.

Nay, not only as in a microscope, but as under a scalpel, and in dissection; for a man may hide himself from you, or misrepresent himself to you, every other way; but he cannot in his work: there, be sure, you have him to the inmost. All that he likes, all that he sees,—all that he can do,—his imaginations, his affections, his perseverance, his impatience, his clumsiness, cleverness, everything is there. If the work is a cobweb, you know it was made by a spider; if a honeycomb, by a bee; a worm-cast is thrown up by a worm, and a nest wreathed by a bird; and a house built by a man, worthily, if he be worthy, and ignobly, if he is ignoble.

And always, from the least to the greatest, as the made thing is good or bad, so is the maker of it.

You all use this faculty of judgment more or less, whether you theoretically admit the principle or not. Take that floral gable; you don't suppose the man who built Stonehenge could have built that, or that the man who built that, *would* have built Stonehenge? Do you think an old Roman would have liked such a piece of flagstone work? or that Michael Angelo would have spent his time in twisting these stems of roses in and out? Or, of modern handcraftsmen, do you think a burglar, or a brute, or a pickpocket, could have carved it? Could Bill Sykes have done it? or the Dodger,¹ dexterous with finger and tool? You will find in the end, that *no man could have done it but exactly the man who did it*; and by looking close at it, you may, if you know your letters, read precisely the manner of man he was.

Now I must insist on this matter, for a grave reason. Of all facts concerning art, this is the one most necessary to be known, that, while manufacture is the work of hands only, art is the work of the whole spirit of man; and as that spirit is, so is the deed of it: and by whatever power of vice or virtue any art is produced, the same vice or virtue it reproduces and

¹ Criminal characters in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.

teaches. That which is born of evil begets evil; and that which is born of valour and honour, teaches valour and honour. All art is either infection or education. It *must* be one or other of these.

This, I repeat, of all truths respecting art, is the one of which understanding is the most precious, and denial the most deadly. And I assert it the more, because it has of late been repeatedly, expressly, and with contumely denied; and that by high authority: and I hold it one of the most sorrowful facts connected with the decline of the arts among us, that English gentlemen, of high standing as scholars and artists, should have been blinded into the acceptance, and been betrayed into the assertion, of a fallacy which only authority such as theirs could have rendered for an instant credible. For the contrary of it is written in the history of all great nations; it is the one sentence always inscribed on the steps of their thrones; the one concordant voice in which they speak to us out of the dust.

All such nations first manifest themselves as a pure and beautiful animal race, with intense energy and imagination. They live lives of hardship by choice, and by grand instinct of manly discipline: they become fierce and irresistible soldiers; the nation is always its own army, and their king, or chief head of government, is always their first soldier. Pharaoh, or David, or Leonidas, or Valerius, or Barbarossa, or Cœur de Lion, or St. Louis, or Dandolo, or Frederick the Great;—Egyptian, Jew, Greek, Roman, German, English, French, Venetian,—that is inviolable law for them all; their king must be their first soldier, or they cannot be in progressive power. Then, after their great military period; in which, without betraying the discipline of war, they add to their great soldiery the delights and possessions of a delicate and tender home-life; and then, for all nations, is the time of their perfect art, which is the fruit, the evidence, the reward of their national ideal of character, developed by the finished care of the occupations of peace. That is the history of all true art that ever was, or can be: palpably the history of it,—unmistakably,—written on the forehead of it in letters of light,—in tongues of fire, by which the seal of virtue is branded as deep as ever iron burnt into a convict's flesh the seal of crime. But always, hitherto, after the great period, has followed the day of luxury, and pursuit of the arts for pleasure only. And all has so ended.

Thus far of Abbeville building. Now I have here asserted two things,—first, the foundation of art in moral character; next, the foundation

of moral character in war. I must make both these assertions clearer, and prove them.

First, of the foundation of art in moral character. Of course art-gift and amiability of disposition are two different things; a good man is not necessarily a painter, nor does an eye for colour necessarily imply an honest mind. But great art implies the union of both powers: it is the expression, by an art-gift, of a pure soul. If the gift is not there, we can have no art at all; and if the soul—and a right soul too—is not there, the art is bad, however dextrous.

But also, remember, that the art-gift itself is only the result of the moral character of generations. A bad woman may have a sweet voice; but that sweetness of voice comes of the past morality of her race. That she can sing with it at all, she owes to the determination of laws of music by the morality of the past. Every act, every impulse, of virtue and vice, affects in any creature, face, voice, nervous power, and vigour and harmony of invention, at once. Perseverance in rightness of human conduct, renders, after a certain number of generations, human art possible; every sin clouds it, be it ever so little a one; and persistent vicious living and following of pleasure render, after a certain number of generations, all art impossible. Men are deceived by the long-suffering of the laws of nature; and mistake in a nation, the reward of the virtue of its sires for the issue of its own sins. The time of their visitation will come, and that inevitably; for, it is always true, that if the fathers have eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge. And for the individual, as soon as you have learned to read, you may, as I have said, know him to the heart's core, through his art. Let his art-gift be never so great, and cultivated to the height by the schools of a great race of men; and it is still but a tapestry thrown over his own being and inner soul; and the bearing of it will show, infallibly, whether it hangs on a man, or on a skeleton. If you are dim-eyed, you may not see the difference in the fall of the folds at first, but learn how to look, and the folds themselves will become transparent, and you shall see through them the death's shape, or the divine one, making the tissue above it as a cloud of light, or as a winding sheet.

Then farther, observe, I have said (and you will find it true, and that to the uttermost) that, as all lovely art is rooted in virtue, so it bears fruit of virtue, and is didactic in its own nature. It is often didactic also in actually expressed thought, as Giotto's, Michael Angelo's, Dürer's, and hundreds more; but that is not its special function,—it is didactic chiefly by

being beautiful; but beautiful with haunting thought, no less than with form, and full of myths that can be read only with the heart.

For instance, there is at this moment open beside me as I write, a page of Persian manuscript, wrought with wreathed azure and gold, and soft green, and violet, and ruby and scarlet, into one field of pure resplendence. It is wrought to delight the eyes only; and it does delight them; and the man who did it surely had eyes in his head; but not much more. It is not didactic art, but its author was happy: and it will do the good, and the harm, that mere pleasure can do. But, opposite me, is an early Turner drawing of the lake of Geneva, taken about two miles from Geneva, on the Lausanne road, with Mont Blanc in the distance. The old city is seen lying beyond the waveless waters, veiled with a sweet misty veil of Athens's weaving: a faint light of morning, peaceful exceedingly, and almost colourless, shed from behind the Voirons, increases into soft amber along the slopes of the Salève, and is just seen, and no more, on the fair warm fields of its summit, between the folds of a white cloud that rests upon the grass, but rises, high and towerlike, into the zenith of dawn above.

There is not as much colour in that low amber light upon the hillside as there is in the palest dead leaf. The lake is not blue, but grey in mist, passing into deep shadow beneath the Voirons' pines; a few dark clusters of leaves, a single white flower—scarcely seen—are all the gladness given to the rocks of the shore. One of the ruby spots of the eastern manuscript would give colour enough for all the red that is in Turner's entire drawing. For the mere pleasure of the eye, there is not so much in all those lines of his, throughout the entire landscape, as in half an inch square of the Persian's page. What made him take pleasure in the low colour that is only like the brown of a dead leaf? in the cold grey of dawn—in the one white flower among the rocks—in these—and no more than these?

He took pleasure in them because he had been bred among English fields and hills; because the gentleness of a great race was in his heart, and its power of thought in his brain; because he knew the stories of the Alps, and of the cities at their feet; because he had read the Homeric legends of the clouds, and beheld the clouds of dawn, and the givers of dew to the fields; because he knew the face of the crags, and the imagery of the passionate mountains, as a man knows the face of his friend; because he had in him the wonder and sorrow concerning life and death, which are the inheritance of the Gothic soul from the days of

its first sea kings; and also the compassion and the joy that are woven into the innermost fabric of every great imaginative spirit, born now in countries that have lived by the Christian faith with any courage or truth. And the picture contains also, for us, just this which its maker had in him to give; and can convey it to us, just so far as we are of the temper in which it must be received. It is didactic, if we are worthy to be taught, no otherwise. The pure heart, it will make more pure; the thoughtful, more thoughtful. It has in it no words for the reckless or the base.

As I myself look at it, there is no fault nor folly of my life,—and both have been many and great,—that does not rise up against me, and take away my joy, and shorten my power of possession, of sight, of understanding. And every past effort of my life, every gleam of rightness or good in it, is with me now, to help me in my grasp of this heart, and its vision. So far as I can rejoice in, or interpret either, my power is owing to what of right there is in me. I dare to say it, that, because through all my life I have desired good, and not evil; because I have been kind to many; have wished to be kind to all; have willfully injured none; and because I have loved much, and not selfishly;—therefore, the morning light is yet visible to me on those hills, and you, who read, may trust my thought and word in such work as I have to do for you; and you will be glad afterwards that you have trusted them.

LIBERTY AND RESTRAINT

(From the same)

Next to Modesty, and her delight in measures, let us reflect a little on the character of her adversary, the Goddess of Liberty, and her delight in absence of measures, or in false ones. It is true that there are liberties and liberties. Yonder torrent, crystal-clear, and arrow-swift, with its spray leaping into the air like white troops of fawns, is free enough. Lost, presently, amidst bankless, boundless marsh—soaking in slow shallowness, as it will, hither and thither, listless, among the poisonous reeds and unresisting slime—it is free also. We may choose which liberty we like,—the restraint of voiceful rock, or the dumb and edgeless shore of darkened sand. Of that evil liberty, which men are now glorifying, and proclaiming as essence of gospel to all the earth, and will presently, I suppose, proclaim also to the stars, with invitation to them *out* of their courses,—and of its opposite continence, which is the

clasp and χρυσή περόνη¹ of Aglaia's cestus, we must try to find out something true. For no quality of art has been more powerful in its influence on public mind; none is more frequently the subject of popular praise, or the end of vulgar effort, than what we call "Freedom." It is necessary to determine the justice or injustice of this popular praise.

I said, a little while ago, that the practical teaching of the masters of Art was summed up by the O of Giotto.² "You may judge my masterhood of craft," Giotto tells us, "by seeing that I can draw a circle unerringly." And we may safely believe him, understanding him to mean, that—though more may be necessary to an artist than such a power—at least this power is necessary. The qualities of hand and eye needful to do this are the first conditions of artistic craft.

Try to draw a circle yourself with the "free" hand, and with a single line. You cannot do it if your hand trembles, nor if it hesitates, nor if it is unmanageable, nor if it is in the common sense of the word "free." So far from being free, it must be under a control as absolute and accurate as if it were fastened to an inflexible bar of steel. And yet it must move under this necessary control, with perfect untortured serenity of ease.

That is the condition of all good work whatsoever. All freedom is error. Every line you lay down is either right or wrong: it may be timidly and awkwardly wrong, or fearlessly and impudently wrong; the aspect of the impudent wrongness is pleasurable to vulgar persons; and it is what they commonly call "free" execution: the timid, tottering, hesitating wrongness is rarely so attractive; yet sometimes, if accompanied with good qualities, and right aims in other directions, it becomes in a manner charming, like the inarticulateness of a child: but, whatever the charm or manner of the error, there is but one question ultimately to be asked respecting every line you draw, Is it right or wrong? If right, it most assuredly is not a "free" line, but an intensely continent, restrained, and considered line; and the action of the hand in laying it is just as decisive, and just as "free" as the hand of a first-rate surgeon in a critical incision. A great operator told me that his hand could check itself within about the two-hundredth of an inch, in penetrating a membrane, and this, of course, without the help of sight, by

sensation only. With help of sight, and in action on a substance which does not quiver nor yield, a fine artist's line is measurable in its purposed direction to considerably less than the thousandth of an inch.

A wide freedom truly!

The conditions of popular art which most foster the common ideas about freedom, are merely results of irregularly energetic effort by men imperfectly educated; these conditions being variously mingled with cruder mannerisms resulting from timidity, or actual imperfection of body. Northern hands and eyes are, of course, never so subtle as Southern; and in very cold countries, artistic execution is palsied. The effort to break through this timidity, or to refine the bluntness, may lead to a licentious impetuosity, or an ostentatious minuteness. Every man's manner has this kind of relation to some defect in his physical powers or modes of thought; so that in the greatest work there is no manner visible. It is at first uninteresting from its quietness; the majesty of restrained power only dawns gradually upon us, as we walk towards its horizon.

There is, indeed, often great delightfulness in the innocent manners of artists who have real power and honesty, and draw, in this way or that, as best they can, under such and such untoward circumstances of life. But the greater part of the looseness, flimsiness, or audacity of modern work is the expression of an inner spirit of license in mind and heart, connected, as I said, with the peculiar folly of this age, its hope of, and trust in, "liberty." Of which we must reason a little in more general terms.

I believe we can nowhere find a better type of a perfectly free creature than in the common house fly. Nor free only, but brave; and irreverent to a degree which I think no human republican could by any philosophy exalt himself to. There is no courtesy in him; he does not care whether it is king or clown whom he teases; and in every step of his swift mechanical march, and in every pause of his resolute observation, there is one and the same expression of perfect egotism, perfect independence and self-confidence, and conviction of the world's having been made for flies. Strike at him with your hand; and to him, the mechanical fact and external aspect of the matter is, what to you it would be, if an acre of red clay, ten feet thick, tore itself up from the ground in one massive field, hovered over you in the air for a second, and came crashing down with an aim. That is the external aspect of it; the inner aspect, to his fly's mind, is of a quite natural and unimportant occurrence—

¹ Golden buckle. *Aglaia* (splendor) was one of the Graces. *Cestus* is a girdle.

² The Pope once sent a messenger to obtain specimens of the work of the chief artists of Italy. Giotto simply drew a circle and gave it to the amazed messenger, who asked if that was all. "Send it," said Giotto, "and we shall see if his Holiness understands the hint."

one of the momentary conditions of his active life. He steps out of the way of your hand, and alights on the back of it. You cannot terrify him, nor govern him, nor persuade him, nor convince him. He has his own positive opinion on all matters; not an unwise one, usually, for his own ends; and will ask no advice of yours. He has no work to do—no tyrannical instinct to obey. The earthworm has his digging, the bee her gathering and building; the spider her cunning network; the ant her treasury and accounts. All these are comparatively slaves, or people of vulgar business. But your fly, free in the air, free in the chamber—a black incarnation of caprice—wandering, investigating, sitting, flirting, feasting at his will, with rich variety of choice in feast, from the heaped sweets in the grocer's window to those of the butcher's back-yard, and from the galled place on your cab-horse's back, to the brown spot in the road, from which, as the hoof disturbs him, he rises with angry republican buzz—what freedom is like his?

For captivity, again, perhaps your poor watch-dog is as sorrowful a type as you will easily find. Mine certainly is. The day is lovely, but I must write this, and cannot go out with him. He is chained in the yard, because I do not like dogs in rooms, and the gardener does not like dogs in gardens. He has no books,—nothing but his own weary thoughts for company, and a group of those free flies whom he snaps at, with sullen ill success. Such dim hope as he may have that I may yet take him out with me, will be, hour by hour, wearily disappointed; or, worse, darkened at once into a leaden despair by an authoritative "No"—too well understood. His fidelity only seals his fate; if he would not watch for me, he would be sent away, and go hunting with some happier master: but he watches, and is wise and faithful, and miserable; and his high animal intellect only gives him the wistful powers of wonder, and sorrow, and desire, and affection, which embitter his captivity. Yet of the two would we rather be watch-dog, or fly?

Indeed the first point we have all to determine is not how free we are, but what kind of creatures we are. It is of small importance to any of us whether we get liberty; but of the greatest that we deserve it. Whether we can win it, fate must determine; but that we will be worthy of it, we may ourselves determine; and the sorrowfullest fate, of all that we can suffer, is to have it, *without* deserving it.

I have hardly patience to hold my pen and go on writing, as I remember (I would that it were possible for a few consecutive instants to

forget) the infinite follies of modern thought in this matter, centred in the notion that liberty is good for a man, irrespectively of the use he is likely to make of it. Folly unfathomable! unspeakable! unendurable to look in the full face of, as the laugh of a cretin. You will send your child, will you, into a room, where a table is loaded with sweet wine and fruit—some poisoned, some not?—you will say to him, "Choose freely, my little child! it is so good for you to have freedom of choice; it forms your character—your individuality! If you take the wrong cup, or the wrong berry, you will die before the day is over, but you will have acquired the dignity of a Free child?"

You think that puts the case too sharply? I tell you, lover of liberty, there is no choice offered to you, but it is similarly between life and death. There is no act, nor option of act, possible, but the wrong deed or option has poison in it, which will stay in your veins thereafter for ever. Never more to all eternity can you be as you might have been, had you not done that—chosen that. You have "formed your character," forsooth! No! if you have chosen ill, you have Deformed it, and that for ever! In some choices, it had been better for you that a red-hot iron bar struck you aside, scarred and helpless, than that you had so chosen. "You will know better next time!" No. Next time will never come. Next time the choice will be in quite another aspect—between quite different things,—you, weaker than you were by the evil into which you have fallen; it, more doubtful than it was, by the increased dimness of your sight. No one ever gets wiser by doing wrong, nor stronger. You will get wiser and stronger only by doing right, whether forced or not; the prime, the one need is to do *that*, under whatever compulsion, until you can do it without compulsion. And then you are a Man.

SCIENCE AND LIFE

(From *Fors Clavigera*, 1871–1878)

And all true science—which my Savoyard guide rightly scorned me when he thought I had not,—all true science is "*savoir vivre*." But all your modern science is the contrary of that. It is "*savoir mourir*."

And of its very discoveries, such as they are, it cannot make use.

That telegraphic signalling was a discovery; and conceivably, some day, may be a useful one. And there was some excuse for your being a little proud when, about last sixth of April (Cœur de Lion's death-day, and Albert

Dürer's), you knotted a copper wire all the way to Bombay, and flashed a message along it, and back.

But what was the message, and what the answer? Is India the better for what you said to her? Are you the better for what she replied?

If not, you have only wasted an all-round-the-world's length of copper wire,—which is, indeed, about the sum of your doing. If you had had, perchance, two words of common sense to say, though you had taken wearisome time and trouble to send them;—though you had written them slowly in gold, and sealed them with a hundred seals, and sent a squadron of ships of the line to carry the scroll, and the squadron had fought its way round the Cape of Good Hope, through a year of storms, with loss of all its ships but one,—the two words of common sense would have been worth the carriage, and more. But you have not anything like so much as that, to say, either to India or to any other place.

You think it a great triumph to make the sun draw brown landscapes for you.

That was also a discovery, and some day may be useful. But the sun had drawn landscapes before for you, not in brown, but in green, and blue, and all imaginable colours, here in England. Not one of you ever looked at them then; not one of you cares for the loss of them now, when you have shut the sun out with smoke, so that he can draw nothing more, except brown blots through a hole in a box. There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, once upon a time, divine as the Vale of Tempe; you might have seen the Gods there morning and evening—Apollo and all the sweet Muses of the Light—walking in fair processions on the lawns of it, and to and fro among the pinnacles of its crags. You cared neither for Gods nor grass, but for cash (which you did not know the way to get); you thought you could get it by what the *Times* calls "Railroad Enterprise." You Enterprised a Railroad through the valley—you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you think a lucrative process of exchange—you Fools Everywhere.

To talk at a distance, when you have nothing to say, though you were ever so near; to go fast from this place to that, with nothing to do either at one or the other: these are powers certainly. Much more, power of increased Production, if you, indeed, had got it, would

be something to boast of. But are you so entirely sure that you *have* got it—that the mortal disease of plenty, and afflictive affluence of good things, are all you have to dread?

Observe. A man and a woman, with their children properly trained, are able easily to cultivate as much ground as will feed them; to build as much wall and roof as will lodge them, and to spin and weave as much cloth as will clothe them. They can all be perfectly happy and healthy in doing this. Supposing that they invent machinery which will build, plough, thresh, cook, and weave, and that they have none of these things any more to do, but may read, or play croquet, or cricket, all day long, I believe myself that they will neither be so good nor so happy as without the machines. But I waive my belief in this matter for the time. I will assume that they become more refined and moral persons, and that idleness in future is to be the mother of all good. But observe, I repeat, the power of your machine is only in enabling them to be idle. It will not enable them to live better than they did before, nor to live in greater numbers. Get your heads quite clear on this matter. Out of so much ground, only so much living is to be got, with or without machinery. You may set a million of steam-ploughs to work on an acre, if you like—out of that acre only a given number of grains of corn will grow, scratch or scorch it as you will. So that the question is not at all whether, by having more machines, more of you can live. No machines will increase the possibilities of life. They only increase the possibilities of idleness. Suppose, for instance, you could get the oxen in your plough driven by a goblin, who would ask for no pay, not even a cream bowl,—(you have nearly managed to get it driven by an iron goblin, as it is;—Well, your furrow will take no more seeds than if you had held the stils yourself. But, instead of holding them, you sit, I presume, on a bank beside the field, under an eglantine;—watch the goblin at his work, and read poetry. Meantime, your wife in the house has also got a goblin to weave and wash for her. And she is lying on the sofa, reading poetry.

Now, as I said, I don't believe you would be happier so, but I am willing to believe it; only, since you are already such brave mechanists, show me at least one or two places where you *are* happier. Let me see one small example of approach to this seraphic condition. I can show you examples, millions of them, of happy people, made happy by their own industry. Farm after farm I can show you in

Bavaria, Switzerland, the Tyrol, and such other places, where men and women are perfectly happy and good, without any iron servants. Show me, therefore, some English family, with its fiery familiar, happier than these. Or bring me—for I am not ~~inconvincible~~ by any kind of evidence,—bring me the testimony of an English family or two to their increased felicity. Or if you cannot do so much as that, can you convince even themselves of it? They *are* perhaps happy, if only they knew how happy they were; Virgil thought so,¹ long ago, of simple rustics; but you hear at present your steam-propelled rustics are crying out that they are anything else than happy, and that they regard their boasted progress “in the light of a monstrous Sham.” I must tell you one little thing however, which greatly perplexes my imagination of the relieved ploughman sitting under his rose bower, 20 reading poetry. I have told it you before, indeed, but I forget where. There was really a great festivity, and expression of satisfaction in the new order of things, down in Cumberland, a little while ago; some first of May, I 25 think it was, a country festival, such as the old heathens, who had no iron servants, used to keep with piping and dancing. So I thought from the liberated country people—their work all done for them by goblins—we should have 30 some extraordinary piping and dancing. But there was no dancing at all, and they could not even provide their own piping. They had their goblin to Pipe for them. They walked in procession after their steam plough, and their 35 steam plough whistled to them occasionally in the most melodious manner it could. Which seemed to me, indeed, a return to more than Arcadian simplicity; for in old Arcadia, ploughboys truly whistled as they went, for want 40 of thought; whereas, here was verily a large company walking without thought, but not having any more even the capacity of doing their own Whistling.

But next, as to the inside of the house. Be- 45 fore you got your power-ooms, a woman could always make herself a chemise and petticoat of bright and pretty appearance. I have seen a Bavarian peasant-woman at church in Munich, looking a much grander creature, 50 and more beautifully dressed, than any of the crossed and embroidered angels in Hesse’s high-art frescoes; (which happened to be just above her, so that I could look from one to the other). Well, here you are, in England, served 55 by household demons, with five hundred fingers, at least, weaving, for one that used to weave in the days of Minerva. You ought to

be able to show me five hundred dresses for one that used to be; tidiness ought to have become five hundred fold tidier; tapestry should be increased in cinque-cento-fold² iri- 5 descence of tapestry. Not only your peasant girl ought to be lying on the sofa reading poetry, but she ought to have in her wardrobe five hundred petticoats instead of one. Is that, indeed, your issue? or are you only on a 10 curiously crooked way to it?

It is just possible, indeed, that you may not have been allowed to get the use of the goblin’s work—that other people may have got the use of it, and you none; because, perhaps, you 15 have not been able to evoke goblins wholly for your own personal service; but have been borrowing goblins from the capitalist, and paying interest, in the “position of William,” on ghostly self-going planes, but suppose you 20 had laid by capital enough, yourselves, to hire all the demons in the world,—nay,—all that are inside of it; are you quite sure you know what you might best set them to work at? and what “useful things” you should com- 25 mand them to make for you? I told you, last month, that no economist going (whether by steam, or ghost,) knew what are useful things and what are not. Very few of you know, yourselves, except by bitter experience of the 30 want of them. And no demons, either of iron or spirit, can ever make them.

There are three Material things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one “knows how to live” till he has got them.

These are, Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

There are three Immaterial things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one knows how to live till he has got them also.

These are, Admiration, Hope, and Love.³

Admiration—the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible form, and lovely in human Character; and, necessarily, striving to produce what is beau- 50 tiful in form, and to become what is lovely in character.

Hope, the recognition, by true Foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others; necessarily issuing in the straightforward and undisap- 55 pointable effort to advance, according to our proper power, the gaining of them.

Love, both of family and neighbour, faithful, and satisfied.

These are the six chiefly useful things to be 55 got by Political Economy, when it has become a science. I will briefly tell you what Modern

¹ Five hundred fold.

² Cf. Wordsworth’s *Excursion*, Bk. 4. “We live by admiration, hope and love.”

³ *Georgica*, II. 458. *V. Fortunati Nimium*, p. 172, *supra*.

Political Economy—the great “savoir mourir”—is doing with them.

The first three, I said, are Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

Heaven gives you the main elements of these. You can destroy them at your pleasure, or increase, almost without limit, the available quantities of them.

You can vitiate the air by your manner of life, and of death, to any extent. You might easily vitiate it so as to bring such a pestilence on the globe as would end all of you. You or your fellows, German and French, are at present vitiating it to the best of your power in every direction;—chiefly at this moment with corpses, and animal and vegetable ruin in war: changing men, horses, and garden-stuff into noxious gas. But everywhere, and all day long, you are vitiating it with foul chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are little more than laboratories for the distillation into leven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia from decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease.

On the other hand, your power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption; by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures; and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere,—is literally infinite. You might make every breath of air you draw, food.

Secondly, your power over the rain and river-waters of the earth is infinite. You can bring rain where you will, by planting wisely and tending carefully;—drought, where you will, by ravage of woods and neglect of the soil. You might have the rivers of England as pure as the crystal of the rock,—beautiful in falls, in lakes, in living pools;—so full of fish that you might take them out with your hands instead of nets. Or you may do always as you have done now, turn every river of England into a common sewer, so that you cannot so much as baptize an English baby but with filth, unless you hold its face out in the rain; and even *that* falls dirty.

Then for the third, Earth,—meant to be nourishing for you, and blossoming. You have learned, about it, that there is no such thing as a flower; and as far as your scientific hands and scientific brains, inventive of explosive and deathful, instead of blossoming and life-giving, Dust, can contrive, you have turned the Mother-Earth, Demeter, into the Avenger-

Earth, Tisiphone⁴—with the voice of your brother's blood crying out of it, in one wild harmony round all its murderous sphere.

