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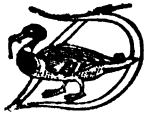
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A HUNDRED YEARS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

100 YEARS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

by
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CHAPTER I

ROMANTICS AND VICTORIANS

IT might appear strange at first that Victorian literature, rooted in the middle class soil, when that was most fruitful, should nevertheless have been nourished by a romantic movement springing from revolution on the one hand and at least some aristocratic tradition on the other. If it were a law that artistic developments derive, not from the last, but from the penultimate movement, the inspiration of our period might have been sought in the eighteenth century; but this, with a few exceptions, will not be found earlier than the 'nineties, when at long last the spell of nature-romanticism is seen to be breaking. Max Beerbohm wrote in *A Defence of Cosmetics* (Yellow Book No. 1, 1894), "the Victorian era comes to its end," in which "artifice they drove forth, and they set Martin Tupper upon a throne of mahogany to rule over them. . . . All things were sacrificed to the fetish Nature". The quotation suggests at once a difference between the romantics and their spiritual children, who have clearly "methodized" nature in their own way; it suggests that into the esemplastic act of imagination,[1] something happily symbolized by the mahogany of the period is intruded. Later it may be decided whether this is true, wholly or partly. But the romantic movement comes first, with its strength, both of thought and technique, which endured as a directing force for more than ninety years. It was its exceptional strength, no doubt, which inhibited the frequently seen reaction of the next generation against the last; a power reinforced in the earlier stages of communication by the persistence, in the flesh, of certain tougher Romantics. Coleridge, who died in 1834, criticized Tennyson's 1830 volume; which Wordsworth also read, before he was appointed Laureate in 1843. In 1845 Wordsworth recognized him as "decidedly the first of our living poets". Landor, who was amongst other things a romantic Hellenist, lived not only to read Trollope but to help young Swinburne along the Grecian way, before he died in 1869. Leigh Hunt, Keats' friend, wrote to D. G. Rossetti (1848): "I guess indeed that you are altogether not so musical as

[1] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria.*

pictorial". He became "dear old Leigh Hunt" to Thackeray and a Skimpole to Dickens. Of Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (1831) he had written, "we have seen no such poetical writing since the last volume of Mr. Keats". It is significant that G. H. Lewes, who was present at the first night of Hunt's *A Legend of Florence* at Covent Garden (1840), regarded him as a Victorian poet; Queen Victoria attended the theatre, and approved of the play.

Matthew Arnold wrote to his mother (February, 1867) from the Athenæum, of Crabb Robinson, the companion of lake poets who aided Victorian higher education, "not a fortnight ago I found him in this very room".[1] Robinson was then near his end but still alive to movements in letters, and so aware of Arnold's reputation. He made shrewdly critical notes on fiction by Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton, Disraeli, Kingsley, Miss Martineau; he knew Tennyson, "by far the most eminent of the young poets. His poems are full of genius, but he is fond of the enigmatical, and many of his most celebrated pieces are really poetic riddles" (Diary, 1845). He called Browning "one of the young half-crazy poets" but found Ruskin to be delicate and gentlemanly. He heard Emerson's first lecture in England (1848), admired Harriet Martineau's mind, and believed that Clough, whose *Bothie* he read, would do well as Principal of University Hall. Samuel Rogers, friend of Fox and Byron, was in consultation with Lord John Russell over Tennyson's fitness for the Laureateship: and had the Brownings to breakfast in 1851. He called Emerson's *Orators* "German poetry, given out in American prose"; and disapproved of Dickens's hastiness in composing. Southey fell out of the running soon after the death of his first wife in 1837; and about this time both Henry Taylor and Carlyle noted morbid abnormalities in his behaviour. He was given a copy of Tennyson's *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, in 1830, by Spedding.

Harriet Martineau would, 1845, drop in on Wordsworth of a winter evening in Lakeland, but "my deafness was a great difficulty when his teeth were out".[2] Coleridge, who rambled to her about her stories, she recognized as an instigator of thought. Godwin, in his "reformed" phase, was nervous of this modern female economist. She knew Leigh Hunt (as did many Victorians) and Barry Cornwall; Sidney Smith made a *mot* about her. Smith himself, though no romantic, warmly commended the *Modern Painters* of Ruskin, a book of notable influence on the mid-century romantic move-

[1] *cit.* J. M. Baker, *Henry Crabb Robinson*, p. 243.
[2] Autobiography, Period VI § ii.

ment. He believed that *Modern Painters*, "a work of transcendent talent . . . would work a complete revolution in the world of taste" (which it did); revealing in that belief a depth unsuspected by the creator[1] of that burlesque and sinister figure Canon Schidnischmidt, and a suppleness refusing to be bound by his own Reynoldsian aesthetic. Before Theodore Hook, another apparent unromantic, died in 1841, he had not only been used as a model by Thackeray for Mr. Wagg, and by Disraeli for Lucian Gay, but had influenced the later humour, notably Dickens; as will be remarked elsewhere. Although we may rightly see in him a characteristic period piece of George IV, he was able to appreciate *Rienzi*, and to write, "Mr. Bulwer, with whom in politics I totally differ, whom I know personally, and whose writing I greatly admire". John Hamilton Reynolds died in 1852 and Procter ("Barry Cornwall") in 1874. Procter was an early admirer of Browning: Reynolds retired for good to the Isle of Wight about 1831. Thomas Moore, before his death (1852) might have noticed an increase in metrical variety and suppleness for which he was in a large measure responsible. Evident in Tennyson, Browning and Poe (who pays Moore a high tribute), it was continued by Swinburne. Tennyson knew him and preferred his poetry to Rogers'. "Oft in the stilly night" was a favourite with him: and Moore, during his last illness, cried over Tennyson's poems.

Of junior links between the two ages, outstanding examples are De Quincey and Hood. De Quincey, so long in Scotland, did not enter the Victorian stream as deeply as Hood; but he was interested in the Maurice-Kingsley beginnings of Christian Socialism, partly approved of Dickens, Emerson, and Hawthorne, and failed to admire Thackeray, whom he refused to meet. But Hood was very much in the middle of literary life, and no doubt, had he lived longer and enjoyed better fortune with his *Magazine* (1844) would have established himself fully as "nucleus" to a group of contributors including Dickens, Browning, G. P. R. James, Monckton Milnes, and lesser stars. In fact Hood, who had punned with Lamb, became a Victorian—that at least, when his *Song of the Shirt* appeared in *Punch* (December, 1843); a poem introductory to the mode for a strong utterance of sociological emotions prominent in works of the latter part of that decade—in *Sybil* (1845), *Mary Barton* (1848), *Alton Locke* (1849) and repeatedly through later years. It may be worth noting that Carlyle, regarded as a

[1] Thackeray.

buttress of mid-century thought, was born in 1795, four years before Hood; though he lived much longer into the century, dying in 1881.

The personal contacts of the older generation with the younger counted, it seems, for something in determining the way, or part of it, that thought and letters were taking in the first half of our hundred years; it is not negligible that the younger writers, if they, like Browning, did not "see Shelley plain", were able, like Miss Martineau, to see Wordsworth demonstrably so. The revolutionary spirit of the 1790's was not the sole inspiration of the Romantic revival; but *The Prelude* shows, if nothing else does, how that spirit quickened the eyes of poets in their scrutiny of man and nature. The French Revolution, which had roused Wordsworth at the time, was still rousing Carlyle in 1835. Meanwhile, new and minor explosions succeeded it. The youth of the Victorians was passed in the stimulant conditions of the Luddite Riots, Peterloo and the Cato Street conspiracy, the Reform Demonstrations of 1831, and the Chartist movement, which gave us Carlyle's *Chartism*, and *Alton Locke*, to mark, practically, its beginning and end. Both literary ages flowered when—and some may say because—the political temperature was feverish; which may at least help to account for certain similarities among many dissimilarities. Among the latter it may appear that whereas romantic literature of the revival tends to philosophize, whether in *Caleb Williams*, *The Prelude*, or *Prometheus*, that of the mid-century is inclined rather to sociologize with an infection that neither Charlotte Brontë (*Shirley*) nor Tennyson (*The Princess*) can escape. Yet the sociology of the latter will appear often to be coloured with the philosophy of the former; and it is not suggested for a moment that Carlyle or any of the more thoughtful juniors, avoided philosophy; merely that the other mode now becomes more salient in creative letters. Arnold's complaint in *Essays in Criticism* (1st series) of the practical bent of the English genius, militating against the literature of pure ideas, is more valid in his own time than that of Coleridge or Shelley.

Not even Alfred de Musset has succeeded in truly defining the Romantic; and it may be doubted whether Pater's Attic salt has arrested more than the tail feathers of this beautiful, effectual angel. But it is possible to see in the working model afforded by authors from, say, the date of *Lyrical Ballads* to that of Shelley's death in 1822, certain components common to romantic writers.

First there was the revolt against "those rules of old, discover'd not devis'd"; of which the passage in Keats' *Sleep and Poetry*, naming "one Boileau", is a sign. Individual judgment took the place of central law; the academic and the formal were assailed, by Lamb, by Hazlitt, before Ruskin launched his second campaign in *Modern Painters*. Meanwhile, Godwin's concern for the integrity of the individual assisted the "private protestantism", if one may call it so, of the romantic attitude, as in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. But his postulate that "every man ought to feel his independence" was further-reaching than this, as the art of the whole century, with a few exceptions, declares. The pre-Raphaelites echoed it in theory and practice; and so did Tennyson when he framed the words of a once familiar advertisement. It might be argued that after the Reform Act of 1832, ideas of the individual and his freedom became more prominent than ever; that one parleyed, on the one hand, with certain people, partly or largely, because free individuality had become so much "the thing"; that one re-read, with Browning, oddments of history (including Bubb Doddington) in its light; on the other, one observed, with Dickens, in Mr. Bounderby, an immediate product of the cult of personal independence.

The swing from the "head" to the "heart" in poetic expression was manifest, anyhow, as soon as *Lyrical Ballads* appeared. Reason yielded precedence to feeling; or a new and Coleridgean conception of reason replaced the old. "Reason is pre-eminently spiritual, and a spirit, even our spirit, through an effulgence of the same grace by which we are privileged to say, Our Father!" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*). Carlyle's pursuit of this idea will be noted. Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry* (1821) sums up the later tendency when he writes, "reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance". Godwin took part in the swinging, when he declared that it was time (1798) to "correct certain errors in the earlier part of *Political Justice*", which he found defective in "not yielding a proper attention to the empire of feeling". That the logic of the heart persisted vigorously in later times is indisputable; it speaks through Browning's frequently *ad misericordiam* arguments; it mutters in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*.[1]

Intuition, a flashing on the inward eye, though already valued by Reynolds (*Discourses*), now came into its kingdom, proclaimed in

[1] Yet Dr. Johnson complains of Cowley's lack of heart.

Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. "Wherever there is a sense of beauty", wrote Hazlitt, "there is poetry in its birth" (*The English Poets.*) It remained, as a principle, to be lamented by Matthew Arnold as occurring too fitfully;

> The spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides:
> But tasks in hours of insight will'd
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

Its divine somnambulism still informs our art.

With the rise of intuition, Nature appreciated rapidly. The fresh homage to her was offered at a stage beyond that of prizing her for "Claudesque" or "Salvatoresque" effects. The progress can be measured in quantities of Wordsworth's poetry. Nature became a teacher, a nurse, a guide, as she remained for Arnold; in her, as Wordsworth reflects in a MS. fragment, "all things live with God, *themselves are God*,[1] existing in the mighty whole." To Clare, in Northampton Asylum (after 1842), she was love:

> "For nature is love. . . .
> . . . . . .
> It hides from the eagle and joins with the dove,
> In beautiful green solitude."

Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound*) stressed love in particular as a cosmic force.[2] The increasingly mechanized and objective Nature of pre-Rousseau times is experienced subjectively (or there is for Coleridge a coalescence of subject and object) and reanimated; she becomes our nurse, or our sense of love, and passes as such into the century until with advances in science, she is suspected of being redder in tooth and claw than was earlier implied. Yet, despite the "Darwinian", the romantic view continued to exert a wide influence. In America, where repudiations of Darwinism are comparatively recent, the other inspiration spread, with happiest results in Whitman and Thoreau, to name only two; possibly inducing a vision acuter than was vouchsafed to the British at a time when, according to Sir Max Beerbohm, they were making a fetish

[1] Present writer's italics.

[2] Demogorgon, addressing the earth,
"... gathering as thou dost roll
The love that paves thy path along the skies."

of Nature. Be that as it may, an emotional reaction to Her has become a stock response which the 'nineties failed to eradicate: if anything, the levels of its appeal have multiplied. Victorian individualism, which nowadays appears portentous to some, might be found on further examination, partly to have undone Wordsworth's task of relating men more humbly to Nature. How often if at all, as the examiners put it, does She become a stage-setting for "personality" in *The Idylls of the King* or *Asolando*? How often is She dispensed with, the lime tree bower yielding to Gigadibs, the literary man?

The renaissance of religious enthusiasm, again—the passing of interest from nature's "fairy guise" to "Heaven's Age of fearless rest"[1] was already suggesting rivalry in themes at the outset of our period. Newman, the writer of these words, brought romance, partly absorbed from a youthful reading of Miss Porter and Mrs. Radcliffe, and later from Scott, Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, back to the church-goer. Devotional poetry, whether his, or Keble's—or Christina Rossetti's, flourished throughout the era; *The Christian Year* (1827) impressed Arthur Pendennis, Christina Rossetti (d. 1894), and delighted Lionel Johnson.

When Coleridge wrote in 1815–16 (*Biographia Literaria*) of that domain on the other side of the spontaneous consciousness, "the domain of pure philosophy, which is therefore properly entitled *transcendental*", he was opening the sea-gates to a tide which flowed with Carlyle into the middle of the Victorian age, moving Tennyson among others; and with Emerson into America.

The cult of the invisible, abstracted from visionary or "rarified" sources that included Swedenborg, Goethe, and Jacobi, opposed itself to the materialism of which that age has been accused. Carlyle opined that "the visible becomes the bestial when it rests not on the invisible"; "the idealist", Emerson follows suit, "*in speaking of events, sees them as spirits*". P. J. Bailey's *Festus*, the first edition of which appeared in 1839, may with its ponderous spirituality, be regarded as a peculiar by-product of this kind of enthusiasm; with a special debt to Goethe.

Newman observed (*Apologia*) that Scott "turned men's minds to the direction of the middle ages": and the taste for old, unhappy, far-off things became, as Peacock also recognized, a signal for romantic attitudes. The novelists and poets, from Harrison Ainsworth to Swinburne, recorded their sense of the past; Tennyson

[1] Newman, The Trance of Time, 1827.

exploited it allegorically in his *Idylls*, D. G. Rossetti did selective homage to the middle ages; Ruskin offered Italian Gothic as a medicine for moral deficiencies; the Gothic and Social Reform led William Morris by either hand. But other motifs than Gothic were developed early in the course of the revival. The "Grecian Gusto", already evident in the eighteenth century, was next fortified by the arrival of the Elgin Marbles in England; Haydon and Keats, Shelley, Byron, Landor, all "hellenized" in their fashion. And so indeed did T. L. Peacock, the satirical friend of Shelley. How much more he was in later days than the literary as well as literal father-in-law of Meredith (who inherited much from his wit) is not easy to determine: but he carried his ardour for ancient Greece, idealized and romanticized as in *Rhododaphne*, with him into the 'sixties' decade, to which he gave the Homeric hero of *Gryll Grange*. He helped to conserve the Greek interest. Landor, whose *Hellenics* impressed the young pre-Raphaelites, and who was friendly with Tennyson and Browning and Swinburne is more easily traced in this function, but Peacock need not be too lightly dismissed. It may be decided that the Greek modes in which younger poets, major and minor, sang, developed the romantic Hellenism, interpreted by the heart, rather than by "Reason Chill" which

> ". . . chased the dreams that charmed the youth
> Of nature and the world . . ."[1]

and that not even Arnold, who conceived Hellenism as a principle, was exempt from the tendency.

Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, as revived by Lamb, Coleridge and Hazlitt added another order of colouring to those derived from the glamour of the past. Although Arnold, in 1853, issued a severe, perhaps too severe warning, against the dangers of Shakespeare as a poetic model, Shakespearian echoes are recognisable in Tennyson's dramas. But the middle ages proved the stronger and wider inspiration, and it is noteworthy that whereas Lamb derived a stimulus from metaphysical poetry, Buchanan, writing in 1871, shows a distaste for, and misunderstanding of, Donne and Crashaw. The maximum intensity of the Elizabethan gusto had been attained by T. L. Beddoes (*Death's Jest Book*, even though he considered it "Gothic") in 1825–6: it is present, too, in Darley's *Thomas à*

[1] Rhododaphne.

Becket (pub. 1840) to which Tennyson's *Becket* is in debt. Landor wrote to Procter soon after that date, "all things are now Elizabethan, from poets that nobody can read, to windows that nobody can look out of".

The Ghost, which Senecan drama had bequeathed to the Elizabethans, appeared in the eighteenth century among Gothic properties (*The Castle of Otranto*) and thence passed into a widening repertory of mystery subjects to meet an increasing demand for wonder and terror. The taste affected Scott, Coleridge, Keats amongst others; of prose writers, Maturin, whose work Rossetti admired, certainly intensified the "horror" aspect; Godwin's *St. Leon* and *Caleb Williams* exhibited themes of the occult and of crime, both of which Lytton developed more picturesquely; but Poe, in poetry and prose, made of the shudder, in all its varieties, an art accepted by the world; and that chiefly in a dozen years at the beginning of the Victorian era. Eeriness seems to be a romantic by-product which, if sometimes despised, is never rejected; as the recent success of Mr. Walter De La Mare in this province suggests.

The flight from the General in artistic expression may be dated from the publication of George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* in 1776, if not earlier; this anti-classical trend was in fact beginning before Sir Joshua Reynolds, apostle of the General, had finished preaching it in his *Discourses*. The Particular afforded a roomy asylum to the fugitives, and whether they were loading every rift with ore, or recording the *propria* of the lesser celandine,[1] they reopened a path which is still, as by Mr. Blunden, effectively trodden; and by him perhaps more as they would have it done, than by some of the Victorians. For it may be argued that the romantics, and certainly Wordsworth, cultivated the particular for the sake of the universal. This might also be argued of Ruskin; but is it always true of Tennyson? It may seem that out of the philosophic cult of the particular there grew an artistic, or decorative, cult of it for its own sake; and that this had appeared at least as early as Keats. It may be seen in the song from *Paracelsus*, "Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes/Of labdanum", or in the "Long carven silver-banded ebony wands" of *The Earthly Paradise*. The nineteenth century tended to defy the counsels of Imlac. The romantics wrote in a social environment strongly tinged with "wildness": their lives —even if we divide Haydon's overstatements by half, for example

[1] cf. the third of Wordsworth's poems on this flower.

—seem to have reflected it. We hear of gin and opium; of Wordsworth's unhappy love affair, and of occurrences to Byron and Shelley that shocked Arnold. John Hamilton Reynolds became in his youth a man about town, the town of Egan's Tom and Jerry, where one made "a good *set-to* with Eales, Tom Belcher (the monarch of the *gloves*!) and Turner": and drank "Deady" or "Heavy Wet". B. W. Procter, who survived till 1874, though his poetical life ended in 1832, was another of the knowing ones of the day, and a pupil of Tom Cribb. Carlyle sneered at him. The slang and humour and fisticuffs of those times are echoed in *Pickwick*, its rakishness in *Nicholas Nickleby* (Sir Mulberry Hawke and his set); and we may note how soon Dickens passes thence to a less flamboyant atmosphere. In ten years something has happened between the conception of Chowser and Westwood in *Nickleby* (1838–9) and Bagstock in *Dombey and Son* (1847–8). Even the name Chicken appears decadent, and reflecting little of the glamour of Belcher or Cribb. Thackeray finds himself disillusioned about Egan: the wildfire has died down. Was it replaced by the "Bohemianism" of the pre-Raphaelites, or the earlier adventures of Swinburne, or Samuel Butler's uninspired visits to "Madame"? If so, it was replaced by something less virile, if more civilized. The March of Mind, as Peacock called it, helped to create conditions in which Jellybys and Pardiggles tended to impart a stronger flavour to the air than Corinthians; this air the Victorian poets breathed. Peacock was to Thackeray a whitehaired worldling—as though Thackeray was deliberately placing himself on the other side of the moral barrier. It may not be too fanciful to account in part for a predominating difference between the earlier and later romantic utterance by this difference in "air". One of the last Bohemians in the older tradition was E. A. Poe, who died in 1849, soon after being found drunk in a gutter. But in America too the glory was, for a time, departing; *The Dial* was already founded; Transcendentalists had appeared in Boston as far back as 1832.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century Jane Austen was in revolt against the sentimental conventions which had been already struck at by Goldsmith and Sheridan; and the "tear of sensibility" glitters less than previously in the art of her age, though it can be found—in Scott, for instance.[1] Bryant, during his long life, conveyed a gentle freight of sensibility from the one century to the last quarter of the other. But a marked revival of sentimentality had set

[1] One recollects Dominic Sampson; but the tear is shed also in *Mansfield Park*.

in by the middle of the century; if it was a legacy at all it might seem to have been inherited rather from the times of Richardson, Kelly, Mackenzie, than from immediate predecessors. At all events, the sales value of "idle tears" was once more recognized. Elizabeth Barrett Browning confidently exploits the sob and the tear in a number of poems; and what is perhaps particularly significant to seekers after a "period" sign—she utilizes it for social criticism in *The Cry of the Children*. Several thoughtful novels, ranging from *Mary Barton* to *Our Mutual Friend* reveal comparable devices. Rossetti, on the other hand, is an example of a poet who could throw—as Keats does in his Odes—a drier light on the emotions: he can render pangs without tears; and these last, recurrent in Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erectheus*, seem to be purged of sentimentality.