That is what you have done for the Three Material Useful Things.

Then for the Three Immaterial Useful Things. For Admiration you have learned contempt and conceit. There is no lovely thing ever yet done by man that you care for, or can understand; but you are persuaded that you are able to do much finer things yourselves. You gather and exhibit together, as if equally instructive, what is infinitely bad, with what is infinitely good. You do not know which is which; you instinctively prefer the Bad, and do more of it. You instinctively hate the Good, and destroy it.

Then secondly, for Hope. You have not so much spirit of it in you as to begin any plan which will not pay for ten years; nor so much intelligence of it in you, (either politicians or workmen), as to be able to form one clear idea of what you would like your country to become.

Then, thirdly, for Love. You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbour as yourselves.

You have founded an entire science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man—the desire to defraud his neighbour.

And you have driven your women mad, so that they ask no more for Love, nor for fellowship with you; but stand against you, and ask for “justice.”

Are there any of you who are tired of all this? Any of you, Landlords or Tenants? Employers, or Workmen?

Are there any Landlords—any masters,—who would like better to be served by men than by iron devils?

Any tenants, any workmen, who can be true to their leaders and to each other? who can vow to work and to live faithfully, for the sake of the joy of their homes?

Will any such give the tenth of what they have; and of what they earn,—not to emigrate with, but to stay in England with; and do what is in their hands and hearts to make her a happy England?

⁴ One of the Furies, the “blood-avenger.” Cf. Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV.*, Act I. sc. iii.

“And it was great pity, so it was,
That villainous saltpetre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly.”

Charles Kingsley

1819-1875

ST. GUTHLAG

(From *The Hermits*, 1867)

Hermits dwelling in the wilderness, as far as I am aware, were to be seen only in the northern and western parts of the island, where not only did the forest afford concealment, but the crags and caves shelter. The southern and eastern English seldom possess the vivid imagination of the Briton, the Northumbrian, and the Scot; while the rich lowlands of central, southern, and eastern England, well peopled and well tilled, offered few spots lonely enough for the hermit's cell.

One district only was desolate enough to attract those who wished to be free from the world,—namely, the great fens north of Cambridge; and there, accordingly, as early as the seventh century, hermits settled in morasses now so utterly transformed that it is difficult to restore in one's imagination the original scenery.

The fens in the seventh century were probably very like the forests at the mouth of the Mississippi, or the swampy shores of the Carolinas. Their vast plain is now, in summer, one sea of golden corn; in winter, a black dreary fallow, cut into squares by stagnant dykes, and broken only by unsightly pumping mills, and doleful lines of poplar trees. Of old it was a labyrinth of black wandering streams; broad lagoons; morasses submerged every springtide; vast beds of reed and sedge and fern; vast copses of willow, alder, and gray poplar, rooted in the floating peat, which was swallowing up slowly, all-devouring, yet all-preserving, the forests of fir and oak, ash and poplar, hazel and yew, which had once grown on that low rank soil, sinking slowly (so geologists assure us) beneath the sea from age to age. Trees, torn down by flood and storm, floated and lodged in rafts, damming the waters back upon the land. Streams, bewildered in the flats, changed their channels, mingling silt and sand with the peat-moss. Nature, left to herself, ran into wild riot and chaos more and more, till the whole fen became one "Dismal Swamp," in which at the time of the Norman Conquest, the "Last of the English," like Dred in Mrs. Stowe's tale, took refuge from their tyrants, and lived, like him, a free and joyous life awhile.

¹ In Mrs. Stowe's novel *Dred*, the hero, a runaway slave, lives in the *Dismal Swamp*.

² Hereward the Wake, one of the last, to resist William the Conqueror.

For there are islands in the sea which have escaped the destroying deluge of peat-moss,—out-crops of firm and fertile land, which in the early Middle Age were so many natural parks, covered with richest grass and stateliest trees, swarming with deer and roe, goat and boar, as the streams around swarmed with otter and beaver, and with fowl of every feather, and fish of every scale.

Beautiful after their kind were those far isles in the eyes of the monks who were the first settlers in the wilderness. The author of the "*History of Ramsey*," grows enthusiastic, and somewhat bombastic also, as he describes the lovely isle, which got its name from the solitary ram which had wandered thither, either in extreme drought or over the winter ice, and never able to return, was found feeding among the wild deer, fat beyond the wont of rams. He tells of the stately ashes, most of them cut in his time, to furnish mighty beams for the church roof; of the rich pastures painted with all gay flowers in spring; of the "green crown" or reed and alder which encircled the isle; of the fair wide mere (now drained) with its "sandy beach" along the forest side, "a delight," he says, "to all who look thereon."

In like humour William of Malmesbury, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, speaks of Thorney Abbey and its isle. "It represents," says he, "a very paradise; for that in pleasure and delight it resembles heaven itself. These marshes abound in trees, whose length, without a knot, doth emulate the stars. The plain there is as level as the sea, alluring the eye with its green grass, and so smooth that there is naught to trip the foot of him who runs through it. Neither is there any waste place; for in some parts are apples, in others vines, which are either spread on the ground, or raised on poles. A mutual strife there is between Nature and Art; so that what one produces not the other supplies. What shall I say of those fair buildings, which 'tis so wonderful to see the ground among those fens upbear?"

So wrote William of Malmesbury, after the wisdom and industry of the monks, for more than four centuries, had been at work to civilize and cultivate the wilderness. Yet even then there was another side to the picture; and Thorney, Ramsey, or Crowland would have seemed, for nine months every year, sad places enough to us comfortable folk of the nineteenth century. But men lived hard in those days, even the most high-born, and luxurious nobles

³ *Ramsey Abbey*, near Peterborough in the Fen Country.

⁴ V. p. 45, *supra*.

⁵ *Thorney Abbey* and *Crowland Abbey* (mentioned later) are short distances from Peterborough.

and ladies; under dark skies, in houses which we should think, from darkness, draught, and want of space, unfit for felons' cells. Hardly they lived; and easily were they pleased; and thanked God for the least gleam of sunshine, the least patch of green, after the terrible and long winters of the Middle Ages. And ugly enough those winters must have been, what with snow and darkness, flood and ice, ague and rheumatism; while through the dreary winter's night the whistle of the wind and the wild cries of the waterfowl were translated into the howls of witches and demons; and (as in St. Guthlac's case) the delirious fancies of marsh fever made those fiends take hideous shapes before the inner eye, and act fantastic horrors round the fen-man's bed of sedge.

Concerning this St. Guthlac full details remain, both in Latin and Anglo-Saxon; the author of the original document professing to be one Felix, a monk of Ramsey, near by, who wrote possibly as early as the eighth century.

There we may read how the young warrior—noble Guthlac ("The Battle-Play," the "Sport of War,") tired of slaying and sinning, be- thought him to fulfil the prodigies seen at his birth; how he wandered into the fen, where one Tatwin (who after became a saint likewise) took him in his canoe to a spot so lonely as to be almost unknown, buried in reeds and alders and how he found among the trees naught but an old "law," as the Scots still call a mound, which men of old had broken into, seeking for treasure, and a little pond; and how he built himself a hermit's cell thereon, and saw visions and wrought miracles; and how men came to him, as to a fakir or shaman of the East; notably one Beccel, who acted as his servant; and how as Beccel was shaving the saint one day there fell on him a great temptation: Why should he not cut St. Guthlac's throat, and instal himself in his cell, that he might have the honour and glory of sainthood? But St. Guthlac perceived the inward temptation (which is told with the naïve honesty of those half savage times), and rebuked the offender into confession, and all went well to the end.

There we may read too a detailed account of the Fauna now happily extinct in the fens; of the creatures who used to hale St. Guthlac out of his hut, drag him through the bogs, carry him aloft through frost and fire—"Develin and luther goses"—such as tormented in likewise St. Botolph (from whom Botulfston—Boston, has its name), and who were supposed to haunt moors and fens, and to have an

especial fondness for old heathen barrows with their fancied treasure-hoards; how they "filled the house with their coming, and poured in on every side, from above, and from beneath, and everywhere. They were in countenance horrible, and they had great heads, and a long neck, and a lean visage; they were filthy and squalid in their beards, and they had rough ears, and crooked "nebs," and fierce eyes, and foul mouths; and their teeth were like horses' tusks; and their throats were filled with flame, and they were grating in their voice; they had crooked shanks, and knees big and great behind, and distorted toes, and cried hoarsely with their voices. . . . And they tugged and led him out of the cot, and led him to the swart fen, and threw and sunk him in the muddy waters. After that they brought him into the wild places of the wilderness, among the thick beds of brambles that all his body was torn. . . . After that they took him and beat him with iron whips, and after that they brought him on their creaking wings between the cold regions of the air."

But there are gentler and more human touches in that old legend. You may read in it how all the wild birds of the fen came to St. Guthlac, and he fed them after their kind; how the ravens tormented him, stealing letters, gloves, and what not, from his visitors; and then, seized with compunction at his reproofs, brought them back, or hanged them on the reeds; and how, as Wilfred, a holy visitant, was sitting with him, discoursing of the contemplative life, two swallows came flying in, and lifted up their song, sitting now on the saint's hand, now on his shoulder, now on his knee; and how, when Wilfrid wondered thereat, Guthlac made answer, "Know you not that he who hath led his life according to God's will, to him the wild beasts and the wild birds draw the more near?"

After fifteen years of such a life, in fever, ague, and starvation, no wonder St. Guthlac died. They buried him in a leaden coffin (a grand and expensive luxury in the seventh century) which had been sent to him during his life by a Saxon princess; and then over his sacred and wonder-working corpse, as over that of a Buddhist saint, there arose a chapel, with a community of monks, companies of pilgrims who came to worship, sick who came to be healed; till at last, founded on great piles driven into the bog, arose the lofty wooden Abbey of Crowland; in "sanctuary of the four rivers," with its dykes, parks, vineyards, orchards, rich ploughlands, from which in time of famine, the monks of Crowland fed all people of the neighbouring fens; with its tower with

* One of the early Saints of England (c. 673-714).

† A *fakir* is a religious mendicant, especially among the Mohammedans. A *shaman* is a medicine-man or sorcerer, found among rude tribes.

seven bells, which had not their like in England; its twelve altars rich with the gifts of the Danish vikings and princes, and even with twelve white bear-skins, the gift of Canute's self; while all around were the cottages of the corrodiers, or folk, who for corrody, or life pittance from the abbey, had given away their lands, to the wrong and detriment of their heirs.

But within those four rivers, at least, were 10 neither tyranny nor slavery. Those who took refuge in St. Guthlac's place from cruel lords must keep his peace toward each other, and earn their living like honest men, safe while they so did: for between those four rivers 15 St. Guthlac and his abbot were the only lords; and neither summoner, nor sheriff of the king, nor armed forces of knight or earl, could enter—"the inheritance of the Lord, the soil of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew, the most holy 20 sanctuary of St. Guthlac and his monks; the minister free from worldly servitude; the special almshouse of most illustrious kings; the sole refuge of anyone in worldly tribulation; the perpetual abode of the saints; the possession of religious men, especially set apart by the common council of the realm; by reason of the frequent miracles of the holy confessor St. Guthlac, an ever fruitful mother of campfire in the vineyards of Engadi,* and, by reason 30 of the privileges granted by the kings, a city of grace and safety to all who repent."

Does not all this sound like a voice from another planet? It is all gone; and it was good and right that it should go when it had 35 done its work, and that the civilisation of the fen should be taken up and carried out by men like the good knight, Richard of Rulos, who two generations after the Conquest, marrying Hereward's granddaughter, and becoming 40 Lord of Deeping (the deep meadow), thought that he could do the same work from the hall of Bourne as the monks did from their cloisters; got permission from the Crowland monks, for twenty marks of silver, to drain as 45 much as he could of the common marshes; and then shut out the Welland by strong dykes, built cottages, marked out gardens, and tilled fields, till "out of slough and bogs accursed, he made a garden of pleasure."

Yet one lasting work those monks of Crowland seem to have done besides those firm dykes and rich cornlands of Porsand which endure unto this day. For within two generations of the Norman conquest, while the old 55

wooden abbey, destroyed by fire, was being replaced by that noble pile of stone whose ruins are still standing, the French Abbot of Crowland (so runs the legend) sent French monks to open a school under the new French donjon, in the little Roman town of Grantebrigg; whereby—so does all earnest work, however mistaken, grow and spread in this world, infinitely and for ever—St. Guthlac, by his canoe voyage into Crowland Island, became the spiritual father of the University of Cambridge in the old world; and therefore of her noble daughter, the University of Cambridge, in the new world, which fen-men sailing from Boston deeps colonized and Christianized 800 years after St. Guthlac's death.

Matthew Arnold

1822-1888

THE GRAND STYLE

(From *On Translating Homer*, 1861)

So deeply seated is the difference between the ballad-manner and Homer's that even a man of the highest powers, even a man of the greatest vigour of spirit and of true genius,—the Coryphæus¹ of balladists, Sir Walter Scott,—fails with a manner of this kind to produce an effect at all like the effect of Homer. "I am not so rash," declares Mr. Newman, "as to say that if *freedom* be given to rhyme as in Walter Scott's poetry,"—Walter Scott, "by far the most Homeric of our poets," as in another place he calls him,—"a genius may not arise who will translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*." "The *truly* classical and the *truly* romantic," says Dr. Maginn, "are one; the moss-trooping Nestor reappears in the moss-trooping heroes of Percy's *Reliques*;" and a description by Scott, which he quotes, he calls "graphic, and therefore Homeric." He forgets our fourth axiom,—that Homer is not *only* graphic; he is also noble, and has the grand style. Human nature under like circumstances is probably in all ages much the same; and so far it may be said that "the *truly* classical, and the *truly* romantic are one;" 50 but it is of little use to tell us this, because we know the human nature of other ages only through the representations of them which have come down to us, and the classical and romantic modes of representation are so far from being "one," that they remain eternally distinct, and have created for us a separation between the two worlds which they respectively

* Cf. *Song of Solomon*, i. 14: "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of campfire in the vineyards of Engedi." The vineyards of Engedi were watered by a spring, the region about being desolate, on the west shore of the Dead Sea.

¹ The leader and speaker of the chorus in Greek drama. The phrase is analogous to "prince of balladists."

represent. Therefore to call Nestor the "moss-trooping² Nestor" is absurd, because, though Nestor may possibly have been much the same sort of man as many a moss-trooper, he has yet come to us through a mode of representation so unlike that of *Percy's Reliques*, that instead of "reappearing in the moss-trooping heroes" of these poems, he exists in our imagination as something utterly unlike them, and as belonging to another world. So the Greeks in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* are no longer the Greeks whom we have known in Homer, because they come to us through a mode of representation of the romantic world. But I must not forget Scott.

I suppose that when Scott is in what may be called full ballad swing, no one will hesitate to pronounce his manner neither Homeric nor the grand manner. When he says, for instance,

"I do not rhyme to that dull elf
Who cannot image to himself,"

and so on, any scholar will feel that *this* is not Homer's manner. But let us take Scott's poetry at its best; and when it is at its best, it is undoubtedly very good indeed:—

"Tunstall lies dead upon the field,⁴
His life-blood stains the spotless shield;
Edmund is down,—my life is left,—
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost."

That is, no doubt, as vigorous as possible, as spirited as possible; it is exceedingly fine poetry. Now, how shall I make him who doubts this feel that I say true; that these lines of Scott are essentially neither in Homer's style nor in the grand style? I may point out to him that the movement of Scott's lines, while it is rapid, is also at the same time what the French call *saccade*, its rapidity is "jerky;" whereas Homer's rapidity is a flowing rapidity. But this is something external and material; it is but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual diversity. I may discuss what, in the abstract, constitutes the grand style; but that sort of general discussion never much helps our judgment of particular instances. I may say that the presence or absence of the grand style can only be spiritually discerned; and this is true, but to plead this looks like evading the difficulty. My best way is to take eminent specimens of the grand

² The marauders between England and Scotland were called *moss-troopers* because of their constant riding over the *moss* or bogs.

³ *Marmion*, c. vi. 38.

⁴ *Marmion*, c. vi. 29.

style, and to put them side by side with this of Scott. For example, when Homer says:—

ἄλλὰ φίλος, θάναε καὶ σὺ τῇ δλυφύρεαι οὐτως;⁵
κάτθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερσέ πολλὰν ἀμείνων,

that is in the grand style. When Virgil says:—

"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,
Fortunam ex aliis,"

that is in the grand style. When Dante says:—

"Lascio lo fele, et vo pei dolci pomi?
Promessi a me per lo verace Duca;
Ma fino al centro pria convien ch' io tomi,"

that is in the grand style. When Milton says:—

"His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than an archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured,"

that, finally is in the grand style. Now let any one, after repeating to himself these four passages, repeat again the passage of Scott, and he will perceive that there is something in style which the four first have in common, and which the last is without; and this something is precisely the grand manner. It is no disrespect to Scott to say that he does not attain to this manner in his poetry; to say so, is merely to say that he is not among the five or six supreme poets of the world. Among these he is not; but, being a man of far greater powers than the ballad-poets, he has tried to give to their instrument a compass and an elevation which it does not naturally possess, in order to enable him to come nearer to the effects of the instrument used by the great epic poets,—an instrument which he felt he could not truly use,—and in this attempt he has but imperfectly succeeded. The poetic style of Scott is—(it becomes necessary to say so when it is proposed to "translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*")—it is, tried by the highest standards, a bastard epic style; and that is why, out of his own powerful hands, it has had so little success. It is a less natural, and therefore a less good style, than the original ballad style; while it shares with the ballad style the inherent incapacity of rising into the grand style, of adequately rendering Homer. Scott is certainly at his best in his

⁵ "Be content, good friend, die also thou! why lamentest thou thyself on this wise? Patroclus, too, died who was a far better than thou." *Iliad*, xxi. 106.

⁶ "From me, young man, learn nobleness of soul and true effort: learn success from others." *Aeneid*, xii. 435.

⁷ "I leave the gall of bitterness, and I go for the apples of sweetness promised unto me by my faithful Guide; but far as the centre it behooves me first to fall." *Heil*, xvi. 61.

battles. Of Homer you could not say this; he is not better in his battles than elsewhere; but even between the battle-pieces of the two there exists all the difference which there is between an able work and a masterpiece.

"Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield;
Edmund is down,—my life is left,—
The Admiral alone is left."

"For not in the hands of Diomedes the son of Tydeus rages the spear, to ward off destruction from the Danaans; neither as yet have I heard the voice of the son of Atreus, shouting out of his hated mouth; but the voice of Hector the slayer of men bursts round me, as he cheers on the Trojans; and they with their yellings fill all the plain, overcoming the Achæans in the battle."—I protest that, to my feeling, Homer's performance, even through that pale and far-off shadow of a prose translation, still has a hundred times more of the grand manner about it, than the original poetry of Scott.

Well, then, the ballad manner and the ballad-measure, whether in the hands of the old ballad poets, or arranged by Chapman, or arranged by Mr. Newman, or, even arranged by Sir Walter Scott, cannot worthily render Homer. And for one reason: Homer is plain, so are they; Homer is natural, so are they; but Homer is sustainably noble, and they are not. Homer and they are both of them natural, and therefore touching and stirring; but the grand style, which is Homer's, is something more than touching and stirring; it can form the character, it is edifying. The old English balladist may stir Sir Philip Sidney's heart like a trumpet, and this is much; but Homer, but the few artists in the grand style, can do more; they can refine the raw natural man, they can transmute him.

OXFORD

(From Preface to *Essays in Criticism*, First Series, 1865)

No, we are all seekers still! seekers often make mistakes and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

"There are our young barbarians, all at play!"

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchant-

¹ Byron, *Childs Harold*, c. iv. st. 141.

ments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection,—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side?—nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen.² Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine; only never to the Philistines! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties! what example could ever so inspire us to keep down the Philistine³ in ourselves, what teacher could ever so save us from that bondage which Goethe, in his incomparable lines on the death of Schiller, makes it his friend's highest praise (and nobly did Schiller deserve the praise) to have left miles out of sight behind him;—the bondage of "*was uns alle bändigt*,"⁴ *das Gemeine*!" She will forgive me, even if I have unwittingly drawn upon her a shot or two aimed at her unworthy son; for she is generous, and the cause in which I fight is, after all, hers. Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare which this queen of romance has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone?

THE CELTIC SPIRIT

(From *The Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867)

Let me repeat what I have often said of the characteristics which mark the English spirit, the English genius. This spirit, this genius, judged to be sure, rather from a friend's than an enemy's point of view, yet judged on the whole fairly, is characterised, I have repeatedly said, by *energy with honesty*. Take away some of the energy which comes to us, as I believe, in part from Celtic and Roman sources; instead of energy, say rather *steadiness*; and you have the Germanic genius: *steadiness with honesty*. It is evident how nearly the two characterisations approach one another; and yet they leave, as we shall see, a great deal of room for difference. Steadiness with honesty; the danger for a national spirit thus composed is the humdrum, the plain and ugly, the ignoble: in a word, *das Gemeine, die Gemeinheit*,¹ that curse of Germany, against which Goethe was all his life fighting. The excellence of a national spirit thus composed is freedom from

² Tübingen University, which had a faculty on natural science.

³ The enemies of the children of light; hence, those opposed to culture.

⁴ "That which binds us all, the commonplace."

⁵ The ordinary, the commonplace.

whim, flightiness, perverseness; patient fidelity to Nature,—in a word, *science*,—leading it at last, though slowly, and not by the most brilliant road, out of the bondage of the humdrum and common, into the better life. The universal dead-level of plainness and homeliness, the lack of all beauty and distinction in form and feature, the slowness and clumsiness of the language, the eternal beer, sausages, and bad tobacco, the blank commonness everywhere, pressing at last like a weight on the spirits of the traveller in Northern Germany, and making him impatient to be gone,—this is the weak side; the industry, the well-doing, the patient steady elaboration of things, the idea of science governing all departments of human activity,—this is the strong side; and through this side of her genius, Germany has already obtained excellent results, and is destined, we may depend upon it, however her pedantry, her slowness, her fumbling, her ineffectiveness, her bad government, may at times make us cry out, to an immense development.

For dulness, the creeping Saxons,—says an old Irish poem, assigning the characteristics for which different nations are celebrated:—

For acuteness and valour, the Greeks,
For excessive pride, the Romans,
For dulness, the creeping Saxons,
For beauty and amorousness, the Gaedhils.

We have seen in what sense, and with what explanation, this characterisation of the German may be allowed to stand; now let us come to the beautiful and amorous Gaedhil. Or rather, let us find a definition which may suit both branches of the Celtic family, the Cymri as well as the Gael. It is clear that special circumstances may have developed some one side in the national character of the Cymri or Gael, Welshman or Irishman, so that the observer's notice shall be readily caught by this side, and yet it may be impossible to adopt it as characteristic of the Celtic nature generally. For instance, in his beautiful essay on the poetry of the Celtic races, M. Renan,² with his eyes fixed on the Bretons and the Welsh, is struck with the timidity, the shyness, the delicacy of the Celtic nature, its preference for a retired life, its embarrassment at having to deal with the great world. He talks of the *douce petite race naturellement chrétienne*,³ his *race fière et timide, à l'extérieur gauche et embarrassée*.⁴ It is evident that this description,

however well it may do for the Cymri, will never do for the Gael, never do for the typical Irishman of Donnybrook fair. Again, M. Renan's *infinie délicatesse de sentiment qui caractérise la race Celtique*,⁵ how little that accords with the popular conception of an Irishman who wants to borrow money. *Sentiment* is, however, the word which marks where the Celtic races really touch and are one; sentimental, if the Celtic nature is to be characterised by a single term, is the best term to take. An organisation quick to feel impressions, and feeling them very strongly; a lively personality therefore, keenly sensitive to joy and to sorrow; this is the main point. If the downs of life too much outnumber the ups, this temperament, just because it is so quickly and nearly conscious of all impressions, may no doubt be seen shy and wounded; it may be seen in wistful regret, it may be seen in passionate, penetrating melancholy; but its essence is to aspire ardently after life, light, and emotion, to be expansive, adventurous, and gay. Our word *gay*, it is said, is itself Celtic. It is not from *gaudium*, but from the Celtic *gair*, to laugh; and the impressionable Celt, soon up and soon down, is the more down because it is so his nature to be up—to be sociable, hospitable, eloquent, admired, figuring away brilliantly. He loves bright colours, he easily becomes audacious, overcrowing, full of fanfaronade. The German, say the physiologists, has the larger volume of intestines (and who that has ever seen a German at a table-d'hôte will not readily believe this?), the Frenchman has the more developed organs of respiration. That is just the expansive, eager, Celtic nature; the head in the air, snuffing and snorting; a *proud look and a high stomach*,⁶ as the Psalmist says, but without any such settled savage temper as the Psalmist seems to impute by those words. For good and for bad, the Celtic genius is more airy and unsubstantial, goes less near the ground, than the German. The Celt is often called sensual; but it is not so much the vulgar satisfactions of sense that attract him as emotion and excitement; he is truly, as I began by saying, sentimental.

Sentimental,—*always ready to react against the despotism of fact*; that is the description a great friend of the Celt⁷ gives of him; and it is not a bad description of the sentimental temperament; it lets us into the secret of its dangers and of its habitual want of success. Bal-

⁵ Infinite delicacy of sentiment which characterizes the Celtic race.

⁶ *Psalm*, ci. 7. (Prayer-Book version) "Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach, I will not suffer him."

⁷ "Monsieur Henri Martin, whose chapters on the Celts, in his *Histoire de France*, are full of information and interest." Arnold.

² A religious historian of France. His essay on *The Poetry of the Celtic Races* was Arnold's chief inspiration for his *Study of Celtic Literature*.

³ Gentle little race, naturally Christian.

⁴ Proud and shy, outwardly awkward and embarrassed.

ance, measure, and patience, these are the eternal conditions, even supposing the happiest temperament to start with, of high success; and balance, measure, and patience are just what the Celt has never had. Even in the world of spiritual creation, he has never, in spite of his admirable gifts of quick perception and warm emotion, succeeded perfectly, because he has never had steadiness, patience, sanity enough to comply with the conditions under which alone can expression be given to the finest perceptions and emotions. The Greek has the same perceptive, emotional temperament as the Celt; but he adds to this temperament the sense of *measure*; hence his admirable success in the plastic arts, in which the Celtic genius, with its chafing against the despotism of fact, its perpetual straining after mere emotion, has accomplished nothing. In the comparatively petty art of ornamentation, in rings, brooches, crosiers, relic-cases, and so on, he has done just enough to show his delicacy of taste, his happy temperament; but the grand difficulties of painting and sculpture, the prolonged dealings of spirit with matter, he has never had patience for. Take the more spiritual arts of music and poetry. All that emotion alone can do in music the Celt has done; the very soul of emotion breathes in the Scotch and Irish airs; but with all this power of musical feeling, what has the Celt, so eager for emotion that he has not patience for science, effected in music, to be compared with what the less emotional German, steadily developing his musical feeling with the science of a Sebastian Bach or a Beethoven, has effected? In poetry, again,—poetry which the Celt has so passionately, so nobly loved; poetry where emotion counts for so much, but where reason, too, reason, measure, sanity, also count for so much,—the Celt has shown genius; but even here his faults have clung to him, and hindered him from producing great works, such as other nations with a genius for poetry,—the Greeks, say, or the Italians,—have produced. The Celt has not produced great poetical works, he has only produced poetry with an air of greatness investing it all, and sometimes giving moreover, to short pieces, or to passages, lines, and snatches of long pieces, singular beauty and power. And yet he loved poetry so much that he grudged no pains to it; but the true art, the *architectonice* which shapes great works, such as the *Agamemnon* or the *Divine Comedy*, comes only after a steady, deep-searching survey, a firm conception of the facts of human life, which the Celt

has not patience for. So he runs off into technic where he employs the utmost elaboration, and attains astonishing skill; but in the contents of his poetry you have only so much interpretation of the world as the first dash of a quick, strong perception, and then sentiment, infinite sentiment, can bring you. Here, too, his want of sanity and steadfastness has kept the Celt back from the highest success.

If his rebellion against fact has thus lamed the Celt even in spiritual work, how much more must it have lamed him in the world of business and politics! The skilful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is needed both to make progress in material civilisation, and also to form powerful states, is just what the Celt has least turn for. He is sensual, as I have said, or at least sensuous; and here he is like the Greek and Latin races; but compare the talent the Greek and Latin (or Latinised) races have shown for gratifying their senses, for procuring an outward life, rich, luxurious, splendid, with the Celt's failure to reach any material civilisation sound and satisfying, and not out at elbows, poor, slovenly, and half-barbarous. The sensuousness of the Greek made Sybaris and Corinth, the sensuousness of the Latin made Rome and Baire, the sensuousness of the Latinised Frenchman makes Paris; the sensuousness of the Celt proper has made Ireland. Even in his ideal, heroic times, his gay and sensuous nature cannot carry him, in the appliances of his favorite life of sociability and pleasure, beyond the gross and creeping Saxon whom he despises; the regent Breas, we are told in the *Battle of Moytura of the Fomorians*, became unpopular because "the knives of his people were not greased at his table, nor did their breath smell of ale at the banquet." In its grossness and barbarousness is not that Saxon, as Saxon as it can be? just what the Latinised Norman, sensuous and sociable like the Celt, but with the talent to make this bent of his serve to a practical embellishment of his mode of living, found so disgusting in the Saxon.

And as in material civilisation he has been ineffectual, so has the Celt been ineffectual in politics. The colossal, impetuous, adventurous wanderer, the Titan of the early world, who in primitive times fills so large a place on earth's scene, dwindles and dwindles as history goes on, and at last is shrunk to what we now see him. For ages and ages the world has been constantly slipping, ever more and more, out of the Celt's grasp. "They went forth to war," Ossian says most truly, "*but they always fell.*"

* The art of the master-builder which enables him to plan and execute great works.

CULTURE

(From *Culture and Anarchy*, 1889)

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more and more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." Above all, the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And, meanwhile, the mode of action that they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for everyone to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve;

but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are, even, religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that everyone should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Everyone must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failures of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea tomorrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depend-

ing on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplace tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

THE VOICES OF YOUTH

(From "Emerson," in *Discourses in America*, 1885)

Forty years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, voices were in the air there which haunt my memory still. Happy the man who in that susceptible season of youth hears such voices! they are a possession to

him forever. No such voices as those which we heard in our youth at Oxford are sounding there now. Oxford has more criticism now, more knowledge, more light; but such voices as those of our youth it has no longer. The name of Cardinal Newman¹ is a great name to the imagination still; his genius and his style are still things of power. But he is over eighty years old, he is in the Oratory at Birmingham; he has adopted, for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's minds to-day, a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible. Forty years ago he was in the very prime of life; he was close at hand to us at Oxford; he was preaching in St. Mary's pulpit² every Sunday; he seemed about to transform and to renew what was for us the most national and natural institution in the world, the Church of England. Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music,—subtle, sweet, mournful? I seem to hear him still, saying: "After the fever of life, after wearinesses and sicknesses, fightings and despondings, languor and fretfulness, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled, unhealthy state,—at length comes death, at length the white throne of God, at length the beatific vision." Or, if we followed him back to his seclusion at Littlemore,³ that dreary village by the London road, and to the house of retreat and the church which he built there,—a mean house such as Paul might have lived in when he was tent-making at Ephesus, a church plain and thinly sown with worshippers,—who could resist him there either, welcoming back to the severe joys of church-fellowship, and of daily worship and prayer, the firstlings of a generation which had well-nigh forgot them? Again I seem to hear him: "The season is chill and dark, and the breath of the morning is damp, and worshippers are few; but all this befits those who are by their profession penitents and mourners, watchers and pilgrims. More dear to them that loneliness, more cheerful that severity, and more bright that gloom, than all those aids and appliances of luxury by which men nowadays attempt to make prayer less disagreeable to them. True faith does not covet comforts; they who realise that awful day,

¹ One of the great leaders of the Oxford movement. Newman became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, and thereafter spent the greater part of his life at the Oratory at Birmingham. He died in 1890.

² The University Church at Oxford.

³ Newman's residence just outside of Oxford.

when they shall see Him face to face whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will as little bargain to pray pleasantly now, as they will think of doing so then."

Somewhere or other I have spoken of those "last enchantments of the Middle Age,"⁴ which Oxford sheds around us, and here they were! But there were other voices sounding in our ear besides Newman's. There was the puissant voice of Carlyle; so sorely strained, over-used, and misused since, but then fresh, comparatively sound, and reaching our hearts with true, pathetic eloquence. Who can forget the emotion of receiving in its first freshness such a sentence as that sentence of Carlyle upon Edward Irving, then just dead: "Scotland sent him forth a herculean man; our mad Babylon wore and wasted him with all her engines,—and it took her twelve years!" A greater voice still,—the greatest voice of that century,—came to us in those youthful years through Carlyle: the voice of Goethe. To this day,—such is the force of youthful associations,—I read the *Wilhelm Meister* with more pleasure in Carlyle's translation than in the original. The large, liberal view of human life in *Wilhelm Meister*, how novel it was to the Englishman in those days! and it was salutary, too, and educative for him, doubtless, as well as novel. But what moved us most in *Wilhelm Meister* was that which, after all, will always move the young most,—the poetry, the eloquence. Never, surely, was Carlyle's prose so beautiful and pure as in the rendering of the Youth's dirge over Mignon!—"Well is our treasure now laid up, the fair image of the past. Here sleeps it in the marble, undecaying; in your hearts, also, it lives, it works. Travel, travel, back into life! Take along with you this holy earnestness, for earnestness alone makes life eternity." Here we had the voice of the great Goethe;—not the stiff, and hindered, and frigid, and factitious Goethe who speaks to us too often from those sixty volumes of his, but of the great Goethe, and the true one.

And besides those voices, there came to us in that old Oxford time a voice also from this side of the Atlantic,—a clear and pure voice, which for my ear, at any rate, brought a strain as new, and moving, and unforgettable, as the strain of Newman, or Carlyle, or Goethe. Mr. Lowell has well described the apparition of Emerson to your young generation here, in that distant time of which I am speaking, and of his workings upon them. He was your Newman, your man of soul and genius visible to you in the flesh, speaking to your bodily ears,

* V. p. 745.

a present object for your heart and imagination. That is surely the most potent of all influences! nothing can come up to it. To us at Oxford Emerson was but a voice speaking from three thousand miles away. But so well he spoke, that from that time forth Boston Bay and Concord were names invested to my ear with a sentiment akin to that which invests for me the names of Oxford and of Weimar; and snatches of Emerson's strain fixed themselves in my mind as imperishably as any of the eloquent words which I have been just now quoting. "Then dies the man in you; then once more perish the buds of art, poetry, and science, as they have died already in a thousand thousand men." "What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand." "Trust thyself! every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the Divine Providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age; betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest spirit the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on chaos and the dark!" These lofty sentences of Emerson, and a hundred others of like strain, I have never lost out of my memory; I never *can* lose them.

WORDSWORTH

(From *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, 1888)

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

"On man, on nature, and on human life,"

which he has acquired for himself. The line quoted is Wordsworth's own; and his superiority arises from his powerful use; in his best pieces, his powerful application to his

subject, of ideas "on man, on nature, and on human life."

Voltaire with his signal acuteness, most truly remarked that "no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." And he adds: "There, it seems to me, is the great merit of the English poets." Voltaire does not mean, by "treating in poetry moral ideas," the composing moral and didactic poems;—that brings us but a very little way in poetry. He means just the same thing as was meant when I spoke above "of the noble and profound application of ideas to life;" and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth. If it is said to call these ideas moral ideas is to introduce a strong and injurious limitation, I answer that it is to do nothing of the kind, because moral ideas are really so main a part of human life. The question, *how to live*, is itself a moral idea; and it is the question which most interests every man, and with which, in some way or other, he is perpetually occupied. A large sense is of course to be given to the term *moral*. Whatever bears upon the question, "how to live," comes under it.

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but, what thou liv'st,
Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven."

In those fine lines Milton utters, as every one at once perceives, a moral idea. Yes, but so too, when Keats consoles the forward-bending lover on the Grecian Urn, the lover arrested and presented in immortal relief by the sculptor's hand before he can kiss, with the line,

"For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!"—

he utters a moral idea. When Shakespeare says, that

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep,"

he utters a moral idea.

Voltaire was right in thinking that the energetic and profound treatment of moral ideas, in this large sense, is what distinguishes the English poetry. He sincerely meant praise, not dispraise or hint of limitation; and they err who suppose that poetic limitation is a necessary consequence of the fact, the fact being granted as Voltaire states it. If what distinguishes the greatest poets is their powerful and profound application of ideas to life, which surely no good critic will deny, then to prefix to the term ideas here the term moral

makes hardly any difference, because human life itself is in so preponderating a degree moral.

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question: How to live. Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day; they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us. We find attraction, at times, even in a poetry of revolt against them; in a poetry which might take for its motto Omar Khayyám's words: "Let us make up in the tavern for the time which we have wasted in the mosque." Or we find attractions in a poetry indifferent to them; in a poetry where the contents may be what they will, but where the form is studied and exquisite. We delude ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life*.

Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with "the best and master thing" for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were afraid of them, he said, or they disliked and undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be over-priced, and treated as final when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns bear to home. "As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay for ever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not to this, but through this. 'But this inn is taking.' And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and to stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they are taking? but as places of passage, as inns. And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am

not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them."

Now, when we come across a poet like Théophile Gautier, we have a poet who has taken up his abode at an inn, and never got farther. There may be inducements to this or to that one of us, at this or that moment, to find delight in him, to cleave to him,—we only stay ourselves in his inn along with him. And when we come across a poet like Wordsworth, who sings

"Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope,
And melancholy fear subdued by faith,
Of blessed consolations in distress,
Of moral strength and intellectual power,
Of joy in widest commonalty spread"—

Then we have a poet intent on "the best and master thing," and who prosecutes his journey home. We say, for brevity's sake, that he deals with *life*, because he deals with that in which life really consists. This is what Voltaire means to praise in the English poets,—this dealing with what is really life. But always it is the mark of the greatest poets that they deal with it; and to say that the English poets are remarkable for dealing with it, is only another way of saying, what is true, that in poetry, the English genius has especially shown its power.

Wordsworth deals with it, and his greatness lies in his dealing with it so powerfully. I have named a number of celebrated poets above all of whom he, in my opinion, deserves to be placed. He is to be placed above poets like Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Lessing, Schiller, because these famous personages with a thousand gifts and merits, never, or scarcely ever, attain the distinctive accent and utterance of the high and genuine poets—

"Quiqui pii vates et Phoebo digna locuti,"¹

at all. Burns, Keats, Heine, not to speak of others in our list, have this accent;—who can doubt it? And at the same time they have treasures of humour, felicity, passion, for which in Wordsworth we shall look in vain. Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority? It is here; he deals with more of *life* than they do; he deals with *life*, as a whole, more powerfully.

No Wordsworthian will doubt this. Nay, the fervent Wordsworthian will add, as Mr. Leslie Stephen does, that Wordsworth's poetry is precious because his philosophy is sound; that his "ethical system is as distinctive and capable of exposition as Bishop Butler's;"

¹"All the holy poet-prophets, who spoke things worthy of Apollo."

that his poetry is informed by ideas which "fall spontaneously into a scientific system of thought." But we must be on our guard against the Wordsworthians, if we want to secure for Wordsworth his due rank as a poet. The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy,—so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of "a scientific system of thought," and the more that it puts them on,—is the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion. But in Wordsworth's case, at any rate, we cannot do him justice until we dismiss his formal philosophy.

The *Excursion* abounds with philosophy, and therefore the *Excursion* is to the Wordsworthian what it can never be to the disinterested lover of poetry,—a satisfactory work. "Duty exists," says Wordsworth, in the *Excursion*; and then he proceeds thus—

"Immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms,
Which an abstract Intelligence supplies,
Whose Kingdom is, where time and space are not."

And the Wordsworthian is delighted, and thinks that here is a sweet union of philosophy and poetry. But the disinterested lover of poetry will feel that the lines carry us really not a step farther than the proposition which they would interpret; that they are a tissue of elevated but abstract verbiage, alien to the very nature of poetry.

Or let us come direct to the centre of Wordsworth's philosophy, as "an ethical system, as distinctive and capable of systematical exposition as Bishop Butler's"—

"... One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists, one only;—an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, how'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

That is doctrine such as we hear in church, too, religious and philosophic doctrine; and the attached Wordsworthian loves passages of such doctrine, and brings them forward in proof of his poet's excellence. But however true the doctrine may be, it has, as here presented, none of the characters of *poetic* truth, the kind of truth which we require from a poet, and in which Wordsworth is really strong.

Even the "intimations" of the famous Ode,² those corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth,—the idea of the high instincts and affections coming out in childhood, testifying of a divine home recently left, and fading away, as our life proceeds,—this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind; it has no real solidity. The instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty had no doubt extraordinary strength in Wordsworth himself as a child. But to say that universally this instinct is mighty in childhood, and tends to die away afterwards, is to say what is extremely doubtful. In many 15 people, perhaps with the majority of educated persons, the love of nature is nearly imperceptible at ten years old, but strong and operative at thirty. In general we may say of these high instincts of early childhood, the base of 20 the alleged systematic philosophy of Wordsworth, what Thucydides says of the earliest achievements of the Greek race: "It is impossible to speak with certainty of what is so remote; but from all that we can really investigate, I should say that they were no very great things."

Finally, the "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth gives us at last such poetry as this, which the devout Wordsworthian accepts: 30

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth."

Wordsworth calls Voltaire dull, and surely the production of these unVoltarian lines must have been imposed on him as a judgment! One can hear them being quoted at a Social Science Congress; one can call up the whole scene. A 45 great room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty air and jaded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to 50 declaim these lines of Wordsworth; and in the soul of any poor child of nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

"But turn we," as Wordsworth says, "from 55 these bold, bad men," the haunters of Social Science Congresses. And let us be on our guard, too, against the exhibitors and extollers

of a "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth's poetry. The poetry will never be seen aright while they thus exhibit it. The cause of its greatness is simple, and may be told quite simply. Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.

Thomas Henry Huxley

1825-1895

ON THE ADVISABLENESS OF IMPROVING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

(From *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, 1870)

This time two hundred years ago¹ in the beginning of January, 1666—those of our forefathers who inhabited this great and ancient city, took breath between the shocks of two fearful calamities: one not quite past, although its fury had abated; the other to come.

Within a few yards of the very spot² on which we are assembled, so the tradition runs, that painful and deadly malady, the plague, appeared in the latter months of 1664; and, though no new visitor, smote the people of England and especially of her capital, with a 35 violence unknown before, in the course of the following year. The hand of a master has pictured what happened in those dismal months; and in the truest of fictions, "The History of the Plague Year,"³ Defoe shows death, with 40 every accompaniment of pain and terror, stalking through the narrow streets of old London, and changing their busy hum into a silence broken only by the wailing of the mourners of fifty thousand dead; by the woful denunciations and mad prayers of fanatics; and by the madder yells of despairing profligates.

But, about this time in 1666, the death-rate had sunk to nearly its ordinary amount; a case of plague occurred only here and there, and the richer citizens who had flown from the pest had returned to their dwellings. The remnant of the people began to toil at the accustomed round of duty, or of pleasure; and the stream of city life bid fair to flow back 55 along its old bed, with renewed and uninterrupted vigour.

¹ Huxley's *Address* was delivered in 1866.

² St. Martin's Borough Hall and Public Library, near Trafalgar Square, London.

³ V. p. 316, *supra*.

The newly kindled hope was deceitful. The great plague, indeed, returned no more; but what it had done for the Londoners, the great fire, which broke out in the autumn of 1666, did for London; and, in September of that year, a heap of ashes and the indestructible energy of the people were all that remained of the glory of five-sixths of the city within the walls.

Our forefathers had their own ways of accounting for each of these calamities. They submitted to the plague in humility and in penitence, for they believed it to be the judgment of God. But, towards the fire they were furiously indignant, interpreting it as the effect of the malice of man,—as the work of the Republicans, or of the Papists, according as their prepossessions ran in favour of loyalty or Puritanism.

It would, I fancy, have fared but ill with one who, standing where I now stand, in what was then a thickly peopled and fashionable part of London, should have broached to our ancestors the doctrine which I now propound to you—that all their hypotheses were alike wrong; that the plague was no more, in their sense, Divine judgment, than the fire was the work of any political, or of any religious, sect; but that they were themselves the authors of both plague and fire, and that they must look to themselves to prevent the recurrence of calamities, to all appearance so peculiarly beyond the reach of human control—so evidently the result of the wrath of God, or of the craft and subtlety of an enemy.

And one may picture to oneself how harmoniously the holy cursing of the Puritan of that day would have chimed in with the unholy cursing and the crackling wit of the Rochesters and Sedleys,⁴ and with the revilings of the political fanatics, if my imaginary plain dealer had gone on to say that, if the return of such misfortunes were ever rendered impossible, it would not be in virtue of the victory of the faith of Laud,⁵ or of that of Milton; and, as little, by the triumph of republicanism, as by that of monarchy. But that the one thing needful for the compassing this end was, that the people of England should second the efforts of an insignificant corporation, the establishment of which, a few years before the epoch of the great plague and the great fire, had been as little noticed, as they were conspicuous.

Some twenty years before the outbreak of the plague a few calm and thoughtful students banded themselves together for the purpose, as they phrased it, of “improving natural

knowledge.” The ends they proposed to attain cannot be stated more clearly than in the words of one of the founders of the organization:—

“Our business was (precluding matters of theology and state affairs) to discourse and consider of philosophical enquiries, and such as related thereunto:—as Physic, Anatomy, Geometry, Astronomy, Navigation, Staticks, Magneticks, Chymicks, Mechanicks, and Natural Experiments; with the state of these studies and their cultivation at home and abroad. We then discoursed of the circulation of the blood, the valves in the veins, the venæ lacteæ, the lymphatic vessels, the Copernican hypothesis, the nature of comets and new stars, the satellites of Jupiter, the oval shape (as it then appeared) of Saturn, the spots on the sun and its turning on its own axis, the inequalities and selenography⁶ of the moon, the several phases of Venus and Mercury, the improvement of telescopes and grinding of glasses for that purpose, the weight of air, the possibility or impossibility of vacuities and nature’s abhorrence thereof, the Torricellian experiment⁷ in quicksilver, the descent of heavy bodies and the degree of acceleration therein, with divers other things of like nature, some of which were then new discoveries, and others not so generally known and embraced as now they are; with other things appertaining to what hath been called the New Philosophy, which, from the times of Galileo at Florence, and Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) in England, hath been much cultivated in Italy, France, Germany, and other parts abroad, as well as with us in England.”

The learned Dr. Wallis,⁸ writing in 1696, narrates, in these words, what happened half a century before, or about 1645. The associates met at Oxford, in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, who was destined to become a bishop; and subsequently coming together in London, they attracted the notice of the king. And it is a strange evidence of the taste for knowledge which the most obviously worthless of the Stuarts shared with his father and grandfather, that Charles the Second was not content with saying witty things about his philosophers, but did wise things with regard to them. For he not only bestowed upon them such attention as he could spare from his poodles and his mistresses, but, being in his usual state of impecuniosity, begged for them of the Duke of Ormond; and, that step being without

⁴ The study of the physical condition of the moon.

⁷ Torricelli, an Italian, discoverer of the principle of the barometer in 1643.

⁸ The greatest of Newton’s predecessors in the field of mathematics (1616–1703).

⁴ Courtiers of Charles II’s time, noted for their wit and profligacy.

⁵ Archbishop of Canterbury.

effect, gave them Chelsea College, a charter, and a mace; crowning his favours in the best way they could be crowned, by burdening them no further with royal patronage or state interference.

Thus it was that the half-dozen young men, studious of the "New Philosophy,"⁹ who met in one another's lodgings in Oxford or in London, in the middle of the seventeenth century, grew in numerical and in real strength, until, in its latter part, the "Royal Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge" had already become famous, and had acquired a claim upon the veneration of Englishmen, which it has ever since retained, as the principal focus of scientific activity in our islands, and the chief champion of the cause it was formed to support.

It was by the aid of the Royal Society that Newton¹⁰ published his "Principia." If all the books in the world, except the Philosophical Transactions,¹¹ were destroyed, it is safe to say that the foundations of physical science would remain unshaken, and the vast intellectual progress of the last two centuries would be largely, though incompletely, recorded. Nor have any signs of halting or of decrepitude manifested themselves in our own times. As in Dr. Wallis's days, so in these, "our business is, precluding theology and state affairs, to discourse and consider of philosophical enquiries." But our "Mathematick" is one which Newton would have to go to school to learn; our "Statics, Mechanicks, Magneticks, Chymicks, and Natural Experiments" constitute a mass of physical and chemical knowledge, a glimpse at which would compensate Galileo for the doings of a score of inquisitorial cardinals;¹² our "Physick" and "Anatomy" have embraced such infinite varieties of being, have laid open such new worlds in time and space, have grappled, not unsuccessfully, with such complex problems, that the eyes of Vesalius¹³ and of Harvey¹⁴ might be dazzled by the sight of the tree that has grown out of their grain of mustard seed.

The fact is perhaps rather too much, than too little, forced upon one's notice, nowadays, that all this marvellous intellectual growth has a no less wonderful expression in practical life; and that, in this respect, if in no other, the movement symbolized by the progress of the

Royal Society stands without a parallel in the history of mankind.

A series of volumes as bulky as the Transactions of the Royal Society might possibly be filled with the speculations of the Schoolmen; not improbably, the obtaining a mastery over the products of mediæval thought might necessitate an even greater expenditure of time and of energy than the acquirement of the "New Philosophy;" but though such work engrossed the best intellects of Europe for a longer time than has elapsed since the great fire, its effects were "writ in water," so far as our social state is concerned.

On the other hand, if the noble first President¹⁵ of the Royal Society could revisit the upper air and once more gladden his eyes with the sight of the familiar mace, he would find himself in the midst of a material civilization more different from that of his day, than that of the seventeenth, was from that of the first, century. And if Lord Brouncker's native sagacity had not deserted his ghost, he would need no long reflection to discover that all these great ships, these railways, these telegraphs, these factories, these printing-presses, without which the whole fabric of modern English society would collapse into a mass of stagnant and starving pauperism,—that all these pillars of our State are but the ripples and the bubbles upon the surface of that great spiritual stream, the springs of which, only, he and his fellows were privileged to see; and seeing, to recognise as that which it behoved them above all things to keep pure and undefiled.

It may not be too great a flight of imagination to conceive our noble *revenant*¹⁶ not forgetful of the troubles of his own day, and anxious to know how often London had been burned down since his time, and how often the plague had carried off its thousands. He would have to learn that, although London contains tenfold the inflammable matter that it did in 1666; though, not content with filling our rooms with woodwork and light draperies, we must needs lead inflammable and explosive gases into every corner of our streets and houses, we never allow even a street to burn down. And if he asked how this had come about, we should have to explain that the improvement of natural knowledge has furnished us with dozens of machines for throwing water upon fires, any one of which would have furnished the ingenious Mr. Hooke, the first "curator and experimenter" of the Royal

⁹ The principles set forth in Bacon's *Novum Organum*.

¹⁰ Sir Isaac Newton, who was elected to the Royal Society in 1672.

¹¹ The publications of the Royal Society.

¹² Galileo's views of the Copernican theory were condemned by the Pope.

¹³ A famous Belgian anatomist (1514-1564).

¹⁴ An English physiologist, noted for discovering the circulation of the blood.

¹⁵ Lord Brouncker, the first president of the Royal Society after its incorporation.

¹⁶ Ghostly visitor.

Society, with ample materials for discourse before half a dozen meetings of that body; and that, to say truth, except for the progress of natural knowledge, we should not have been able to make even the tools by which these machines are constructed. And, further, it would be necessary to add, that although severe fires sometimes occur and inflict great damage, the loss is very generally compensated by societies, the operations of which have been rendered possible only by the progress of natural knowledge in the direction of mathematics, and the accumulation of wealth in virtue of other natural knowledge.

But the plague? My Lord Brouncker's observation would not, I fear, lead him to think that Englishmen of the nineteenth century are purer in life, or more fervent in religious faith, than the generation which could produce a Boyle,¹⁷ an Evelyn,¹⁸ and a Milton. He might find the mud of society at the bottom, instead of at the top, but I fear that the sum total would be as deserving of swift judgment as at the time of the Restoration. And it would be our duty to explain once more, and this time not without shame, that we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith, nor that of our morals, which keeps the plague from our city; but, again, that it is the improvement of our natural knowledge.

We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets, foul with accumulated garbage. Their houses must be ill-drained, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated. Their subjects must be ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed. The London of 1665 was such a city. The cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities. We, in later time, have learned somewhat of nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge and of that fractional obedience, we have no plague; because that knowledge is still very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhus is our companion and cholera our visitor. But it is not presumptuous to express the belief that, when our knowledge is more complete and our obedience the expression of our knowledge, London will count her centuries of freedom from typhus and cholera, as she now gratefully reckons her two hundred years of ignorance of that plague which swooped upon her thrice in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Surely, there is nothing in these explanations which is not fully borne out by the facts?

¹⁷ Robert Boyle, an English chemist. ¹⁸ V. p. 280, *supra*.

Surely, the principles involved in them are now admitted among the fixed beliefs of all thinking men? Surely, it is true that our countrymen are less subject to fire, famine, pestilence, and all the evils which result from a want of command over and due anticipation of the course of Nature, than were the countrymen of Milton; and health, wealth, and well-being are more abundant with us than with them? But no less certainly is the difference due to the improvement of our knowledge of Nature, and the extent to which that improved knowledge has been incorporated with the household words of men, and has supplied the springs of their daily actions.