If, as the century progressed, the Corinthian spirit waned, that of Philistinism waxed for a time. Even Philistia found literary expression, if to Philistia belongs a type of art which has a primarily "average middle-class" appeal. The sporting life in Surtees' books is no longer Corinthian; and when we come to Messrs. Puffington and Jogglebury Crowdey,[1] we find ourselves among the Philistines. Yet his work might be said to be more unsympathetic to the snob than to the nob; for sympathy with what the *homme moyen* wants we may go to Martin Tupper (*Proverbial Philosophy*, 1838) or even to such poems of Tennyson's as roused the gall of "The New Timon" (Bulwer); and to numerous novels, to be considered in their place. Here we shall seem to be detached from anything that could be easily called a romantic legacy; but shall perhaps better understand Sir Max Beerbohm's reference to a mahogany throne. Yet, in fact, the romantic preference of heart to head will still persist in this, and in the sentimental, sort of writing; though differently interpreted, perhaps. Further, a link between the "sentimental" and the "Philistine" can be suspected.

If it is agreed that the glamour of Duration, the feeling for time's immensity and distances, is a romantic rather than classic element; and that Byron was expressing this romance when he wrote:

> "Time—Space—Eternity—Life—Death—
> The vast known and immeasurable unknown,"

it will be worth while tracing it through the romantic inheritors.

[1] from *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*.

Beddoes felt it strongly, in *The Bride's Tragedy*, where in one passage he becomes distinctly pre-Bergsonian, and in other pieces. Tennyson, reinforcing the inspiration with a more "recent" attitude, acquired from the fairy-tales of science, and the long result of time, reflects that many a million of ages have gone to the making of man: Rossetti responded to the spell of time in *The Sea-Limits*. Browning's cognate but not identical sense of the past dominates his poetry; but Sordello is permitted, in the speech which makes the Chief yawn, to refer to "some first fact/I'the faint of time". For Swinburne:

> "Time again is risen with mightier word of warning,
> Change hath blown again a blast of louder breath."

One might attempt to find in the core of this time-pre-occupation a kinetic principle, and oppose it, as romantic, to a classic stillness, to the dignified calm of the Grand Manner. This quality is however exploited in contexts where time is lost sight of, but motion or speed are emphasized. So Shelley:

> Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
> With eager lips the wind of their own speed.

and Swinburne:

> Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
> Over the splendour and speed of thy feet.

The romantic cult of the sea seems to be not unconnected with that of movement; passing from Byron (*Childe Harold*) and Procter to Mrs. Browning's awareness of "mystic motion, And . . . the throbbing sea" (*The Sea-Mew*); to Charlotte Brontë's poetry, where it reveals a taste for billows, raving seas, waves that rose in threatening heap: and Tennyson's admirable sea-scapes.[1] Meanwhile, the American poets, from Longfellow to Lowell, were celebrating sea-restlessness; among whom Walt Whitman achieved high distinction in the *genre*. The mid-century has little marine description that will compare, for the rendering of the fascination of waves, with some of the numbers in *Sea-Drift*.

Pater declared that "it is the addition of strangeness to beauty

[1] e.g. those drawn with so few strokes in *The Palace of Art*.

that constitutes the romantic character in art": and further, that "it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper", so widening what would otherwise have been a too exclusive definition. Even so, it is scarcely wide enough; but curiosity may be accepted as a radical motive, stimulating exploration, individual enterprise and movement, and rebellion against the familiar. After the first wave of it, which includes Coleridge and Shelley, the pre-Raphaelite manifestos in *The Germ* are found to be instinct with it; Browning is a subtle, and Rudyard Kipling a more obvious, example of its working. R. L. Stevenson well expresses it through one of its outward and visible signs—wandering, whether on an inland voyage or elsewhere. Such are some, but by no means all, of the more noticeable items of the legacy. The vexed question of "romantic love" between the sexes has been evaded for several reasons; the word "romance" in this connection has been confusingly debased; the problem of Platonic love arises with a threat to carry discussion out of strict relevancy; and the root of the whole matter may be found to lie, as far as art is concerned, in the prevalence of the "heart" point of view over the "head" point of view.

CHAPTER II

POETRY IN THE 1830'S

WHEN Queen Victoria came to the throne Wordsworth was still active, and still capable of inspired poetry; at least, in the *Extempore Effusion on the Death of James Hogg*, where the tragic passing of a brilliant generation is shown (except in two less fortunate stanzas) with a poignancy keener even than anything in *Adonais* or *In Memoriam*. As Lamb, the gentle and the frolic, passes with his companions, the younger men come to fruition. John Clare (1793–1864) was at Epping, writing of the forest. He continued to treat of country matters with the vivid minuteness of detail and particularity of language ("kecks", "slats", "pooty", "water-pudge") so characteristic of his art, during the twenty-two years of his seclusion in a madhouse. His scrutiny of the things immediately around him, especially in youth, made a rural encyclopædia in his mind. He said of himself, "I am like the boy that gets his horn-book alphabet by heart and then can say his lesson with his eyes as well shut as open." Out of this rose his art of Particulars, which soon discarded the few mannerisms of eighteenth century origin visible in *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, 1820. His *Shepherds' Calendar* appeared in 1827 and *The Rural Muse* in 1835. A closer scrutiny of nature certainly followed; notably, in Tennyson. But one feels a difference immediately. Tennyson was supported by the textbook of Botany and the miscroscope: he would say, "bring me my Baxter's *Flowering Plants*";[1] and the effect is seen in his works. Both ways are good approaches to "country" poetry, and no preference is suggested.

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878) born in America a year later than Clare, and falling more noticeably when young under the influence of eighteenth century models, and among them Blair's *Grave*, wrote his *Thanatopsis* at the age of seventeen. He turned, unostentatiously, his calm, mild muse towards nature as well as towards Homer; Cowper and then Wordsworth helped him; and Cowper, as well as Wordsworth, abides with him to the last; in *Among the Trees*, written when he was old, the spirit of *The Task* is

[1] *Memoir*, by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, vol. I.

still traceable.[1] His manner, too, returns a pleasant limpidity and leisure which both for its own merit and its memory of Cowper, refreshes through secular dust and heat; nor does his sentimentality offend. He may be prim, but he has decorum, as Whitman and Browning lack it.

In other directions literary events of a stormier kind were taking place, in the work of George Darley (1795–1846), and his two juniors, T. L. Beddoes and E. A. Poe. Darley had, with *Sylvia*, discovered a formula, which Tennyson might have noted, for greenery without sentimentality and an unaffected "fairy way of writing" in 1827. In 1835 he produced his unfinished *Nepenthe*. It was next year that he protested in a letter to Monckton Milnes, against "this Wordsworthian rabies", prescribing the Shakespearean way as an antidote. In this letter, after dismissing "old Wordy" he mentions "one little volume" of Tennyson who, he declares in another letter to Milnes of the same year, may well "leave us all behind him". Tastes are changing: and Tennyson has not begun his singing in vain. But this revolt against Wordsworth was limited, as may be seen in his influence on Ruskin, Arnold, and others. In 1837 both Darley and Tennyson wrote for *The Tribute*; Tennyson, "O that 'twere possible", Darley the "syren songs" where his "Fantasy, twin-brother profane to Prophecy" touches in one verse, on the macabre of worms and corpses; but there is no more than a touch. In *Thomas à Becket* (pub. 1840) the proportion of it (comprised in Dwerga, who drinks "old coffin-snags boil'd down/Thrice in fat charnel-ooze") is about the same. Such an ingredient belongs not only to his art but to that of others representing this phase of romanticism; the Jacobeans were partly responsible for it and other *stigmata* of a flamboyant style, in writing the utterances of tortured minds—Eleanor's in *Thomas à Becket* or Ellisif's in *Ethelstan* (1841). The coloured sensuousness of imagery in the lyric poetry (also in *Sylvia*) is a sequel to Keats; Tennyson's grew richer. The ingenuity and grace of movement suggests Shelley; such ingenuity developed, with Browning, sometimes into metrical buffooning; with Swinburne, at his worst, into a rowdy jingling. Darley avoids such extremes, but still arrests attention. Browning said of him, "the power of the man is immense and irresistible"; yet he failed to make that most of it which the "high-light" requires. Carlyle admitted him on his "real

[1] cf. e.g. the robin and squirrels, who also appear in *The Winter Walk at Noon*; and cf. Bryant's earlier *Winter Piece*.

lyrical genius" to front rank at the time. But he was neither widely appreciated then nor since. His earnestness was not sufficiently supported by vitality, it seems; and his, in its way, fastidious taste had little popular appeal. His most ambitious attempts, the dramas *Thomas à Becket* and *Ethelstan*, were coldly received.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849) was ambitious, but not consistently sure of his balance; he could declare, as he did to Kelsall, that "the man who is to awaken the drama must be a bold trampling fellow—no creeper into wormholes", and trample boldly himself: but he could also suffer from depression, drunken lapses, and suicidal inclinations pointing to madness. In his schooldays at Charterhouse he had displayed a capacity for rebellion and for appreciating the Elizabethans. His *Bride's Tragedy* was published in 1822; but his other major work, *Death's Jest Book*, though complete by 1829, was not published till 1850. This play most completely exposes his genius; nurtured not only in the lurid traditions of the drama from Marston to Shirley, but on medical science (he was an M.D. of Würzburg), occult lore, Lully and Paracelsus, Arabic surgery and Rabbinical osteology, where he found the magical bone Luz (III. iii) mentioned by Ziba. He cannot be said to marry science to poetry as Tennyson does; but his poetry may be said to transform his scientific and other reading into something rich and strange. Problems of life, death and disease are carried from hospital or lecture-room into a nightmare region where, characteristically, roses and lilies are juxtaposed to ghosts and graveworms. Shelley, we recollect, also assembled a scientific-philosophical foundation, and could refer his readers to Cuvier and Laplace. But he had not the professional backing, which provided Beddoes with so much material for the death-theme that haunted him, and fills the play with that fascination for and horror of death which the poetic doctor experienced to the full. The epilogue to the play suggests the point reached in his struggle to accept the way out of tragic life: "Death's darts are sometimes Love's". Tennyson ventures on neighbour ground in *In Memoriam*, published in the same year; the two attitudes to death may be profitably compared. Beddoes' lyric poetry, with its freedom and variety of movement, is haunted with his almost habitual darkness, which often makes strange company with a nimbleness of rhythm worthy of, and in part traceable to, Tom Moore. His grotesque sometimes runs away with him; but he has it well under control in Wolfram's Song "Old Adam, the carrion crow", from *Death's Jest Book*.

Edgar Allen Poe (1809–1849) succeeded in popularizing, as Darley and Beddoes did not, romance flavoured with horror. Dare one suggest that this is partly due to a bold and sometimes coarse-grained extravagance of art, such as appears, but less frequently, in Beddoes, and is rare and subdued by comparison in Darley, who nevertheless was prompted to write to Miss Mitford, about *Sylvia* "the grotesque parts offend grievously against good taste"? His genius seems to prevail through a certain hard imperviousness—it is indeed the conqueror worm, that storms or corrupts all the strongholds of existing taste. He "gets past" with such manifest rhetorical sins as the excessive repetition of "bells" in the poem of that name. If, as Lowell declares, he was "two-fifths sheer fudge", he had the secret of forcing the two-fifths on our acceptance. The technique of his utterance is sometimes offensively bad; Mr. Orwell might call his "bad good poetry". There are clichés as wretched as "the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride"; yet the reader is not only compelled to admit them, but to recognize that through them the imaginative[1] miracle is taking place.

Further light may be thrown on the source of this quality by a French writer:[2] "Edgar Poe était avant tout et par excellence un *esprit* mathématique . . . L'imagination et la faculté poétique doivent se placer au second rang, immediatement après l'esprit mathématique, et soumises à lui". Darley was a mathematician; yet can this be said also of him? Not everyone will find it true of Poe, perhaps. But often it might be fancied that he is calculating, like a good engineer, how to convey tremendous power cheaply: lines in *The Raven*, *Lenore*, *Annabel Lee*, (where the angels were "not half so happy in heaven") support one's fancy. But the tremendous power *is* conveyed, nevertheless; and beauty arises out of tawdriness. His rhythms are strongly infectious, and Sir Edmund Gosse has referred to the effect on later poetry of his metrical enterprise, of which the pre-Swinburnian lilt of *Ulalume* is one instance. Moore acted here as a formative influence, as well as Hood and Byron, as can easily be gathered from Poe's essay, *The Poetic Principle*. He finds Moore, as we may in turn find him, "weirdly imaginative". "Ossian" he calls "alive and panting with immortality" (*Letter to B——*), but his low opinion of Wordsworth

[1] In Coleridge's sense.
[2] L. Lemonnier, *Edgar Poe et la Critique Française de* 1845 à 1875. (1928).

is comparable with Darley's: he has no faith in him. The "terror" element in his verse as well as his prose (which will be considered later), proclaim him heir to the elder school of extravagance that exasperated Wordsworth; from Radcliffe to Maturin, from Bürger to Hoffman: to these rather than to the Elizabethan and Jacobean Senecans. But there are some Elizabethan turns of phrase in *Politian*, where we learn that "Politian was a *melancholy* man" His poems were published in 1831.

Thomas Hood (1799–1845) whose serious poetry affected Poe, brought out *The Dream of Eugene Aram* in the same year; after which he wrote poetry almost to the end of his life, including wholly serious pieces like *The Song of the Shirt*, looking forward to the "sociological" literary wave; and others combining jokes with grimness and horror—looking backward to Lamb for the one, and, say, Maturin for the rest: such is *Miss Kilmansegg. The Haunted House*, and *The Elm Tree*, two sinister poems, sometimes achieve the kind of phrasing that is the matrix of a Hood joke, but no more. A throe of the romantic agony can be detected here, no less than in Beddoes or Poe. It is present in the work of another comic poet, R. H. Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends* (pub. 1840), as *Hamilton Tighe, Bloudie Jacke*, the diablerie of *The Lay of St. Cuthbert*, the sadism of the *Auto-da-Fé*, variously testify. Barham has some derivation from Southey's ballads, wherein the Devil goes through his motions. In the history of Gothic architecture the macabre, appearing late, might be taken as a sign of decadence; and so it might in the poetry of the 'thirties, had it permeated the whole structure. But other forces were at work.

Religious poetry, from different "camps", attracted many readers. James Montgomery (1771–1854) was still being too prolific. His longer poems are rightly forgotten; his best hymns are in the *Ancient and Modern* collection. He is said to have begun writing verse under the spell of the Moravian hymns, when as a boy he was educated by that brotherhood. The Anglo-Catholic poets, already active in the previous decade, are of greater historical significance. *Lyra Apostolica*, an anthology in which John Henry Newman (1801–90) played a leading part, was published in 1836.[1] John Keble (1792–1866) continued at this time to compose poetry (*Lyra Innocentium*, 1846). So did Newman, who was then at work on his hymns from the Latin Breviary. His *Dream of*

[1] The other contributors were: John Keble, I. Williams, R. H. Froude, J. W. Bowden, R. I. Wilberforce.

Gerontius was begun early, though finished and published (1865) late. Among the minors of this group were F. W. Faber, Isaac Williams, and John Mason Neale, all devout and, compared with Newman, deficient in art. Williams' *Cathedral* (1838) may be mentioned as exposing the Scott-Tractarian nexus mentioned in Newman's *Apologia*. Newman stands above these lesser angelicals for several reasons. He avoids sentimentality (which, in Faber, offended Robert Bridges): his logic and strength of head govern his feeling, and make for a deliberation in his art—or his design—which satisfies: and in some of the short lyrics there are refreshing approximations to satire. On the debit side, there are sometimes logic and dogma and intellectual ingenuity without poetry; yet these things are better than feeling without poetry. In *The Dream of Gerontius* there is a happy balance of all these good qualities; the design is integrally adorned, and not hindered, by the emotional climaxes which succeeded one another in increasing depths of intensity, yet always within the control of the artist: for whom there were some difficult moments, indeed; but Newman had enterprise, and took his demons by the horns.

If he administered, without express purpose, a tonic to sacred poetry, Sir Henry Taylor (1800–86) consciously attempted to treat "profane" poetry likewise. His deflationary policy is set out in the foreword to *Phillip Van Artevelde* (1st edn. 1834); poetry, under the influence of Byron, has grown too "highly coloured", developing a diction "which addresses itself to the sentient, not the percipient, properties of the mind"; or under that of Shelley, having already earned the title of the *Phantastic School*, ignores the maxim, "Poetry is Reason's self sublimed". Taylor did not ignore it; he attempted to restore at least a measure of the control of head over heart, to restrain the new "gaudy and inane phraseology"[1] within the bounds of decorum, and indeed, to pave the way for some later remarks on the romantic poets by Arnold in the *Essays in Criticism*. Taylor's own chastened, but still at times faintly Shakespearean, style, is reliably dignified: if it shows any Wordsworthian origin, it avoids his "flats". His production in the new mode was substantial; from *Isaac Comnenus* (1827) admired by Southey, to *Edwin the Fair* (1842) and—with omissions—*The Virgin Widow* (1850). He made his reputation on *Phillip*: Browning wrote to Miss Blagden (1872) that he met "Henry Taylor (of Artevelde)", who "said he had never gained anything by his books". He lived long,

[1] The phrase had been applied by Wordsworth to 18th century poetic diction.

but missed popularity. Good craftsmanship was not enough for this; and possibly his avoidance of ostentation, together with a deficiency in élan, outweighed his sober virtues. *Phillip*, a dramatized story, not for the stage, is a well-designed example of the traditional heroic theme, the rise and fall of greatness; there is excitement without melodrama, and carnage without rant. Aristotle might have appreciated it more than such modern readers as set character unduly above plot.

The newer earnestness was, then, already making itself felt diversely; and yet one more variation, in Phillip James Bailey's[1] *Festus*, aroused much comment in 1839. Tennyson told Fitzgerald, "you will most likely find it a great bore, but there are really *very grand* things in *Festus*." Bailey aspired to grandeur with the aid of Goethe's Faust and Milton's diction; he ranged through celestial, infernal, and interstellar space, and through millennial time; now out-Miltoning Milton with "nebular pertransitions", now colloquial, now again warbling (or is there an apter word?) of the "starlet" and the "birdling". Rather than boredom, *Festus* offers immense variety; but the hugeness of his design swamps the author's poetic control.

The newer earnestness was overlapped by the older wildness in the shape of Hartley Coleridge (1796–1849) with his gin and his eccentricity. Here, if anywhere, the original and paternal romantic energy showed enfeeblement. He had a true, but slender gift for sonnet writing. His sonnet to Shakespeare (whose inspiration supported his) is probably the best known, as it deserves to be; the less fortunate one to Tennyson, with personified abstracts, is not unsuggestive of his father's early manner. "He was a loveable little fellow", Tennyson wrote. All the Flower Poems seem to be written *at* Wordsworth, to whom he pays homage in the Celandine and Daisy verse. Another sonnet writer, Sir Aubrey De Vere (1788–1846), is better-known for his tragedy *Mary Tudor* (pub. 1847) which was as highly esteemed as Tennyson's later *Queen Mary*. Gladstone, admiring both, praised de Vere's drama more warmly. His *Song of Faith, Devout Exercises and Sonnets*, was dedicated, in 1842, to Wordsworth who has "perused many of the following poems with pleasure". "Old Wordy" was not without disciples then, nor later: the reaction against him extended narrowly —Arnold owed much to him, Tennyson, while criticizing his diffuseness, placed him next to Milton; and Browning wrote of the

[1] 1816–1902.

lost leader, but joined the Wordsworth society. A humbler following of him is visible in the short pieces of his son-in-law, Edward Quillinan; the blank verse of *Wild-Flowers of Westmoreland*, with Wordsworthian italics, bears sufficient witness to the debt (Poems 1853).

Tennyson (1809–92) fell in with an early phase of the newer earnestness, when he became an Apostle at Cambridge in 1828. He then noted that Shelley's poems had not an immoral tendency: he supported the anti-slavery convention, discussed Evolution (as he then conceived it) and "advocated the Measure for abolishing subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles" (*Memoir*, Hallam Lord Tennyson). *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, 1830 and *Poems*, 1832, revealed a genius for rendering "sensuous beauty", atmosphere, a sense of musical delight, rather than thought. Richness of decoration was accompanied by a keenly observant eye; the former a clear and legitimate inheritance from Keats; the latter, up to a point at least suggestive of Wordsworth. But beyond that point the "natural history" attitude begins to affect his treatment of detail; the sponges of millennial growth and polypi in *The Kraken* already point the way towards:

> "Before the little ducts began
> To feed thy bones with lime . . ."