Granting for a moment, then, the truth of that which the depreciators of natural knowledge are so fond of urging, that its improvement can only add to the resources of our material civilization; admitting it to be possible that the founders of the Royal Society themselves looked for no other reward than this, I cannot confess that I was so guilty of exaggeration when I hinted, that to him who had the gift of distinguishing between prominent events and important events, the origin of a combined effort on the part of mankind to improve natural knowledge might have loomed larger than the Plague and have outshone the glare of the Fire; as a something fraught with the wealth of beneficence to mankind, in comparison with which the damage done by those ghastly evils would shrink into insignificance.

It is very certain that for every victim slain by the plague, hundreds of mankind exist and find a fair share of happiness in the world, by the aid of the spinning jenny. And the great fire, at its worst, could not have burned the supply of coal, the daily working of which, in the bowels of the earth, made possible by the steam pump, gives rise to an amount of wealth to which the millions lost in old London are but as an old song.

But spinning jenny and steam pump are, after all, but toys, possessing an accidental value; and natural knowledge creates multitudes of more subtle contrivances, the praises of which do not happen to be sung because they are not directly convertible into instruments for creating wealth. When I contemplate natural knowledge squandering such gifts among men, the only appropriate comparison I can find for her is, to liken her to such a peasant woman as one sees in the Alps, striding ever upward, heavily burdened, and with mind bent only on her home; but yet, without effort and without thought, knitting for her children. Now stockings are good and comfortable things, and the children will un-

doubtedly be much the better for them; but surely it would be short-sighted, to say the least of it, to depreciate this toiling mother as a mere stocking-machine—a mere provider of physical comforts?

However, there are blind leaders of the blind, and not a few of them, who take this view of natural knowledge, and can see nothing in the bountiful mother of humanity but a sort of comfort-grinding machine. According to them, the improvement in natural knowledge always has been, and always must be, synonymous with no more than the improvement of the material resources and the increase of the gratifications of men.

Natural knowledge is, in their eyes, no real mother of mankind, bringing them up with kindness, and, if need be, with sternness, in the way they should go, and instructing them in all things needful for their welfare; but a sort of fairy godmother, ready to furnish her pets with shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness, and omnipotent Aladdin's lamps, so that they may have telegraphs to Saturn, and see the other side of the moon, and thank God they are better than their benighted ancestors.

If this talk were true, I, for one, should not greatly care to toil in the service of natural knowledge. I think I would just as soon be quietly chipping my own flint axe, after the manner of my forefathers a few thousand years back, as be troubled with the endless malady of thought which now infests us all, for such reward. But I venture to say that such views are contrary alike to reason and to fact. Those who discourse in such fashion seem to me to be so intent upon trying to see what is above Nature, or what is behind her, that they are blind to what stares them in the face of her.

I should not venture to speak thus strongly if my justification were not to be found in the simplest and most obvious facts,—if it needed more than an appeal to the most notorious truths to justify my assertion, that the improvement of natural knowledge, whatever direction it has taken, and however low the aims of those who may have commenced it—has not only conferred practical benefits on men, but in so doing, has effected a revolution in their conceptions of the universe and of themselves, and has profoundly altered their modes of thinking and their views of right and wrong. I say that natural knowledge, seeking to satisfy natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings. I say that natural knowledge, in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort, has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay foundations of a new morality.

Let us take these points separately; and, first, what great ideas has natural knowledge introduced into men's minds?

I cannot but think that the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature; when the savage first learned that the fingers of one hand are fewer than those of both; that it is shorter to cross a stream than to head it; that a stone stops where it is unless it be moved, and that it drops from the hand which lets it go; that light and heat come and go with the sun; that sticks burn away in a fire; that plants and animals grow and die; that if he struck his fellow-savage a blow he would make him angry, and perhaps get a blow in return, while if he offered him a fruit he would please him, and perhaps receive a fish in exchange. When men had acquired this much knowledge, the outlines, rude though they were, of mathematics, of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of moral, economical, and political science, were sketched. Nor did the germ of religion fail when science began to bud. Listen to words which, though new, are yet three thousand years old:—

" . . . When in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart."

If the half-savage Greek could share our feelings thus far, is it irrational to doubt that he went further, to find, as we do, that upon that brief gladness there follows a certain sorrow,—the little light of awakened human intelligence shines so mere a spark amidst the abyss of the unknown and unknowable; seems so insufficient to do more than illuminate the imperfections that cannot be remedied, the aspirations that cannot be realized, of man's own nature. But in this sadness, this consciousness of the limitation of man, this sense of an open secret which he cannot penetrate, lies the essence of all religion; and the attempt to embody it in the forms furnished by the intellect is the origin of the higher theologies.

Thus it seems impossible to imagine but that the foundations of all knowledge—secular or sacred—were laid when intelligence dawned, though the superstructure remained for long ages so slight and feeble as to be compatible with the existence of almost any general view respecting the mode of governance of the uni-

¹⁹ From Tennyson's *Specimens of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse*.

verse. No doubt, from the first, there were certain phenomena which, to the rudest mind, presented a constancy of occurrence, and suggested that a fixed order ruled, at any rate, among them. I doubt if the grossest of Fetish worshippers ever imagined that a stone must have a god within it to make it fall, or that a fruit had a god within it to make it taste sweet. With regard to such matters as these, it is hardly questionable that mankind from the first took strictly positive and scientific views.

But, with respect to all the less familiar occurrences which present themselves, uncultured man, no doubt, has always taken himself as the standard of comparison, as the centre and measure of the world; nor could he well avoid doing so. And finding that his apparently uncaused will has a powerful effect in giving rise to many occurrences, he naturally enough ascribed other and greater events to other and greater volitions, and came to look upon the world and all that therein is, as the product of the volitions of persons like himself, but stronger, and capable of being appeased or angered, as he himself might be soothed or irritated. Through such conceptions of the plan and working of the universe all mankind have passed, or are passing. And we may now consider, what has been the effect of the improvement of natural knowledge on the views of men who have reached this stage, and who have begun to cultivate natural knowledge with no desire but that of "increasing God's honour and bettering man's estate."

For example: what could seem wiser, from a mere material point of view, more innocent, from a theological one, to an ancient people, than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy,—which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy,—which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling, no man knows whither, through illimitable space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, but matter and force, operating according to rigid rules; which leads

us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant.

But it is not alone those who pursue astronomy who ask for bread and receive ideas. What more harmless than the attempt to lift and distribute water by pumping it; what more absolutely and grossly utilitarian? But out of pumps grew the discussions about Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and then it was discovered that Nature does not abhor a vacuum, but that air has weight; and that notion paved the way for the doctrine that all matter has weight, and that the force which produces weight is co-extensive with the universe,—in short, to the theory of universal gravitation and endless force. While learning how to handle gases led to the discovery of oxygen, and to modern chemistry, and to the notion of the indestructibility of matter.

Again, what simpler, or more absolutely practical, than the attempt to keep the axle of a wheel from heating when the wheel turns round very fast? How useful for carters and gig drivers to know something about this; and how good were it, if any ingenious person would find out the cause of such phenomena, and thence educe a general remedy for them. Such an ingenious person was Count Rumford; and he and his successors have landed us in the theory of the persistence, or indestructibility, of force. And in the infinitely minute, as in the infinitely great, the seekers after natural knowledge, of the kinds called physical and chemical, have everywhere found a definite order and succession of events which never seemed to be infringed.

And how has it fared with "Physick" and Anatomy? Have the anatomist, the physiologist, or the physician, whose business it has been to devote themselves assiduously to that eminently practical and direct end, the alleviation of the sufferings of mankind,—have they been able to confine their vision more absolutely to the strictly useful? I fear that they are the worst offenders of all. For if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of force; and if both have alike proclaimed the

* A distinguished scientist of American birth, chiefly remembered for his experiments on the nature of heat.

universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover in the earth no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite.

Furthermore, the physiologist finds life to be as dependent for its manifestation on particular molecular arrangements as any physical or chemical phenomenon; and, wherever he extends his researches, fixed order and unchanging causation reveal themselves, as plainly as in the rest of Nature.

Nor can I find that any other fate has awaited the germ of Religion. Arising, like all other kinds of knowledge, out of the action and interaction of man's mind, with that which is not man's mind, it has taken the intellectual coverings of Fetichism or Polytheism; of Theism or Atheism; of Superstition or Rationalism. With these, and their relative merits and demerits, I have nothing to do; but this it is needful for my purpose to say, that if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past; because it has not only renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs: and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions, by worship "for the most part of the silent sort" at the altar of the Unknown and Unknowable.

Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity; they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standards of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumerable forms of life now existing in the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have

made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and rivet in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe—which is embodied in what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature—and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself.

Whether these ideas are well or ill founded is not the question. No one can deny that they exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's most cherished and most important convictions.

And as regards the second point—the extent to which the improvement of natural knowledge has remodelled and altered what may be termed the intellectual ethics of men,—what are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people?

They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief; that merit attaches to a readiness to believe; that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and scepticism a sin; that when good authority has pronounced what is to be believed, and faith has accepted it, reason has no further duty. There are many excellent persons who yet hold by these principles, and it is not my present business, or intention, to discuss their views. All I wish clearly to bring before your mind is the unquestionable fact, that the improvement of natural knowledge is effected by methods which directly give the lie to all these convictions, and assume the exact reverse of each to be true.

The improver of natural knowledge absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority, as such. For him, scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin. And it cannot be otherwise, for every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith; and the most ardent votary of science holds his firmest convictions, not because the men he most venerates hold them; not because their verity is tested by portents and wonders; but because his experience teaches him that whenever he chooses to bring these convictions into contact with their primary sources, Nature—whenever he thinks fit to test them by appealing to experiment and to observation—Nature will confirm them. The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.

Thus, without for a moment pretending to

despise the practical results of the improvement of natural knowledge, and its beneficial influence on material civilization it must, I think, be admitted that the great ideas, some of which I have indicated, and the ethical spirit which I have endeavoured to sketch, in the few moments which remained at my disposal, constitute the real and permanent significance of natural knowledge.

If these ideas be destined, as I believe they are, to be more and more firmly established as the world grows older; if that spirit be fated, as I believe it is, to extend itself into all departments of human thought, and to become co-extensive with the range of knowledge; if, as our race approaches its maturity, it discovers, as I believe it will, that there is but one kind of knowledge and but one method of acquiring it; then we, who are still children, may justly feel it our highest duty to recognize the advisableness of improving natural knowledge, and so to aid ourselves and our successors in their course towards the noble goal which lies before mankind.

Frederick Harrison

1831-

WALTER SCOTT

(From *The Choice of Books*, 1880)

In Europe, as in England, Walter Scott remains as yet the last in the series of the great creative spirits of the human race. No one of his successors, however clear be the genius and the partial success of some of them, belongs to the same grand type of mind, or has now a lasting place in the roll of the immortals. It should make us sad to reflect that a generation, which already has begun to treat Scott with the indifference that is the lot of a "classic," should be ready to fill its insatiable maw with the ephemeral wares of the booksellers, and the reeking garbage of the boulevard.

We all read Scott's romances, as we have all read Hume's History of England; but how often do we read them, how zealously, with what sympathy and understanding? I am told that the last discovery of modern culture is that Scott's prose is commonplace; that the young men at our universities are far too critical to care for his artless sentences and flowing descriptions. They prefer Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Mallock, and the Euphuism of young Oxford, just as some people prefer a Dresden Shepherdess to the Caryatides of the Ere-

theum,¹ pronounce Fielding to be low, and Mozart to be *passé*. As boys love lollipops, so these juvenile fops love to roll phrases about under the tongue, as if phrases in themselves had a value apart from thoughts, feelings, great conceptions, or human sympathy. For Scott is just one of the poets (we may call poets all the great creators in prose or in verse) of whom one never wearies, just as one can listen to Beethoven, or watch the sunrise or the sunset day by day with new delight. I think I can read the *Antiquary*, or the *Bride of Lammermoor*, *Ivanhoe*, *Quentin Durward*, and *Old Mortality*, at least once a year afresh.

Scott is a perfect library in himself. A constant reader of romances would find that it needed months to go through even the best pieces of the inexhaustible painter of eight full centuries and every type of man; and he might repeat the process of reading him ten times in a lifetime without a sense of fatigue or sameness. The poetic beauty of Scott's creations is almost the least of his great qualities. It is the universality of his sympathy that is so truly great, the justice of his estimates, the insight into the spirit of each age, his intense absorption of self in the vast epic of human civilisation. What are the old almanacs that they so often give us as histories beside these living pictures of the ordered succession of ages? As in Homer himself, we see in this prose Iliad of modern history, the battle of the old and the new, the heroic defence of ancient strongholds, the long impending and inevitable doom of mediæval life. Strong men and proud women struggle against the destiny of modern society, unconsciously working out its ways, undauntedly defying its power. How just is our island Homer! Neither Greek nor Trojan sways him; Achilles is his hero; Hector is his favorite; he loves the councils of chiefs, and the palace of Priam; but the swine-herd, the charioteer, the slave-girl, the hound, the beggar, and the herds-man, all glow alike in the harmonious colouring of his peopled epic. We see the dawn of our English nation, the defence of Christendom against the Koran, the grace and terror of feudalism, the rise of monarchy out of baronies, the rise of parliaments out of monarchy, the rise of industry out of serfage, the pathetic ruin of chivalry, the splendid death-struggle of Catholicism, the sylvan tribes of the mountain (remnants of our pre-historic forefathers) beating themselves to pieces against the hard advance of

¹ A temple in Athens, (so named because it contained the bust of Erechtheus), generally regarded as one of the finest specimens of Greek architecture. The *Caryatides* are six robed female figures which support the Erechtheum, and are choice examples of architectural sculpture.

modern industry; we see the grim heroism of the Bible-martyrs, the catastrophe of feudalism overwhelmed by a practical age which knew little of its graces, and almost nothing of its virtues. Such is Scott, who, we may say, has done for the various phases of modern history, what Shakespeare has done for the manifold types of human character. And this glorious and most human and most historical of poets, without whom our very conception of human development would have ever been imperfect, this manliest, and truest, and wisest of romancers we neglect for some hothouse hybrid of psychological analysis, for the wretched imitators of Balzac, and the jackanapes phrasemongering of some Osric² of the day, who assures us that Scott is an absolute Philistine.

ON READING

(From the same)

Collecting rare books and forgotten authors is perhaps of all the collecting manias the most foolish in our day. There is much to be said for rare china and curious beetles. The china is occasionally beautiful; and the beetles at least are droll. But rare books now are, by the nature of the case, worthless books; and their rarity usually consists in this, that the printer made a blunder in the text, or that they contain something exceptionally nasty or silly. To affect a profound interest in neglected authors and uncommon books, is a sign for the most part—not that a man has exhausted the resources of ordinary literature—but that he has no real respect for the greatest productions of the greatest men of the world. This bibliomania seizes hold of rational beings and so perverts them, that in the sufferer's mind the human race exists for the sake of the books, and not the books for the sake of the human race. There is one book they might read to good purpose, the doings of a great book collector—who once lived in La Mancha.¹ To the collector, and sometimes to the scholar, the book becomes a fetch or idol, and is worthy of the worship of mankind, even if it be not of the slightest use to anybody. As the book exists, it must have the compliment paid it of being invited to the shelves. The "library is imperfect without it," although the library will, so to speak stink, when it is there. The great books are of course the common books; and these are treated by collectors and librarians with sovereign contempt. The more

dreadful an abortion of a book the rare volume may be, the more desperate is the struggle of libraries to possess it. Civilisation in fact has evolved a complete apparatus, an order of men, and a code of ideas, for the express purpose one may say of degrading the great books, and gives the place of honour to that which is plainly literary carrion.

Now I suppose, at the bottom of all this lies that rattle and restlessness of life which belongs to the industrial Maelstrom wherein we ever revolve. And connected therewith comes also that literary dandyism, which results from the pursuit of letters without any social purpose or any systematic faith. To read from the pricking of some cerebral itch rather than from a desire of forming judgments; to get, like an Alpine club stripling, to the top of some unscaled pinnacle of culture; to use books as a sedative, as a means of exciting a mild intellectual titillation, instead of as a means of elevating the nature; to dribble on in a perpetual literary gossip, in order to avoid the effort of bracing the mind to think—such is our habit in an age of utterly chaotic education. We read, as the bereaved poet made rhymes—

"For the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics numbing pain."

We, to whom steam and electricity have given almost everything excepting bigger brains and hearts, who have a new invention ready for every meeting of the Royal Institution,³ who want new things to talk about faster than children want new toys to break, we cannot take up the books we have seen about us since our childhood: Milton, or Molière, or Scott. It feels like donning knee-breeches and buckles, to read what everybody has read, what everybody can read, and which our very fathers thought good entertainment scores of years ago. Hard-worked men and overwrought women crave an occupation which shall free them from their thoughts and yet not take them from their world. And thus it comes that we need at least a thousand new books every season, whilst we have rarely a spare hour left for the greatest of all. But I am getting into a vein too serious for our purpose; education is a long and thorny topic. I will cite but the words on this head of the great Bishop Butler. "The great number of books and papers of amusement which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in

¹ An affected courtier in *Hamlet*, noted for his high flown phrases.

² Don Quixote in the romance of Cervantes.

³ Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, v. 5.

⁴ Founded by Count Rumford and others in 1799, for the furthering of mechanical inventions and the teaching of applied science.

part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with, and humour this idle way of reading and considering things. By this means time, even in solitude, is happily got rid of, without the pain of attention; neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness; one can scarce forbear saying is spent with less thought, than great part of that which is spent in reading." But this was written a century and a half ago, in 1729; since which date, let us trust, the 10 multiplicity of print and the habits of desultory reading have considerably abated. . . .

We need to be reminded every day, how many are the books of inimitable glory, which, with all our eagerness after reading, we have 15 never taken in our hands. It will astonish most of us to find how much of our very industry is given to the books which leave no mark, how often we rake in the litter of the printing-press, whilst a crown of gold and rubies is 20 offered us in vain.

Sir Leslie Stephen

1832-1904

SWIFT AND THE SPIRIT OF HIS TIME

(From *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1876)

A hatred for enthusiasm was as strongly impressed upon the whole character of contemporary thought as a hatred of scepticism. And thus the literary expression of the feeling is rather a dislike to all speculation than a dislike to a particular school of speculatists. The whole subject was dangerous, and should be avoided by reasonable men. A good common-sense religion should be taken for granted, and no ques- 40 tions asked. If the philosophy of the time was unfitted for poetry, it was, for the same reason, unfitted to stimulate the emotions, and therefore for practical life. With Shakespeare or Sir Thomas Browne, or Jeremy Taylor, 45 or Milton, man is contemplated in his relations to the universe; he is in presence of eternity and infinity; life is a brief dream; we are ephemeral actors in a vast drama; heaven and hell are behind the veil of phenomena; at every 50 step our friends vanish into the vast abyss of ever-present mystery. To all such thoughts the writers of the eighteenth century seemed to close their eyes as absolutely as possible. They do not, like Sir Thomas Browne, delight 55 to lose themselves in an Oh! Altitudino! or to snatch a solemn joy from the giddiness which follows a steady gaze into the infinite.

¹ V. p. 244, and n. 1.

The greatest men amongst them, Swift or a Johnson, have indeed a sense—perhaps a really stronger sense than Browne or Taylor—of the pettiness of our lives and the narrow limits of 5 our knowledge. No great man could ever be without it. But the awe of the infinite and the unseen does not induce them to brood over the mysterious, and find utterance for bewildered musings on the inscrutable enigma.

It is only felt in a certain habitual sadness which clouds their whole tone of thought. They turn their backs upon the infinite and abandon the effort at a solution. Their eyes are fixed upon the world around them, and they 15 regard as foolish and presumptuous any one who dares to contemplate the great darkness. The expression of this sentiment in literature is a marked disposition to turn aside from pure speculation, combined with a deep interest in social and moral laws. The absence of any deeper speculative ground makes the immediate practical questions of life all the more interesting. We know not what we are, nor whither we are going, nor whence we 25 come; but we can, by the help of common sense, discover a sufficient share of moral maxims for our guidance in life; and we can analyse human passions, and discover what are the moving forces of society, without going 30 back to first principles. Knowledge of human nature, as it actually presented itself in the shifting scene before them, and a vivid appreciation of the importance of the moral law, are the staple of the best literature of the time. 35 As ethical speculation was prominent in the philosophy, the enforcement of ethical principles is the task of those who were inclined to despise philosophy. When a creed is dying, the importance of preserving the moral law 40 naturally becomes a pressing consideration with all strong natures.

I have coupled Swift and Johnson as the two most vigorous representatives of this tendency. Between them there is a curious analogy as well as a striking contrast. They are alike in that shrewd humorous common sense which seems to be the special endowment of the English race. They are alike, too, in this; that they express the reaction against the complacent optimism of the Pope-Shaftesbury variety. They illustrate the incapacity of that system of thought to satisfy men of powerful emotional nature. The writings of each might be summed up in a phrase embodying the most uncompromising protest against the optimist philosophy. Swift says, with unrivalled intensity, that the natural man is not, as theorists would maintain, a reasonable and virtuous animal; but, for the most part, a knave and a

fool. Johnson denies, with equal emphasis, though with inferior literary power, that the business of life can be carried on by help of rose-coloured sentiments and general complacency. The world is, at best, but a melancholy place, full of gloom, of misery, of wasted purpose, and disappointed hopes. "Whatever is, is right," say the philosophers. Make up the heavy account of suffering, of disease, vice, cruelty, of envy, hatred, and malice, of corruption in high places, of starvation and nakedness amongst the low, of wars, and pestilences, and famines, of selfish ambition trampling on thousands, and wasted heroism strengthening oppression by its failure, of petty domestic tyranny, of lying, hypocrisy, and treachery, which run through all the social organism like a malignant ulcer, and see how far your specious maxim will take you.

That is the melancholy burden of the teaching of each of these great men; and it was echoed in various tones by many who felt that the grain of a sham philosophy consisted chiefly of unprofitable husks. Between Swift and Johnson, indeed, there was a wide difference; and the sturdy moralist had a hearty dislike for the misanthropist whose teaching was so far at one with his own. The strong sense of evil which, in Johnson's generous nature, produced rather sadness than anger, had driven Swift to moody hatred of his species. He is the most tragic figure in our literature. Beside the deep agony of his soul, all other suffering, and especially that which takes a morbid delight in contemplating itself, is pale and colourless. He resembles a victim tied to the stake and slowly tortured to madness and death; whilst from his proudly compressed lips there issue no weak lamentations but the deep curses of which one syllable is more effective than a volume of shrieks. Through the more petty feelings of mere personal spite and disappointed ambition we feel the glow of generous passions doomed to express themselves only in the language of defiant hatred. The total impression made by Swift's writings is unique and almost appalling; for even the sheer brutality suggests some strange disease, and the elaborate triflings remind us of a statesman amusing himself with spiders in a Bastille. If we ask what were the genuine creeds of this singular intellect, the answer must be a blank. The "Tale of a Tub" is the keenest of satire against all theologians; "Gulliver's Travels" expresses the concentrated essence of contempt for all other classes of mankind; the sermons and tracts defend the Church of England in good set terms, and prove beyond all question his scorn of dis-

senters, deists, and papists; but it would be an insult to that fiery intellect to suppose that his official defence of the Thirty-nine Articles² represents any very vivid belief. He could express himself in very different fashion when he was in earnest. Jove's address, in the "Day of Judgment,"³ shows the true Swift:—

Offending race of human kind,
By nature, learning, reason blind;
You who through frailty stept aside,
And you who never fell—from pride;
You who in different sects were sham'd,
And come to see each other damn'd
(So some folks told you, but they knew
No more of Jove's designs than you—)
The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more—
I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools! Go, go, you're bit.

That is genuine feeling. The orthodox phrases are no more part of Swift than his bands and cassock.

Swift's idiosyncrasy would doubtless have made itself felt at any time. The special direction of his haughty passions and intense intellect is determined by the conditions of the time. In a time of strong beliefs he would have been a vehement partisan. . . . He felt to the depths of his soul the want of any of the principles which in trying times take concrete shape in heroic natures; and he assumed that the whole race of the courtiers of kings and mobs in all ages were such vile crawling creatures as could sell England or starve Ireland to put a few thousands in their pockets. He felt the want of some religion, and therefore scalped poor Collins,⁴ and argued with his marvellous ingenuity of irony against "the abolition of Christianity;"⁵ but the dogmas of theologians were mere matter for the Homeric laughter of the "Tale of a Tub." He had not the unselfish qualities or the indomitable belief in the potential excellence of human nature to become a reformer of manners, or the speculative power to endeavour to remould the ancient creeds. He stands in fierce isolation amongst the calmer or shallower intellects of his time, with insight enough to see the hollowness of their beliefs, with moral depth enough to give such forcible utterance to his feelings as has scarcely been rivalled in our literature. But he had not the power or the

² i. e. the thirty-nine articles in the Prayer-book.

³ V. p. 295, *supra*.

⁴ Anthony Collins, published in 1713, a *Discourse of Freethinking*, in which he ridiculed the clergy, the Mosaic Law, and the evidences of revealed religion. Swift attacked this in his tract.

⁵ An allusion to Swift's *Argument Against the Abolishing of Christianity*, 1708.

nobility of nature to become a true poet or philosopher, or reformer. When a shallow optimism is the most living creed, a man of strong nature becomes a scornful pessimist.

John Richard Green

1837-1883

THE DEATH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

(From *History of the English People*,
1877-1880)

The triumph of Mountjoy¹ flung its lustre over the last days of Elizabeth, but no outer triumph could break the gloom which gathered round the dying Queen. Lonely as she had always been, her loneliness deepened as she drew towards the grave. The statesmen and warriors of her earlier days had dropped one by one from her Council board. Leicester² had died in the year of the Armada; two years later Walsingham³ followed him to the grave; in 1598 Burleigh⁴ himself passed away. Their successors were watching her last moments, and intriguing for favour in the coming reign. Her favourite, Lord Essex, not only courted favour with James of Scotland,⁵ but brought him to suspect Robert Cecil,⁶ who had succeeded his father at the Queen's Council-board, of designs against his succession. The rivalry between the two ministers hurried Essex into fatal projects which led to his failure in Ireland and to an insane outbreak of revolt which brought him in 1601 to the block. But Cecil had no sooner proved the victor in this struggle at court than he himself entered into a secret correspondence with the King of Scots. His action was wise; it brought James again into friendly relations with the Queen; and paved the way for a peaceful transfer of the crown. But hidden as this correspondence was from Elizabeth, the suspicion of it only added to her distrust. The troubles of the war in Ireland brought fresh cares to the aged Queen. It drained her treasury. The old splendour of her Court waned and disappeared. Only officials remained about her, "the other of the Council and nobility estranged themselves by all occasions." The love and rever-

ence of the people itself lessened as they felt the pressure and taxation of the war. Of old, men had pressed to see the Queen as if it were a glimpse of heaven. "In the year 1588," a Bishop tells us who was then a country boy fresh come to town, "I did live at the upper end of the Strand near St. Clement's Church, when suddenly there came a report to us (it was in December, much about five o'clock of the night, very dark) that the Queen was gone to Council, "and if you would see the Queen you must come quickly. Then we all ran, when the Court gates were set open, and no man did hinder us from coming in. There we came, where there was a far greater company than was usually at Lenten sermons; and when we had staid there an hour and that the yard was full, there being a number of torches, the queen came out in great state. When we cried 'God save your Majesty! God save your Majesty!' Then the Queen turned to us and said, 'God bless you all, my good people!' Then we cried again, 'God bless your Majesty! God bless your Majesty!' Then the Queen said again to us, 'You may well have a greater prince, but you shall never have a more loving prince.' And so looking one upon another a while, the Queen departed. This wrought such an impression on us, for shows and pageantry are ever best seen by torchlight, that all the way long we did nothing but talk what an admirable Queen she was, and how we would adventure our lives to do her service." But now, as Elizabeth passed along in her progresses, the people whose applause she courted remained cold and silent. The temper of the age in fact was changing, and isolating her as it changed. Her own England, the England which had grown up around her, serious, moral, prosaic, shrank coldly from this brilliant, fanciful, unscrupulous child of earth and the Renaissance.