In spirit it is nearer to Crabbe, finding poetry in his jellyfish and saltwort, than to Wordsworth finding philosophy in his celandines: since it was Crabbe (as well as Erasmus Darwin), who anticipated the reunion of natural history and poetry[1] which Kingsley emphasized in some remarks by Tom Thurnall in *Two Years Ago*. Kingsley admired Tennyson's early poetry not because it was "philosophic", but because it discovered poetic sublimity in "the trivial everyday sights and sounds of nature." The garden, as opposed to Wordsworthian wild nature, is a significant feature of his descriptive side. We may greet, too, his early gift for gnomic utterance ("It is man's privilege to doubt" in the Supposed Confessions) pointing to "Kind hearts are more than coronets" or " 'Tis better to have loved and lost. . . ." It is the restoration to poetry of true wit as defined by Pope; but, *a definitione*, it is not

[1] and cf. Wordsworth, *Preface to 2nd Edition*, etc.: "the remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be . . . proper subjects of the Poet's art . . ."

profound thought. It helped him along the way to popularity; enriching the hoard of a tradition, dear to the people, and older than the Proverbs of Hendyng. This is not to say that Tennyson did not strive to penetrate further. He was, and remained, keenly aware of the problems which became urgent to thinkers of his time—*The How and the Why* (about which Kingsley wrote[1]) in many guises. Faith or doubt, mortalism or immortalism, love or duty, action or contemplation, Art or Life;[2] such were the themes that occupied him from 1830 and were still doing so when he finished the *Idylls of the King* (1872), which Carlyle described as superlative lollipops. As a poet of ideas he is as disappointing in his way as Browning in his; which may be a reason why Arnold wrote of him to Dykes Campbell, 22.9.64, "I do not think Tennyson a great and powerful spirit in any line, as Goethe was in the line of modern thought . . ." Tennyson was in many "lines"; his almost bewildering variety appeared in the 'thirties, and extended as the decades passed. In several he was unquestionably "great and powerful". He reanimated English poetry with a music the power of which, after 1842, drowned for a time, if we may credit Arnold, that of Wordsworth.[3] He too was a mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies, an Enceladus with his Pontic pine, as Thackeray knew; a bold metrist and experimenter with words, and a creator of atmosphere —excelling particularly in the gloomy and subdued, in accordance with the acknowledged vein of melancholy in him:

> "The curlews call,
> Dreary gleams about the moorland flying
> over Locksley Hall":

> "Over them the sea-wind sang, shrill, chill, with flakes of foam."

(*Locksley Hall* and *Morte D'Arthur*, both 1842). He could follow a sportive line, but always unsuccessfully. Fitzgerald said of *The Skipping Rope*, "Alfred, whatever he may think, cannot trifle . . . His smile is rather a grim one." Another facet of Alfred was neither grim nor fortunate, but drew on him first Lockhart's, and then Lytton's, satire. The New Timon (Lytton) put his finger right on this "line" in the couplet

[1] *Madam How and Lady Why.*
[2] *The Palace of Art* resulted from Trench's remark, "Tennyson, we cannot live in art."
[3] *Essays in Criticism*, 2nd series: Wordsworth.

Let School-Miss Alfred vent her chaste delight
On "darling little rooms[1] so warm and bright"

in 1846. This *alter ego* to Enceladus cannot be ignored; it flavours too much of his work for that; *The May Queen*, parts of *In Memoriam* (despite the forge and file), *Edwin Morris*, *Sea-Dreams*, *Enoch Arden*, do not exhaust the list. But was there not a demand for the cosy and even the mawkish in those days, by a possibly Philistine public? And did not authors beside Tennyson supply it? Dickens did copiously, Mrs. Gaskell charmingly, in prose; why not in verse? For those who cannot stomach it, it is a price to pay for delight in the more tonic aspects of his muse: for the austerity of Ulysses (1842), the massive starkness—if we discount the intrusive "voluptuous garden roses"—of the Ode on Wellington's death (1852), the disillusionment that is yet strength in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*.

In Memoriam, when it had finally grown out of a few stricken elegies on Hallam's death, into an imposing spiritual odyssey, made a profound impression on intellectuals then and later in the century, Henry Taylor, Kingsley, Gladstone and Jowett among them: but Fitzgerald wrote, in disappointment, of the feeling that it was evolved by a poetic machine of the highest order; evidently preferring the "champagne flavour" of the earlier poems. Later Professor Sidgwick wrote to Hallam Lord Tennyson[2] apropos of this work that Tennyson was "pre-eminently the poet of science; contrasting his with Wordsworth's less scientific attitude to nature." The more recent conception of nature is confronted with theology in §§ 54 and 55 of the poem, to be reconciled finally on a higher plane of understanding in which, apparently, heart (faith), not head (science) predominates. Science fascinates but alarms Tennyson; it may be agreed that such alarm in the poem leads him to questionable conclusions; that, in short, he is not a very strong thinker. But this is far less important than the proof, here, that he has made a memorable poetic pattern out of contemporary thought. If there are still complaints of "poetic machines", it might be urged that the severer orderliness of the machine was not unsalutary in times when the Phantastic School was about to be succeeded by the Spasmodic. Tennyson benefited English poetic practice in more

[1] *O Darling Room* had appeared in *Poems* 1833 but was not reprinted.
[2] Memoirs, vol. I. p. 302.

than one way. His sensitivity to current modes and feelings encouraged an already present gift for variety. *Maud*, vehement and at times hysterical, reflects the Spasmodic fashion, and goes one better; he may have been stimulated by William Barnes' Dorset Poems to his own not too happy efforts in dialect. Hawker's *Quest of the Sangreal* (1864) preceded Tennyson's *Holy Grail*,[1] though plagiarism is denied. Tennyson, like Shakespeare, did not plagiarize, but absorbed and created anew. Sources in Thackeray, Bailey's *Festus*, and Shelley, Wordsworth and elsewhere, have been noted in illustration of this power: yet it was misunderstood, and Lytton misleadingly accused him of "outbabying Wordsworth and outglittering Keats". As Laureate, and patriotic poet, he produced the best kind of public verse (*The Duke of Wellington Ode*, *The Light Brigade*) and possibly the worst (*Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition*, *Riflemen form*), but avoided steady mediocrity. When upright, he towered above the rest; but when Titan[2] fell, calamity was the more noticeable. He had not, and never learnt, such acrobatic equilibrium as Browning had. When old, he could still write things as good as *Demeter and Persephone* (the "grecian gusto" is generally beneficial to him) and as bad as *Mechanophilus*.

There are many excellences in his plays, as in Browning's, to be discussed elsewhere; but in his non-dramatic poetry he achieves so often the imaginative process of "incantation", which Browning as often misses; and a little seldomer, the grand gesture of the bard (*The Revenge*), and rhetorical splendour (*Boadicea*) such as Arnold missed: virtues none the worse, perhaps, for a touch of panache.

His most serious rival was Robert Browning (1812—89), of whom he said, "Browning never greatly cares about the glory of words or beauty of form".[3] Tennyson certainly cared about both. By the time he was twenty-one Browning had studied and composed music; attended London University, shown interest in painting, and written *Pauline*. He had also become familiar with the poetry of Shelley and Keats of whom the former exerted the stronger influence. Later (1852) he wrote an essay on Shelley, but *Pauline* was the first-fruit of this attraction, expressed in his tribute to the "sun-treader", "a spell to me alone", as he had believed.

[1] He had met Hawker at Morwenstow in 1848, when contemplating a resumption of Arthurian poems. Baring Gould wrote that Hawker "flattered himself" that he had introduced the Arthurian Cycle to Tennyson.

[2] I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart. *In Memoriam*.

[3] Memoir, vol. ii, p. 285.

Paracelsus followed in 1835, marking an advance towards that intensely individual style which in its full attainment, some find overwhelming. If we take a few Victorian poets, say, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, and Swinburne, we may be struck with the extent to which poetic diction is restored, after Wordsworth's campaign against it: but with the difference that, whereas much eighteenth century-diction had some reference to a general standard that of our poets is intensely individualized. A vocabulary rich in sumptuous oddities ("riveled gold . . . burgonet"); decoration with a stronger touch of strangeness in his artifice than in Tennyson's: the elliptical expression, the jerky sentence broken with dashes, the use of anapaests in blank verse; the beginnings of these characteristics are seen. The subject, so studiedly off the beaten track, is of the kind that he continued to prefer. His unorthodox education, with much browsing among his father's books, had revealed to him some alluring by-ways of matter and manner, from an astrological treatise to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*—later on he was to "parley" with Mandeville.

Sordello (1848) has the full bouquet of a vintage Browning; the eccentric rhymes begin (fritter youth—bitter truth"); the ellipsis, in his attempts to be concise, increases; but while this is true of his statements, it is not of his amplification, which generally tends towards excess. And he is now well launched on his "philosophic" voyage of discovering the inclination towards good (with which we may connect Shelley and Godwin) in men: in men rather than man, since the individual is precious to him; especially one in whom the prospects of good are not too promising—as in *Sordello.* The story is one of, eventually, inward spiritual triumph, two steps towards which are articles of Browning's creed: the first, that knowledge of the head (science possibly) is not enough; the second that love, of the heart, is of the greatest value, for the soul striving to ascend. Tennyson feared, we remember, in *In Memoriam* that divine philosophy might become procuress to the lords of hell; and advised the necessary precautions in the region of faith. Browning's course seemed set for optimism, and so, at present, it continued. In *Pippa Passes*, and subsequently, he pulled oddities from the world's lucky-dip, as though to demonstrate that all sorts, whether best or worst, were God's "puppets . . . there is no first or last"; another way, perhaps, of pointing out to Victorians that *sub specie aeternitatis* the commonly received scale of values ceases to be valid. His choice of the humble Zion chapel (*Christmas Eve and Easter*

Day) illustrates this principle, which he has stated in his Essay on Shelley: *The Ring and The Book* discloses, at length, reasons for the fallibility of human judgments, their inconstancy; but in Art there is constancy; it is evidently an eye that can see from the eternal standpoint—"and save the soul". Browning knew much more about art than Kingsley did; but here he approaches a view comparable rather with his than with the pre-Raphaelites. Can we call this view characteristically Victorian, and the pre-Raphaelites not? At all events the soul, and its saving, stands forth as a primary concern of his, as in *Ned Bratts*; and art is frequently called in to aid the process, whether in the manner of *Fra Lippo Lippi*; or of the "parleying" with Francis Furini, whence we may gather that the nude, if treated or considered from the "eternal" position, uplifts the soul, through sense, to apperception of the divine. Such attempts to vindicate Art and its nudes were, no doubt, required in an age of indignant Buchanans;[1] but Browning himself seems to have been consistently biassed on the spiritual side in his criticisms of art, as of life. The defence of the nude model, in the bad short *Lady and the Painter* (*Asolando*) is based on a cognate text, "God's surpassing good . . . a type of purest womanhood". And so once more the good is extracted from apparent evil—a favourite legerdemain of our philosopher. His last Epilogue summarized the optimistic creed, of never doubting clouds would break, right would prevail, victory come of defeat; he would have us, as he did "greet the Unseen with a cheer". It may not be very profound, but it is quite characteristic; forming the main ingredient of the tonic which he administered to an age that required it. Even his more "shocking" poems contribute to the dose; his contemplation of the phallic monolith in *Fifine at the Fair* leads him to reflect on "God, man, or both together mixed", and *The Statue and the Bust* is a naughty sermon on the evils of procrastination. Possibly Browning's naughtiness was partly a device for shocking his readers into awareness; but it may be related to his search for good in apparent evil; a search which was not, however—as in *Bubb Doddington*—always successful.

If he did not wed any startling philosophical ideas to poetry, he shewed how psychology might become as acceptable in non-dramatic verse as in drama or fiction; though he "psychologized" as a pilgrim of eternity. The faults of his style, its often ponderous playfulness, its digressions, ellipses, tangled allusions, harshness,

[1] for Buchanan's attack on "the Fleshly School" see p. 47.

are well known; but these were also virtues, as far as they suggested further poetic horizons than had been suspected. In loading nearly every rift with junk he indicated such new decorative possibilities as twentieth century poets have not yet exhausted. In mingling colloquial prose idiom ("he simply takes/The dividends and cuts the coupons off") with uncompromisingly poetic diction ("howe'er rock's grip may grind"[1]) his destruction of barriers benefited modern poets; and, incidentally, he cut his definite articles in the style of the 1930's—and of G. M. Hopkins, some of whose rhymes are Browningesque. He revived a blend of wit with—if not wisdom, at least philosophizing, which stands intermediate between the Metaphysicals and the Moderns. His was the newer conception of wit, after Hazlitt and not Pope; it includes the facetious, the grotesque and the clownish (v. *Of Pacchiarotto*) to an unchastened extent that may not apply to his successors. He disproved the heresy that cleverness and genius are incompatible by being abundantly, unremittingly clever; he was as unable to take a holiday from Coleridgean fancy as Cowley, or Hood; from this his fatiguing superabundance of amplification, as well as much indispensable brilliance, seems to arise.

Browning's "grecian" excursions may be noticed as indicators of the distance from Lessing that he achieved in a wide swerve from that aesthetician's view of Greek beauty. He makes the most of Aristophanes' grotesque or Aeschylus' obscurity, using the latter[2] as an instrument to pull the leg of Matthew Arnold, who was nearer in spirit to Lessing. Browning tinctured English poetry with European colour, much of it Italian: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82) did the same for American poetry, with emphasis on the Teutonic side; and there resemblance ceases. In some ways —as in that of hitting on the public taste simply, and without cheapness, he is more closely related to Tennyson; but he is never Enceladus waving his Pontic pine, or liking "his meat in chunks". His muse is simpler, more tranquil, more serene—and perhaps, more sentimental in a pleasant manner.

Like Tennyson, Longfellow has been posthumously derided to excess; and it was much to Kipling's credit that he appreciated "Othere, the old sea-captain", which exhibits the characteristic "forth-rightness" of Longfellow at his best when story-telling. His narrative power, whether in the "Kalevala" metre of *Hiawatha* or

[1] both from *The Inn Album*.
[2] preface to his *Agamemnon*.

the hexameter of *Miles Standish*, is likely to have held old men from chimney-corners that they would not have vacated for Browning; Coleridge Taylor has confirmed the tunefulness of language in *Hiawatha*—tunefulness which, there and in *Miles Standish* and *Evangeline*, stands in some peril of glibness ("slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded each other—days and weeks and months"). Yet there is a sense of repose in his style, as beside flowing water, for which gratitude is due. His lyrics can sing, not shriek, and have been sung, if to absurd music; and after the guffaws have died *The Village Blacksmith* and *Excelsior* stay to remind us that there are good examples of art at other than the highest levels. His attempts at dramatic writing vary from the excellence of *The Golden Legend*, with its admirable variations in mood and temper, to the monotony of *The Divine Tragedy*, where he seems to have aspired to what lay beyond his powers; which was mainly the stirring of depths. The sublimity of Longinus that "lies in intensity" was not his. Each of his two main tasks, of "European" enrichment, and of work on "The Matter of America" is carried out with a limpid and sometimes naive[1] honesty. Both are important in the history of romance; the former imparts ancestry to *transition*; the latter brings the Nature theme into a native wild-wood context. Poet and professor, but no pedant, he could write as single-heartedly of Hermes Trismegistus as of Giles Corey. When classical allusion tempts him to call Shakespeare a Musagetes and Milton a Maeonides (*Book of Sonnets*) it is through joy in the Hellenic current that has refreshed him, "Poseidon in the purple sea".[2] His homage to Tennyson, sweet historian of the heart, conveys both his own dignified cession of the laurels, and his own poetic trend away from "the howling dervishes of song". His sonnets, not ungrateful, once more fail in presenting thought "that lies concentrated in a single word". He was sentimental, and disarmingly so; he was objective, mellow, and sensible. As to this last it may be agreed that if he never attained Tennyson's heights he never descended to his sillinesses. The Darling Room, and Longfellow's room at Devereux Farm (*The Seaside and the Fireside*), are significantly different. The upholstered comfort of his poetry may now, after much howling of dervishes, be recognized for the virtue that it is, meriting his European reputation.

In John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–92) we seem at first to have

[1] cf. his *Elegiac Verse* from *In the Harbour*.
[2] *Three Friends of Mine*, II.

met an even simpler soul who could (*Massachusetts to Virginia*) bow to Macaulay.[1] He is soon known for an alertness of eye for constructive detail (cf. *The Countess*), and for a tongue capable of the invective and satire of the slavery poems, but kept within the bounds of Quaker decorum. His Abolitionist enthusiasm helped to impart a certain austerity to his poetic make-up (cf. *Ichabod*), not evident in Longfellow's. It appears elsewhere, in some of the Hymns, one of which celebrates "the austere virtues strong to save", and political poems. His feeling for Nature was strong; the lines to Wordsworth with reference to "that which shares the life of God", hints at some sympathy with Lake pantheism: and he admires Bryant for sharing a Wordsworthian gift[2] and Burns, who taught him much about the poetry in "life among the lowly", in natural surroundings. Earlier in his career he broached The Matter of America (under the spell of Scott's poetic manner) in *Mogg Megone*; following it up with *The Bridal of Pennacook*, (1848) and other "Indian" pieces. He succeeded better in the paleface department of American history, older and newer, whence emerged some of his acknowledged triumphs like *Barbara Frietchie* and *Maud Muller*, where his mastery of the ballad form is admirable. The ballad-like *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, from *Legends and Poems of New England*, is one of the most vigorous things he wrote, braced evidently by the tang and savour of Marblehead, so sharply conveyed to the reader.

Such concentrated liveliness is not always present; Whittier dilutes it variously with uncalled-for classical or geographical allusions, odds and ends of eighteenth century diction, and barren "fill-up" *clichés* which he was perfectly capable of avoiding. He had virility and at least a conception of the beauty "such as Goethe pictured, such as Shelley dreamed of",[3] but not the unremitting vigilance of the first rate artist. To call him "homespun" may mislead, for he "homespins" very well: *Snowbound* is a delightful product of his wheel. But it may be doubted whether the European cultural impact was as good for him as for Longfellow. He is rather distracted from than assisted to, his true *métier*, by "Saga's chant and Runic rhyme". He comes into his own on his native soil where he is profoundly sincere, whether idyllic or passionate as well; there is passionate sincerity, if little art, in his reproof of the

[1] as Andrew Lang demonstrated.
[2] *Bryant on his Birthday.*
[3] *To——, with a copy of Woolman's Journal.*

English, which that nation should acknowledge.[1] With less skill but stronger feeling than Longfellow, he has done as much if not more, of the task of establishing American romance on a solid territorial basis: but his is romance moralized.

The poetry of two eminent prose writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) and Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94) belongs to this generation. Emerson's poems have been even preferred to his prose; on the other hand, the poems have been accused of obscurity. They are certainly the most "metaphysical" of any hitherto encountered in America. If he was obscure, so was Browning: if gnomic, so was Tennyson; a measure of such aberrations in style seems almost necessary to one phase, at least, of the nineteenth century genius. He may have been of the Brahmin caste and one of Columbia's prophets and intellectual dictators; but he could certainly write bad verse, beyond the respective nadirs of Longfellow and Whittier. Perhaps he followed too conscientiously his own requirement (*Merlin*) that the bard "shall not his brain encumber/With the coil of rhythm and number"; would he had "encumbered" more and trusted less to a vocabulary (how gaudy the century's diction has become since *Lyrical Ballads*!) which includes "supersolar", "lote", "maugre", "supplemental asteroid," "antipode", to see him through. Not that these verbal surprises are crowded; they are spaced out with language capable of baldnesses like "what he knows nobody wants"; and Andrew Lang quotes from *Nature, II*:

> She who is old but nowise feeble
> Pours her power into the people.

This poem—in passing—repeats Wordsworth's view of Nature as a teacher. There is, then, pretentiousness and stumbling; but also what is admirable and admired. Arnold approved of that blueprint for priggishness:

> When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
> The youth replies, *I can*.

But *Brahma* is surely poetry in the oracular style at its finest; the paradox of "all-ness" being put into concentrated and musical shape which only the fastidious would alter in a few details—and

[1] *To Englishmen.*

probably for the worse. *Days*, the quatrain from Alcuin, *Merops* (despite the last stanza) deserve homage; and there are some taking passages of the oracular manner in *Initial, Daemonic, and Celestial Love*, as well as the sad line "Love—love—love—love", which like the title, is better forgotten. The message of the poetry is one of romantic idealism based on the Germans, Coleridge, and Carlyle; Plato, Plotinus, and Swedenborg also acted as emotional elevators towards what Dickens happily terms the vortex of immensity.