But if ministers and courtiers were counting on her death, Elizabeth had no mind to die. She had enjoyed life as men of her day enjoyed it, and now that they were gone she clung to it with a fierce tenacity. She hunted, she danced, she jested with her young favourites, she coquetted and scolded and frolicked at sixty-seven as she had done at thirty. "The Queen," wrote a courtier a few months before her death, "was never so gallant these many years nor so set upon jollity." She persisted in spite of opposition, in her gorgeous progresses from country-house to country-house. She clung to business as of old, and rated in her usual fashion "one who minded not to giving up some matter of account." But death crept on. Her face became haggard, and her

¹ Lord Mountjoy, the Queen's Lieutenant in Ireland, had just succeeded, after three years of ruthless warfare, in putting down a rebellion in Ireland led by Hugh O'Neil, the Earl of Tyrone, and the Earl of Desmond. This brought the work of conquering Ireland to a close.

² Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (died 1588) known as one of Elizabeth's favorite councillors.

³ V. p. 178, n. 1, and p. 725, n. 4.

⁴ V. p. 725, n. 5.

⁵ James VI of Scotland, who on Elizabeth's death (1603) became King James I of England.

⁶ The son of Lord Burleigh.

frame shrank almost to a skeleton. At last her taste for finery disappeared, and she refused to change her dresses for a week together. A strange melancholy settled down on her. "She held in her hand," says one who saw her in her last days "a golden cup which she often put to her lips, but in truth her heart seemed too full to need more filling." Gradually her mind gave way. She lost her memory, the violence of her temper became unbearable, her very courage seemed to forsake her. She called for a sword to lie constantly beside her and thrust it from time to time through the arras, as if she heard murderers stirring there. Food and rest became alike distasteful. She sate day and night propped up with pillows on a stool, her finger on her lip, her eyes fixed on the floor, without a word. If once she broke the silence, it was with a flash of her old queenliness. When Robert Cecil declared that she "must" go to bed, the word roused her like a trumpet. "Must!" she exclaimed; "is *must* a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man! thy father, if he had been alive, durst not have used that word." Then, as her anger spent itself, she sank into her old dejection. "Thou art so presumptuous," she said, "because thou knowest I shall die." She rallied once more when the ministers beside her bed named Lord Beauchamp, the heir to the Suffolk claim,⁷ as a possible successor. "I will have no rogue's son," she cried hoarsely, "in my seat." But she gave no sign save a motion of the head, at the mention of the King of Scots. She was in fact fast becoming insensible; and early the next morning on the twenty-fourth of March, 1603, the life of Elizabeth, a life so great, so strange and lonely in its greatness, ebbed quietly away.

RELIGION AND THE BIBLE IN 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY ENGLAND

(From the same)

The immense advance of the people as a whole in knowledge and in intelligence throughout the reign of Elizabeth was in itself a revolution. The hold of tradition, the unquestioning awe which formed the main strength of the Tudor throne, had been sapped and weakened by the intellectual activity of the Renaissance, by its endless questionings, its historic research, its philosophic scepticism. Writers and statesmen were alike discussing the claims

of government and the wisest and most lasting forms of rule, travellers turned aside from the frescoes of Giorgione to study the aristocratic polity of Venice, and Jesuits borrowed from the schoolmen of the middle ages a doctrine of popular rights which still forms the theory of modern democracy. On the other hand the nation was learning to rely on itself, to believe in its own strength and vigour, to crave for a share in the guidance of its own life. . . .

The nation which gave itself to the rule of the Stewarts was another nation from the panic-struck people that gave itself in the crash of social and religious order to the guidance of the Tudors. It was plain that a new age of our history must open when the lofty patriotism, the dauntless energy, the overpowering sense of effort and triumph, which rose into their full grandeur through the war with Spain, turned from the strife with Philip to seek a new sphere of activity at home.

What had hindered this force from telling as yet fully on national affairs was the breadth and largeness which characterized the temper of the Renaissance. Through the past half century the aims of Englishmen had been drawn far over the narrow bounds of England itself to every land and every sea; while their mental activity spent itself as freely on poetry and science as on religion and politics. But at the moment which we have reached the whole of this energy was seized upon and concentrated by a single force. For a hundred years past men had been living in the midst of a spiritual revolution. Not only the world about them but the world of thought and feeling within every breast had been utterly transformed. The work of the sixteenth century had wrecked that tradition of religion, of political and social order, which had been accepted without question by the Middle Ages. The sudden freedom of the mind from these older bonds brought a consciousness of power such as had never been felt before; and the restless energy, the universal activity of the Renaissance were but outer expressions of the pride, the joy, the amazing self-confidence, with which man welcomed this revelation of the energies which had lain slumbering within him. But his pride and self-reliance were soon dashed by a feeling of dread. With the deepening sense of human individuality came a deepening conviction of the boundless capacities of the human soul. Not as a theological dogma, but as a human fact man knew himself to be an all but infinite power, whether for good or for ill. The drama towered into sublimity as it painted the strife of mighty forces within the breasts of Othello and Macbeth.

⁷ Edward Seymour, Lord Beauchamp was descended from Henry VII. through Mary, the sister of Henry VIII—who married the Duke of Suffolk. There was, however, doubt as to the legitimacy of the marriage of Lord Beauchamp's parents.

Poets passed into metaphysicians as they strove to unravel the workings of conscience within the soul. From that hour one dominant influence told on human action: and all the various energies that had been called into life by the age that was passing away were seized, concentrated, and steadied to a definite aim by the spirit of religion.

The whole temper of the nation felt the change: "Theology rules there;" said Grotius¹ of England only two years after Elizabeth's death; and when Casaubon² was invited by her successor to his court he found both king and people indifferent to pure letters. "There is a great abundance of theologians in England," he says; "all point their studies in that direction." Even a country gentleman, like Colonel Hutchinson,³ felt the theological impulse. "As soon as he had improved his natural understanding with the acquisition of learning, the first studies he exercised himself in were the principles of religion." It was natural that literature should reflect the tendency of the time; and the dumpy little quartos of controversy and piety which still crowd our older libraries drove before them the classical translations and Italian novelettes of the age of the Renaissance. But their influence was small beside that of the Bible. The popularity of the Bible had been growing fast from the day when Bishop Bonner⁴ set up the first six copies in St. Paul's. Even then, we are told, "many well-disposed people used much to resort to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them." . . . "One John Porter used sometimes to be occupied in that goodly exercise, to the edifying of himself as well as others. This Porter was a fresh young man and of a big stature; and great multitudes would resort thither to hear him, because he could read well and had an audible voice." But the "goodly exercise" of readers such as Porter was soon superseded by the continued recitation of both Old Testament and New in the public services of the Church; while the

small Geneva Bibles⁵ carried the Scripture into every home, and wove it into the life of every English family.

Religion indeed was only one of the causes for this sudden popularity of the Bible. The book was equally important in its bearing on the intellectual development of the people. All the prose literature of England, save the forgotten tracts of Wyclif, has grown up since the translation of the Scriptures by Tyndale and Coverdale.⁶ So far as the nation at large was concerned, no history, no romance, hardly any poetry save the little-known verse of Chaucer, existed in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in the Churches. Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered round the Bible in the nave of St. Paul's, or the family group that hung on its words in the devotional exercises at home, were leavened with a new literature. Legend and annal, war song and psalm, State roll and biography, and the mighty voices of prophets, the parables of Evangelists, stories of mission journeys, of perils by the sea and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions, all were flung broadcast over minds unoccupied for the most part by any rival learning. The disclosure of the stories of Greek literature had wrought the revolution of the Renaissance. The disclosure of the older mass of Hebrew literature wrought the revolution of the Reformation. But one revolution was far deeper and wider in its effects than the other. No version could transfer to another tongue the peculiar charm of language which gave their value to the authors of Greece and Rome. Classical letters therefore remained in the possession of the learned, that is, of the few; and among these, with the exception of Colet and More,⁷ or of the pedants who revived a Pagan worship in the gardens of the Florentine Academy,⁸ their direct influence was purely intellectual. But the language of the Hebrew, the idiom of the Hellenistic Greek, lent themselves with a curious felicity to the purposes of translation. As a mere literary monument the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of

¹ *Hugo Grotius*, a famous Dutch theologian, statesman, jurist and historian.

² *Isaac Casaubon*, a French theologian and student of the classics. On coming to England in 1610 he was appointed prebendary to Canterbury and Westminster by James I. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

³ *Col. John Hutchinson* (1616-64), one of the Commissioners who signed the death warrant of Charles I, is remembered as an example of the nobler and more liberal type of Puritanism. He combined an intense religious earnestness, with a love of music and beauty, and his disposition was at once serious and free from a narrow fanaticism. The quotation is from his wife's *Memoir of Colonel Hutchinson*.

⁴ *Edmund Bonner*, Bishop of London, procured six copies of the *Great Bible* and set them in convenient places in St. Paul's cathedral, shortly after the King's proclamation of 1538, ordering a copy to be put in every church.

⁵ Copies of the Bible prepared at Geneva, 1557-60, by English refugees who had fled there in Mary's reign. They were in plain type, divided into chapters and verses, with marginal notes.

⁶ *William Tyndale* published a New Testament at Worms, 1525, and in 1530 translations of parts of the Old Testament. *Miles Coverdale* published the first complete English Bible, including the Apocrypha.

⁷ *John Colet*, Dean of St. Paul's, and *Sir Thomas More*, Chancellor under Henry VIII, were not only learned students but popular preachers and teachers as well.

⁸ Some of the enthusiasts of the new learning formed a Platonic Academy at Florence in the 15th century, and attempted to harmonize mythology and philosophy with Christianity.

the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language.

For the moment however its literary effect was less than its social. The power of the book over the mass of Englishmen showed itself in a thousand superficial ways, and in none more conspicuously than in the influence it exerted on ordinary speech. It formed, we must repeat, the whole literature which was practically accessible to ordinary Englishmen; and when we recall the number of common phrases which we owe to great authors, the bits of Shakespeare or Milton, or Dickens, or Thackeray, which unconsciously interweave themselves in our ordinary talk, we shall better understand the strange mosaic of Biblical words and phrases which coloured English talk two hundred years ago. The mass of picturesque allusion and illustration which we borrow from a thousand books, our fathers were forced to borrow from one; and the borrowing was the easier and the more natural that the range of the Hebrew literature fitted it for the expression of every phase of feeling. When Spenser poured forth his warmest love-
notes in the "Epithalamion," he adopted the very words of the Psalmist,⁹ as he bade the gates open for the entrance of his bride. When Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar, he hailed the sunburst with the cry of David: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt Thou drive them away!"¹⁰ Even to common minds this familiarity with grand poetic imagery in prophet and apocalypse gave a loftiness and ardour of expression that with all its tendency to exaggeration and bombast we may prefer to the slipshod vulgarisms of to-day.

But far greater than its effect on literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. The Bible was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman; and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. The whole moral effect which is produced now-a-days by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone; and its effect in this way however dispositionately we examine it was simply amazing. The whole nation became a church. The problems of life and death, whose questionings found no answer in the higher minds

of Shakespeare's day, pressed for an answer not only from noble and scholar but from farmer and shopkeeper in the age that followed him. The answer they found was almost of necessity a Calvinistic answer. Unlike as the spirit of Calvinism seemed to the spirit of the Renaissance, both found a point of union in their exaltation of the individual man. The mighty strife of good and evil within the soul itself which had overawed the imagination of dramatist and poet became the one spiritual conception in the mind of the Puritan. The Calvinist looked on churches and communions as convenient groupings of pious Christians; it might be as even indispensable parts of a Christian order. But religion in its deepest and innermost sense had to do not with churches but with the individual soul. It was each Christian man who held in his power the issues of life and death. It was in each Christian conscience that the strife was waged between Heaven and Hell. Not as one of a body, but as a single soul, could each Christian claim his part in the mystery of redemption. In the outer world of worship and discipline the Calvinist might call himself one of many brethren, but at every moment of his inner existence, in the hour of temptation and of struggle, in his dark and troubled wrestling with sin, in the glory of conversion, in the peace of acceptance with God, he stood utterly alone. With such a conception of human life Puritanism offered the natural form for English religion at a time when the feeling with which religion could most easily ally itself was the sense of individuality. The 'prentice who sate awed in the pit of the theatre as the storm in the mind of Lear outdid the storm among the elements passed easily into the Calvinist who saw himself day by day the theatre of a yet mightier struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, and his soul the prize of an eternal conflict between Heaven and Hell.

Walter Pater

1839-1894

THE PERCEPTION OF BEAUTY

(From the Preface to *The Renaissance*, 1873)

Many attempts have been made by writers on art and poetry to define beauty in the abstract, to express it in the most general terms, to find a universal formula for it. The value of such attempts has most often been in the suggestive and penetrating things said by the

⁹ If, as appears probable, Green had in mind *Psalm* xiv. 7, Spenser's language is similar, but not identical.

¹⁰ *Psalm*, lxxviii. 1-2.

way. Such discussions help us very little to enjoy what has been well done in art or poetry, to discriminate between what is more and what is less excellent in them, or to use words like beauty, excellence, art, poetry, with more meaning than they would otherwise have. Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract, but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not a universal formula for it, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of æsthetics.

"To see the object as in itself it really is,"¹ has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in æsthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate, to realize it distinctly. The objects with which æsthetic criticism deals, music, poetry, artistic and accomplished forms of human life, are indeed receptacles of so many powers or forces; they possess, like natural elements so many virtues or qualities. What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the æsthetic critic has to do; and, as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realise such primary data for one's self, or not at all. And he who experiences these impressions strongly, and drives directly at the discrimination and analysis of them, need not trouble himself with the abstract question what beauty is in itself, or what its exact relation to truth or experience—metaphysical questions, as unprofitable as metaphysical questions elsewhere. He may turn them all by as being, answerable or not, of no interest to him.

The æsthetic critic, then, regards all the objects with which he has to do, all works of art, and the fairer forms of nature and human life, as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations, each of a more or less peculiar and unique kind. This influence he feels, and wishes to explain, analysing it, and reducing it to its elements. To him, the picture, the landscape, the engaging personality in life or in a book, *La*

Gioconda,² The hills of Carrara,³ Pico of Mirandola,⁴ are valuable for their virtues, as we say in speaking of a herb, a wine, a gem; for the property each has of affecting one with a special unique impression of pleasure. Our education becomes complete in proportion as our susceptibility to these impressions increases in depth and variety. And the function of the æsthetic critic is to distinguish, analyse, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced. His end is reached when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element, for himself and others; and the rule for those who would reach this end is stated with great exactness in the words of a recent critic of Sainte-Beuve:—*De se borner à connaître de près les belles choses, et à s'en nourrir en exquis amateurs, en humanistes accomplis.*⁵

What is important, then, is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects. He will remember always that beauty exists in many forms. To him all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal. In all ages there have been some excellent workmen, and some excellent work done. The question he asks is always—In whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself? who was the receptacle of its refinement, its elevation, its taste? "The ages are all equal," says William Blake, "but genius is always above its age."

Often it will require great nicety to disengage this virtue from the commoner elements with which it may be found in combination. Few artists, not Goethe or Byron even, work quite cleanly, casting off all *débris*, and leaving us only what the heat of their imagination has wholly fused and transformed. Take for instance the writings of Wordsworth. The heat of his genius, entering into the substance of his work, has crystallised a part, but only a part, of it; and in that great mass of verse there is much which might well be forgotten. But scattered up and down it, sometimes fusing and transforming entire compositions, like the

¹ *La Gioconda*, the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci, better known as *Mona Lisa*.

² Carrara in northern Italy is famous for its marble.

³ An Italian philosopher and theologian (1463-94), one of the most astonishingly facile scholars of the renaissance.

⁴ "To satisfy one's self with beautiful things, and to nourish one's self as an exquisite amateur and accomplished humanist."

⁵ Matthew Arnold in his essay "On the Function of Criticism at the Present Time," in *Essays in Criticism*, First Series.

Stanzas on *Resolution and Independence* and the *Ode on the Recollections of Childhood*,⁸ sometimes, as if at random, turning a fine crystal here and there, in a matter it does not wholly search through and transform, we trace the action of his unique, incommunicable faculty, that strange, mystical sense of life in natural things, and of man's life as a part of nature, drawing strength and colour and character from local influences, from the hills and streams, and from natural sights and sounds. Well! that is the *virtue*, the active principle in Wordsworth's poetry; and then the function of the critic of Wordsworth is to trace that active principle, to disengage it, to mark the degree in which it penetrates his verse.

WORDSWORTH

(From "Wordsworth" in *Appreciations*, 1889)

Nowhere is there so perplexed a mixture as in Wordsworth's own poetry, of work touched with intense and individual power, with work of almost no character at all. He has much conventional sentiment, and some of that insincere poetic diction, against which his most serious critical efforts were directed: the reaction in his political ideas, consequent on the excesses of 1795,¹ makes him, at times, a mere declaimer on moral and social topics; and he seems, sometimes, to force an unwilling pen, and write by rule. By making the most of these blemishes it is possible to obscure the true æsthetic value of his work, just as his life also, a life of much quiet delicacy and independence, might easily be placed in a false focus, and made to appear a somewhat tame theme in illustration of the more obvious parochial virtues. And those who wish to understand his influence, and experience his peculiar savour, must bear with patience the presence of an alien element in Wordsworth's work, which never coalesced with what is really delightful in it, nor underwent his special power. Who that values his writings most has not felt the intrusion there, from time to time, of something tedious and prosaic? Of all poets equally great, he would gain most by a skillfully made anthology. Such a selection would show, in truth, not so much what he was, or to himself or others seemed to be, as what, by the more energetic and fertile quality in his writings, he was ever tending to become.

⁸ V. pp. 478, and 481, *supra*.

¹ The great reaction in Wordsworth's sentiments began in 1793, when, at the time of the Reign of Terror, England declared war against France. Wordsworth describes the effect as being a revolution in his whole moral nature.

And the mixture in his work, as it actually stands, is so perplexed, that one fears to miss the least promising composition, lest some precious morsel should be lying hidden within the few perfect lines, the phrase, the single word perhaps, to which he often works up mechanically through a poem, almost the whole of which may be tame enough. He who thought that in all creative work the larger part was *given* passively, to the recipient mind, who waited so dutifully upon the gift, to whom so large a measure was sometimes given, had his times also of desertion and relapse; and he has permitted the impress of these too to remain in his work. And this duality there—the fitfulness with which the higher qualities manifest themselves in it, gives the effect in his poetry of a power not altogether his own, or under his control, which comes and goes when it will, lifting or lowering a matter, poor in itself; so that that old fancy which made the poet's art an enthusiasm, a form of divine possession, seems almost literally true of him. . . .

But although the necessity of selecting these precious morsels for oneself is an opportunity for the exercise of Wordsworth's peculiar influence, and induces a kind of just criticism and true estimate of it, yet the purely literary product would have been more excellent, had the writer himself purged away that alien element. How perfect would have been the little treasury, shut between the covers of how thin a book! Let us suppose the desired separation made, the electric thread untwined, the golden pieces, great and small, lying apart together. What are the peculiarities of this residue? What special sense does Wordsworth exercise, and what instincts does he satisfy? What are the subjects and the motives which in him excite the imaginative faculty? What are the qualities in things and persons which he values, the impression and sense of which he can convey to others in an extraordinary way?

An intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier mind passed roughly by, is a large element in the complexion of modern poetry. It has been remarked as a fact in mental history again and again. It reveals itself in many forms; but is strongest and most attractive in what is strongest and most attractive in modern literature. . . .

It has doubtless some latent connection with those pantheistic theories² which locate an intelligent soul in material things, and have largely exercised men's minds in some modern

² i. e. theories of the all-pervading presence and influence of spirit or soul; the theory that the Divine Spirit is in all inanimate, as well as in animate creation.

systems of philosophy: it is traceable even in the graver writings of historians: it makes as much difference between ancient and modern landscape art, as there is between the rough masks of an early mosaic and a portrait by Reynolds or Gainsborough. Of this new sense, the writings of Wordsworth are the central and elementary expression: he is more simply and entirely occupied with it than any other poet, though there are fine expressions of precisely the same thing in so different a poet as Shelley. There was in his own character a certain contentment, a sort of inborn religious placidity, seldom found united with a sensibility so mobile as his, which was favourable to the quiet, habitual observation of inanimate or imperfectly animate, existence. His life of eighty years is divided by no very profoundly felt incidents: its changes are almost wholly inward, and it falls into broad, untroubled, perhaps somewhat monotonous spaces. What it most resembles is the life of one of those early Italian or Flemish painters, who, just because their minds were full of heavenly visions, passed some of them, the better part of sixty years in quiet, systematic industry. This placid life matured a quite unusual sensibility, really innate in him, to the sights and sounds of the natural world—the flower and its shadow on the stone, the cuckoo and its echo. The poem of *Resolution and Independence* is a storehouse of such records: for its fulness of imagery it may be compared to Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve*.³ To read one of his longer pastoral poems for the first time, is like a day spent in a new country: the memory is crowded for awhile with its precise and vivid incidents—

"The pliant harebell swinging in the breeze
On some grey rock;"—⁴

"The single sheep and the one blasted tree,
And the bleak music from that old stone wall;"⁵

"In the meadows and the lower ground
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn;"⁶

"And that green corn all day is rustling in thine ears."⁷

Clear and delicate at once, as he is in the outlining of visible imagery, he is more clear and delicate still, and finely scrupulous, in the noting of sounds; so that he conceives of noble

sound as even moulding the human countenance to nobler types, and as something actually "profaned" by colour, by visible form, or image. He has a power likewise of realising, and conveying to the consciousness of the reader, abstract and elementary impressions—silence, darkness, absolute motionlessness: or, again, the whole complex sentiment of a particular place, the abstract expression of desolation in the long white road, of peacefulness in a particular folding of the hills. In the airy building of the brain, a special day or hour even, comes to have for him a sort of personal identity, a spirit or angel given to it, by which, for its exceptional insight, or the happy light upon it, it has a presence in one's history, and acts there, as a separate power or accomplishment; and he has celebrated in many of his poems the "efficacious spirit," which, as he says, resides in these "particular spots" of time.

It is to such a world, and to a world of congruous meditation thereon, that we see him retiring in his but lately published poem of *The Recluse*—taking leave, without much count of costs, of the world of business, of action and ambition, as also of all that for the majority of mankind counts as sensuous enjoyment.

And so it came about that this sense of a life in natural objects which in most poetry is but a rhetorical artifice; is with Wordsworth the assertion of what for him is almost literal fact. To him every natural object seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life, to be capable of a companionship with man, full of expression, of inexplicable affinities and delicacies of intercourse. An emanation, a particular spirit, belonged, not to the moving leaves or water only, but to the distant peak of the hills arising suddenly, by some change of perspective, above the nearer horizon, to the passing space of light across the plain, to the lichenized Druidic stone even, for a certain weird fellowship in it with the moods of men. It was like a "survival," in the peculiar intellectual temperament of a man of letters at the end of the eighteenth century, of that primitive condition, which some philosophers have traced in the general history of human culture, wherein all outward objects alike, including even the works of men's hands, were believed to be endowed with animation, and the world was "full of souls"—that mood in which the old Greek gods were first begotten, and which had many strange aftergrowths.

³ V. p. 530, *supra*.

⁴ *The Prelude*, Bk. X. 277-8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. X. 319-20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Bk. IV. 332-3.

⁷ *The Pet Lamb*.

Frederick W. H. Myers

1843-1901

POETRY

(From "Virgil" in *Essays Classical and Modern*, 1883)

The range of human thoughts and emotions greatly transcends the range of such symbols as man has invented to express them; and it becomes therefore, the business of Art to use these symbols in a double way. They must be used for the direct representation of thought and feeling; but they must also be combined by so subtle an imagination as to suggest much which there is no means of directly expressing. And this can be done; for experience shows that it is possible so to arrange forms, colours, and sounds as to stimulate the imagination in a new and inexplicable way. This power makes the painter's art an imaginative as well as an imitative one; and gives birth to the art of the musician, whose symbols are hardly imitative at all, but express emotions which, till music suggests them, have been not only unknown but unimaginable. Poetry is both an imitative and an imaginative art. As a choice and condensed form of emotional speech it possesses the reality which depends on its directly recalling our previous thoughts and feelings. But as a system of rhythmical and melodious effects—not indebted for their potency to their associated ideas alone—it appeals also to that mysterious power by which mere arrangements of sound can convey an emotion which no one could have predicted beforehand, and which no known laws can explain.

It is true that the limits of melody within which poetry works are very narrow. Between an exquisite and a worthless line there is no difference of sound in any way noticeable to an unintelligent ear. For the mere volume of

sound—the actual sonority of the passage—is a quite subordinate element in the effect which is produced mainly by relations and sequences of vowels and consonants, too varying and delicate to be reproducible by rule although far more widely similar, among European languages at least, than is commonly perceived. But this limitation of the means employed, which may itself be an added source of pleasure from the sense which it may give of difficulty overcome, is by no means without analogies in other forms of art. The poet thrills us with delight by a collocation of consonants, much as the etcher suggests infinity by a scratch of the needle.

And, indeed, in poetry of the first order, almost every word (to use a mathematical metaphor) is raised to a higher power. It continues to be an articulate sound and a logical step in the argument; but it becomes also a musical sound and a centre of emotional force. It becomes a musical sound;—that is to say, its consonants and vowels are arranged to bear a relation to the consonants and vowels near it,—a relation of which accent, quantity, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration are specialized forms, but which may be of a character more subtle than any of these. And it becomes a centre of emotional force; that is to say, the complex associations which it evokes modify the associations evoked by other words in the same passage in a way quite distinct from grammatical or logical connection. The poet therefore must avoid two opposite dangers. If he thinks too exclusively of the music and the colouring of his verse—of the imaginative means of suggesting thought and feeling—what he writes will lack reality and sense. But if he cares only to communicate definite thought and feeling according to the ordinary laws of eloquent speech, his verse is likely to be deficient in magical and suggestive power.