Holmes' poetry frequently eschews the Arnoldian virtue of high seriousness; much of it is facetious in an easy way which contrasts with the keen-pointedness of W. M. Praed (1802–39), but reminds us sometimes of the ungirt familiarity of the conversation piece, and more often of Goldsmith, and Cowper's earlier "Table Talk" manner. He wrote freely in the couplet, using it without difficulty for the colloquialisms of *Rip Van Winkle, M.D.*, or the more literary style, with a few echoes of Crabbe, in *A Family Record* (1877). Several of these couplet pieces were composed for reading on academic occasions; *Vestigia Quinque Retrorsum*, for the Harvard Alumni Winner of 1879 is a fair sample—pleasant, jocose, felicitous, but without immortal longings. Indeed, a substantial part of his verse is of the nature of his prose—good table-talking and dinner-speaking. His metrical range was considerable between extremes, of a clever imitation of Moore's dactylic lilt, and blank verse. *The Deacon's Masterpiece* (from *The Autocrat*) is in the Christabel metre—very suitable for the motions of an old one-hoss shay. Its merit consists rather in a certain local fragrance as of timber and bison-skin, than in its fun. In general he does not take his fun seriously enough to win a firm place among the comic writers. It has been suggested that he abandoned medicine, in which he was trained, for literature partly because of a satiric touch in his bedside manner. In his literature this touch is soft; and possibly for the higher comic poetry a hardness, a spice of cruelty, is demanded, which he cannot supply. On the serious side his anthology piece, *The Chambered Nautilus*, his romantic foundation, at times disguised elsewhere by the couplet, is revealed, with tribute to the Lake school in "gulfs enchanted", "sunless crypt", and Triton blowing his wreathed horn. There are immortal longings, of a meliorist kind, in the last stanza; and more in the poems from *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* which, with the others of his "Table" series, break intermittently into verse. Of these *Wind-Clouds and Star-Drifts* form a latter-day series of Night Thoughts,

without the Lorenzo, in blank verse, bearing everywhere the craftsman's mark, and in some passages that of imagination—those at least in which he exploits time and space. But no excursions, as with Poe, into the remote terrain of Strangeness can be expected of such wholesome normality as governs a muse well equipped for composing a song for the National Sanitary Association (1860).

While it would not do to call James Russell Lowell (1819–91) America's Matthew Arnold, yet Andrew Lang has uttered both names in one breath; and there was in Lowell a fine consciousness of literature as such, a critical alertness which might prompt one to a loose comparison. He edited not only some Romantics, but also Marvell and Donne for a series of British Poets, and criticized others, from Chaucer to Swinburne, in prose and verse like the good professor that he was—before he became a diplomatist. In poetry he exposed serious, comic, satiric, facets. Of the first kind are the *Legends of Brittany* (from *Poems*, 1844) admired by Poe, with its touch of the *macabre*, or *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (1848), a Grail poem. Tuckerman, in 1852, compared him with Wordsworth and Tennyson evidently on the strength of work of this sort, and not, surely, on that of *The Fable for Critics* or the *Biglow Papers*. It is in these however, with their humour and satire, that the true Lowell flavour is recognized. In the former, erudite fun, and cannily personal appraisals of contemporary "new writings", compare with a more varied exuberance in the latter, where puns, recalling Hood, whom he admired, contribute to the rollicking. The Latin *Kettelopotomachia* has its macaronic virtues; the note on the literary remains of Mr. Wilbur sparkles more than Scott's Cleishbotham waggery; but Birdofrèdum Sawin and Hosea Biglow seem a little overpowering in the mass, and may have appeared to better advantage as originally printed in "numbers"; some of them in *The Atlantic Monthly*, of which Lowell was first editor. If he had not the creative power of Poe, or of Whittier, he had ample equipment for that mission of propagating "sweetness and light" which he, as well as Arnold, undertook.

As for creation—in Lowell's birth year that portent, Walt Whitman, also was born; and with him the American romantic movement touched its zenith once more after Poe, whose romance was of things imagined, while Whitman's was that of things seen. Whereas all the major poets, from Whittier to Lowell and including Poe, had imported much of European mode and tradition, Whitman, as he tells us in *A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads* attempted to

break loose from the influence of "Old-World Song", and to present, unimpeded, the modern spirit of America, with neither "euphemism nor rhyme". The free-verse form that he created may have some remote ancestry in Blake and Macpherson; but its rhythms partake of "the sea rolling in" at Long Island (*A Backward Glance*) "the solid roll of the train" (*Song of Myself*) the leaping broad-axe, and the "proud music of the storm". His vocabulary, avoiding euphemism, is rich and sometimes eccentric and pretentious, as his parodists realized; "eidolons", "allons", "formules", and the like have afforded them opportunities: but it survives as a poetic diction with an exuberance and power all its own. It exudes virility, highly dramatized, at every syllable; its kind is opposite to that of the anthosmial Doctor Holley Chivers,[1] with his "ruby-rimmed berylline buckets". His manner, so exclamatory and passionate, at times may move more deeply, perhaps, than anything else written in America; at others, its rowdiness fatigues. Head yields, often regrettably, to heart; and splendour, long sustained, may suddenly collapse at unfortunate references like "scented herbage of my breast". But his earnestness and good faith, and the sheer power of his emotion, seem again and again to blast a way to beauty through obstacles largely built by his own indiscipline. After *Leaves of Grass* appeared in 1855, there was some printed resentment, and more sales-resistance. He was counselled by Emerson, his spiritual guide (or one of them), to be more discreet; advice wasted on a congenital mystic and exhibitionist. Controversy over him became acute: on the one hand O'Connor hailed him as the Good Gray Poet, on the other *Public Opinion* found that such senseless trash indicated the madhouse. The stir that he created lasted into the more recent psychological age, at which it has been debated whether he was auto-, homo-, bi-, or a-sexual. But what matters is that he made, in his poetry, a more honest attempt to see man steadily and see him whole; in the process of which (as in *Calamus*, *Children of Adam*) he celebrates physical as well as other forms of love. When he mentions sex he does so in the New Solemn Manner (as opposed to the older and more sportive) which has found echoes in the generation of D. H. Lawrence. He strives after the vision of a greater whole, embracing "God in every object" and soul, the subject, that "fillest, swellest full the vastness of space". The celebration of America expands to one of the

[1] 1809–1858; a poet whose style, for all its chambering and wantonness, is something more than a caricature of Poe.

Allness which, through Emerson, has derivation from the Coleridgean imaginative act; but Whitman makes more noise about his, and about his love and soul and body, and their universal extensions (as in *Chanting the Square Deific*). But it is a deeply impressive noise, still reverberant.

Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, encountering Matthew Arnold abroad, found him "a very different kind of poet from Walt Whitman".[1] He means that Arnold[2] wore large checks, flapped large tanned gloves about, and talked boastfully to ladies, which is pleasant hearing, and implies that he could flourish away from Apollonian haunts. The creator of high seriousness—or its Victorian version—was able to become a little vulgar, as well as, occasionally, to jest. His Mr. Bottles, the Radical, who looked forward to marrying his deceased wife's sister, is rich. But high seriousness guided him as a poet, almost throughout; his poetic aims, fully developed in the Preface of 1853, and in the critical essays, were towards height, grandeur, and austerity on a classic basis. The unpopular *Strayed Reveller, and other Poems*, by A. (1849) already sounds a note other than classic—that of the romance of aloofness, the loneliness savoured by Byron;[3] in the sketches of remote lives of *The Strayed Reveller*, or in the sea-kings "left lonely for ever". It persists thereafter, from *The Scholar Gipsy* to the Carnac stanzas; a cult of what is "romantic, solitary, still",[4] is one of the things which, like Wordsworth's influence on him, aided by a leaning towards Celtic "glamour", resists a rigorous classicism. Arnold's classicism, important historically, is severe to Pope's neo-classicism, but in itself scarcely rigorous unless in *Merope*. It consciously woos the Greek, not the "Gallo-Latin", spirit, onwards from the *Fragment of an Antigone*. In 1853 he reached under Aristotelian guidance, a point at which he excluded *Empedocles*, on the grounds of deficiency in action, from his new book—a poem in which, by the way, the theme of spiritual exile is salient. The pursuit of action and the grand style, led him to attempt a kind of abbreviated epic, in *Sohrab and Rustum*, and later in *Balder Dead*. Both are enjoyable and Homeric—with modern décor; discreeter than Horne's *Orion*; but Horne had more space to go wrong in. And so Arnold arrived, with another preface, at *Merope* (1858), where he rightly deplored such as were "taught

[1] *Unforgotten Years*, 1938.
[2] 1822–88.
[3] cf. *Childe Harold*, III, LXVIII.
[4] *A Southern Night*.

to consider classicalism as inseparable from coldness". Unfortunately the play itself has chilled many. He derided Pope's Ode; but a halting chorus passage in *Merope* has even less to recommend it. Of Gray he misquoted, "he never spoke out"; but his own "Hellenic" fastidiousness, in this play and elsewhere, has a muting effect. It is a taste—or even aesthetic, descended rather from Lessing than Boileau: yet it is so fashioned of his own temperament as to make him, as a critic, somewhat contemptuous of two earlier "Hellenists", Shelley and Keats.[1] But the fastidiousness was valuable in an age of art tending to those excesses and eccentricities that Arnold reproved for their provinciality. If *Sohrab and Rustum* is the best product of Arnold's Homeric mode, it may demand comparison with *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis*, conceived in a full awareness of the romance of the elusive, and the dreamy Oxfordshire setting. Some of the descriptive ornament is worthy and reminiscent of Keats; and so, in the first of the two poems, in his use of abstract Persons. In both he comes to "a fugitive and gracious light"; even the "thoughtful" stanzas of *The Scholar Gipsy* are so illumined, as too often they are not elsewhere, e.g. the Epilogue to Lessing's *Laocoön*. He was capable of the exquisiteness of "Strew on her roses, roses", and of sheer bathos:

A prop gave way! Crash fell a platform! Lo

in the sonnet *Austerity of Poetry*; his poetic creed placed the fanfare and the Tennysonian gigantic pose beyond him. But he replaced a measure of sweet reasonableness which was due in English art. If he criticized the romantics, excepting Wordsworth, severely, and over-estimated the value of certain French writers,[2] it was from the laudable motive of directing attention to continental art, where ideas were cultivated, and to the dangers of insularity and excessive subjectivity.

Arnold was an experimental metrist in an age distinguished for such experiment; and evolved two characteristic forms of rhymeless verse; the lightly moving *Strayed Reveller* measure, and the bumpity bumpity bump[3] that is noticed in *Rugby Chapel*, neither of which, any more than Longfellow's or Clough's hexameters,[4] solved the problem for moderns; Whitman was nearer the mark.

[1] *Essays in Criticism, 2nd series.*
[2] *Essays in Criticism*, Series I.
[3] Its probable Greek original has grace and lightness, cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ἀέναοι Νεφέλαι.
[4] Arnold tried the Hexameter in some translations from Homer.

Yet they widened that range of measure which is one of the good things of Victorian poetry. And Arnold left his age an æsthetic in which, appropriately, duty and beauty were undivorced; and one challenging to later ages. In many respects he might be hailed as a liberator, as he had hailed Goethe, a major force behind his thought. The effect of Goethe, already seen operating on Bailey, is also apparent in the work of Arnold's schoolfellow, Arthur Hugh Clough (1819—61); *Dipsychus*, with its Mephistopheles, gives the easy clue. But Clough, more chameleon-like than Arnold in his sensitivity to style, takes the manner of the Faust-imitation, and (in *Dipsychus*) of some Browningisms and *In Memoriam* stanzas; just as in *Mari Magno*, he revived the manner of Crabbe, suggesting a scholarly delight in imitation—an ingenuity of wit—not remote from Calverley's. A nimble spirit pierces the clouds of Rugbeian seriousness in *The Latest Decalogue*, but also in *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* and *Amours de Voyage*. That may be why the sociology (with special reference to the Woman Question) in *The Bothie* does not "clip an angel's wing", if a line on the removal of slops can be called angelic. This poem, which stirred Kingsley and the pre-Raphaelites, Lowell and Emerson, records, though it may be a minority report, the presence of lively, unconventional, and questioning enthusiasm in 1848; but in *Dipsychus* (1850) depression is signalled. His vitality, never as great as Arnold's, waned, leaving Arnold to drive on, bumpity bump, to the City of God. Some recovery, after his marriage in 1854, had no correspondent poetic rebirth; in *Mari Magno* the earlier enthusiasm is lacking, though a sparkle lingers in the Crabbisms. Carlyle found him 'mildly radiant": he emitted intellectual rays, but equally like a less athletic Hamlet, stultified action—his own Claude[1] does so—in fogs of intellectual doubt.

It may still be unfashionable to mention "influences", but the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–61) tempts one to do so; the early Grecian Phase (*The Battle of Marathon*, with its foreword) the trail of hope through the *Essay on Mind*, or the Robert Browning phase in the 'forties', are firm invitations. It is less easy to say of her that the sources were absorbed into original creation, when as much diluted Robert is to be seen among the *Last Poems* as in "Died . . ." But her own individuality is variously shown; in ambitious attempts at magnitude, which o'erleap themselves, whether in *The Seraphim* or *Aurora Leigh*, though her enterprise is

[1] *Amours de Voyage.*

to be admired; in her "sociological" interest; and in that poetry (e.g. *Sonnets from the Portuguese*) which most truthfully conveys her own spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. A few of the Sonnets (XIX, XL) suffer from "conceits" which spoil the effect of genuineness which, achieved elsewhere, is one of her crowning virtues. *Aurora Leigh*, a blank verse novel, which scandalized some readers in its day, bears the signs of a gallantly sustained attack on so ponderous a form: "I have put much of myself in it," she confessed, and was rewarded by the appreciation of Ruskin, and Swinburne, who remarked that there was not a dead line in it. In spite of which, her diffuseness in comment and dialogue and allusion is all too clear; but the straight narrative and description, which includes a little "slumming" and some railway talk, conveys a breath of life as the dragged-in Oreads and Panomphean Joves do not. It is a feat, while the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are poems of the "pure poetry" order. Though Italian politics led her astray with *Casa Guidi Windows*, she found her true direction there in several beautiful lyric passages. Of her shorter lyrics, *Cowper's Grave* affords a model of that unimpeded outpouring which carries her along, as it were, in confidence and safety; and *The Musical Instrument* (Cornhill Magazine, 1860) offers that kind of plaintively rich melody that haunts nineteenth century poets from the humbler (T. H. Bayly) to the exalted (Tennyson, *The Lady of Shalott*). Her pure vein of romantic expression places her nearly at the top of the list of Victorian female poets. Had there been consistently more purity and less amalgam, more craftsmanship and less carelessness, the palm would have been hers; as it is, Christina Rossetti may be judged to have won by a short stanza.

Robert Stephen Hawker (1803—75) Vicar of Morwenstow, visionary and eccentric, cannot easily be roped into any group or school; his anglo-catholicism developed along his own picturesque lines before he died in the Roman faith; he is certainly not "one of the Tractarian poets", though he preferred Newman to Kingsley, whom he considered "nosey". His balladry won him a reputation, but the blank verse of *The Quest of the Sangraal* has many splendours. Local colour becomes in his art not an ornament but an inspiration; it is an art that rarefies, or spiritualizes, with a maleness characteristic of both words and deeds. The stormy coasts with a moorish hinterland, then breeding a rough population, with recent memories of smugglers and wreckers:[1] "Morwenna's strand, where

[1] cf. *Mawgan of Melhuach*, 1832.

rock and ridge the bulwark keep" nurtured his soul, if it disposed his body to sciatica. His dual life of this and the unseen world enabled him to write with equal conviction of the Sangraal as it "swoon'd along the golden air" or of a day with the hounds.[1] His satiric *The Carol of the Pruss* (1870) expresses his awareness and disapproval of the beginnings of our "blood and iron" age; he had a pet pig, and saw Saint Morwenna in his church. The strangeness of his mysticism, conveyed in symbol, magic and folklore, gives to his Sangraal poem an attraction, a sense of things implicit but not explicit, lacking in Tennyson's. It might be complained that the language suffers from pseudo-antique clichés, "yon", "ah me!" "yea", "ye", and the like; but such had become an established part of the new diction superseding what Wordsworth had denounced. Tennyson had been using such forms for his Claribel and Lilian in 1830; Robert Bridges did the same in 1902; it was a widespread and persistent convention. Discounting this, which in Hawker's case was doubtless assisted by the Bible, and old ballads to the extent of a few phrases, we may admire his creation of atmosphere with "telling" words, among them "logan", "transome" "sigilled" and even "numinous".

Hawker had distinction, and so had Richard Hengist (baptised Henry) Horne (1803—84) in his different genre. Like Lodge, he roamed the seas and wrote poetry, and prose—the Brownings helped him in *A New Spirit of the Age*, before they married. He showed his dramatic power in *Cosmo de Medici* and the short and even more impressive *Death of Marlowe* (1837). Other dramas followed (*Gregory VII*, 1840, *Judas Iscariot*, 1848). But he is best known, and nicknamed, for his epic *Orion* (1843), overpraised by Poe and compared by Elizabeth Barrett's friend, Mr. Kenyon, with *Endymion* and *Hyperion*; and Keats throve in Horne's literary background, though the poem contains some Wordsworthian and Miltonic reminiscences. His object was twofold at least; to present allegorically, man's inward struggle, but also to create new associations with Greek mythology which, he declared were perverted at present, and evidently too Latinized as a Neptune or a Diana. A purer Hellenism was to be ushered in, with "Phoibos" for Phoebus, and so on. Other poets made something of a fashion of this nomenclature; Browning wrote "Hippolutos", Buchanan "Olumpos". The style, whether used for narrated action (as in Rhexergon's account of Merope's rescue by Orion) or description—"the clear-

[1] *Arscott of Tetcott*; 1853.

skied windy gap", absorbs "influences" into its generally triumphant masculinity. The triumph falters when technique fails, permitting awkward things like agglomerated consonants such as Tennyson would have dodged; or phrases insipid by contrast apart from permissible relics ("templed glades", "sylvan troops") of the age of Thomson, with which no quarrel is intended. His contribution to the health of English letters was certainly tonic, But one may feel in regard to him as to several other Victorians, that there is some danger of confusing an intense personal flavour with creative genius, unless watchful discrimination is maintained. Such care is needed with "Festus" Bailey, and with William Barnes (1801—86), the Dorset dialect poet. Kilvert,[1] visiting him in 1874, described him as "half hermit, half enchanter". Barnes had then something to say, not wholly approving, of *The Northern Farmer*; and it has been suggested that Tennyson, with his flair for contemporary movement in poetry, was stimulated to his dialectal efforts by Barnes's example.

Barnes sang of bright-eyed maidens among their cows, and old Grammers in high-heeled shoes; of the "clote" in the Stour and the "eltrot" by the roadside, mills and copses, snowfall and haymaking; and all with great skill and sweetness; his melody, enriched with internal rhymes, is sometimes almost cloying. He has bequeathed us a delicious record of the bad old days when country-folk were happy in their work (*Haÿ-carrèn*) and hearty in their fun (*What Dick an' I did*); unless he had idealized beyond belief. Stripped of dialect the poems would still preserve individuality in rhythm, and in detail, characteristic both of the district and the poet's feeling for significance; and not infrequently, through a conscious rendering of "folk" sentiment, in corresponding form, as in *The Winter's Willow*.

A school of "spasmodic" poets was indicated and satirized by Aytoun in 1854; but those to whom the name has been attached had no very close connection in technique. Two of the most prominent are Alexander Smith (1830–67) best known for his delightful prose *Dreamthorp, A Book of Essays Written in the Country*, and Sidney Dobell (1824–74), the "Gander Redney" of Aytoun. Smith's *Poems*, 1853, aroused interest, favourable and hostile, as did his *City Poems*, 1857, and *Edwin of Deira*, 1861. He was accused of employing "the mutilated property of other bards"; and *Edwin* was found to be indebted to Tennyson.[2] His sensuousness may be

[1] *Diary*.
[2] London Athenaeum, 1857, 1861.

traced to Keats. Dobell, sometimes the poet of "fierce despair", was sometimes Byronic. If he inherited Keats' descriptive genius, he twisted it to his own purpose in

> The slipping slipping drip
> Did whip the fillipped pool whose hopping plashes ticked.
> (*A Shower in War-time*).

The Roman (1850), *Balder* (1854), *England in Time of War*, 1856, brought him a reputation that has since rightly waned. Of *Balder* the *Edinburgh Review* wrote, with perception, that it was the drama of a poet's disease, full of beauties—the loveliness of the hectic flush. It was this flush, and some hysteria, as well as an interest in the Crimean War, which the "school" owned in common. Tennyson's *Maud* which, with its hectic air, has been claimed as spasmodic, appeared in 1855.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND AFTER

THE liveliness of the 'forties was increased by the re-discovery of beauty by the pre-Raphaelites in 1848—a portentous year. The short-lived *Germ* and its equally short-lived successor *Art and Poetry*, four numbers in all, provided space for a manifesto of the new "Thoughts towards Nature" of D. G. Rossetti (1828–82) and his group: Nature, as conditioned primarily by Dante, Giotto, Benozzo Gozzoli. William Rossetti, who acted as compère, declared the honest and personal and non-imitative aims of this movement; the only satisfactory works of art, he added, were those that exhibited the very soul of the artist. The individualist reaction from academic standards was, in fact, intensified. One result might seem to have been a passage from Nature to extreme mannerism; so Buchanan evidently thought. But a better one, immediately seen, was the emancipation, if only temporary, of beauty from duty, which also shocked Buchanan into his attack on The Fleshly School of Poetry (1871), though he lived to recant, and to write a verse-tribute to Rossetti on his death. Not every Victorian reader misconstrued the new, erotic and mystical, poetry; *The Critic*, reviewing *Germ* I and II, found it not material enough for the age; noted affectations, but saw in these numbers the beginnings of a new poetic era. *The Guardian*, also encouraging, discovered purifying elements. Rossetti, proceeding from the spirituality of Dante, the sensuous decoration of Keats, the sombre romance of Poe, quickly established his own expression in *The Blessed Damozel* and maintained it into the later ballads. Throughout, a close, and sometimes even strained, attention to the craft of words, is characteristic; whether they are words as stunning as "hell-spurge of Geomaunt and teraphim"[1] or as artificially simple as those of *John of Tours*. Occasionally a reflection of other styles appears: *A Last Confession* reflects Browning, whose *Pauline* impressed him as a young man. But nothing deters him from the steady pursuit of an idiom, slow-moving and profound, which, generally with outstanding success, sacrifices the effect of free

[1] *Sonnet for a picture of Ingres* (1st version).

spontaneity. He proved, as Pater, who owed him something, did later, that art is not always to conceal art. *The House of Life* is a monument of such discipline; the faults there and elsewhere lie not so much in vocabulary as in rhythm; the chloral of his muse is the spondee, over-indulgence in which induces heaviness.