And what is meant by the vague praise so often bestowed on Virgil's unequalled style is practically this, that he has been, perhaps, more successful than any other poet in fusing together the expressed and the suggested emotion, that he has discovered the hidden music which can give to every shade of feeling its distinction, its permanence, and its charm; that his thoughts seem to come to us on the wings of melodies prepared for them from the foundation of the world. But in treating of so airy and abstract a matter it is well to have frequent recourse to concrete illustration. Before we attempt further description of Virgil's style, or his habitual mood of mind, let us clear our conceptions by a careful examination of some few passages from his poems. As

¹ F. W. H. Myers, the son of an English clergyman and author, was born at Kewick, in the "Lake Country," in 1843. He graduated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1864, and was made Fellow and Classical lecturer in 1865. From 1872 to 1900, he was inspector of schools. He became deeply interested in the scientific investigation of the problems of the spiritual life, and he was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. Myers wrote little. A few slender volumes of verse, some essays, an admirable life of Wordsworth, and a book on personal immortality in the light of psychical research, practically complete the list. But he was a scholar and the son of a scholar; and while he lacked those popular qualities which seem necessary in our democratic age to win the applause of the crowd, his work is distinguished by that refinement and delicacy of feeling, that purity and elevation of tone, which are the rewards of true culture. A recent critic has pronounced Myers' *Virgil* and Francis Thompson's *Shelley* (p. 779) "the two best English Essays on Poetry of our day."

we turn the leaves of the book we find it hard to know on what passages it were best to dwell. What varied memories are stirred by one line after another as we read! What associations of all dates, from Virgil's own lifetime down to the political debates of today! On this line³ the poet's own voice faltered as he read. At this⁴ Augustus and Octavia melted into passionate weeping. Here is the verse⁴ which Augustine quotes as typical in its majestic rhythm of all the pathos and the glory of pagan art, from which the Christian was bound to flee. This is the couplet⁴ which Fenelon could never read without admiring tears. This line Filippo Strozzi scrawled on his prison wall, when he slew himself to avoid worse ill.⁵ These are the words⁷ which, like a trumpet-call, roused Savonarola to seek the things that are above. And this line⁶ Dante heard on the lips of the Church Triumphant, at the opening of the Paradise of God. Here, too, are the long roll of prophecies, sought tremblingly in the monk's secret cell, or echoing in the ears of emperors⁸ from Apollo's shrine, which have answered the appeal made by so many an eager heart to the Virgilian Lots—that strange invocation which has been addressed, I believe, to Homer, Virgil, and the Bible alone; the offspring of men's passionate desire to bring to bear on their own lives the wisdom and the beauty which they revered in the past, to make their prophets in such wise as they might—

"Speak from those lips of immemorial speech,
If but one word for each."

Such references might be multiplied indefinitely. But there is not at any rate need to prove the estimation in which Virgil has been held in the past. The force of that tradition would only be weakened by specification. "The chastest poet," in Bacon's words, "and royalist, Virgilius Maro, that to the memory of man is known," has lacked in no age until our own the concordant testimony of the vi-

³ *Hoc solum nomen quoniam de confuge restat.* Since this name (i. e. of guest), is all that remains of our union. *Æn.*, Bk. IV. 324.

⁴ *Tu Marcellus eris.* etc. You will be a Marcellus indeed. *Æn.*, Bk. VI. 883.

⁵ *Infelix simulacrum atque ipsius umbra Creusa.* Unhappy image and shade of Creusa herself. *Æn.*, Bk. II. 772.

⁶ *Aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum Finge deo, rebusque tibi non asper egenus.* Dare, O Guest, to despise wealth and to render yourself also worthy of a god, and do not come harshly into the surroundings of poverty. *Æn.*, Bk. VIII. 364.

⁷ *Ezoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.* May some avenger arise from my ashes. *Æn.*, Bk. IV. 625.

⁸ *Hæc fuge crudelis terras, fuge litus avarum.* Alas! fly the cruel region, fly the rapacious shore. *Æn.*, Bk. III. 44.

⁹ *Manibus date lilia plenis.* Bring lilies with generous hands. *Æn.*, Bk. VI. 884.

¹⁰ *Claudius, Hadrian, Severus,* etc. "in templo Apollinaris Cumani." In the temple of the Cumæan oracle.

lized world. No poet has lain so close to so many hearts; no words so often as his have sprung to men's lips in moments of excitement and self-revelation, from the one fierce line retained and chanted by the untameable boy who was to be Emperor of Rome,¹⁰ to the impassioned prophecy of the great English statesman¹¹ as he pleaded till morning's light for the freedom of a continent of slaves.

And those who have followed by more secret ways the influence which these utterances have exercised on mankind know well, perhaps themselves have shared, the mass of emotion which has slowly gathered round certain lines of Virgil's as it has round certain texts of the Bible, till they come to us charged with more than an individual passion and with a meaning wider than their own—with the cry of the despair of all generations,¹² with the yearning of all loves unappeased,¹³ with the anguish of all partings,¹⁴ "beneath the pressure of separate eternities."

Robert Louis Stevenson

1845-1894

ÆS TRIPLEX¹

(From *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881)

The changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a Thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege

¹⁰ *Clodius Albinus.* *Arma amens capio; nec sal rationis in armis.* Frenzied I take arms, not that there is any reason in taking arms. *Æn.* II. 315.

¹¹ Pitt.

Nasque ubi primus equis Oriens adflavit anhelis, Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.

Aurora returns to them when she leaves us, and brings them back the day, and as among us the rising day first breathes her panting steeds, etc. *Georg.*, i. 250.

¹² *Quo res summa locq, Panthi? quam prendimus arcem?* How is it with the state Panthus? How do we defend the citadel? *Æn.*, Bk. II. 322.

¹³ *Ilum absens absentem auditque videtque.* Him absent she both sees and hears. *Æn.*, iv. 83.

¹⁴ *Quem fugias extremum fato, quod te adloquor, hoc est.* Whom would you fly from? This is the last word which fate allows me to address to you. *Æn.*, vi. 466.

¹ *Æs Triplex.* (Lat., threefold brass.) The title of the essay is taken from Horace:

*Ille robur et æs triplex
Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci
Commisit pelago ratem.*

Odes, I. iii. 9-11.

"Oak and brass of triple fold
Encompassed sure that heart, which first made bold
To the raging sea to trust
A fragile bark."

Conington's trans.

and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule³ trees of mediæval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead; and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe; and even cheese and salad,

it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens² forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of pe-tards?⁴ The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle—the blue-peter⁵ might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table: a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it were a grisly

² The fate of St. Pierre (1902) affords a striking illustration of Stevenson's statement, and in the light of that recent catastrophe the whole passage becomes eloquent with a new meaning.

⁴ A kind of bomb formerly used to blow up gates and walls.

⁵ A blue flag with a white square in the centre, flown in the merchant marine as a signal that the vessel is ready to depart.

³ Trees of mourning; a name given in Scotland to trees under which the clan gathered to bewail its dead. Spelled also *dool-trees*. (Lat. *dolor*, grief, lamentation.)

warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived some one else; and when a draft might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unafrighted, and they go on, hubbubbing with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaklava⁶ was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius⁷ to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doll his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby.⁸ Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula,⁹ how he encouraged a vast concourse of holidaymakers on to his bridge over Baïa bay; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Prætorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Prætorian throws us over in the end!

We live the time that a match flickers; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of the human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder

to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyâm¹⁰ to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word *life* in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations

⁶ In the Crimea; the scene of the famous charge of the Light Brigade. Through a mistaken order, a brigade of light English cavalry was sent against three Russian batteries, and of 670, only 198 returned.

⁷ According to tradition a chasm appeared in the forum of Rome (B. C. 362), which the soothsayers declared could be closed only by casting into it Rome's greatest treasure. Thereupon Marcus Curtius, a young noble, declaring that Rome's greatest treasure was a brave citizen, mounted his horse and leaped into the gulf, which immediately closed over him.

⁸ A celebrated horse-race, held annually about the end of May, at Epsom, near London. It is one of the great English sporting events, and is said to be attended by about 300,000 people.

⁹ Emperor of Rome, 37–41 A. D., and noted for his insane cruelty and extravagance. He caused himself to be worshipped as a god, and had his horse made consul. The bridge he built from Puteoli to Baïa was three miles long. When it was finished he gave a banquet in the midst of it, which ended as Stevenson describes.

¹⁰ A Persian poet of the end of the eleventh century, made familiar to English readers by Edward Fitzgerald's translation. V. p. 658, *supra*.

does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues; nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue;¹¹ we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through, and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall—a mere bag's end,¹² as the French say—or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about

¹¹ In Spanish legend, Don Juan, after he had murdered the Commandant of Ulloa, was enticed to a certain monastery, and there killed by the monks, who asserted that the statue of the Commandant (erected there) had come down from its pedestal and dragged Juan off to Hell.

¹² The French expression is *cul de sac*.

its vanity and brevity; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer;¹³ and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour¹⁴ and his heart, bound with triple brass,¹⁵ did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcase, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist¹⁶ who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equally forward over blood and rain. To be overwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the

¹³ Dr. Samuel Johnson.

¹⁴ In 1773, Dr. Johnson, aged 64, accompanied by his faithful Boswell, made his celebrated tour to Scotland and the Hebrides.

¹⁵ V. p. 772, n. 1.

¹⁶ Dr. Joseph Black (1728-1799), professor of chemistry at Edinburgh.

world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than a wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and swashes through incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of all of us; unfortunate surprises gird him round; mim-mouthed¹⁷ friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path; and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something 15 pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey!"¹⁸ cried Nelson in his 20 bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down 25 the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through 30 triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny post card? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray 35 and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course?¹⁹ Who would find heart enough to begin to live if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is! To forego all the issues of 40 living in a parlour with a regulated temperature—as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it 45 were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. 50 It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in

the sickroom. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished 5 in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their 10 whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of 15 mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once 20 tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When 25 the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young,²⁰ I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has 30 not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a tip-toe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, 35 the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory,²¹ this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

PULVIS ET UMBRA¹

(From *Across the Plains*, 1892)

We look for some reward of our endeavours 45 and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the

¹⁷ Attributed to Menander. Cf. Plautus, *Bacchides*, iv. 7. 18.

¹⁸ Cf. Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, etc.

¹⁹ But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

²⁰ Dust and a shade.

Nos, ubi decidimus.

*Quo, pater Æneas, quo disces Tullius et Ancus,
Pulvis et umbra sumus.*

Hor., *Od.* IV. 7. 14.

(We, when we go down whither the father Æneas, whither the rich Tullius and Ancus [have gone], we shall become dust and a shade.)

¹⁷ *Mim*, is a Scotch form of *mum*. "Reserved in discourse, implying an affectation of modesty." *Cent. Dict.*

¹⁸ Commonly stated to have been Nelson's exclamation before the Battle of the Nile.

¹⁹ Thackeray left *Dennis Duval* unfinished, and Dickens *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Stevenson, himself "fell in midcourse," leaving *St. Ives* to be completed, and that remarkable fragment, *Weir of Hermiston*.

sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalised, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing 15 gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

I

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this 25 solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and bring us forth and beat us down; gravity that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying 30 inversely as the squares of distances; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH_3 and H_2O .² Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies;³ science carries us into zones 35 of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds 40 and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter: a thing which no 45 analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarities can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life; seized through all its 50 atoms with a pediculous malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through 55 varying stages. This vital putrescence of the

dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check 5 our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean: the moving sand is infected with lice; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms; even in the hard rock the crystal is 10 forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the inversion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds: a thing so inconceivable that, if it be well considered, the heart stops. To 20 what passes with the anchored vermin, we have little clue; doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies: it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and when it is gone, its image 30 kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process, growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert; for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotatory island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable 45 speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

II

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust,⁴ lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like 55 grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter

² NH_3 and H_2O , i. e. ammonia and water.

³ Oh, that way madness lies, let me shun that.

Learn, III. iv. 21.

⁴ "What a piece of work is man! . . . and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust!" etc. *Ham.* III. ii. 295. The style and rhythm of Stevenson's passage are strikingly close to the famous speech of *Hamlet*, from which the above lines are quoted.

in his face; a thing to set children screaming;—and yet looked at nearer, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg¹ or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought:—Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little:—But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents; of organised injustice, cowardly violence and treacherous crime; and of the damning imper-

fections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiring, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight, he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he for all that simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employment, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches:—everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffactual goodness:—ah! if I could show you this! If I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks; still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape,

¹ To do battle for an egg.

Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell.

Ham., IV. iv. 51.

² Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.

Othello, III. iii. 181.

and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: That this ennobled lemur,⁷ this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, 10 and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine, received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step 15 farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. 20 Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where 25 the ground is blackened with the swarming ant: a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered polities and rigorous justice, 30 we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of well-doing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from 35 the frosty top of Everest⁸ to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together.⁹ It is the common and 40 the god-like law of life. The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love 45 of an ideal: strive like us—like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle—to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified 50 between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the

timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, 5 and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes—God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation 10 groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: Surely not all in vain.

Francis Thompson

1859(?)–1907

THE ETERNAL CHILD IN SHELLEY

(From *Shelley*, pub. 1908)

We have among us at the present day no lineal descendant, in the poetical order, of Shelley; and any such offspring of the abounding spontaneous Shelley is hardly possible, still less likely, on account of the defect by which (we think) contemporary poetry in general, as compared with the poetry of the early nineteenth century, is mildewed. That defect is the predominance of art over inspiration, of body over soul. We do not say the defect of inspiration. The warrior is there; but he is hampered by his armour. Writers of high aim in all branches of literature, even when they are not—as Mr. Swinburne, for instance, is—lavish in expression, are generally over-deliberate in expression. Mr. Henry James, delineating a fictitious writer clearly intended to be the ideal of an artist, makes him

⁷ The *lemurs* belong to the highest order of mammalia, the *Primates*, including besides themselves, man and monkeys. They are just below the apes in the scale of evolution. In appearance they are fox-like monkeys. The name *lemur* (Lat. *lemures*, ghosts) has been given them on account of their nocturnal habits and stealthy steps.

⁸ A mountain in the Himalayas, so far as known the highest peak on the earth (29,002 feet).

⁹ *V. Rom.*, vii. 23.

¹ Francis Thompson is remembered chiefly as one of a little group of poets who challenged attention toward the close of the Victorian era. Of a mystical and deeply religious temperament, he was obviously influenced by Crashaw, and other religious poets of the early 17th century. His *Hound of Heaven* (which has been greatly over-praised) is probably his best-known poem. His essay on *Shelley* (*Dublin Review*, 1908; Scribner, 1912) is a remarkable production in an age not distinguished for the eloquence or poetic enthusiasm of its prose.

regret that he has sometimes allowed himself to take the second-best word instead of searching for the best. Theoretically, of course, one ought always to try for the best word. But practically, the habit of excessive care in word selection frequently results in loss of spontaneity; and, still worse, the habit of always taking the most ornate word, the word most removed from ordinary speech. In consequence of this, poetic diction has become latterly a kaleidoscope, and one's chief curiosity is as to the precise combinations into which the pieces will be shifted. There is, in fact, a certain band of words, the *Prætorian cohorts*¹ of poetry, whose prescriptive aid is invoked by every aspirant to the poetical purple, and without whose prescriptive aid none dares aspire to the poetical purple; against these it is time some banner should be raised. Perhaps it is almost impossible for a contemporary writer quite to evade the services of the free-lances whom one encounters under so many standards. But it is at any rate curious to note that the literary revolution against the despotic diction of Pope seems issuing, like political revolutions, in a despotism of its own making.

This, then, we cannot but think, distinguishes the literary period of Shelley from our own. It distinguishes even the unquestionable treasures and masterpieces of to-day from similar treasures and masterpieces of the precedent day; even the *Lotus-Eaters* from *Kubla-Khan*; even Rossetti's ballads from *Christabel*. It is present in the restraint of Matthew Arnold no less than in the exuberance of Swinburne, and affects our writers who aim at simplicity no less than those who seek richness. Indeed, nothing is so artificial as our simplicity. It is the simplicity of the French stage *ingénue*. We are self-conscious to the finger-tips; and this inherent quality, entailing on our poetry the inevitable loss of spontaneity, ensures that whatever poets, of whatever excellence, may be born to us from the Shelleian stock, its founder's spirit can take among us no reincarnation. An age that is ceasing to produce child-like children cannot produce a Shelley. For both as poet and man he was essentially a child.

¹ i. e. this chosen band of words stands in the same relation to the aspirant for poetical distinction, as the *Prætorian Cohort*, or *Guard* (the special guard of the Roman emperors), stood to those who aspired to the imperial purple. The *Prætorian Cohort*, created by the Emperor Augustus for his especial use and protection, gained such power in later times that it made and deposed emperors at its pleasure.

Yet, just as in the effete French society before the Revolution the Queen played at Arcadia, the King played at being a mechanic, every one played at simplicity and universal philanthropy, leaving for most durable outcome of their philanthropy the guillotine, as the most durable outcome of ours may be execution by electricity;—so in our own society the talk of benevolence and the cult of childhood are the very fashion of the hour. We, of this self-conscious, incredulous generation, sentimentalize our children, analyse our children, think we are endowed with a special capacity to sympathize and identify ourselves with children; we play at being children. And the result is that we are not more child-like, but our children are less child-like. It is so tiring to stoop to the child, so much easier to lift the child up to you. Know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of to-day. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief, it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space;² it is

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour;³

It is to know not as yet that you are under sentence of life, nor petition that it be commuted into death. When we become conscious in dreaming that we dream, the dream is on the point of breaking; when we become conscious in living that we live, the ill dream is but just beginning. Now if Shelley was but too conscious of the dream, in other respects Dryden's false and famous line⁴ might have been applied to him with very much less than its usual untruth. To the last, in a degree uncommon even among poets, the idiosyncrasy of childhood expanded and matured without differentiation. To the last he was the enchanted child.

² "O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." *Ham.*, II. ii. 250.

³ William Blake.

⁴ The line referred to is presumably:

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied."

Absalom and Achitophel, 162.

APPENDIX

I. SELECTIONS ILLUSTRATING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

c. 737-c. 1500

CÆDMON'S HYMN

(Translated on p. 8)

nu scylun hergan hefaenricaes uard,
 metudaes mæceti end his modgidanc,
 uerc uuldurfadur; sue he uundra gihwas,
 eci dryctin, or astelidæ.
 he ærist scop aelda barnum
 heben til brofe, haleg scepen.
 Tha middungeard moncynnæs uard,
 eci dryctin, æfter tladæ
 frum foldu frea allmectig.

BEOWULF

(Translated on p. 3)

1c þæt lond-būend, lēode mine,
 sele-rædende, seggan hýrde,
 þæt hie gesāwon swylce twēgen
 micle mearc-stapan mōras healdan,
 ellor-gāstas, ðāra ðer was,
 þæs þe hie gewislicost gewitan meahton,
 idese onlicnes; ðer earm-sceapen
 on weres wæstmum wræc-lāstas træd,
 næfne hē was māra þonne ænig man ðer,
 þone on gēar-dagum Grendel nemdon
 fold-būende; nō hie fæder cunnon,
 hwæþer him ænig was ær æcenned
 dyrnra gāsta. Hie dýgel lond
 warigeaþ, wulf-hleoþu, windige næssas,
 frēcne fen-gelād, ðær fyrgen-strēam
 under næssa genipu niþer gewīteþ,
 flōd under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon
 mil-gemearces, þæt se mere standeþ,
 ofer þām hongiaþ hrimge bearwas,
 wudu wyrutum fæst, wæter oferhelmaþ.
 þær mæg nihta gehwām nið-wundur sēon,
 fyr on flode. Nō þæs frōd leofaþ
 gūmena bearna, þæt þone grund wite.
 Ðeah þe hæð-stapa hundum gesewened,
 heorot hornum trum, holt-wudu sēce,
 feorran gefýmed, ær hē feorh seleþ,
 aldor on ofre, ær hē in wille
 hafelan [hýdan]. Nis þæt hēoru stōw;
 þonon fð-geblond tīp āstigeþ
 won tō wolcnum, þonne wind styreþ
 lāþ gewidru, oð ðæt lyft drysmæþ,
 roderas rēotaþ. Nū is se rād gelang
 eft æt þē ānum. Eard git ne const,
 frēcne stōwe, ðær þū findan miht

fela-sinnigne secg; sēc gif þū dyrre.
 1c þē þā fēhte fēo lēanige,
 eald-gestrēonum, swā ic ær dyde,
 wundnum goldes, gyf þū on weg cymest.

1380

THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

(Translated on p. 14)

Hēr Ælhelstān cyning, eorla drihten,
 beorna bēahgifa, and his brōðor Æac,
 Eadmund sēling, ealdorlangne tīr
 geslōgon æt sēcce sweorda ecgum
 ymbe Brunanburh: bordweall clufon,
 hēowon heaþolinde hamora lāfum,
 eaforan Eadweardes; swā him gesēde was
 fram cnēomāgum, ðæt hī æt campe oft
 wið lāðra gehwāne land ealgodon,
 hord and hāmas. Hettend crungan,
 Scotta lēode and scipflotan,
 fāge fēollon: feld dennode
 secga swāte, sibban sunne āpp
 on morgentid, mære tungol,
 glād ofer grundas, Godes candel beorht,
 āces Drihtnes, oð sio sēde geacraft
 sāh tō sette. Ðær læg secg monig
 gārum āgēted, guma Norðerna
 ofer scyld scoten, swylce Scyttisc Æac
 wērig wiges sād. . . .

1345

5

10

15

1355

20

ALFRED'S PREFACE TO HIS TRANSLATION OF GREGORY'S PASTORAL CARE

(Translated on p. 20)

Ælfrēd kyning hāteþ grētan Wærferð bisceþ
 his wordum luflice and frēondlice; and ðe cýðan
 hāte ðæt mē cōm swiðe oft on gemynd, hwelce
 wiotan iu wæron giond Angelcynn, ægðer ge
 godcundra hāda ge woruldcundra; and hū ge-
 sǣliglica tīda ðā wæron giond Angelcynn; and
 hū ðā kyningas ðe ðone onwald hæfdon ðæs
 folces on ðām dagum Gode and his ārendwrecum
 hērsumedon; and hū hie ægðer ge hiora sibbe ge
 hiora siodo ge hiora onweald innanbordes gehi-
 oldon, and ðac út hiora ēdel gerýmdon; and hū
 him ðā spēow ægðer ge mid wige ge mid wis-
 dōme; and ðac ðā godcundan hādas hū giorne
 hie wæron ægðer ge ymb lāre ge ymb liornunga,
 ge ymb ealle ðā ðiowotdōmas ðe hie Gode dōn

1360

1370

1375

scoldon; and hū man ūtanbordes wīsdōm and lāre hieder on lōnd sōhte, and hū wē hīe nū sceoldon ūte begietan, gif wē hīe habban sceoldon. Swā clāne hlo was oðfeallenu on Angelecyne ðæt swiðe fēawa wāron behioan Humbre ðe hiora ðēninga, cūðen understōdan on Englisc oððe furðum an ārendgewit of Lādene on Englisc ārecean; and ic wēne ðætte nōht monige begiōndan Humbre nāren. Swā fēawa hiora wāron ðæt ic furðum ānne ānlēpne ne mæg geðencean be sūðan Tēnese, ðā ðā ic tō rice fēng. Gode ælmihtegum sie ðonc ðætte wē nū ænigne onstāl habbað lārðowa. And for ðon ic ðe bebiode ðæt ðū dō swā ic geliefe ðæt ðū wille, ðæt ðū ðe ðissa worulðinga tō ðām ge-æmetige, swā ðū oftost mæge, ðæt ðū ðone wīsdōm ðe ðe God sealde ðær ðær ðū hiene befæstan mæge, befaeste. Geðenc hwelc witu ūs ðā becōmon for ðisse worulde, ðā ðā wē hit nōhwæðer ne seife ne lufodon, ne ēac oðrum monnum ne lēfdon: ðone naman ānne wē lufodon ðætte wē Cristne wāron, and swiðe fēawe ðā ðeawas.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE, 1087

(Translated on p. 44)

Gif hwā gewilnigeð tō gewitane hū ge dōn mann hē was, oððe hwilene wurdscipe hē hæfde, oððe hū fela lande hē wære hlāford, ðonne wille wē be him āwritan swā swā wē hine āgeaton ðe him lōcōdan and oðre hwlte on his hīrde wunodan. Sē cyng Willelm þe wē embe spēcað was swiðe wīse man and swiðe rice, and wurdfulre and strengere ðonne ænig his foregenga wære. Hē was milde þām gōdum mannum þe God lufodon, and ofer eall gemett stearc þām mannum þe wiðcwædon his willan. On ðām lēan steode þe God him geūðe þæt hē mōste Engleland gegān, hē ārerde mære mynster and muncas þær gesette and wæll gegōdode. On his dagan was þæt mære mynster on Cantwarbyrig getymbrad and ēac swiðe manig oðer ofer eall Engleland. Eac þis land was swiðe āfyllad mid munecan and þā leofodan heora lif æfter scs Benedictus regule, and sē Xpēndōm was swilc on his dæge þæt ælc man hwæt his hāde tō belumpe folgade sē þe wolde. . . .

POEMA MORALE

(Modernized on p. 27)

Ich am elder þen ich was ā wintre and ā lōre;
 Ic wælde mōre þanne ic dude, mī wit āh tō bēn mōre.
 Wēl lānge ic habbe chīld ibēon ā wēorde and ēch ā dēde;
 ðēh ic bēo ā wintre ēald, tō syng I eom ā rēde.
 Cnutt lȳf ic habb ilād, and āyet mē þīncþ ic lēde;
 Ðanne ic mē biþenche, wēl sōre ic mē adrēde.
 Mēst al þæt ic habbe ydōn ys īdlesse and chilche;

Wēl late ic habbe mē biþoht, būte mē God dō milce.

Fele yðele wōrd ic habbe īqueden, syððen ic speke cūpe,
 And fale yunge dēde idō þet mē ofþīnchet nūpe.

ORMULUM

(Modernized on p. 28)

Nū brōþerr Wallterr, brōþerr mīn
 afterr þe flāshess kinde,
 andd brōþerr mīn ī Crīsttēndōm
 þurh fulluht and þurh trowwþe,
 andd brōþerr mīn ī Godess hūs
 æt o þe brīde wise,
 þurh þatt witt hafenn takenn bā
 ān reyhellbōc tō follhenn,
 unnderr kanunnkess hād andd lif
 swā summ Sannt Awwstin sette;
 icc hafe dōn swā summ þū badd
 andd fōrþedd tē þīn wille,
 icc hafe wennd īntill Ennglīssh
 goddspelless hallþe lāre,
 afterr þatt little witt þatt mē
 mīn Drihtīn hafeþ lēned.
 Ðu þohhtest tatt itt mīhtte wēl
 till mīkell frame turnnenn,
 jiff Ennglīssh folc, forr lufe off Crīst,
 itt wolde yerne lērnenn
 andd follhenn itt and fillenn itt
 wīþ þohht, wīþ wōrd, wīþ dēde;
 andd forþt yerrndesst tū þatt icc
 þiss werre þe sholde wirrkenn,
 andd icc itt hafe fōrþedd tē,
 acc all þurh Crīstess hellpe.

DEBATE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL

(Modernized on p. 30)

Als I lay in a winteris nyzt
 In a droupening bifōr þe day,
 Forsōþe I sau; a sellȳ syzt,
 A bodȳ on a bēre lay,
 Ðat hāvede bēn a mōdy knyzt
 And litel served God tō pay;
 Lōren hē hāved þe līves lyzt,
 Ðe gōst was oute and scholde away.
 Wan þe gōst it scholde gō,
 It biwente and withstōd,
 Bihēld the bodȳ bēre it cam frō
 Sō serfullȳ with drēdlȳ mōd;
 It seide, 'Welle and walawō!
 Wō worpe þī fleys, þī foule blōc'
 Wreche bodȳ wȳ list ou sō,
 Ðat wtlene wēre sō wilde and wōd?
 Ðou þat wēre woned tō rīde
 Heye on horse in and out,
 Sō kweynte knyt ikūð sō wīde,
 As a lȳon fērs and proud,

Ʒwære is al þi michele pride,
And þi lēde þat was sƷ loud ?
Ʒwi list ou þere sƷ bære Ʒ alde
Ipricked in þat pōre schroud ?

Ʒwære bēn þi wurðli wēdes, 25
Ʒi somers with þi richē beddes,
Ʒi proude palfreys and þi stēdes ?
Ʒat þou about in dester leddes ?
Ʒi faucons þat wære wont tō grēde,
And þine houndes þat þou fedde ? 30
Mē pinkē God is þē tō gnēde,
Ʒat alle þine frēnd bēon frƷ þē fledde.

Ʒwære bēon þi castles and þi toures,
Ʒi chāmbres and þi riche halles
Ipeynted with sƷ riche floures, 35
And þi riche rōbes alle ?
Ʒine cowites and þi covertoures,
Ʒi cendels and þi riche palles ?
Wreche, ful derk is nou þi bour ;
Tōmoruwe þou schalt þerinne falle.' 40

THE ANCREN RIWLE

Of Speech

(Modernized on p. 51)

Spellunge and smecchunge bēoð ine mūtē bƷðe
ase sihðe is i ðēn elen ; auh wē schullen lēten
smecchunge vort tet wē spēken of ower mēte,
and spēken nū of spellunge and tērefter of her-
runge, of bƷ imēne sume cherre ase gƷð tƷgederes.

On alre Ʒrest hwon Ʒē schulen tō oure parlūres
þurle, iwrite et ower meiden hwƷ hit bēo þet is
icumen, vor swuch hit mei bēon þet Ʒē schulen
asunien ou ; and hwon Ʒē alles mōten vorð,
creoliseð ful Ʒborne our mūtē, Ʒāren, and elen,
and tē brēoste Ʒke, and gƷð forð mid Godes drēde
tō prēoste. On Ʒrest siggeð 'confiteor,' and
þerefter 'benedicite' ; þet hē ouh tō siggen,
hercneð his wōrdes and sitteð al stille þet, hwon
hē parteð vrom ou, þet hē ne cunne ower gƷð
ne ower uvel nouðer, ne hē ne cunne ou nouðer
blāmen ne preisen. Sum is sƷ wēl ilƷred Ʒðer
sƷ wis iwōrdeð þet hē wolde þet hē wuste hit þe
sit and spēkeð touward him and Ʒelt him wōrd
aƷein wōrd, and bicumeð meister þe schulde bēon
ancne, lƷareð him þet is icumen tō lēren hire ;
wolde bi hire tēle sƷne bēon mit tē wise icūd
and icnowen. Icnowen hēo is wēl, vor þurh þet
ilke þet hēo weneð tō bēon wis ihƷlden hē un-
derstont þet hēo is sot, vor hēo hunteð efter pris
and keccheð lastunge. Vor et tē laste hwon hē
is iwend awei, 'Ʒeos ancne,' hē wule siggen, 'is
of muchele spēche.'

ALYSOUN

(Modernized on p. 42)

Bytuene Mersh ant Averil,
When spray biginneth to springe,
The lutel foul hath hire wyl
On hyre lud to syng.

Ich libbe in love-longinge 5
For semlokeat of alle thinge ;
He may me blisse bringe ;
Icham in hire baundoun,
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent ;
Ichot from hevene it is me sent ; 10
From alle wymmen mi love is lent
Ant lyht on Alysoun.

On heu hire her is fayr ynoh,
Hire browe broune, hire eye blake ;
With lossum chere he on me loh, 15
With middel smal ant wel ymake.
Bote he me wolde to hire take,
Forte buen hire owen make,
Longe to lyven ichulle forsake,
Ant feye fallen adoun. 20

Nihtes when I wende ant wake,
Forthi myn wonges waxeth won.
Levedi, al for thine sake
Longinge is ylent me on.
In world nis non so wytermon, 25
That al hire bounte telle con.
Hire swyre is whittore then the swon
Ant feyrest may in toune.

Icham for wowing al forwake,
Wery so water in wore. 30
Lest eny reve me my make,
Ichabbe y-yrned yore.
Betere is tholien whyle sore,
Then mournen evermore.
Geynest under gore, 35
Herkne to my roun.
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent ;
Ichot from hevene it is me sent ;
From alle wymmen mi love is lent
Ant lyht on Alysoun. 40

BARBOUR'S BRUCE

(Modernized on p. 55)

A ! fredome is a noble thing ! 225
Fredome mayes man to haif liking ;
Fredome all solace to man giflis ;
He levys at ess that frely levys !
A noble hart may haif nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless, 230
Gyff fredome failhe ; for fre liking
Is þarnyt our all othir thing.
Na be, that ay hass levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The angry, na the wrechyt dome, 235
That is cowplyt to foule thyridome.
Bot gyff he had assayit it,
Than all perquer he suld it wyt ;
And suld think fredome mar to pryss
Than all the gold in world that is. 240
Discoweryngis off the tothir ar.

THE PEARL

(Modernized on p. 55)

I

Perle plesaunte to Prynceys paye,
 To clany clos in golde so clere!
 Oute of Oryent, I hardyly saye,
 Ne proued I neuer her precios pere,
 So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
 So smal, so smobe her syde; were.
 Queresoeuer I jugged gemme; gaye,
 I sette hyr sengeley in syngulere.
 Alias! I leste hyr in on erbere;
 Dur; gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
 I dewyne, fordolke, of luf-daungere,
 Of þat pryuy perle wythouten spot.

III

Ðat spot of spyse; mot nede; sprede,
 Ðer such ryche; to rot is runne;
 Blome; blayke & blwe & rede
 Ðer schyne; ful schyr agayn þe sunne;
 Flor & fryte may not be fede
 Ðer hit doun drof in molde; dunne;
 For vch gresse mot grow of grayne; dede,
 No whete were elle; to wone; wonne;
 Of goud vche goude is ay bygonne;
 So semly a sede most fayly not,
 Ðat spryngande spyce; vp ne sponne
 Of þat precios perle wythouten spotte.

VII

Dubbed wern alle þo downe; syde;
 Wyth crystal klyffe; so cler of kynde.
 Holte-wode; bryst aboute hem hyde;
 Of bolle; as blwe as ble of ynde;
 As bornyst syluer þe lef onsyde;
 Ðat þike con trylle on vch a tynde
 Quen glem of glode; agayn; hem glyde;
 Wyth schymeryng achene ful schrylle pay
 schynde. 80

Ðe grauayl þat on grounde con grynde
 Wern precious perle; of Oryente;
 Ðe sunnebeme; bot blo & bynde
 In respecte of þat adubbement.

VIII

The adubbemente of þo downe; dere
 Garten my goste al greffe forsete;
 So frech flauore; of fryte; were
 As fode hit con me fayre refete.
 Fowle; þer flouen in fryth in fere,
 Of flaumbande hwe; boþe smale & grete;
 Bot sytole-stryng & gyternere
 Her reken myrþe most not retere;
 For, quen þose brydde; her wynges; bete,
 Ðay songen wyth a swete asent;
 So gracios gle coupe no mon gete
 As here & se her adubbement.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

(Modernized on p. 58)

For-þi þis ȝol ouer-jede, & þe ȝere after, 500
 & vche sesoun serlepes sued after oper;
 After crysten-masse com þe crabbed lentoun,
 Ðat frayte; flesch wyth þe fysche & fode more
 symple;
 Bot þenne þe wader of þe worlde wyth wynter
 hit þrepe;
 Colde clenge; adoun, cloude; vp-lyften, 505
 Schyre schede; þe rayn in schowre; ful warme,
 Falle; vpon fayre flat, flowre; þere schewen,
 Boþe grounde; & þe greue; grene ar her wede;
 10 Brydde; busken to bylde, & breunlych syngen.
 For solace of þe softe somer þat sues þer-after, 510
 bi bonk;
 & blossom; bolne to blowe,
 Bi rawe; rych & ronk,
 þen note; noble in-noþe,
 Ar herde in wod so wlonk. 515

After þe sesoun of somer wyth þe soft wynde;
 Quen ȝerferus syde; hym-self on sede; & erbe;
 Wela-wynne is þe wort þat woxes þer-oute,
 When þe donkande dewe drope; of þe leue;
 To bide a blisful blusch of þe bryst sunne. 520
 Bot þen hyes heruest, & hardenes hym sone,
 Warne; hym for þe wynter to wax ful rype;
 He dryues wyth droȝt þe dust for to ryse,
 Fro þe face of the folde to flye ful hye;
 35 Wrope wynde of þe welkyn wrastale; with þe
 sunne, 525
 Ðe leue; lancen fro þe lynde, & lysten on þe
 grounde,
 & al grayes þe gres, þat grene wat; ere;
 Ðenne al rype; & rote; þat ros vpon fyrst,
 & þus sirne; þe ȝere in ȝisterdaye; mony,
 & wynter wynde; asayn, as þe worlde aske; 530
 no sage.

Til meȝel-mas mone,
 Wat; cumen wyth wynter wage;
 Ðen þenkke; Gawan ful sone,
 Of his anious uyage. 535

William Langland

PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN

(Modernized on p. 60)

In A somer sesun whon softe was þe sonne,
 I schop me in-to a schroud A scheep as I were;
 85 In Habite of an Hermite vn-holy of werkes,
 Wende I wydene in þis world wondres to here.
 Bote in a Mayes Morwynyge on Maluerne
 hulles 5
 Me bi-fel a ferly A Feyrle me pouhte;
 90 I was weori of wandringe and wente me to
 reste
 Vndur a brod banke bi a Bourne syde,
 And as I lay and leonede and lokede on þe
 watres,
 95 I slumberede in A slepyng hit sownede so murie.
 Denne gon I Meeten A Meruelous sweuene. 11

Dat I was in A Wildernesse wuste I neuer
where,
And as I beo-heold in-to þe Est an-hei; to þe
sonne,

I sauh a Tour on A Toft triysly I-maket;
A Deop Dale bi-neoþe A dungun þer-Inne, 15
With deop dich and derk and dredful of siht.
A Feir feld ful of folk fond I er bi-twene,
Of alle maner of men þe mene and þe riche,
Worthinge and wondringe as þe world askeþ.
Summe putten hem to þe plou; and pleiden
hem ful seldene, 20

In Eringe and in Sowynge swonken ful harde,
Dat monie of þeos wasturs In Glotonye dis-
truen.

And Summe putten hem to pruide apparaylden
hem þerafter,

In Cuntinaunce of cloþinge queinteliche de-
Gysset;

To preyere and to penaunce putten heom
monye, 25

For loue of vr lord liueden ful harde,
In Hope for to haue Heuene-riche bliße;
As Anores and Hermytes þat holdeþ hem in
heore Celles,

Coueyte not in Cuntre to carien a-boute 29
For non likerous lyfode heore licam to please.
And summe chosen Chaffare to cheeuen þe
bette,

As hit semeþ to vre siht þat suche men scholden;
And summe Murþes to maken as Munstrals
cunne,

And gete gold wiþ here gle gittles, I trowe.
Bote lapers and langelers Iudas Children, 35
Fouden hem Fantasyes and foolles hem
maaden,

And habbeþ wit at heor wille to worchen ȝif
hem luste.

Dat Poul precheþ of hem I dar not preouen
heere;

Qui loquitur turpiloquium Hee is Luciferes
hyne.

John Wyclif

(Modernized on p. 78)

A schort reule of lffe for ich man in general,
and for prestis and lordis and laboreris in special,
how ich man schal be savyd in his degre, if he
wille hym silf.

First, whanne þou risist or fulli wakist, þenk
on þe goodnesse of God; for his owne goodnesse
and non oþer nede he made al þing of nouȝt, boþe
angels and men, and alle oþer creatures good in
her kynde. þe secunde tyme þenk on þe gret
passioun and wilful deþ þat Crist sufferid for man-
kynde. When no man miȝt make satisfaccioun
for þe gilt of Adam and Eve, and oþer moo, ne
non angel owe no myȝt make aseþ þerfor, þan
Crist of his endeles charite sufferid so gret pas-
sioun and peynful deþ, þat no creature myȝt
suffre soo myche. And þenk þe þrid tyme, how
God haþ savyd þe fro deþ and oþer miscevis, and
sufferid many þousyndis to be lost þat niȝt sum
in watir, sume in fier, sume bi sodeyn deþ, and

sume to be dampnyd wiþouten ende. And for
þese goodnesse and mercies þanke þi God wiþ
al þin hert, and preye hym to ȝive þe grace to
spende, in þat day and evernore, all þe miȝtis
of þi soule, as mynde, reson, witt and wille, and
alle þe miȝtis of þi bodi, as strengþe, bewte, and
þi five wittis, in his servise and his worschipe;
and in no þing forfete ȝenis his comaundemen-
tis, but redi to performe werkis of merci, and
to ȝive good ensample of holi lif, boþe in word
and in dede, to alle men aboute þe.

William Dunbar

DANCE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

(Modernized on p. 84)

Off Februar the fyiftene nycht,
Full lang befor the dayis lycht,
I lay in till a trance;
And then I saw baith hevin and hell: 5
Me thoct, amangis the feyndis fell,
Mahoun gart cry ane dance
Off schrewis that wer nevir schrevin,
Aganis the feist of Fasternis evin,
To mak thair observance;
He bad gallandis ga graith a gyiss, 10
And kast vp gamountis in the skyiss,
That last came out of France. . . . 12

"Lat se," quod he, "Now quha begynnis;" 19
With that the fowll Sevin Deidly Synnis
Begowth to leip at anis.
And first of all in dance wes Pryd,
With bair wyld bak and bonet on syd,
Lyk to mak vaistie wanis;
And round about him, as a quheill, 25
Hang all in rumpillis to the heill
His kethat for the nanis:
Mony prout trumpour with him trippit
Throw skaland fyre, ay as thay skippit
Thay gyrnd with hiddouss granis. 30

Than Yre come in with sturt and stryfe;
His hand wes ay vpoun his knyfe,
He brandeist lyk a beir:
Bostaris, braggaris, and barganeris,
Eftir him passit in to pairis, 35
All bodin in feir of weir;
In lakkis, and stryppis and bonnettis of steill,
Thair leggis wer chen eit to the heill,
Ffrawart wes thair affair:
Sum vpoun vdir with brandis beft, 40
Sum jaggit vthiris to the heft,
With knyvis that scherp coud scheir.

William Carton

PREFACE TO MALORY'S LE MORTE DARTHUR

(Modernized on p. 110)

After that I had accompysshed and fynnyshed
dyuers hystories as wel of contemplacyon as of
other hystorial and worldly actes of grete con-

querours & prynces, and also certeyn bookes of ensaumples and doctryne, many noble and dyuers gentylmen of thys royaume of Englonde camen and demaunded me many and oftymes, wherfore that I haue not do made & enprynte the noble hystorye of the saynt greal and of the moost renommed crysten kyng Arthur, whyche ought moost to be remembered emonge vs englysshe men tofore al other crysten kynges; for it is notoyrly knowen thorough the vnyuersal world that there been ix worthy & the best that euer were. That is to wete thre paynmys, thre Iewes and thre crysten men. As for the paynmys they were tofore the Incarnacyon of Cryst, whiche were named, the fyrst Hector of Troye, of whome thystorye is comen bothe in balade and in prose. The second Alysander the grete, & the thyrd Iulys Cezar Emperour of Rome of whome thystories ben wel kno and had. And as for the thre Iewes whyche also were tofore thyncarnacyon of our lord of whome the fyrst was Duc Iosue whyche brought the chyldren of Israel in to the londe of byheste; the second Dauyd king of Iherusalem, & the thyrd Iudas Machabeus, of these thre the byble reherceth al theyr noble hystories & actes. And sythe the sayd Incarnacyon haue ben thre noble crysten men stalled and admytted thorough the vnyuersal world in to the nombre of the ix beste & worthy, of whome was fyrst the noble Arthur, whos noble actes I purpose to wryte in thys present book here folowyng. The second was Charleymayn or Charles the grete, of whome thys-

torye is had in many places bothe in frensshe and englysshe; and the thyrd and last was Godefray of boloyne, of whos actes & lyf I made a book vnto the excellent prynce and kyng of noble memorye kyng Edward the fourth. The sayd noble lentylnen Instantly requyred me temprynte thystorye of the sayd noble kyng and conquerour kyng Arthur, and of his knyghtes wyth thystorye of the saynt greal, and of the deth and endyng of the sayd Arthur, affermyng that I ouyt rather tenprynte his actes and noble feates, than of godefroye of boloyne, or ony the other eyght, consyderyng that he was a man borne wythin this royaume and kyng and Emperour of the same; and that there ben in frensshe dyuers and many noble volumes of his actes and also of his knyghtes.

THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT

(Modernized on p. 90)

The Perse ow't off Northumbarlonde,
and avowe to God mayd he
That he wold hunte in the mowntayns
off Chyviat within days thre,
In the magger of doughte Dogles,
and all that ever with him be.

5

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:
'Be my feth,' sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
'I will let that hontyng yf that I may.'

10

(It must be remembered that the English language and orthography did not remain stationary after 1500; but that they have been, and, indeed, are still, subject to a continual, if unobtrusive, change. English spelling has changed since the sixteenth century and it is still changing; old words, old manners of expression, are constantly falling into disuse and being replaced by new. We sometimes forget that we commonly read our Shakespeare and Milton in a modernized spelling. But the changes in the language since 1500 have been, comparatively speaking, so trifling that it has not been thought necessary to include any examples of the original texts later than that date.)

II. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE EARLY DRAMA

NOAH'S FLOOD

(A Miracle Play, from the Chester Plays, Early XIV Century)

GOD. I, God, that all this world hath wrought,
Heaven and earth, and all from naught,
I see my people in deed and thought
Are set foul in sin;
My ghost shall not linger in mon,¹
That through flesh-liking is my son,
But till six score years be come and gone,
To look if they will blynne.²
Man that I made I will destroy,
Beast, worm, and fowl that fly;
For on earth they me deny,
The folk that are thereon;
It harms me so most hurtfully
The malice that doth now multiply,

5

10

That sore it grieves me heartily
That ever I made mon.
Therefore, Noah, my servant free,
That righteous man art, as I see,
A ship soon shalt thou make to thee
Of trees both dry and light;
Little chambers therein thou make,
And binding plaster thou must take,
Within and without thou must not slake.
To anoint it with all thy might.
Three hundred cubits it shall be long,
And fifty broad to make it strong;
Of height fifty the meete thou fonge.⁴
Thus measure thou it about.
One window work in through thy wit,
A cubit of length and breadth make it,

15

20

25

30

¹ Man.
measure.

² Cease.

³ Slack.

⁴ Take thou

- Upon the side a door thall sit
For to come in and out.
Eating places make thou also,
Three roofed places in a row :
For with water I mean to slow¹ 35
Man that I can make ;
Destroyed all the world shall be,
Save thou, thy wife, and children three,
And their wives also with thee,
Shall saved be for thy sake. 40
- NOAH. O Lord, I thank thee loud and still,
That to me art in such good will,
And spar'st me and my household to spill,²
As I now truly find.
Thy bidding Lord I shall fulfil, 45
And never more thee grieve nor grill,³
That such grace hath sent me till⁴
Among all mankind.
Have done, you men and women all,
Hie you, lest this water fall, 50
To build this ship, chamber and hall
As God hath bidden us do.
- SHEM. Father, I am already bowne,⁵
An axe I have, by my crown !
As sharp as any in all this town,
For to go thereto.
- HAM. I have a hatchet, wonder keen,
To bite well, as may be seen,
A better ground, as I ween,
Is not in all this town. 60
- JAPHET. And I can make well a pin,
And with this hammer knock it in :
Go we to work without more din,
And I am ready bowne.
- NOAH'S WIFE. And we shall bring timber too,
For we have nothing else to do, 66
Women be weak to undergo
Any great travail.
- SHEM'S WIFE. Here is a good hacking stock,
On this one you may hew and knock, 70
None shall be idle in this flock ;
Nay, now may no man fail.
- HAM'S WIFE. And I will go and gather alyche,⁶
The ship for to caulk and pitch,
Anointed must be every stiche,⁷ 75
Board, and tree, and pin.
- JAPHET'S WIFE. And I will gather chippes⁸
here
To make a fire for you in feare,⁹
For to make ready your dinner,
Against your coming in. 80
- Then Noah beginneth to build the Ark, and speaketh Noah.*
- NOAH. Now, in the name of God I will begin
To make the ship that we shall in,
That we may be ready for to swim
At the coming of the flood.
These boards here I pin¹ together, 85
To bear us safely from the weather,
That we may row both hither and thither
And safe be from the flood.
Of this tree will I make the mast,
Tied with cables that will last, 90
With a sail yard for each blast,
And each thing in their kind :
With top-castill² and bowsprit,
With cords and ropes I hold all meete,
To sail forth at the next weat,³ 95
This ship is at an end.
Wife, in this vessel we shall be kept :
My children and thou, I would in ye leapt.
- NOAH'S WIFE. In faith, Noah, I had as lief
thou slept !
For all thy good advice, 100
I will not do after thy rede.⁴
- NOAH. Good wife, do now as I thee bid.
- NOAH'S WIFE. By Christ ! not ere I see more
need,
Though thou stand all the day and stare.
- NOAH. Lord, that women be crabbed aye, 105
And none are meek I dare well say,
This is well seen by me to-day,
Bear witness of it each one.
Good wife, let be all this beare,⁵
That thou makest in this place here ; 110
For all well know that thou art master,
And so thou art, by Saint John !
- Then Noah with all his family shall make a sign as though they wrought upon the ship with divers instruments and after that God shall speak to Noah, saying :*
- GOD. Noah, take thou thy company,
And in the ship hie that you be,
For none so righteous man to me 115
Is now on earth living ;
Of clean beasts with thee thou take,
Seven and seven, before thou slake,⁶
He and she, make to make,⁷
Hasten that thou bring in. 120
Of beasts unclean, two and two,
Male and female, but no more ;
Of clean fowls seven also,
The he and she together ;
Of fowls unclean, twain, and no more, 125
As I of the beasts said before ;
That man be saved through my lore,⁸
Against I send this weather.
Of all meats that may be eaten,
Into the ship, look there be gotten ; 130
For that may be no way forgotten,

¹ Slay. ² I.e. from being killed. ³ Grumble.
⁴ To me. ⁵ Prepared. ⁶ Plaster. ⁷ Stick.
⁸ Chips. ⁹ I.e. and your companions.

¹ Nail. ² Topmast. ³ Wet. ⁴ Counsel.
⁵ Noise. ⁶ Slack. ⁷ Mate to mate. ⁸ Knowl-
edge.

- And do all this bydene,¹
To sustain man and beast therein,
Till the water cease and blyne.²
This world ye filled full of sin,
And that is now well seen.
Seven days be yet coming,
You shall have space them in to bring;
After that it is my liking
Mankind for to annoy.
Forty days and forty nights,
Rain shall fall for their unrights,
And that I have made through my mights,
Now think I to destroy.
- NOAH. Lord to thy bidding I am beane,³
Seeing no other grace will gain,
It will I fulfil fayne.⁴
For gracious I thee find;
A hundred winter and twenty
This ship making tarried have I.
If through amendment thy mercy
Would fall to mankind,
Have done, you men and women all,
Hie you lest this water fall,
Let each beast be installed
And into the ship be brought;
Of clean beasts seven shall be,
Of unclean two, this God bade me;
The flood is nigh, you may well see,
Therefore tarry you nought.
- Then Noah shall go into the Ark with all his family, except his wife; and the Ark must be boarded round about, on the boards all the birds and beasts are painted.*
- SHEM. Sir, here are lions, leopards, in,
Horses, mares, oxen, and swine;
Goat and calf, sheep and kine;
Here sitting you may see.
- HAM. Camels, asses, man may find,
Buck and doe, hart and hinde,
And beasts of all sorts and kind,
Here be, as thinketh me.
- JAPHET. Here take cats, and dogs also,
Otter, and fox, and fulmarts too;
Hares hopping gaily can go,
Here have cabbage for to eat.
- NOAH'S WIFE. And here bears and wolves are set,
Apes, owls, and marmosette,
Weasels, squirrels, and ferret,
Here they eat their meat.
- SHEM'S WIFE. Here are beasts in this house,
Here cats do make it crouse,⁵
Here a rat, here a mouse,
That stand nigh together.
- HAM'S WIFE. And here are fowls lesse and more,¹
Herons, cranes, and bittor,²
Swans, peacocks, and them before
Meat for this weather.
- JAPHET'S WIFE. Here are cocks, kites, crows,
Rooks, ravens, many roes,
Cuckoos, curlews, who ever knows
Each one in his kind.
Here are doves, ducks, and drakes,
Red-shanks running through the lakes,
And each bird that music makes,
In this ship you may find.
- NOAH. Wife, come in: why stand'st thou there?
Thou art ever froward, I dare will swear;
Come in, in God's name, half time it were,
For fear lest that we drown.
- NOAH'S WIFE. Yea, sir, set up your sail
And row forth with evil hail³
For withouten any fail
I will not out of this town.
But⁴ I have my gossip every one,
One foot further I will not gone:
They shall not drown, by Saint John!
I may save their life.
They loven me full well, by Christ!
But thou let them into thy chelste⁵
Else row now when thou list,
And get thee a new wife.
- NOAH. Shem, son, lo! thy mother is wrawe:⁶
Forsooth, such another I do not know.
- SHEM. Father, I shall fetch her in, I trowe,
Withouten any fail,—
Mother, my father doth for thee send,
And bids thee into yonder ship wend
For we be ready to sail.
- NOAH'S WIFE. Shem, go again to him, I say;
I will not go therein to-day.
- NOAH. Come in, wife, in twenty devil's way!
Or else stand there without.
- HAM. Shall we fetch her in?
- NOAH. Yea, sons, in Christ's blessing and mine!
I would you hied you betime,
For of this flood I am in doubt.