Rossetti made a background of mediæval romances as well as of the sham gothic of the romantic revival. He translated from *The Romance of the Rose* and Villon, as well as from Dante and the early Italians. He learnt something from Poe and Tennyson; and recreated from such sources an idealized world of preterite things, strongly flavoured with strangeness. Morris was indebted to him in the creation of his own mediæval fantasy: and Swinburne, also a translator of Villon and an employer of "stunning" words. He took an active part—and so did Swinburne—in the re-valuation of William Blake, assisting Gilchrist in discovery of matter for his life. Swinburne dedicated his first book[1] to Rossetti. But his poetry of "contemporary reactions", of which *Jenny* is the most conspicuous, is so admirable and comparatively rare, that we might wish there were more of it. Everywhere he showed himself to be, as William declared, "a fastidious writer."

Among the allies of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Coventry Patmore (1823–96), mystical and domestic amorist, entered, with Rossetti, the field of carnal symbolism. But his audacities, more quietly and less concretely expressed, avoid the provocation of Rossetti's, and for that matter, Swinburne's. Indeed, he managed to pass with some readers as a garrulous and sentimental writer; but while he was both at times (e.g. in *The Victories of Love*), he was more generally a modern metaphysical, with the gift (formerly Donne's or Vaughan's) of ordering strong feeling in intellectual pattern; continuing, at the same time, from Coleridge's intuition as Rossetti continued from Keats' visual intensity. Some may chiefly prize him for his peculiarly fragrant rendering of Victorian life in *The Angel in the House*, and *The Victories of Love*; where the Rose Boudoir, the Luncheon Bell, Mendelssohn played in the study, even railway travel,[2] dispense a restful "beauty of security" that has passed from us. For he had the narrator's art of selective scene-setting which avoids descriptive excesses disturbing to the main interest, which is love. This is not disturbed but intensified by the lavish conceits of *The Unknown Eros*, where he makes considerable

[1] *The Queen Mother*, and *Rosamund*.
[2] *The Rosy Bosom'd Hours*.

play with the theme of pain, as one at the same time sadist and masochist in the spirit. There is a fine extravagance about both his Catholicism and his Toryism as poetically treated; too much eccentricity indeed for the balanced grandeur of great poetry; but he is never dull, even when he prattles of tea-parties.

Christina Rossetti[1] is able to convey the fullest religious fervour without the metaphysical apparatus or the "whipping" interest: yet in her too, as her brother William's analysis suggests, there was that which the antiseptic conscience could label morbid, and sometimes garrulity as well. Early and late, "the day of death" fascinated her; pausing over decomposition in *Thoughts of Death* (1850), she welcomed final release in *Sleeping at Last.* It recurs in her secular as well as Anglo-Catholic poems; and one cannot help noticing that it is not always treated as a gateway to a new life. On the other hand she used the family love for animals in her verse; and shared with her brother the characteristic rose-lily decoration. Among the beast-like goblins of *Goblin Market*, one was like a wombat, a creature also significant to Gabriel. In her more youthful poems there are a few touches, and no more, of Gabriel's statelier manner; but already in 1847 there was a fluency pointing not only to *Goblin Market* but to the surprising lilts and accelerations of certain devotional verses (cf. some *Feasts and Fasts*). One is compelled to take notice of tawdry neighbourhoods in which exquisite pieces like "Herself a Rose" find themselves. Christina might with advantage have relegated to hymnals those pieces in which the piety exceeded poetry; there would have been a glorious residue. She missed two disciplines—the intellectual, like Newman's, the artistic like Gabriel's; what the century needed especially was more poets (and writers generally) with the latter.

It owes much to D. G. Rossetti and to his senior, Edward Fitzgerald,[2] for observance of this; Fitzgerald who, if eccentric in his life, was fine in his taste, whether or not it is easier to maintain perfection in the limited compass of the book by which he is known. For his *Six Dramas of Calderon, Freely Translated*, and his renderings of Greek tragedies, had little popular appeal; it was his *Rubáiyát* which, aided by the appreciation of Rossetti and Swinburne, who bought remaindered copies of Fitzgerald's own abortive printing, at one penny each, grew posthumously into a favourite Christmas present, in limp leather. He had made, not a transla-

[1] 1830–1894.
[2] 1809–1883.

tion, but an original poem, as he admitted; "better a live Sparrow than a stuffed Eagle." In it he revived wit as defined by Pope, to express no new consolation for the quarrels of the universe. The eastern garden of Epicurus,[1] which he planted with roses and watered with wine, probably brought, by the end of the century, as much comfort to the perplexed as the conflicts of Arnold, Tennyson's cries for faith, or Browning's acrobatic aspirations to the divine: for it had the advantage of being consistently beautiful, if not sublime in the sense of Burke. The fine and even fastidious sense apparent in *Omar* did not bring him to success with the Greek or Spanish ventures, or with *Euphranor*, a following of the Platonic dialogue, which he himself suspected of affectation. But it showed advantageously in these critical remarks which impart such value to his letters as documents in the history of taste. If hypersensitiveness sometimes made him shrink from merits when obscured by mannered façades, this was better than the reverse; it was a good fault in one who, like Lamb before him, demanded a purity of beauty, unpolluted by any kind of show or humbug. His keen scent for a good thing aroused his distrust in a reasoned way to it, and so for the "æsthetic Germans" including *Gewty* (Goethe) slighted in *Euphranor*. In the 1830's he was suspicious that Carlyle's teutonified "mystical language" concealed no great depth. He doubted the ability of Thackeray, his Cambridge contemporary, to overcome a deficiency in perseverance and steadiness; and found *Pendennis* "very stupid", but modified this view later. Pre-Raphaelite poetry and painting—with its mannerisms, and the "system" of Ruskin, were not to his taste; though he praised a later picture of Millais (1874). He loved Dickens, while noting his faults of melodrama and "sham pathos"; but Scott was his favourite. He preferred Wilkie Collins and Trollope to George Eliot, and exclaimed, on the death of Mrs. Browning, "no more Aurora Leighs, thank God!" The art of the past he found generally more reliable than that of the present, in which, he complained, there were too many clever people going wrong for clever reasons. Browning went wrong under his odd titles; the "Gurgoyle" (neo-gothic and pre-Raphaelite, evidently) school also; and so did even his friend Tennyson, when, leaving the poetic age of "champagne flavour" behind him, he "crippled his growth by over-elaboration."

Of the older poets, Milton contained too many "pedantries" to

[1] He admits a natural inclination to "gentle Epicurism" in a letter to F. Tennyson, 8.12.1844.

please him. Gray was awarded high marks for his exquisite taste; Wordsworth, praised for his honesty, fell short of his aspiration, and—all the Wordsworths were pompous and priggish. He favoured Keats, but "Crabbe is my great gun", whose cause he promoted when fashion trended elsewhere. He did his best, but failed, to like Hawthorne, apologizing for this to Lowell; with whom, as an author, he went as far as he could, which was not all the way. *Mutatis mutandis*, his view of the moderns has its analogue in Peacock's of his Age of Brass; he declared, in 1880, that he cared for none of the poems, not even Tennyson's, except in parts, of the last thirty years. He shrank from the violence and vulgarity of his time; from that of Mr. Balfe's "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls", finding asylum in Mozart and Handel, whom he believed to be "a good old pagan at heart"; as he was himself except when the ostentation of Puseyite parsons awakened a fugitive Cromwellian mood. In painting the older masters, not the new, pleased him; Raphael, Titian, Poussin,[1] Vandyke, Reynolds. The age that bore him could not be wholly brazen.

The Accuser of the pre-Raphaelites, Robert Buchanan (1841–1901) was strongly conscious—perhaps too much so—of his own poetic mission. A Glasgow Scot, he reached London in 1860; when he was inspired to write one of his best things, the *London Poems*. If bulk were a test for greatness, he would rank high; or if earnestness and determination were. Massive works which satiate without satisfying, *The Book of Orm*, *Balder the Beautiful*, *The City of Dream*, *The Wandering Jew*, and others, shoulder their way through a throng of minor but often substantial pieces. He may, and does, borrow a characteristic rhyme of Rossetti, but not his condensation, nor his patience in waiting for the inevitable word or phrase, which brings poetry into complete being. In *The Book of Orm* and elsewhere, he may be so frequently baffled, not by understatement, but by an inconclusive creative act: the poem ought to be beautiful, but isn't. It may have been partly that his egotism restrained the freedom of his Muse; a self-conscious egotism that sometimes peeps out as in the epilogue of the *London Poems*, or *The Devil's Case*. He could seldom so achieve detachment as to forsake Buchanan; about whom he seems to be as solicitous as Whitman is genial about Whitman. He is more effective when he looks outward in such satires as *Attorney Sneak* (*London Poems*), recalling Crabbe, or some passages in *The Devil's Case*, including a reference

[1] ? Nicholas.

to Bailey's "bad blank verse and metaphysics", and a few in *Thro' the City*. The late literary satire, *The Dismal Throng*, while amusing, suggests a personal (almost national?) bias against the French novelists and Ibsen. He visited America, attempted "transatlantic" poetry (*Saint Abe and his Seven Wives*) admired Herman Melville and Whitman, and lived to address a complimentary verse to Bernard Shaw. *The Book of Orm* reveals him as a pioneer in Celtic mysticism as a poetic colouring; but as such it will scarcely bear comparison with "Fiona Macleod". It might be wished of his lines, as Jonson wrote of Shakespeare, "that he had blotted a thousand". He was a man of strong, even aggressive character; he loved nature and abhorred jingoism; he was a fighter, a sentimentalist, something of a Philistine; but made no poetic history as Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne did.

Poetry of the political Left Wing had appeared in the *Corn-Law Rhymes* (1828) of Ebenezer Elliott (1781–1849), Hood's *Song of the Shirt*, and works by the Chartist group, including Thomas Cooper, and Capel Lofft whose *Ernest, or Political Regeneration* had attracted notice in 1839. Sidney Dobell supported the cause of liberty in Europe, aware of "the captive . . . at the dungeon gate" (*England in Time of War*, also *The Roman*). It remained for William Morris[1] to conceive poetry, on such political foundations, more grandly. An associate of Rossetti's, he was deeply convinced, like him, of the sacredness of art. The next step was prompted largely by Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, where he found support for his own Gothic preference, and the view that Gothic in which the workman expressed his art-urge freely, was democratic, while Renaissance art where the architect dictated entirely, was not. He found that the Renaissance and succeeding ages had robbed the folk of that art which is "the natural solace of men's labour"; and for joyfully creative work had substituted that which was joyless and mechanical, manufacturing ugly and joyless products. From such reflections rose the firm of Morris and Company, in which Rossetti too was active; aiming at a restoration of beauty to the common things of the household, and training workmen to be artists. His poetry is part of his protest against Renaissance "tyrant" art and the final resultant machine-made materialism. His peculiarity of style is partly explained by the abandonment of the "Quintilianic" rhetoric of the classicists, in favour of a simple, quasi-mediæval method of composition, recalling the imagined age

[1] 1834–1896.

of the people's gothic art, and fittingly direct as a medium of beauty for the people of his time.

Morris's political ideal as well as his poetry was conceived in a cusped and pinnacled vision; neither Marx nor "gas and water socialism" were to his taste; while Kingsley had disapproved of the poor man's drains, he approved of the poor man's art: "art made by the people and for the people", as he put it in the Birmingham Lecture of 1880. And so, in an early story[1] we meet the sculptor imagining a Gothic Abraham with a mail-hood and a scarlet pennon to his lance. *The Defence of Guenevere* and other Arthurian poems are similarly conceived in a Gothic, not Celtic spirit. The later and more Chaucerian *Life and Death of Jason* (1867) is not as Gothic as it might have been; the "little aumbrye", the Citheræan temple, Circe and her cloistered shrine, may be conceived in the style; but the seafaring has Homeric reminiscences—and Homer was among his hundred best books; and the interest in the behaviour of rabbits and sooty swifts, and the romantic feeling for ancient times, are modern. The poem is unified by that spirit of "applied decoration" which Morris (Liverpool Lecture, 1888) associates with the middle ages, and which affects practically all his poetry. *The Doom of King Acrisius*,[2] with a setting of battlements, knights, horn-blowing and tapestry, is nearer that mediæval conception of Greek legend at which he, presumably, aimed. The *Earthly Paradise* includes a new interest competitive with ornamental mediævalism; this is the North Teutonic, with its epic sweep, seen in *The Lovers of Gudrun*. The beginnings of this trend appear in his Icelandic studies as far back as 1860: the results are voluminous, but uneven, as may be seen with *Sigurd the Volsung* which he began in 1875 partly as a result of his dismay at Wagner's treatment of the Siegfried and Nibelung matter. It represents his main effort to write a masterpiece: it provides a grand story and richly designed decoration. But Morris could do this with a prose tale or a wallpaper: and it is difficult to agree that he has achieved an epic style *via* the sagas any more than Scott has done *via* the romances. The effects of a solid foundation in nature, which neo-classic enthusiasts had rightly noted in Homer, cannot admit as a substitute the effect of a solid foundation in applied art. The latter is here and is "vara fine";[3] the illusion of two, but not

[1] *The Unknown Church*, 1856.
[2] From *The Earthly Paradise*.
[3] As Costard said in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

three, dimensions, of a surface on which design, and "the green and the blue, and the red", are abundantly laid, delights, but does not wholly sustain. The stylisation of the death and mourning of Sigurd mitigates its tragedy. These may not be defects, but signs of a new approach to poetry—the "Morris and Company" approach, which is that of the specialist. Hazlitt accused Scott of making modern antiques; without seeking a parallel here, the reader, once accustomed to the wealth of the poem, cannot help suspecting that Morris, the foe of machine-made art, sometimes falls back on mechanisms. Despite which it is a splendid recital, crowning him as a story-teller and picture-maker in prose and verse. The metre, variously described as developed fourteener or six-foot anapæst,[1] rolls powerfully along, just missing the mighty-mouth'd harmony which it so gallantly pursues. It is with true regret (and possibly error) that Rossetti is allowed the mastery as *poet*. Morris had two recognizable prose styles, both hearty in the best sense; the "mediæval", eschewing Renaissance rhetoric and cherishing old syntax, used for many of the tales from its milder beginnings in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine pieces of 1856, to its maturity in *The Sundering Flood* (printed 1897): and the "modern", the penny plain, affected by the former, but stripped for the propagandist purposes of *News from Nowhere* or *Hopes and Fears for Art* (i.e. lectures). His verbal art has a genuine value which may be better assessed if one does not use the apparatus suitable for a Tennyson or an Arnold. He made a great experiment, leading to both good and evil; the good lay in a direction north of the "Gallo-Latin" conventions: the evil in the beginnings of a sentimental and popular cult of the "old world" manner. Both have marked our culture demonstrably.

The connexion of Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) with Morris and Rossetti gives him a Pre-Raphaelite setting; but his profound homage to Landor, beginning at Eton with the *Hellenics*, is even more significant. Some experiments more or less in the Pre-Raphaelite manner (e.g. *Rosamund*), which have the ornament but also some quite Swinburnian waywardness, gave way to *Atalanta in Calydon* 1865, where modern thought and rhythm enlivened a Grecian setting. He succeeded as he hoped, in outdoing *Caractacus* and *Merope* in this piece, the new beauty of which startled the age. Morris's manner is easier to remember than his lines; Swinburne impressed both on the public; "when the

[1] Or, might I add, adapted heroic hexameter.

hounds of spring" and "before the beginning of years" have won popularity. Next year *Poems and Ballads*, First Series, provoked even more comment, chiefly because they included a group of "daring" poems—the squibs, presumably, which Buchanan accused him of flinging like a naughty schoolboy. The book was sensational, its cultural tone anti-Tennysonian; a number of the poems reflected in their conception, his link with the pre-Raphaelites; the metre, but not the spirit, of *Laus Veneris*, was borrowed from Fitzgerald's *Omar*. In it (and *Atalanta*), appeared not only the "champagne flavour", but the legendary Swinburne, atheistical, rebellious, perverse, frenzied in his anapæstic dance of pursuit after Our Lady of Pain. The technique was dazzlingly acrobatic, but graceful: the audacious rhetorical gesture was restored to poetry, and intensified in *Songs Before Sunrise* 1871, where revolution, Mazzini, and liberty, were celebrated. In this book there was considerable purgation of the décor of sea-foam, wind, rods, fruit, wounded lips, serpents; but a few such images still linger. It will be noticed that his last poems of the 'nineties and after are further divested, except that the sea, always of such deep import to Swinburne, echoes its "glad rage" as late as 1907. The rhetorical surge and clangour of *Songs Before Sunrise* is sometimes terrific, always arresting. There may be moments of hysteria; but there is "fire and wild light", and an appearance of increased mastery over form and words, as at the close of *Cor Cordium*. The intensity and comparative economy of *Hertha*—one of his favourites—is also outstanding. *Erectheus* (1875) following on the lengthy, but less shapely *Bothwell*, revealed an austerer Hellenism than that of *Atalanta*. It is consciously Aeschylean; he detested Euripides, as is clear from a rude *jeu d'esprit* at the expense of Mrs. Browning's "with his droppings of warm tears". But his thunders are not merely reboant of Aeschylus'; they are his own, "of the trumpets of the night." The thought also gives evidence of improved control, in the sense of citizenship that submits to the decree, however harsh, of the gods. Man, in submitting to destiny, becomes divine, or more than that. The power and passion of *Erectheus* is intensified by the "marmoreal" dignity of its language.

The second series of *Poems and Ballads* (1878) included the memorable Choriambics, where rose-lily imagery, the legacy of the pre-Raphaelites, still persists, as it did with Morris. The next year was that of his salvage from alcoholic excess by Watts-Dunton,

himself a writer with the strangeness prescribed by romance. Among the excellences of this last phase was *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882) where intellectual pyrotechnics (e.g. the Fate Passage) rebut the accusation that he sacrificed sound to sense, and the sea motif is used from first to last with admirable subtlety. In the third *Poems and Ballads* (1889), the baby-cult of a later phase is illustrated; but it produced nothing remarkable in verse. His late poems have been sneered at, particularly when he wrote in defence and praise of England. But she was worth praise and defence, when she was "crown and head of all her glories". If he learnt this with Watts-Dunton's help, the clearer is that saving influence. When his excesses in style, which he knew and parodied, are allowed for, great poetry remains; great for its vigour and motion, incomparable in the century except with Poe, and for its wit in the older, more serious sense of "fitting expression".[1] He made vivid the things of this world without recourse, like Rossetti, to mysticism, or like Poe, to the spectral. His sensuous beauty is often of the baroque, or kinetic order; but he creates art of its very restlessness. If a "message" is sought it may be found, as it evolved, in *The Altar of Righteousness*, in the recognition of manhood rising on the twilight of the Gods. Upon such a basis H. G. Wells was to found his new, if fugitive, religion.

[1] cf. Davenant, Preface to *Gondibert*, and Dryden's earlier Essays.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSCENDENTAL AND MECHANIC FLIGHTS

COLERIDGE, bemused (as Hazlitt thought) by the German philosophers, had led the way into Transcendental philosophy. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) following into this morass, became one of the keys to nineteenth century creative thought. He had been critically unkind to Coleridge, as he had to other notables of the romantic age; to Lamb, the "cockney school", "the satanic school": and one of the prerequisites of the Everlasting Yea (*Sartor Resartus*) was this: "close thy Byron; open thy Goethe". In fact while saying much to damage the English Romantic prestige, he established a romantic philosophy which reeked of Germany, and borrowed from Coleridge certain conceptions of intuition, pure reason as intuitive revelation, and mystical experience. His hostility to mechanistic conceptions of cosmic or human happenings has again, analogues in *Biographia Literaria*; and his *via dolorosa* to the Everlasting Yea, or Illumination (to which a preliminary is "Annihilation of Self") in Coleridge's line "Ignore thyself, and strive to know thy God".[1] And from Coleridge[2] and Wordsworth he carried into Victorian times the theory of the "divineness of nature" (*Heroes and Hero Worship*, 1840), and the pantheistic recognition (*Sartor Resartus*) of the glory of a present God in star and grass blade. Dismissing Wordsworth as garrulous and Southey as "starched before he was washed", he remained a romantic, coloured not only with German mysticism (e.g. Novalis) but with the Scotch Calvinism which is primarily responsible for his snarls at Pusey,[3] and his sophisticated defence of Knox (*Hero as Priest*). He went his own way towards the doctrines of Might, Action, and Heroism—that is, with the aid of the Germans, largely Fichte. Heroes for him were executors of the divine idea, bringers of order and culture; Odin and Rousseau—but not Voltaire, whose levity was too Gallic. While he preached Fact and Reality as opposed to Semblance and Sham, he did so as an idealist, not as a Bentham

[1] *Self-Knowledge*, pub. 1834.
[2] *To Nature*, pub. 1836.
[3] *Past and Present*, (1843).

or a Darwin, nor for that matter, as a dialectical materialist; his facts may be intuitively perceived, like that of the heaven-sent despot (or hero) and the motto, "work is worship" (a text for Ruskin and William Morris) of *Past and Present*; or, in the same book, that of the sphere of usefulness of landed aristocracy, which concerned Kingsley in *Two Years Ago*. He strengthened Tennyson in faith, Dickens in the ardour of reform; he showed the paths of action and duty which became highways of the age. The glamour of his Transcendentalism, and Emerson's, rests in wonder; at time and space, Immensity, the incomprehensible All, and similar ingredients; but the appeal of this kind of thing was less widely distributed here, whereas its American form, derived from Emerson, came to fuller fruition with Whitman. As a transcendentalist, with one eye on the Infinite and the other on historic fact, he saw the Divine Mission of Sansculottism;[1] he brought the realism of Frederick the Great beyond "the first range of hills",[2] in the light of "God-effulgences"; he condemned the spivs and drones of his day, the Dandies, unworking aristocrats and followers of Mammonism, in *Past and Present*, and *Sartor Resartus*. God was in his heaven, but all was not right with the world; the gifted, the heroes, were astray from the light of truth and duty; and the workers no less, tending to Chaos "deep as Hell". Carlyle prophesied an ascent from such depths, but scarcely with an optimist's conviction; as though he felt the need to persuade himself that men love not darkness, but light, and that the dollar's rule in heaven was impermanent. He saw no divine mission in even this hard currency area. It is significant that he expressed surprise at Emerson's confident cheerfulness. His intense earnestness was relieved by humour, sometimes harshly satirical, on occasion interestingly scatological (cf. *Sartor Resartus*). Its breadth and weight, its innocence of subtlety, is sometimes reminiscent of Kingsley's, but its sweep is wider; sometimes of Dickens', but without his divine gift for pure absurdity. Both it and his style conspire to present the effect of yet another of those imposing personalities which have seemed, to some of us to-day, hypertrophied and overwhelming. It is a disruptive style, by the time it achieves (suddenly, in *Sartor*), full defiance of accepted conventions. German origins[3] assisted its formation: but there is a racy and Scottish basis to it, as to his

[1] *The French Revolution* (1837).
[2] see *Biog. Lit.* on Transcendental Philosophy.
[3] notably J. P. Richter.

humour; and a deep background of reading which embraces Shakespeare, with his boldness in coining new verbs and double epithets, and the exclamatory and digressive tricks of Sterne. He is one of the people who have been called prose Brownings; and his use of words, it is true, partakes of the tortured acrobatics indulged in by that poet; but his peculiarities run rather to parenthesis than to ellipsis. Browning plays with his words, Carlyle fights with his like a cudgel-wielder; they are full of sound and fury, but signify much, as prophecies, of what has since occurred.

Emerson hitched his waggon to a star with greater suavity and cheerfulness. He took as one of his texts, "the Golden Age . . . is before you", and attainable through virtue and wisdom.[1] His prophecy—to the extent that he prophesied—was no jeremiad. The essay "Civilization" (in which hitching the waggon is advised), while severe on his country's backslidings, notes with hope and confidence "what cubic values America has". He practises, as he preaches, the affirmatives, hope, beauty, cheerfulness, aided by a belief in Nature's honourable intentions[2] paralleled in Ruskin's *Ethics of the Dust* ("Crystal Virtues"). Nature gives us, in short, a lead towards "uplift", by clothing the skeleton in beauty; and Emerson specialized in uplift, quintessentialized from an ancestry and background of preaching ministers. He had begun as a minister, but in 1832 took up an unacceptable attitude to the Lord's Supper and declared, "I am not interested in it"; after which he visited England, met Carlyle, and became a Transcendentalist, an individualist, a Platonist. Carlyle did not aspire "unto this last". Plato (*Representative Men*) was doubly valuable to Emerson; for "the Asia in his mind", the sense of the Ineffable and Illimitable; and for the "instinct of Europe", or intellectual discrimination. Both faculties were present in Emerson himself; and it may be due to the coolness of the latter that the wheels of his vatic chariot do not, as Carlyle's do, take fire with such explosive sequels. Professor Wendell, indeed, drew attention to that other aspect of him, "a canny honest Yankee gentleman": and Emerson's level-headed appraisal of Swedenborg,[3] who might be pure jam to the all-in transcendental, illustrates the point.

His conception of the individual, founded on the culture of an inner life ("Success", *Society and Solitude*) reached the point of

[1] "Resources".
[2] "Success", and "Civilization", from *Society and Solitude*.
[3] Representative Men.

protestantism at which laws, wrong in private judgment, might be disregarded. Obedience to the sublime order would be voluntary. Independence, the victory of character, are signs of his ideal, "the man that stands by himself" (*The Conduct of Life*). Yet there is another colour in his portrait, reminiscent of Carlyle's favourite pigment; nobility, heroic manners, for which other defects are to be forgiven. His valuation of truth, his contempt for "the avarice of reward" (or Mammonism) again awake thoughts of Carlyle; but a shrewd worldly wisdom, all his own, dominates the essay on Wealth. And his political notions are founded, not on the motto "might is right", but on the rightness of the individual[1] with self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control; they follow naturally on the assumption of the soul's divinity—a strong buttress of the Transcendentalist creed; the soul, "born into . . . the universal mind" (*The Over-soul*). In Nature (romantically, not scientifically, conceived as the city of God), the incarnation of a thought, man, who is Nature's, confirms that divinity. As with Arnold, so with Emerson, homage to the beneficent power of Nature, and the concept of entry into man of nature's "everlasting surges", owe something to Wordsworth, with whom he conversed in 1833. Coleridge, met also in that year, he may have found helpful in discovering the Over-Soul; in the essay with this title he notes Coleridge as one of the class that speaks *from within*. For the authenticity of inward judgment he has, with Carlyle and Coleridge, the German support of Jacobi, Fichte and Kant ("The Transcendentalist", in *Miscellanies*). But he has in strategic reserve for spiritual conquest the Asiatics, the Vedas, the Bhagavadgita, to strengthen the idea of a "terrific unity",[2] which underlies his Over-Soul essay, and enables him there to stress the evanescence of time, space, and nature with its principle of diversity. It is this part of his background that seems especially to distinguish him from the British transcendentalists. Otherwise there are more familiar figures in the background; Plotinus, whom we have met in *Biographia*, Jean Paul Richter, so often mentioned by Carlyle. One cannot help suspecting that the Emersonian philosophy, at once so practical and so "cosmic", was in some measure responsible for the rise of that "New Thought", which is still dominating parts of America. One remembers allusion to a Swami by Bret Harte; one meditates on Elmer Gantry. What hand, if any, had Emerson in predisposition to these wonders?

[1] See "Politicus", *Essays*.
[2] *Plato, or the Philosopher*.

But he was (like Lowell) a valuable cultural influence, this time in the ethical direction, and the wholesome "Concord" savour of his expression, its honesty and bigness, will, no doubt, continue to be prized. The bigness may be measured through a comparison of his *English Traits* with Dickens's *American Notes*. Dickens was petulant and even petty. Emerson, while criticizing severely, does so with much fairness and detachment, as long as he knows his facts. He remembers that British sins, like cant, are shared by America. He is neither fanatical nor prejudiced, but sometimes unaware; unaware for example, of the significance of the spiritual ferment which was working in the English church during his visits to England in the 'thirties and 'forties. One fruit of the second visit was a too brief review of contemporary English letters.[1] He made merry over Macaulay's practical viewpoint; and misjudged Dickens to be "local and temporary". He found pessimism in Carlyle, as Carlyle saw optimism in him, but understood his drift with sympathy; a narrowing in Coleridge's horizon disappointed him, but Wordsworth's genius still preserved "sanity in a worldly and ambitious age": as for Tennyson, his beautiful talent, wasted on an unworthy subject, (the Englishman as he was), was evidently awarded a "Beta". The misses seem to-day, more palpable than the hits. If he was censorious over our writers, Matthew Arnold returned the compliment in deciding that he, too, was only worth a "Beta";[2] with which the shades of Montaigne, Bacon, and Addison might agree. Yet Emerson towered out of the local entourage of New England spirituality; a big man, if not an equally big writer. He found the Brook Farm boundaries confining, and refused to cramp his large individuality in this scheme; and Thoreau, also asked to join the advanced community of property-sharing Transcendentalists, decided likewise. But Emerson was interested in this social experiment, and in the similar one at Fruitlands, run by Bronson Alcott, Louisa Alcott's father, with other unpractical philosophers; and was a solidly useful friend to Alcott. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who lived at Brook Farm for a time, records a picnic at which a Jim Crow Indian and Mr. Emerson were present. But, finding the setting unbearably eccentric, he (Hawthorne) broke with it soon after the picnic. While it was no permanent emplacement for the big guns, it played its part in an important campaign of thought;

[1] *English Traits, Literature.*

[2] M. Arnold, *Discourses in America: Emerson.* "I do not place Emerson among the great poets . . . I do not place him among the great writers."

and illustrates the nexus of Transcendentalism and Nature and "Pantisocracy".

Rather than Emerson, it is John Ruskin (1819—1900) who seems best to fill the bill of Elisha to Carlyle's Elijah. To Carlyle, "the solitary teacher", he dedicated *Munera Pulveris* (1872); Carlyle, whom he called his master, who was one of his closest friends (others were Patmore and the Brownings), whose teachings he absorbed, and whose praise he received. Ruskin wrote poetry in his youth and won the Newdigate at Oxford; but it is of greater moment that he studied drawing and geology, and that his first published prose was a piece on the strata of Mont Blanc.[1] The extent to which Wordsworth guided him towards Nature may be judged from the number of quotations of him in *Modern Painters* which he began in 1842. He used Nature as a touchstone for truth and beauty in Art. Turner passed, but Claude and the seventeenth century landscapists failed in, the examination. He hailed Turner as a prophet through art; and viewed art, not as imitative, but creative. Keats had observed, "beauty is truth—truth, beauty"; for Ruskin, beauty was not merely truth to nature, but moral and theological truth as well; "Vital beauty", at least, seems to have these implications; a theory which was further clarified in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849). Here the ethical and social question of the workman's happiness in his work crops up, which was to be answered at such length by William Morris. It will be remembered that the Lamps were Truth, Beauty, Power, Sacrifice, Obedience, Labour and Memory. The holiness of work and the happiness of the workmen were pointers, for him and for Morris, towards socialism and also towards handcraft instead of machine manufacture, which was joyless and uncreative. The "twisted tracery" and "multitudinous pinnacles" of Gothic had him in thrall at this time; and out of it he shaped in *The Stones of Venice*, which he finished in 1852, a social-religious Gothic creed, according to which Renaissance-Classic architecture was a pagan lapse into what "was neither good nor natural"; and Morris followed this lead. It is not surprising that Ruskin, a Scot with a Calvinistic mother, flavoured his Gothic revival with Protestantism, and stripped his cathedrals of the "tinsel and glitter" of Roman worship. Rome lured, and Nonconformity repelled, him on certain occasions. He lunched with Manning, but preached socialism. In an increasingly scientific age he enlisted science into the service of art and nature

[1] *London Magazine of Natural History*, 1834.

(v. *Modern Painters, Ethics of the Dust*) and refers in *Praeterita* to his early study of Geology and Mineralogy; he confesses there to an "unabated . . . geological instinct", which he put to good use in his search for truth to nature in Art. That it affected his religious views is evident in *Ethics of the Dust* (where he is so arch with the little girls) and speaks of the "conditions under which the Personal Creative Power manifests itself in . . . matter" (Preface to 2nd Edn. 1877). His short account of the presence of the spirit in organic and inorganic nature suggests that early Wordsworthian pantheism was not forgotten. His socialism is founded on emotionally moral assumptions, such as the possession by men of souls, or that personal wealth involves robbery (*Unto this Last*). On the other hand, he not only repudiated the notion of social equality, but seems to have borrowed something of Carlyle's belief in the Hero principle for his postulate of superior persons as guides, which he amplified in Letter XIII of *Time and Tide*. The chapter on Government in *Munera Pulveris* acknowledges a debt to Carlyle's *Past and Present*; which work may also have offered him a point of departure on his mission to settle the problem of land-owning (*Time and Tide*). He pioneered ways to many things which are accomplished to-day, from state-owned enterprise to state education; maintaining throughout a consistent vatic fortissimo, which is audible, too, in his works on art. With such rowdiness he set out a bewildering and sometimes mad ethical system of art, life, and the universe; sometimes indeed, as Mr. Frederic Harrison noted, in line with Comte, at others reminiscent in some attitudes of the visionary Blake. Here was another hyperbolic nineteenth century personality, carried over the line of sanity to the status of a minor Messiah. The effect of madness on eighteenth century writers—Cowper, Smart, Collins, might provide an interesting comparison, were the full data available. Ruskin's inclination to ramble through heaven and hell during the course of a lecture ostensibly on art is conspicuous in *Sesame and Lilies*; and the most solid thing that emerges from "The Mystery of Life and its Arts" is his version of the well-worn didactic theory of art, by which the distance of his "æsthetic" from Rossetti's may be measured. In literature it makes him question the integrity of modern novelists, including Thackeray, and to find an asylum in Scott's portrayal of women ("of Queens' Gardens"). But Coventry Patmore, whose poetry "strengthens and purifies", comes well out of it. In *Praeterita* he records that Dickens was for him of restorative but not educational

value. *The Crown of Wild Olive* offers among its loud-voiced eccentricities, a droll example of Ruskin's hatred of machines; the reaction to machinery of certain intelligences in the century—Ruskin's, Morris's, Samuel Butler's—and Dickens's (*Dombey and Son*), is worth noting. Ruskin was perturbed when a village "festa" in the Lake District used a whistling steam plough for the band to head their procession.

To those who like pleasure to accompany their reading the comparatively quiet, autobiographical *Praeterita* is likely to appeal. The Messianic mantle is laid aside, to disclose an animated, observant young man (in the earlier part) honestly enjoying the silver spoon of his birth; and later on admiring (like "Lewis Carroll") Dean Liddell's delightful children, Sir Walter Scott, and the salutary Cheviot border which relieved Carlyle from his "morbid German fancies". In these pages Elisha may be suspected of seceding from Elijah to the extent to which *Redgauntlet* differs from Kant's *Pure Reason*; in general his secession was not only further to the Left but further to "sensibility"[1] for art, which made William Morris a natural sequel to him and not to Carlyle.

As Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, from 1869, he lectured frequently on art, and as frequently on such other topics as dabchicks and the baseness of the age (Carlyle's *Past and Present* is once more remembered). These discourses were published in books, among them *The Eagle's Nest*, up to 1884; where we hear again his Blake-like outcry against "the Classics",[2] and yet more evidence that a passion for reform was distorting his views on art; he even looked askance at science, whose aid he had freely used. As he became more mystical and erratic, his course increased in divagation. The strange mysticism can scarcely be said to have lived after him; but many of his ideas have reached into the present. His naturalism, which did so much to foster the Victorian phase of "Nature-awareness", received a temporary check with the generation of Max Beerbohm. But his ideas for social reform have borne abundant fruit. In the province of teaching he must be regarded as a legitimate parent of the Adult Education movement, in that of architecture he must accept some responsibility for the import to this island of the Italian Gothic, a variant of that "Middle-age spread" which, as we have seen, was so ubiquitous in the century.

While the philosophy of the heart was so flourishing, that of the

[1] He uses the word of Scott in the passage referred to.
[2] cf. Blake, *On Homer's Poetry*.

head became also an imposing phenomenon of an imposing age; evolving in three especially noticeable directions—the economic, the sociological, and the scientific. At the start of the first appears the pre-Victorian figure of Jeremy Bentham of whom Carlyle disapproved; and of the second, Comte with his Positive Philosophy. John Stuart Mill (1806–73), without wholly agreeing with either, owed much to both. Bain wrote of him that he, his father (James) and Bentham, made a formidable trio for "pulling down rotten structures". Mrs. Ruskin dedicated her John to God; Mr. James Mill dedicated his to Bentham, of whom he became the student and editor. Bentham brought the hard-headedness of the previous century, and his Utility theory, based on the mechanics of pain and pleasure, into this later age; his system rested on the quantitative computation of amounts of these feelings, by a "felicific calculus". He brought out, in 1817, a *Table of the Springs of Action*, a working chart for the purposes of a social theory. Mill, starting where Bentham left off, produced, in 1863, an essay on Utilitarianism with a more humanized and, one might add, more idealistic version of the theory, founded on a qualitative assessment; and more in line with certain trends of "sensibility" already noticed in Victorian times. In defending Utility as a high moral principle he left Bentham behind; once it is admitted that "some *kinds* of pleasure are more desirable and . . . valuable than others", the "higher and lower" system of comparison enters; the superior pleasures, as in art and poetry, transcend those of mere sensation. Utility, the ethics of which had support in the New Testament, was misunderstood by those who accused it (as Dickens did) of rendering men cold and unsympathetic in judging others; to which he replies to the effect that a Utilitarian would be intelligent enough to deny that one virtuous action makes a good man. Dickens's *Hard Times*, where allegations of the coldness of Utilitarianism are seen, had appeared in the previous decade. Comte's Philosophy meant much to other Victorians as well as Mill; though not as much, perhaps, as Rousseau had meant to the Romantics. In Comte there was a reaction from the basic individualism of Rousseau's ideas towards a scientific treatment of the behaviour of corporate man—towards sociology as a science. Human thought, especially as applied to social order, evolved through three phases; the theological, the metaphysical, and the scientific, to the commencement of which man was now approaching. Yet he recognized the claim of religion to be a factor in life. The new religion was to be one of Humanity,

which was neither fictitious nor unknowable. His system therefore provided for the heart as well as the head, since for him religion encouraged the emotions of reverence, love and benevolence. What of Earth, man's home, and Space, the earth's home? He left these to poetic imagination, which would satisfy with its myths those cravings of the heart to which reality could not minister.

Running counter to Coleridgean Truth and reconcilement of head and heart, this implied, in poetry, rescission of the latter and negation of the former. The poet was debased from the high position allotted him in Shelley's Defence, to become a dispenser of fictional rations for hungry souls. Historically this has some importance, in assisting the turn towards a more rational view of poetry. What mattered more at the time was the systematisation of human thought and expression, in which art had a definite and useful function, in a single plan—a design for society. Mill accepted and admired Comte's interpretation of historical fact,[1] and philosophy of the physical sciences. His *Utility of Religion* shows its connection with Comte's thought in the consideration of Humanity as a substitute for the usually accepted concept of God. To digress a little, he rationalized Jesus to the aspect of a man with a divine message; writing these essays between 1850 and 1858, at a time when the works of Strauss were becoming known. Through Comte he became strengthened in support of the historical method: but not in regard to Liberty, over which he both differed from the earlier Utilitarians and quarrelled with the positivist view, charging Comte with attempting to establish "a despotism of society over the individual" (*Liberty*). Mill, on the contrary, prized that liberty of the person which to-day is becoming so unfashionable: the motives of the public in restricting individual conduct were too often merely objections to permitting anyone to act or feel differently from themselves; and the State would be wrong in dwarfing potentially great personalities, in order to make them more docile. It was Ruskin, the fanatical seer, and not Mill, the open-minded reasoner, who advocated official snoopers under the title of Bishops (*Time and Tide*). This places him nearer to Comte's system of controlling society by Spiritual Power; of which Mill observed that individual liberty formed no part of the scheme. Mill was in fact laying in *Liberty* the foundations of true liberalism, now to be sought among the conservatives. Of bureaucracy, of the Circumlocution Office, he said that a government could not have too

[1] *Auguste Comte*, from Westminster Review.

much of activity which aided and stimulated instead of impeding.

Though Carlyle once believed him to be a mystic, Mill, despite his emotional and un-Benthamic facet, knew himself for a reasoner, hobbling after things and proving them, while Carlyle, a man of intuition, was on the other side of the house; so Mill confessed in his *Autobiography* (1873), a book with the double wholesomeness of simplicity of style and humility of spirit. It was there that he declared himself no poet; nevertheless he was sensitive to poetry, felt its presence even in the disguise of prose, and so, reviewing Carlyle's *French Revolution*, pronounced it to be an epic. Wordsworth's poetry seems to have acted therapeutically on his illness of 1826–7, and had its effects on his life and thought; he found solace in both the natural descriptions and philosophizings of *The Excursion*, among other works. It may be noted that he, like Wordsworth, was concerned at the danger to the scenic integrity of the country presented by railway development. He was an early defender of Tennyson, in his *London Review* (1835), against *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly*: he was, in fact, modern, progressive and in or ahead of "the movement"; a leader who was content to acknowledge himself, with quiet modesty, to be a follower, if this was required. Soap-box oratory, even if transcendental, becomes irritant: and to pass from Ruskin and Carlyle to Mill's *Logic* is to pass from Hyde Park hubbub into a college cloister.