THE GOOD GOSSIP'S SONG

- The flood comes fleeting in full fast,
On every side, and spreads full far;
For fear of drowning, I am aghast;
Good gossips, let us draw near.
And let us drink e'er we depart,
For oft times we have done so;
For at a draught thou drink'st a quart,
And so will I do ere I go.

¹ Immediately. ² Decline. ³ Obedient.
⁴ Gladly. ⁵ Noisy.

¹ Big and little. ² Bittern. ³ Bad luck.
⁴ Unless. ⁵ Ark. ⁶ Angry.

Here is a bottle full of Malmsey,¹ good and strong,
It will rejoice both heart and tongue ;
Though Noah think us never so long,
Here we will drink together. 235

JAPHET. Mother, we pray you all together,
For we are here, your own childer,²
Come into the ship for fear of the weather ;
For His love that you bought !

NOAH'S WIFE. That will I not, 'or all your call,
But I have my gossips all. 241

SEEM. In faith, mother, yet ye shall
Whether you will or not.³

NOAH. Welcome, wife, into this boat.

NOAH'S WIFE. Have thou *that*, for thy note.⁴

NOAH. Ha-ha ! marry ! this is hot ! 246
It is good for to be still.
Ha ! children, methinks my boat removes,⁵
Our tarrying here highly me grieves,
Over the land the water spreads : 250
God do as he will.

Ah ! great God that art so good ;
Who worketh not thy will is wood ⁶ —
Now all this world is in a flood. 255

As well I see in sight.
This window I will shut anon,
And into my chamber I will gone,
Till this water, so great a one,
Be slackened through thy might.

*Then shall Noah shut the window of the Ark,
and for a little space be silent, and afterwards,
looking round about, shall say :*

NOAH. Now forty days are fully gone, 260
Send a raven I will anon
If anywhere earth, tree or stone,
Be dry in any place.
And if this fowl come not again
It is a sign, sooth to sayne,⁷ 265
That dry it is on hill or plain,
And God hath done some grace.

*Then dismissing the raven, and holding the
dove in his hands he says :*

NOAH. Ah, Lord, wherever this raven be
Somewhere is dry, well I see ;
But yet a dove, by my loyalty,⁸ 270
After I will send.
Thou wilt turn again to me :
For of all fowls that do fly
Thou art most meek and gentle.

*Then he sends forth the dove, and there shall
be in the ship another dove bearing an olive twig*

*in its bill ; and some one shall pull this down
from the mast by means of a cord into the hand
of Noah ; and afterwards Noah shall say :*

NOAH. Ah Lord, blessed be thou aye, 275
That me hast comforted to-day ;
By this sight, I well may say,
This flood begins to cease.
My sweet dove to me brought hase ¹
A branch of olive from some place, 280
This betokeneth God has done us some grace
And is a sign of peace.

Ah Lord, honoured most thou be,
All earth is drying now I see,
But yet, till thou command me, 285
Hence will I not hie.
All this water is away,
Therefore as soon as I may
Sacrifice I shall do in faye ²
To thee, devoutly. 290

GOD. Noah, take thy wife anon,
And thy children, every one,
Out of the ship thou shalt be gone
And they all with thee.
Beasts, and all that can fly 295
Out anon they shall hie
On earth to grow and multiply ;
I will that it be so.

NOAH. Lord I thank thee through thy might,
Thy bidding shall be done in height, 300
And as fast as I may dighte ³
I will do thee honour.
And to thee offer sacrifice,
Therefore comes in all this wise :
For of these beasts that been hise ⁴ 305
Offer I will this hour.

*Then departing from the Ark with all his
family, he shall receive the birds and beasts,
and make offering and sacrifice.*

NOAH. Lord, God in majesty,
That such grace hath granted me,
Where all was lost safe to be ;
Therefore now I am bound 310
My wife, my children, and company
With sacrifice to honor thee
Of beasts, fowls, as thou mayest see,
And full devotion.

GOD. Noah, to me thou art full able, 315
And thy sacrifice acceptable,
For I have found thee true and stable ;
On thee now must I think.
To curse the earth I will no more
For men's sins that grieve me sore, 320
For from youth man full yore
Has been inclined to sin.
You shall now grow and multiply,
And earth again to edify,
Each beast, and fowl that may fly 325
Shall be afeard of you ;
And fish in sea that may fleete ⁵

¹ A kind of wine. ² Children. ³ It is supposed that Noah's Wife is brought in by force, and that she strikes Noah. ⁴ Head. ⁵ It moves. ⁶ Foolish. ⁷ Say. ⁸ By my faith.

¹ Has. ² Faith. ³ Make ready. ⁴ His. ⁵ Float.

Shall sustain you, I thee behett¹
To eat of them ye ne lette²
Which clean are, you may know;
Whereas you have eaten before
Trees and roots, since you were bore³
Of clean beasts, now less and more,
I give you leave to eat.
Save blood and flesh, both in fear,
Of rouse dead carrion that is here,
Eat not of that, in no manere,
For that aye you shall leave.
Man slaughter also you shall flee,
For that is not pleasant unto me;
He that sheddeth blood, he or she,
Anywhere among mankind,
That blood foul shed shall be
And vengeance have, that men shall see;
Therefore beware now all ye,
You fall not into that sin.
A covenant, Noah, with thee I make,
And all thy seed, for thy sake,
Of such vengeance for to slake,
For now I have my will;
Here I promise thee a heiste,⁴
That man, woman, fowl, nor beast
With water, while this world shall last,
I will no more spill.⁵
My bow between you and me
In the firmament shall be,
By true token that you shall see,
That such vengeance shall cease.
That man nor woman shall never more
Be wasted with water as hath before;
But for sin that grieveth me sore
Therefore this vengeance was.
Where clouds in the welkin been,
That same bow shall be seen,
In token that my wrath and teem⁶
Shall never thus wrecked be.
The string is turned towards you
And toward me is bent the bow.
That such weather shall never show,
And this I promise thee.
My blessing Noah, I give thee here,
To thee, Noah, my servant dear;
For vengeance shall no more appear,
And now farewell, my darling dear.

The End. By the grace of God, by me
George Bellin 1592. Come, Lord Jesus, come
quickly.

EVERYMAN

(Morality Play, late 15th Century ?)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MESSINGER	COUSIN	STRENGTH
GOD	GOODS	DISCRETION
DEATH	GOOD DEEDS	FIVE-WITS
EVERYMAN	KNOWLEDGE	ANGEL
FELLOWSHIP	CONFESSION	DOCTOR
KINDRED	BEAUTY	

¹ Promise. ² Do not hesitate. ³ Born.
⁴ Promise. ⁵ Destroy. ⁶ Sorrow.

HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE HOW THE HIGH
FATHER OF HEAVEN SENDETH DEATH TO
SUMMON EVERY CREATURE TO COME AND
GIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR LIVES IN THIS
WORLD, AND IS IN MANNER OF A MORAL
PLAY.

MESSINGER

I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play;
The Summoning of Everyman called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows,
How transitory we be all day:
This matter is wonders precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith: man, in the beginning
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay:
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity,
Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty
Will fade from thee as flower in May;
For ye shall hear, how our Heaven King
Callesh Everyman to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.

God speaketh

I perceive here in my Majesty
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they knew me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind. . . .
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appaireth¹ fast,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of every man's person. . . .
They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On every man living without fear.
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

DEATH

Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commadment to fulfil.

GOD

Go thou to Everyman,
And show him in my name
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
Without delay or any tarrying.

DEATH

Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly out-search both great and small;

¹ Grows worse.

Every man will I beset that liveth beastly,
 Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly :
 He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
 His sight to blind, and fro heaven to depart,
 Except that alms be his good friend,
 In hell for to dwell, world without end.
 Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking :
 Full little he thinketh on my coming :
 His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure ;
 And great pain it shall cause him to endure
 Before the Lord, heaven's King.
 Everyman, stand still ; whither art thou going
 Thus gaily ? Hast thou thy Maker forgot ?

EVERYMAN

Why askest thou ? Wouldest thou wit ?

DEATH

Yea, sir, I will show you ; in great haste I am
 sent to thee
 Fro God out of his Majesty.

EVERYMAN

What ! sent to me ?

DEATH

Yea, certainly :
 Though you have forgot him here,
 He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere ;
 As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

EVERYMAN

What desireth God of me ?

DEATH

That shall I show thee ;
 A reckoning he will needs have
 Without any longer respite.

EVERYMAN

To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave ;
 This blind matter troubleth my wit.

DEATH

On thee thou must take a long journey,
 Therefore thy book of count with thee thou
 bring.

For turn again thou cannot by no way :
 And look thou be sure of thy reckoning ;
 For before God thou shalt answer and show
 Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few,
 How thou hast spent thy life, and in what
 wise,

Before the chief lord of paradise.
 Have ado that we were in that way,
 For, wit thou well, thou shalt make none
 attorney.

EVERYMAN

Full unready I am such reckoning to give :
 I know thee not ; what messenger art thou ?

DEATH

I am Death, that no man dreadeth ;
 For every man I 'rrest, and no man spareth,
 For it is God's commandment
 That all to me should be obedient.

EVERYMAN

O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in
 mind ;
 In thy power it lieth me to save ;
 Yet of my good will I give thee, if thou will be
 kind,
 Yea, a thousand pounds shalt thou have,
 And [thou] defer this matter till another day.

DEATH

Everyman, it may not be by no way ;
 I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
 Ne by pope, emperor, king, duke, ne princes ;
 For, and I would receive gifts great,
 All the world I might get ;
 But my custom is clean contrary ;
 I give thee no respite, come hence, and not tarry.

EVERYMAN

Alas ! shall I have no longer respite ?
 I may say Death giveth no warning :
 To think on thee it maketh my heart sick ;
 For all unready is my book of reckoning :
 But [for] twelve year and I might have abiding,
 My counting-book I would make so clear,
 That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
 Wherefore, Death, I pray thee for God's mercy,
 Spare me, till I be provided of remedy.

DEATH

Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray :
 But haste thee lightly, that thou wert gone this
 journey ;
 And prove thy friends, if thou can ;
 For, wit thou well, the tide abideth no man,
 And in the world each living creature
 For Adam's sin must die of nature.

EVERYMAN

Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,
 And my reckoning surely make,
 Show me, for Saint Charity,
 Should I not come again shortly ?

DEATH

No, Everyman, and thou be once there,
 Thou mayest never more come here,
 Trust me verily.

EVERYMAN

O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
Have mercy on me in this most need.
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance, that way me to lead?

DEATH

Yea, if any be so hardy,
That would go with thee, and bear thee
company:
Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
What, weenest thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?

EVERYMAN

I had ween'd so verily.

DEATH

Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;
For, as soon as thou art gone,
Another awhile shall have it, and then go
therefro,
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad, thou hast thy wits
five,
And here on earth will not amend thy life;
For suddenly I do come.

EVERYMAN

O wretched caltiff, whither shall I flee?
That I might escape this endless sorrow!
Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement.

DEATH

Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite;
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement.
And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayest say, this is the day
That no man living may 'scape away.

EVERYMAN

Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep:
Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
How shall I do now for to excuse me!
I would to God I had never be got;
To my soul a full great profit it had be;
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth: Lord, help, that all wrought!
For though I mourn, it availeth nought:
The day passeth, and is almost ago;

I wot not well what for to do.
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What, and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
And showed him of this sudden chance!
For in him is all mine affiance;
We have in the world so many a day
Be good friends in sport and play.
I see him yonder certainly;
I trust that he will bear me company,
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow. . . .

[Here Everyman (as he relates in the following speech) appears in vain to Fellowship, to his Kinsmen, and to Goods, or Worldly Riches, who in turn refuse to accompany him on his journey.]

EVERYMAN

Oh, to whom shall I make my moan,
For to go with me in that heavy journey?
First Fellowship he said he would with me gone;
His words were very pleasant and gay,
But afterward he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
And also they gave me words fair,
They lacked no fair speaking;
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,
In hope to have found comfort; but there had I
least:
For my Goods sharply did me tell,
That he bringeth many in hell.
Then of myself I was ashamed,
And so I am worthy to be blamed,
Thus may I well myself hate.
Of whom shall I now counsel take?
I think that I shall never speed,
Till that I go to my Good Deed;
But, alas, she is so weak,
That she can nether go nor speak:
Yet will I venter on her now.
My Good Deeda, where be you?

GOOD DEEDS

Here I lie cold in the ground;
Thy sins have me so sore bound,
That I cannot stir.

EVERYMAN

O Good Deeds, I stand in great fear;
I must you pray of counsel,
For help now should come right well.

GOOD DEEDS

Everyman, I have understanding,
That thou art summoned account to make
Before Messias of Jerusalem King;
And you do by me, that journey with you will I
take.

EVERYMAN

Therefore I come to you my moan to make
I pray you, that ye will go with me.

GOOD DEEDS

I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.

EVERYMAN

Why, is there anything on you fall ?

GOOD DEEDS

Yes, sir, I may thank you of all ;
If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of account full ready now had be.
Look, the books of your works and deeds eke !
Behold how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERYMAN

Our Lord Jesus help me,
For one letter herein can I not see.

GOOD DEEDS

Here is a blind reckoning in time of distress !

EVERYMAN

Good Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am for ever damned indeed ;
Therefore help me to make my reckoning
Before the Redeemer of all thing,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.

GOOD DEEDS

Everyman, I am sorry of your fall,
And fain would I help you, and I were able.

EVERYMAN

Good Deeds, your counsel, I pray you, give me.

GOOD DEEDS

That shall I do verily :
Though that on my feet I may not go,
I have a sister that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.
[Enter Knowledge.]

KNOWLEDGE

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

EVERYMAN

In good condition I am now in every thing,
And am wholly content with this good thing,
Thanked be God my Creature.

GOOD DEEDS

And when he hath brought thee there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go thou with thy reckoning and thy good
deeds together,
For to make thee joyful at the heart
Before the Blessed Trinity.

EVERYMAN

My Good Deeds, I thank thee heartfully :
I am well content certainly
With your words sweet.

KNOWLEDGE

Now go we together lovingly
To Confession, that cleansing river.

EVERYMAN

For joy I weep : I would we there were ;
But I pray you to instruct me by intellection,
Where dwelleth that holy virtue Confession ?

KNOWLEDGE

In the house of salvation ;
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.
Lo, this is Confession : kneel down, and ask
mercy ;
For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.

EVERYMAN

O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth
clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen ;
I come with Knowledge for my redemption,
Redempt with heart and full contrition,
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,
Help hither my good deeds for my piteous ex-
clamation.

CONFESSION

I know your sorrow well, Everyman :
Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can ;
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, volder of adversity :
Therewith shall your body chastised be
With abstinence and perseverance in God's ser-
vice ;
Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
Which is penance strong that ye must endure,
Remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently :
So must thou, ere thou pass thy pilgrimage.
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good Deeds will be with thee ;
But in anywise be sure of mercy,

For your time draweth fast ; and ye will saved be,
 Ask God mercy, and he will grant truly :
 When with the scourge of penance man doth
 him bind,
 The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

EVERYMAN libtool.com.cn

Thanked be God for his gracious work ;
 For now I will my penance begin :
 This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
 Though the knots be painful and hard within.

KNOWLEDGE

Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfil,
 What pain that ever it to you be ;
 And I shall give you counsel at will,
 How your account ye shall make clearly.

EVERYMAN

O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
 O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,
 Which descended down in a virgin pure,
 Because he would Everyman redeem,
 Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience,
 O blessed Godhead, elect and high Divine,
 Forgive me my grievous offence ;
 Here I cry thee mercy in this presence :
 O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer !
 Of all the world hope and conduyter,
 Mirror of joy, foundation of mercy,
 Which enlumineth heaven and earth thereby,
 Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be,
 Receive my prayers of thy benignity,
 Though I be a sinner most abominable,
 Yet let my name be written in Moses' table.
 O Mary, pray to the Maker of all thing
 Me for to help at my ending,
 And save me from the power of my enemy ;
 For death assaileth me strongly :
 And, Lady, that I may by mean of thy prayer
 Of your son's glory to be partiner.
 By the mean of his passion I it crave ;
 I beseeke you help me my soul to save.
 Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance,
 My flesh therewith shall give acquittance ;
 I will now begin, if God give me grace.

KNOWLEDGE

Everyman, God give you time and space !
 Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour ;
 Now may you make your reckoning sure.

EVERYMAN

In the name of all the Holy Trinity,
 My body punished sore shall be,
 Take this body for the sin of the flesh ;
 Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh ;
 And in the way of damnation thou did me bring,
 Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing :
 Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
 To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

GOOD DEEDS

I thank God, now I can walk and go,
 And am delivered of my sickness and woe ;
 Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not
 spare,
 His good works I will help him to declare.

KNOWLEDGE

Now, Everyman, be merry and glad ;
 Your Good Deeds cometh now, ye may not be
 sad :
 Now is your Good Deeds whole and sound,
 Going upright upon the ground.

EVERYMAN

My heart is light, and shall be evermore ;
 Now will I smite faster than I did before.

GOOD DEEDS

Everyman pilgrim, my special friend,
 Blessed be thou without end ;
 For thee is prepared the eternal glory :
 Ye have me made whole and sound,
 Therefore I will bide by thee in every stound.

EVERYMAN

Welcome, my Good Deeds, now I hear thy voice,
 I hear for very sweetness of love.

KNOWLEDGE

Be no more sad, but evermore rejoice,
 God seeth thy living in His throne above ;
 Put on this garment to thy behove,
 Which with your tears is now all wet,
 Lest before God it be unsweet,
 When ye to your journey's end come shall.

EVERYMAN

Gentle Knowledge, what do ye it call ?

KNOWLEDGE

It is the garment of sorrow,
 From pain it will you borrow ;
 Contrition it is,
 That getteth forgiveness,
 It pleaseth God passing well.

GOOD DEEDS

Everyman, will you wear it for your hele ?

EVERYMAN .

Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's son ;
 For now have I on true contrition :
 And let us go now without tarrying.
 Good Deeds, have we clear our reckoning ?

GOOD DEEDS

Yea, indeed, I have here.

EVERYMAN

Then I trust we need not to fear ;
Now, friends, let us not depart in twain.

KNOWLEDGE

Nay, Everyman, that will we not certain.

GOOD DEEDS

Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

EVERYMAN

Who should they be ?

GOOD DEEDS

Discretion and Strength they hyght,
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

KNOWLEDGE

Also ye must call to mind
Your Five Wits as for your councillors.

GOOD DEEDS

You must have them ready at all hours.

EVERYMAN

How shall I get them hither ?

KNOWLEDGE

You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.

EVERYMAN

My friends, come hither, and be present,
Discretion, Strength, my Five Wits and Beauty.

BEAUTY

Here at your will we be all ready ;
What will ye that we should do ?

GOOD DEEDS

That ye would with Everyman go,
And help him in his pilgrimage :
Advise you, will ye go with him or not in that
voyage ?

STRENGTH

We will bring him all thither
To help and comfort him, ye may believe me.

DISCRETION

So will we go with him altogether.

EVERYMAN

Almighty God, loved may Thou be ;
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, Five Wits : lack I
nought :

And my Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in my company at my will here ;
I desire no more to my business.

STRENGTH

And I Strength will by you stand in distress,
Though thou wouldest in battle fight on the
ground.

FIVE WITS

And though it were thorow the world round,
We will not depart for sweet ne for sour.

BEAUTY

No more will I unto Death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

DISCRETION

Everyman, advise you first of all,
Go with a good advisement and deliberation ;
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well.

EVERYMAN

My friends, hark what I will you tell ;
I pray God reward you in His heavenly sphere :
Now hearken all that be here ;
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present :
In alms half my good I will give with my hands
twain

In the way of charity with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain :
I it bequeath to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,
To go quit out of his peril
Ever after this day.

KNOWLEDGE

Everyman, hearken what I will say ;
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together,
Then shortly see ye turn again hither,
We will all abide you here.

FIVE WITS

Yea, Everyman, hie you that ye ready were :
There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world being ;
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign
He beareth the keys, and thereof hath cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure,

Which God for our soul's medicine
 Gave us out of his heart with great pain,
 Here in this transitory life for thee and me :
 The blessed sacraments seven there be,
 Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
 And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and
 blood,
 Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and pen-
 ance ;
 These seven be good to have in remembrance,
 Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

EVERYMAN

Fain would I receive that holy body,
 And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

FIVE WITS

Everyman, that is the best that ye can do ;
 God will you to salvation bring,
 For good priesthood exceedeth all other thing ;
 To us holy scripture they do teach,
 And converteth man fro sin heaven to reach ;
 God hath to them more power given
 Than to any angel that is in heaven :
 With five words he may consecrate
 God's body in flesh and blood to take,
 And handleth his Maker between his hands.
 The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands
 Both in earth and in heaven ;
 He ministers all the sacraments seven ;
 Though we kiss thy feet, thou wert worthy :
 Thou art the surgeon that cureth sin deadly,
 No remedy may we find under God,
 But all only priesthood.
 Everyman, God gave priest [s] that dignity,
 And setteth them in His stead among us to be ;
 Thus be they above angels in degree.

KNOWLEDGE

If priests be good, it is so surely,
 But when Jesu heng on the cross with great
 smart,
 There he gave us out of his blessed heart
 The same sacrament in great torment.

FIVE WITS

I trust to God, no such may we find :
 Therefore let us priesthood honour,
 And follow their doctrine for our soul's succour ;
 We be their sheep, and they [our] shepherds be,
 By whom we all be kept in surety.
 Peace ! for yonder I see Everyman come,
 Which hath made true satisfaction.

GOOD DEEDS

Methink it is he indeed.

EVERYMAN

Now Jesu Christ be your alder speed !
 I have received the sacrament for my redemp-
 tion,

And then mine extreme unction ;
 Blessed be all they that counselled me to take
 it :
 And now, friends, let us go without longer res-
 pite ;
 I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
 Now set each of you on this rod your hand,
 And shortly follow me ;
 I go before, there I would be :
 God be our guide.

STRENGTH

Everyman, we will not fro you go,
 Till ye have gone this voyage long.

DISCRETION

I, Discretion, will bide by you also.

KNOWLEDGE

And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
 I will never part you fro :
 Everyman, I will be as sure by thee,
 As ever I was by Judas Maccabee.

EVERYMAN

Alas ! I am so faint I may not stand,
 My limbs under me do fold :
 Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
 Not for all the world's gold ;
 For into this cave must I creep,
 And turn to the earth, and there to sleep.

BEAUTY

What, into this grave ? · Alas !

EVERYMAN

Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.

BEAUTY

And what, should I smother here ?

EVERYMAN

Yea, by my faith, and never more appear ;
 In this world live no more we shall,
 But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.

BEAUTY

I cross out all this : adieu, by Saint John ;
 I take my cap in my lap, and am gone.

EVERYMAN

What, Beauty ? whither will ye ?

BEAUTY

Peace ! I am deaf, I look not behind me,
 Not, and thou wouldst give me all the gold in
 thy chest.

EVERYMAN

Alas ! whereto may I now trust ?
 Beauty doth fast away hie :
 She promised with me to live and die.

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STRENGTH

Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny,
 The game liketh me not at all.

EVERYMAN

Why then ye will forsake me all :
 Strength, tarry, I pray you, a little space.

STRENGTH

Nay, sir, by the rood of grace,
 I will hie me from thee fast,
 Though thou weep till thy heart brast.

EVERYMAN

Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

STRENGTH

Yea, I have you far enough conveyed :
 Ye be old enough, I understand,
 Your pilgrimage to take on hand ;
 I repent me, that I hither came.

EVERYMAN

Strength, you to displease I am to blame ;
 Yet promise is debt ; this ye well wot.

STRENGTH

In faith, as for that I care not :
 Thou art but a fool to complain ;
 Thou spendest thy speech and wasteth thy
 brain :
 Go, thrist thee into the ground.

EVERYMAN

I had ween'd surer I should you have found :
 But I see well, he that trusteth in his Strength,
 Is greatly deceived at the length ;
 Both Strength and Beauty hath forsaken me,
 Yet they promised me steadfast to be.

DISCRETION

Everyman, I will after Strength be gone ;
 As for me, I will leave you alone.

EVERYMAN

Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me ?

DISCRETION

Yea, in faith, I will go fro thee ;
 For when Strength is gone before,
 Then I follow after evermore.

EVERYMAN

Yet, I pray thee, for love of the Trinity,
 Look in my grave once piteously.

DISCRETION

Nay, so nigh will I not come.
 Now farewell, fellows everichone.

EVERYMAN

Oh, all thing faileth, save God alone,
 Beauty, Strength, and Discretion ;
 For, when Death bloweth his blast,
 They all run fro me full fast.

FIVE WITS

Everyman, of thee now my leave I take ;
 I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

EVERYMAN

Alas ! then may I both wail and weep ;
 For I took you for my best friend.

FIVE WITS

I will no lenger thee keep :
 Now farewell, and here an end.

EVERYMAN

Now, Jesu, help ! all hath forsaken me.

GOOD DEEDS

Nay, Everyman, I will abide with thee,
 I will not forsake thee indeed ;
 Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

EVERYMAN

Gramercy, Good Deeds, now may I true friends
 see,
 They have forsaken me everychone ;
 I loved them better than my good deeds alone :
 Knowledge, will ye forsake me also ?

KNOWLEDGE

Yea, Everyman, when ye to death shall go ;
 But not yet for no manner of danger.

EVERYMAN

Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

KNOWLEDGE

Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
 Till I see where ye shall be come.

EVERYMAN

Methinketh, alas ! that I must be gone
 To make my reckoning, and my debts pay ;

For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take ensample, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I loved best now forsake me;
Except my Good Deeds, that bideth truly.

GOOD DEEDS libtool.com.cn

All earthly things is but vanity,
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion do man
forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake;
All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

EVERYMAN

Have mercy on me, God most mighty,
And stand by me, thou mother and maid Mary.

GOOD DEEDS

Fear not, I will speak for thee.

EVERYMAN

Here I cry, God mercy !

GOOD DEEDS

Short our end and minish our pain :
Let us go, and never come again.

EVERYMAN

Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend,
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost ;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me fro the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host

That shall be saved at the day of doom :
In manus tuas, of might most,
For ever *commendo spiritum meum*.
(EVERYMAN *dies*.)

KNOWLEDGE

Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure :
The Good Deeds shall make all sure ;
Now hath he made ending,
Methinketh that I hear angels sing,
And make great joy and melody,
Where Everyman's soul shall received be. . . .

DOCTOR

This memory all men may have in mind ;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the
end,
And remember Beauty, Five Wits, Strength, and
Discretion,
They all at last do Everyman forsake,
Save his Good Deeds ; [them he] there doth
take :
But beware, for, and they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all ;
None excuse may be there for Everyman :
Alas ! how shall he do then ?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity doth him forsake ;
If his reckoning be not clear, when he doth come,
God will say, *Ite, maledicti, in ignem aeternum*,
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned ;
Unto which place God bring us all thither,
That we may live body and soul together ;
Thereto help the Trinity :
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.

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