The System of Logic (1843), where nothing louder is heard than a little sedate bickering with Herbert Spencer over axioms, "crystallizes out" certain elements which were growing more and more insistent in the stream of contemporary intellectual activity—the application of induction to research; scientific method, in fact. In this field he had a rival in William Whewell (1794–1866) whose *History* and *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* had appeared within the previous decade. Later generations handled his work roughly, found no precision in his canons, and attacked his empiricism. Mill sought to disburden the apparatus of thought of intuitive, and *a priori* processes, of the "innate ideas" to which Whewell inclined, championing the Experiential school against the Intuitional which he believed to be still prevalent in England: and produced a Logic for Higher Utilitarians; and that in a line of descent from Locke and Bacon. It was a monument of "Experientialism", and like many monuments, impeded the busy flow of traffic in intuitional directions that has been already noted. One of its first opponents

was W. G. Ward, representing the Puseyite faction, who saw in it a threat to the whole fabric of Christian theology. The book was an immediate success and, says Bain, "was asked for by unsuspected persons".[1] Whately admired it: Sir John Herschel praised it (and Whewell's work, too): Liebig acknowledged the helpfulness of Mill's principles of research. Which goes to suggest that it gave, with its empiricism, that generation what it wanted. An important feature of its constructive side is seen in the latter part (Bk. VI), where, in discussing the logic of the moral sciences, he finds Comte's system deficient through his contempt for psychology. Affirming its existence as a science, he proceeds thence to envisage a science of ethology, or formation of character, in which the emphasis will be on man as an individual; on it as a theory, practical education was to be founded. But he did not proceed with the plan, turning instead to Political Economy[2] with a background of Ricardo and Malthus, which did not wholly obstruct an attraction to socialism. He recounts (*Autobiography*) how in the second edition of his book on this subject he modified the severity of his attitude to Socialism in the first; but he remained uninfluenced by Lassalle or Marx. While sympathetic with the Chartists, and the ideals of Fourier or Owen, he deplored (*Political Economy*)[3] Socialist declamations against competition, which afforded a bulwark against monopoly; and, individualist as ever, demanded another bulwark against "authoritative intrusion". The practice of Socialism was for some future age at a higher moral standard of altruism. On the other hand he applauded equalisation of wealth, to be carried out largely by control of inheritance; and a demi-semi-nationalisation of railways. For the restriction of numbers in the state he recommended the sublimated Malthusian device of continence: without such a check, the tendency to populate would defeat the object of redistribution of wealth. His key to social improvement was moral uplift: unlike Malthus, he inherited enough perfectibilitarian faith to take a rosier view of man's future behaviour than later events have justified. Ethology is still a dead letter. The individual would in time educate himself to a state of better co-operation and learn to subordinate personal caprice to combined undertaking. In spite of which hope, Mill committed himself with some misgiving to democratic government (*Representative Government*, 1861), with its

[1] *J. S. Mill, A Criticism.*
[2] In 1844.
[3] 1848.

attendant dangers. Ideal democracy, government of the whole people by the whole people, did not exist outside theory; in practice, a majority had power over a minority, in a system which led (as we see to-day) to class legislation. It was characteristic of Mill's altruistic sense of justice to feel keenly for minorities; he brought his guns to bear on suggestions that such should be "liquidated", asserting that it is, on the contrary, an essential part of democracy that they should be represented. Which is perhaps not the only view of Mill's that might now be dismissed by some, at least, as quixotic; though his conclusions on the subjection of Women (1869) might be expected. He attempted, somewhat as Clough did earlier, in his *Bothie*, to reassess woman in terms of her true nature, unmodified by the "hothouse cultivation" to which social conditions had subjected her. Recognizing the physical disadvantages of being a woman, he estimated the female intelligence highly; he felt strongly on the matter, and disagreed with Professor Bain, urging that women were fully competent to "hold down" higher forms of employment, and that they should be encouraged to take them. (Clough's *Bothie*[1] goes on a different tack, picturing woman as coming into her own as a kind of domestic worker and goddess). Mill had some ground for this belief, in an age which produced a Harriet Martineau, a Mrs. Gaskell, a George Eliot, or his own two prizes "in the lottery of life", Mrs. and Miss Taylor; the former assisting him with *Liberty*, the latter with *The Subjection of Women*. The social effects of the latter work soon began to be manifest in better education and greater choice of employment. More generally, he gave a new meaning to liberalism, perhaps because he was, to the core, morally liberal. Leslie Stephen[2] records that his Logic became a kind of sacred book for young aspirants to liberalism. He made his generation aware of the importance of general ideas by attaching them to particulars of special contemporary interest; whereas Matthew Arnold scolded Barbarians, Philistines, Populace for their attachment to particulars. His power of making his generation think and act was recognized in his lifetime: the "experiential" as against the "intuitional" was readily followed. The mid-century Utilitarian school included several other eminent thinkers; John Austin (1790–1859) on the legal side (*The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*, 1832, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, pub. 1863); George Grote (1794–1871), the first

[1] Pub. 1848. The reference is II, 11, 52–111.
[2] The English Utilitarians, Vol. III.

volume of whose *History of Greece* appeared in 1846, and Henry Thomas Buckle, author of *The History of Civilization in England* (1857) where history becomes more philosophical and serious than the tradition of *The Poetics* allowed. His depreciation of the value of the individual threw down a challenge to the prevailing trend, at its strongest in Carlyle's hero-worship.

A firmer step in the direction of the new philosophy that called so much old belief in doubt was taken by Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) in whose preliminaries to the Synthetic Philosophy a near-mechanistic interpretation of the universe is to be seen emerging. His early study of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, which appeared in the 'thirties, had turned his mind to the "anti-catastrophic" view of a gradual operation of natural laws in the formation of the earth, and to Lamarck, whose application of the evolutionary principle to organic life he found, at that time, hard to accept. Spencer did not find it so, but made it the foundation stone of his social philosophy. He contributed to *The Leader* an article on "the Development Hypothesis", as it was then called, in 1852; following it up in the decade with *The Principles of Psychology* (1855) which broke new ground as an evolutionary system—the development of such doctrines to this pitch before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 is significant; the idea, in varying forms, of "development" had, in fact, been "cooking" for some time; when Tennyson, at the end of his life, told Dr. Grove[1] that such notions "were known and talked about" long before Darwin's work, he was right; a biological theory of evolution, for instance, according to which changes were effected by a kind of volition, had been conceived by Erasmus Darwin late in the previous century, and further developed by Lamarck. It must also be remembered that *Vestiges of Creation* appeared in 1844; that Charles Darwin, independently of Spencer, was moving towards his evolutionary theory during the 1830's, as a result of his voyage on the *Beagle*: and that Wells and Matthew had been at work in this field in 1813 and 1831. Erasmus Darwin had regarded such processes in the light of the "PARENT OF PARENTS! ENS ENTIUM!" Spencer, in that of "the unceasing redistribution of matter and motion". The redistribution acted in two ways, in the evolutionary when there was "a predominant integration of matter and dissipation of motion"; and the dissolutionary when conditions were the reverse of this. The track of the Erasmus Darwin theory is

[1] cit. Poulton, *Charles Darwin*, etc., 1909. p. 9.

visible in several passages of the *Principles of Psychology*, where the living organism is imagined to be functioning and developing through experiences, and so acquiring instincts that "may be regarded as a kind of organized memory"; though the implication of this is countered by an earlier warning that any such tendencies arise not from individual but corporate experiences. But given your memory, you soon come to Design. Meanwhile, the ENS ENTIUM became, in the First Principles, an unknowable Absolute. The validity of his connexion of evolution with an antecedent law of the persistence of force has been assailed; it has been pointed out that his science was not that of the specialist. But his excellence lay in helping us to direct thoughts about man and the universe along those general lines that, with changes and corrections, have been accepted in place of older cosmogonies with their scriptural data, of which in his own time, Philip Gosse's was a remarkable instance; or of older mechanistic accounts of Nature as a machine, "ticking over", but not evolving.

The theme of progress which had reached its nadir with Malthus[1] was revived in the Synthetic Philosophy: and Spencer (*Principles of Biology*) answered Malthus, not as Mill did, but with the conclusion that the problem would disappear through diminished fertility caused by increasing civilization: a stage would come at which the pressure of population, having done its job at multiplying men and cultures, would relax. The civilized community he ingeniously compared and contrasted with a living organism; one of the more pregnant differences being that all components of the body politic could feel; leading him to an individualistic position comparable with Mill's. Compulsory co-operation, or regimenting by dictatorship, was abhorrent to him, whatever its political colouring; and he ends a paragraph in Chapter XVII of *Political Institutions*[2] with the remark that communistic projects are favoured by warlike types of society. Man, having attained through adaptation of his "internal forces" a state of equilibrium with external forces, becomes a mature individual requiring no legal restraint that he does not voluntarily respect. The nature of the inner force in achieving this high state—so like the one described by Mill—evidently differs from whatever goes on inside Mill's individual to the extent that it includes moral intuition, the fruit of past and inherited experiences of utility: which looks like a happy compromise

[1] *Principle of Population*, 1798.
[2] *Principles of Psychology*, II.

with both camps. But something of the kind has been said before, by Coleridge with reference to poetic intuition.[1] Nevertheless, a fresh move was made when Spencer hitched the waggon of ethical optimism to the star of evolution; and removed, or attempted to remove, the barrier between utilitarianism and intuitionism. Both Comte and Spencer conceived synthetic philosophies with some resemblance in their aims; but Spencer's was of the greater range; it at once became so through the inclusion of psychology, if for nothing else. On the question of the mainspring of social progress, they differed; according to Comte it was intellectual developments; according to Spencer, emotion modified by the discipline of social life.

Charles Darwin (1809–82) took Lyell's *Principles of Geology* with him on the *Beagle*. That it impressed him deeply is seen at least in the references to Lyell and his work scattered through the *Journal of Researches during the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*, published in its first form in 1839. He was to voice his admiration for it in *The Origin of Species*, as a work productive of a revolution in science. His grandfather, Erasmus, of whom he wrote a short biographical notice in 1879,[2] may also be reckoned with as an influence; but the differences between the conclusions of Erasmus and Charles gave rise to controversy. Samuel Butler, who was in the front row of this scrum, quoted a sentence (*Luck or Cunning?* p. 62) about hereditary habit from *The Voyage of the Beagle*, reminiscent of Erasmic ideas. For the years that followed to 1859, Darwin prepared his own version of development, with its salient message of Natural Selection. The idea of this, he wrote later, flashed on him after reading Malthus on Population, where he would find the problem of too much humanity chasing too few eatables richly suggestive of the survival of the fittest. Between Darwin's landing from the *Beagle* and the *Origin of Species* another significant book appeared—*The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) by Robert Chambers; which, as Darwin himself recognized, prepared the way for the *Origin of Species*, and was for a time eclipsed by it. Attention was drawn to lower forms of life as life's ultimate origin, impressing this unwelcome view on his critics, but not stating it for the first time; the most popular form of this bogey, the man-monkey belief, had "haunted" Monboddo's eighteenth century *Ancient Metaphysics*, where he refers to men

[1] Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.* on Shakespeare's intuition.
[2] Pub. with Krause's Essay on Erasmus Darwin (trans. Dallas).

who were once orang-utans. Dickens laughs at this in Chapter I of *Martin Chuzzlewit*: but Peacock's Sir Oran Haut-ton comes not only out of Monboddo, but from Linnaeus's *Homo Nocturnus*, and even more from Buffon,[1] who in the same century prepared the way for Darwin and other evolutionists.

One more of these, who staked out his claim before the *Origin*, may be mentioned here, Richard Owen (1810–92). His *Nature of Limbs* (1849) was cited in Darwin's Historical Sketch at the beginning of the *Origin*, in regard to the progression of organic phenomena. But Owen's progress from "special creation" was less decided then, than Darwin's in 1859. Bouquets are handed, in the Historical Sketch, to two other prior adventurers in the evolutionary terrain, W. C. Wells, active in 1813, and Patrick Matthew, whose view on the origin of species, Darwin admitted, scarcely differed at all from his own, and the *Vestiges* is congratulated on having removed prejudice, and prepared "the ground for analagous views". This will serve to illustrate, but not to complete, the copiousness of the sources on which Darwin had to draw.

Both *The Voyage of the Beagle* and the *Origin* bear witness to a growing emphasis on beginnings in the universe, as is seen too, in the geology of Lyell and the palaeontology of Owen: it was not only the historic method that made its mark on the thought of the age, but the prehistoric. The sense of prehistory had come to stay; the distance, and so the enchantment, of old unhappy far-off things, was enlarged. Romance found an ally in science, and, reading *The Voyage of the Beagle*, the *Origin*, and the *Descent of Man*, one might add that science found an ally in romance. A system of thought in which the fundamentals of mutability oppose those of "classic" immutability;[2] over which remoteness and the passage of vast deserts of time exercise their glamour, possesses in itself, as Tennyson, Kingsley, and H. G. Wells knew, romantic possibilities of its own. If we add to these an exponent with the makings of a romantic poet in him, who had stood (*Voyage of the Beagle*) rapt and silent before a forest in Brazil, we may see other reasons beside the value of scientific contribution, and *succès de scandale*, for the excitement created by the *Origin*. Two characteristic reactions to it, Butler's and Kingsley's, suggest that its final verdict on the nature of natural selection left room for doubt, and divergent interpretations. Was it luck or cunning, or both? Kingsley, greeting the

[1] See notes to Peacock's *Melincourt*.

[2] As Cowley had opposed it in note to Pind. Ode. *The 34 Chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.*

work with a shout, plumped for cunning. Writing to F. D. Maurice in 1863, he saw Darwin conquering everywhere, and rushing on like a flood—of truth, which was setting Kingsley on the track of a natural theology, based on the idea of an "immanent, ever-working God". Lecturing on the theology of the future at Sion College (Jan. 1871) he enlarged on the theme, and found in the 139th Psalm a pointer to embryology,[1] and so, to Darwin. Butler (*Evolution Old and New*, *Luck or Cunning?* etc.) in a series of amusingly rude books, found luck to be the keystone of Darwin's bridge to enlightenment; concluding *Luck or Cunning?* with the remark that anyone who opined that luck was the chief modifier of organisms must deny God completely. This was a typical objection, and worse than descent from monkeys; a politer utterance of such a feeling occurs in a letter of George Eliot's to Mme. Bodichon (5.12.59) where she complains apropos of the *Origin* that "development theories" produce on her "a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes."[2]

The style of *The Origin of Species* found no favour with Butler; and the less irritable George Eliot (Journal, 23.11.59) regretted[3] alleged defects in presentation; but even if the style is bad—which it is not—it may still reflect a mind with poetic elements, such are audible in the tone of both descriptive and reflective passages; a sample of the latter is the paragraph in Chapter XI beginning "he who rejects . . ." How well Thomsonic blank verse would fit it! The divergence among readers, just referred to, may be due to uncertainty over the oracle's reply. Butler puts it this way; "the book preached luck, the peroration cunning." The opposition lost the vote, though it was to try again in the Chesterton-Belloc era; and *The Descent of Man* (from quadrumanous sources) was received with less bitterness, though not without protest. Apart from its scientific import it is an admirable bedside book, easier to read, mellower, than the *Origin*; memorable too for anecdote and portraiture, whether of the death of the Sandwich island *pediculi*, or of the blind, old, fat pelican of Utah. His particulars fascinate as much as his universals; and possibly this is the true secret of his style.

Darwin's creed, or many articles of it, had the support of the younger A. R. Wallace; but the most stalwart figure in attack and defence on his side was Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95). Huxley

[1] *Memoirs of Kingsley*, edited by his wife. Vol. II.
[2] *Life*, by J. W. Cross.
[3] *Life*, by J. W. Cross.

is popularly recognized as Darwin's barker and the author of *Lay Sermons*. He was also an anatomist and wit. Breeziness, with eddies of slang, characterises his letters right up to the year of his death; the more (but not very) formal style of the papers and lectures is adorned with flashes; the fancied definition of a capitalist as "a thief with a circumbendibus",[1] a description of the feminist ideal as an apocalyptic vision of "some, as yet unrealized, epicene reality".[2] He had the flair for being in the middle of things, a sensibility to contemporary movements; he quoted, and had his umbrella "borrowed" by[3] Matthew Arnold; he admired the *Sonnets from the Portuguese.* Leonard Huxley mentions (*Life*, Vol. II) his interest in the earlier Browning, and in Tennyson's grasp of "the meaning of modern science". In his youth he had fallen under the spell of Carlyle, and *Sartor Resartus* continued for years to be his "Enchiridion".[4] His essays and lectures reveal versatility and variety. *Man's Place in Nature* (1863), introducing Buffon's "le Pongo et le Jocko" and Neanderthal Man, presents soberly enough, a case for our animal ancestry. The fireworks went off when, at the Oxford Meeting of 1860 (*Life*, Vol. I) where the same theory was debated, he annihilated Bishop Wilberforce, who had given an opening by some very silly and personal remarks. Wilberforce, by the way, was yet another eminent Victorian who objected to Darwin's views as contrary to divine revelation; and the meeting was packed with sympathizing clergymen. *Lay Sermons* (1870) ranges very widely. There is fun and satire; the playful ferocity of Huxley's onslaught on Comte, now evidently on the wane, shows him at ease and in enjoyment of controversy. It might be instructive to compare his lecture *On a Piece of Chalk* with Chesterton's essay on the same subject. He wrote on Hume, with whose thought he sympathized, for the English Men of Letters series; a brisk little book giving opportunities for sarcasm on Comte, and on modern views of immortality. He wrote on, and worked for, education; amongst other ways, through his membership of the London School Board (1870-2). Again, he wrote on religion, in which department he leaves his mark as inventor of the word "agnostic" (*Agnosticism*, orig. pub. *Nineteenth Century*, 1889). This and other "goring"[5] articles in defence of agnosticism,

[1] *Lay Sermons.*
[2] *Universities: Actual and Ideal.*
[3] His letter about this given by Leonard Huxley in the *Life.* 2 vols. 1900.
[4] *Life.* Vol. I.
[5] *Life.* Vol. II.

represent his part in a hot controversy which in itself merely illustrates the vast ferment of the age, or if you will, the mountainous labour pains of the second renaissance, of which the romantic revival had been but a preliminary throe. That Huxley believed such a rebirth to be imminent is clear enough to anyone who reads *Science and Culture*, or *Universities: Actual and Ideal.* To-day there may be some doubt as to what exactly was born, and whether after all, the greater event, the ultimately more valuable outpouring of human spirit, had not been that founded on Rousseau and Kant, rather than that founded on Darwin and Huxley: in other words, whether the latter was not the main "movement", but secondary. To read Huxley is to have such doubts scattered; but this was his business, and thoroughly well he did it. In any case its effects spread wide and lasted at least into the opening years of the next century; "realism" in art took shape in the fostering environment of the scientific reawakening. Abroad, Zola studied heredity in a series of novels; at home (leaving George Eliot aside for the moment) Thomas Hardy built his art on a philosophic foundation for the laying of which Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley provided material; and John Stuart Mill was another influential figure in his background.[1] On the other side of the street Samuel Butler flew his flag of defiance, and expounded Cunning and Design, from the sources of Hering, Lamarck, and Erasmus Darwin. He, in turn, was to influence the thought of Bernard Shaw.

Among the blessings of the march of mind in this era was the intellectualization of woman, well represented by Harriet Martineau (1802–76). Her *Autobiography*—the most readable of her books—tells us that when she was eighteen young ladies were not supposed "to study very conspicuously", but to sit around, sewing, in the parlour. It is partly with her aid that "we have changed all that". She became impressed in her youth with Hartley's associationism, and at twenty years received from her brother James the doctrine of Necessity. Five years later she was studying political economy, the fruits of which was *Illustrations of Political Economy*, begun in 1831. These tales, each of which developed on some economic theme, currency, bills of exchange, etc., created an European sensation. In France they were translated for use in schools. The Russian Emperor ordered them to be burnt; she was officially forbidden to enter Austria. At home Croker and Lockhart attacked her in the *Quarterly* with insulting ribaldry, because she exem-

[1] See Rutland, *Thomas Hardy*, pp. 54–68.

plified Malthus's ideas on population; young ladies were not then supposed to be Malthusian. The attack increased her sales; and she followed up the success with two more series of *Illustrations*, of Taxation and The Poor Laws. Her audacity no doubt was greatly responsible for the furore created by her writings at this time; but the *Illustrations* had not the literary durability of some of her other work; for one thing they were written at pressure, with some hasty "cramming" for local colour.[1] Her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace* (1849), and translation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, 1853, were sober pieces of work which placed her among the serious promoters of advancing thought. The *History* (in which she collaborated with Mrs. Knight) shows a progressive, but not extremist spirit; Volume I treats the Luddite Riots with caution, apportioning blame between Lord Sidmouth and the rioters, and allowing the latter some sympathy; but refers more confidently to the humanizing of "the great body of the people" through "the pleasure of art and the intellect." When she lived in the Lake district she was active in the task of housing and educating the poor. She went part of the way with Bentham, greeting his "assertion of the rights of the depressed." Her visit to America resulted, as with Mrs. Trollope and Dickens, in a book, (*Society in America* 1837), which was well reviewed, though *Blackwood* thought it characteristic of her—"Giddy, self-willed, well-intentioned, and ill-informed." If "giddy" is too harsh, "eccentric" might be applied by some to her interest in mesmerism;[2] it shocked contemporary practitioners. It was possibly the vein of eccentricity and impatience in her, that kept her from achieving higher intellectual eminence—that of her brother, for instance. She suffered no fools gladly; and indeed, shows in the *Autobiography* something of a gift for antagonizing the intelligent (such as Charlotte Brontë) into the bargain. Some but not all of her estimates of living writers can be charged with cattiness: if not of Carlyle, whom she blesses as a purifier of the nation, nor of "Orion" Horne, nor Mrs. Browning; but distinctly so of Miss Mitford; and Dickens who refused a contribution of hers to *Household Words*, is reproved for not knowing his economics. Thackeray is called, periphrastically, a snob. Yet both these criticisms have been so frequently repeated and rebutted since as to suggest that her sharpness was not without some ground.

[1] *Autobiography.*
[2] *Autobiography*, and *Letters on Mesmerism*, 1845.

Her brother James Martineau (1805–1900) is particularly notable as a "brake" on the momentum of those tendencies which, including Comtism were, as we have seen, considered to be striking at the root of religion. His essay, *Personal Influences on Present Theology* (1856) contains the remark that negations of theology "culminate" in Comte and Strauss (whose *Leben Jesu* George Eliot translated). He disposed of Comte with much sarcasm, two years later (*Comte's Life and Philosophy*).[1] His career of thought had opened under the sway of necessarian and utilitarian ideas derived from Hartley; their effect on his sister has been mentioned. Turning from these in 1839, he became increasingly antimaterialist in outlook. The chart of his Odyssey marked numerous obstacles; the Scylla of Tractarianism, the Charybdis of extreme Germanism, the Sirens of New England, singing pantheistically, and the Circean magic of the Darwinians. In *Types of Ethical Theory*[2] he opposed the psychology of this last school on the ground that it takes refuge in prehistory and so is likely to remain "for ever without witness". In contradistinction to "luck" he adopted an intensified form of teleology (*A Study of Religion*)[3] showing evolution as a process of Infinite Mind. The flighty Butler and the grave Martineau were here in agreement. The extent of his acquiescence in "rationalism" as applied to the Bible is well seen in that passage of his *Study of Spinoza*,[4] where he used the word "Bibliolatry". He insisted on a casual self, a soul morally free and immortal (Harriet took the opposite view), a personal God, with both immanent and transcendent aspects. The breadth of his view is exemplified in Upton's[5] account of the formation of the Metaphysical Society. Tennyson had proposed that it should be confined to Theists, ready to combat Utilitarianism and Agnosticism; but Martineau demurred, and Tyndall and Huxley became members. Yet it is seen that his and Tennyson's "scientific" aims had at least something in common; and incidentally that Tennyson's "scientific" approach, admired by Huxley, was far removed from, say, Herbert Spencer's.

The intellectual actions and reactions of the century were vigorous, and on a high plane rendered possible, or greatly helped, by social conditions affording room for the "immaterial" by fending off the urgency of the material. The age of predominant

[1] *Essays, Reviews and Addresses.* Vol. I.
[2] 1885.
[3] 1888.
[4] 1882.
[5] *Dr. Martineau's Philosophy*, by C. B. Upton.

economics had not yet set in, though (as with Malthus, Mill and Harriet Martineau) it was in advanced gestation; to be born it was necessary, as now, that economic ideologies should become religious. Intellectual activity, the promotion of hard thinking, is suggested by the above-mentioned Metaphysical Society (at which Huxley read a paper on "Has a Frog a Soul?"), and by the flourishing of scientists and philosophers whose works provided a hard core for much of the literary expression of the age. But one intellectualist, neither philosophical nor scientific, arrived, by the power of his unique genius, at a peculiar eminence. This was Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), the last of the neoclassics, who succeeded in making conspicuous in the Victorian age an art and outlook more compatible with the late Augustan; a Whig in politics and a Tory in style, as Saintsbury remarked. It might be objected that his theory and practice of imparting concrete picturesqueness to historical and other topics was a newer departure, and the legacy of writers like Scott (whose *Lay of the Last Minstrel* Macaulay knew by heart at the age of nine); but the picturesque which had been an Augustan fashion, seems nearer in spirit to his than the later romantic variety. He is called an intellectualist; but wherein did that intellectuality consist? He has been taken to task more than once for his refusal to philosophize, to extract general and radical conclusions from historical particulars. Yet it is clear from his essays, his history, his poems, that intensely active cerebration had been going on: first of all, as exercise of the memory, which in him was prodigious, and next in the study of exhibiting its fruits with the greatest effect. But it would be untrue to say that Macaulay was devoid of general attitudes: his much criticized Essay on Bacon, where he reveals a "philosophy" of philosophy, is a case in point. He contrasts the philosophy that marks time with the kind that marches. On the one hand Plato tries to make man apprehend abstract truth: on the other, Bacon's aim is "to make imperfect men comfortable". "An acre in Middlesex" he continues, "is better than a principality in Utopia". A general attitude, indeed! There is another in the passage on liberty in the *Milton*; the comparison of theology with other branches of knowledge (essay on *Ranke's History of the Popes*) presents yet another; but none of these examples seems to penetrate very far. Macaulay was concerned with the perfection of surfaces, beneath which it was not his business to remain for long. Anyone suffering from a morbid desire for mental excavations will go not to

Macaulay, but to Carlyle; to Carlyle the heart will go, the head to Macaulay. The hard and glittering splendour of the essays (first collected, 1844) and the *History of England* (1848–61) well matches the hard and glittering splendour of the detail, whether narrated, or employed for rhetorical ornament; instances of both uses adorn the *Warren Hastings*; the *History* abounds in such richly concrete descriptions as that of Alsatia. When he treats of banking we hear, not an exposition of finance, but the clink of guineas. He was in fact a nominalist, finding his values in things and men rather than in ideas. The pattern of his prose can scarcely be compared with that of Addison whom he so admired; but it may be compared with Gibbon's, and his favourite device of a series of short narrative (and dramatic) sentences between full stops, has an analogue in Gibbon's similar sentences between semicolons. Both appreciate the effects of a clangour of Latin polysyllables, and of antithesis, if not indulged to excess. But Gibbon is more elegant, Macaulay more dynamic: yet his style seems to be more at home in the silver age of Gibbon, Johnson and Burke. than the brazen one (to extend the period so allocated by Peacock[1]) of "vatic" writing. Even when, in his somewhat bilious review of the *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*, he underlines the more disgusting traits (or what he believes to be such) of Wycherley, his sense of form maintains a decorum, and exercises restraint on his expressions of disapproval. The march continues, taking in its even stride explosive phrases like "the ribald old man", "the bulky volume of obscene doggerel". The coolness with which he introduces sudden vulgarisms and words even shocking to Victorian ears ("bilge-water", "concubines") may help to account for the feeling on the part of some readers that he is insensitive, of dubious taste, and perhaps coarse-grained. Mid-eighteenth century readers, used, for example, to the sudden and racy intrusion of vulgarisms in Burke's speeches, or Churchill's satires, probably would not have felt so. It is true that there was more sense than sensibility about his prose utterances; and that the alleged "obviousness" of his poems has scared the intellectual snob. In the *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) with the *Armada* poem and *The Last Buccaneer*, we find neither thoughts that do lie too deep for tears (are they really necessary?) nor verses with an exclusive appeal to the schoolboy; but a newer kind of Heroic Poesy, adapted to ballad forms, and presenting, once more, brilliant surfaces. Yet there are lapses from the required elevation;

[1] See his *Four Ages*.

the heroic mood rejects "And now he feels the bottom" as it would Mr. Pickwick in the pond. One suspects that Macaulay's blinkered pursuit of the practical and concrete was to blame here, as with the whizzing of bricks through the air in *Virginia*. But a greater virtue than these faults was the re-inoculation of poetry with imposing rhetoric. Not that his handling of rhetoric was blameless. He was inclined to drive the figures, that of repetition for instance, too hard. His evident taste for caricature may be rated as a fault by the fastidious; but Schwellenberg raging like a wild cat, Newcastle with his shuffling trot, Dr. Johnson, dirty, rolling and puffing, enliven his landscape as champagne did the Drunken Administration.[1] Nevertheless his manner errs, when it does, towards overemphasis. By sheer force he succeeded in persuading more than one generation to take certain partial aspects as wholes; the saintliness of Milton, the frivolous sensuality of Charles II, the shortcomings and oddities of Johnson; these are magnified, but with Whig spectacles.

[1] Essay on *Horace Walpole.*

CHAPTER V

THE NOVEL

THE Victorian age opened with few conspicuous achievements, as yet, in fiction. Of mature writers, Peacock had become silent, and was to remain so till his swan-song (*Gryll Grange*) in 1861. Theodore Hook was producing the last of his series of rather tawdry novels (e.g. *Cousin Geoffrey*) before he died in 1841. Scott had died but recently (1832). Of his followers neither G. P. R. James (1801–69) nor William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–82) were truly worthy legatees. Captain Marryat (1792–1848) still had several books in store, including *Masterman Ready*. Pierce Egan was to live till 1849, but had already made his name with the Tom and Jerry books:[1] Robert Smith Surtees (1803–64) edited *The New Sporting Magazine* from 1831, in which he brought out his *Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities*—droll, but immature. On the other hand, the protean Edward George Earle Bulwer Lytton (1803–73) had reached his peak with *Pelham* (1828) and *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834); and Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) had begun his scintillant career with *Vivian Grey* in 1826. The two American veterans, James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) and Washington Irving (1782–1859) continued to be active; *The Pathfinder* and *Deerslayer* of the former were as yet unpublished: the exciting *Adventures of Captain Bonneville* of the latter, breathing "the romance of America",[2] appeared in 1837. Meanwhile, Thackeray was evolving Mr. Yellowplush in *Fraser's Magazine*, and Dickens, having inserted his first creative piece (*A Dinner at Poplar Walk*) into *The Monthly Magazine's* letter-slit in 1833, completed *Sketches by Boz* three years later. In 1835 the Brontës were still adolescent, and so was George Eliot. Trollope was enjoying the miseries of the Civil Service, and Meredith was seven years old.

The senior of the romantic and historical novelists, G. P. R. James, was somewhat less adaptable to changes of taste than Ainsworth, and much less so than Lytton. A sameness of atmos-

[1] *Life in London*, from 1821: *Finish To The Adventures of Tom, Jerry and Logic*, 1828.

[2] *Blackwood*, July 1837.

phere, and of machinery, (with the often solitary horseman), of the manner of describing scenery, furniture and clothing, kept his work comparatively insipid among newer, stronger flavours; Thackeray's *Barbazure* is a valuable critical skit on the James romance-formula. He wrote over seventy books; for which the age of whiskers no less than that of periwigs afforded material. *Richelieu*, which won him a reputation, had been published in 1829. Those written during the Victorian era include *The Robber* (1838), a tale of the eighteenth century; *The Huguenot* (1839), seventeenth century; *The Jacquerie* (1841), fourteenth century; *Arrah Neil* (1845), seventeenth century; *The Convict* (1847), modern. This last is interesting as a novel with a Chartist motif, developed in the picturesque romantic manner eventually traceable, through Scott, to Salvator Rosa: and for the treatment of the Australian convict episode, so different from that in Reade's subsequent *Foul Play*. Here and elsewhere too, James, though no creator of remembered characters, is seen striving to weight his hero with some seriousness and responsibility; in the Count de Monseiul (*Huguenot*) another such attempt is seen: but the true hero of *Arrah Neil* is Captain Barecolt, a diluted military "humour" of Dugald Dalgetty's strain. His heroines tend to be dear, good, creatures, admired by Leigh Hunt, who found in him "entertainment animated and mild"; the love scenes maintain a high level of fine, but not mawkish, sentimentality; the intrigue-work of the plots might amuse readers of modern detective novels. But at least he avoids the fault, conspicuous in some of Ainsworth's work, of overloading his novels with historical and even "guide-book" detail; and his type of good, clean adventure tale has had its descent in R. L. Stevenson's romances. Ellis (*The Solitary Horseman*) quotes a letter from Stevenson,[1] asking for a batch of James's novels.

Ainsworth wrote more forcefully, but with less control of form; or rather perhaps, of detail. James is diffuse, but selective, Ainsworth, with his magpie feeling for antique odds and ends, inclusive. Even in *Rookwood*,[2] where the adventures of Dick Turpin go far to establish a satisfying unity, some of the minor quaintnesses, including that bore, the knight of Malta, could have been dispensed with: but at least *Rookwood* provided early Victorian times with the popular song, "Nix my dolly". Ainsworth, too, was prolific, having

[1] From *Saranac*, Feb. 1888.
[2] 1834.

written more than forty novels; but only a few of these have survived to become popular "classics". *The Tower of London* (1840), *Old St. Paul's* (1841), *Windsor Castle* (1843) and *The Lancashire Witches* (1849), are probably the best known: *The Star Chamber* (1854) deserves mention, not as a well-constructed tale, but as adding something substantial to that mythology of "Merrie England" (also in *The Lancashire Witches*) with its tiltings and maypole jollity, that pleased the nineteenth century public. *Ovingdean Grange* (1860) told less readably of the times when, to modern ears, factions became discernible through such remarks as "Oddsfish", or "Sons of Belial". Yet there is more connected story here than in *The Tower of London*, but more gusto in this latter, where Ainsworth's wheels take fire in describing Tudor food, tortures, and the burning of Underhill. There are some charnel horrors in *Old St. Paul's*—Ainsworth had at moments a taste for the macabre rather more in tune with Salvador Dali than with Scott; but *Windsor Castle's* Herne the Hunter, though much care has gone to his making, fails to be sufficiently eldritch, by the standards of a Lytton or a Le Fanu. The fictional ghost reached its peak[1] during the century, but not in *Windsor Castle*. The guide-book fault is all too apparent here. Atmosphere, both natural and supernatural, envelops much more effectively the story of *The Lancashire Witches*, undoubtedly Ainsworth's most glamorous book; what he has so often laboured to beget is born—an acceptable period piece.

Lytton had more genius than either of the two last-named, but was inclined to waste it. Probably his unfortunate marriage, and the necessity of writing in difficult surroundings for money, at that time helped to impede his control; but these circumstances will scarcely explain in full a tendency to ramble through the brier-patch of pseudo-philosophy. Thackeray, satiric of the manner of all three, was severest to Lytton; and exposed in *George de Barnwell's* vapourings about the Beautiful and the Ideal Lytton's vain attempt to render this Platonism palatable. Actually there is less of this in *Eugene Aram*, the novel parodied, than elsewhere. To Thackeray another characteristic was unpalatable; a breaking into rhapsodic flights, with capitals and a little periphrasis. There are some of these in *The Caxtons*, in one of which reference is made to the air "of the chill Mother Isle". Inflation haunted other Victorian styles; it is doubtful whether Thackeray himself can be wholly

[1] Lovers of *The Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* will question this, no doubt.

absolved; but Lytton's ostentation offends by its frequent air of selfconsciousness, and disappoints because he was undoubtedly able to "cut the cackle" when he chose. Sensitive to literary winds, he changed with them the direction of his art, from the haut-ton dandyism of *Pelham* towards the middle-class high road of Victorianism; though the centre is not completely shifted in *The Caxtons* (1849) or *My Novel* (1853); the peerage still affords that flavouring which (as Arthur Pendennis knew) the public liked. By the mid-century the ghosts and illuminati of Godwin's age were receiving new support from the mode for occultism. Lytton, embracing the fashion, profited by it to the extent of the too short *The Haunted and the Haunters* (1859) and *A Strange Story* (1862). The former is a capital ghost tale, with vapourings kept to a minimum; but the powerful eeriness of the latter is diluted with much arid speculation in which Van Helmont, Descartes, Mesmer, the Jansenist Convulsionaries, and other irreconcileables, are mingled with more capitals than ever. But considering that this was the era in which Harriet Martineau practised mesmerism, and Rossetti and Mrs. Browning interested themselves in spiritism, one may guess that Lytton hit off once more a prevailing taste. *Zanoni* (1842) and its partial "sketch", *Zicci*, have to do with the occult and the Initiated, but wear less well than the purplest parts of *A Strange Story*. With other books, as we know, he aided the consolidation of the historical romance; *Harold*[1] (to take one less widely popular than *The Last Days of Pompeii*) steers a middle way between the methods of James and Ainsworth, begins with merrie doings on Mayday, ends with Senlac, and exhibits the virtue of straightforward writing. So does *The Coming Race* (1873), a short Utopian tale, introducing "Vril", and touching, with restrained comment and satire, on two contentious matters of the time, evolution and feminism. There is a little Darwinian *badinage* also in *Kenelm Chillingly*, his last complete novel, which shows hardly any abatement of vigour. The priggishness of Kenelm is now as lively as the dandyism of Pelham had been nearly fifty years ago. The tear of sensibility (noted earlier as symptomatic of the Victorian phase of art) shines in this novel, from the eyes of Tom Bowles, a village bruiser whom Kenelm had recently knocked out. A greater burden of sadness, a reduction of the flights, suggests advanced maturity; the *genre* is that of *The Caxtons*.

Lytton functioned effectively in several departments then estab-

[1] 1848.

lishing themselves; the criminal section—as old at least as Defoe—being strengthened by his *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*. The relative sobriety of his later works was an improvement; but even at his most undisciplined he arouses attention; and even when confronting everyday life (e.g. *The Caxtons* or *Chillingly*) he is romantic. Thackeray did not spare any writer whose art rang false to him; and though he satirized Lytton's pretensions more than once, he did not fail to notice, in *Codlingsby*, the extravagance of Disraeli: yet it is an extravagance which may be not only excused, but commended. It may be gaudy, but it is neat; order is imparted by an ironic wit, and objectivity by a detachment more complete than Lytton's. These qualities had already adorned *Vivian Grey* (1826), a work in the then prominent "dandiacal" mode, and were shown to greater advantage in Disraeli's better-constructed novels. The Asiatic style was his natural idiom, and he governed it very soon, in fact, during his first literary phase, which ended, with *Henrietta Temple*, in 1837. The charm of this novel depends largely on its comic, and sub-acid, flavour, which prevents a tale of deeply romantic love from being romantic at all. The clever manipulation of the plot brings out, not too abruptly, the commercial aspects of betrothal and marriage; sense conditions sensibility, as Mirabel shapes the ends of Armine. Nature has left a trail through much modern criticism, traceable by remarks to the effect that cleverness can never be truly great. This curious heresy seems to be refuted by Disraeli's Muse, who rises to her highest on cleverness; and the intellectual play of a Disraeli or an Oscar Wilde has as much right to be taken for a sign of health in art, as the sighs of a Gaskell or a Galsworthy.

Which brings us to the second, or social-political stage of Disraeli's writing, when *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred* (1844–5 and 47) set forth his proposals for the Young England policy. In *Sybil* with its Chartist setting he comes nearest to a realistic portrayal of "the classes". His proletarians, with their racy, witty, and intense individuality, may not altogether convince those of us who think in terms of the modern, standardized mind; but allowing a little discount for the Asiatic manner, we may guess them to have been taken from the life. It is here that his evangel of leadership by the nobs of the workers is preached; Arnold's Barbarians and Populace, in fact, with the Philistines as nigger in the woodpile; though Disraeli sees to it that two ardent revolutionaries come to settle down as Philistines in the last chapter. The young Englanders

who are to re-create England by their high ideals, evolve gradually through the trilogy, till we find them grouped in the third book round the latest recruit, Tancred; who interviews angels on Sinai, and encounters other incredible adventures, by way of initiation. Tancred provides the apex of Disraeli's romance, which is the romance of Israel, already rising in earlier novels; in *Contarini Fleming*, in *Coningsby*, where the Sidonia episode, caricatured in Thackeray's *Codlingsby*, appeared.

Disraeli's last creative phase passes from idealism to experience and disillusion; the moments of cynicism observable in phases one and two become more frequent in three; but it never loses its resigned and sympathetic tolerance, even when in *Lothair* he exposes the Machiavellian nature of religious intrigue, or in *Endymion*, his last finished novel (1880), the whole "game and play" of political careers, and the role of women therein. *Endymion* makes a strong finish to his literary life; there is a hardening, but no abatement, in the brilliance; and while exaggeration is present, the incredibly fantastic is not. The caricature of St. Barbe (Thackeray) is exaggerated, but acceptable—an effective *riposte* to *Codlingsby*. Leslie Stephen appreciated him as a humorist, but he was rarer than this; he was a wit.

The high society flavour of Disraeli's work, and its success, convinces us that while, after the Reform Act, the middle-class atmosphere became more grateful to subscribers at Mudie's, the other lingered for a substantial time. Longmans gave him £10,000 for *Endymion*, and Mudie secured three thousand copies.[1]

There were others in the field, of whom Mrs. Catherine Gore (1799–1861) was judged worthy, by Thackeray, of a place in *Novels by Eminent Hands*, with "Lords and Liveries"; Lytton mentioned her in his *England and the English* for her knowledgeableness in the tactics of matchmaking. Starting from a base of unsentimental domesticity—a link with Jane Austen, she swerved into the "amusing" manner, with a level of efficient smartness whence she is perfectly capable of ascending to wit. "Sunday schools and steam have created a new world", we are told in *Mammon* (1855); a *mot* of the sort recognizable as germane to wit as cultivated by Disraeli; a little french-polished and gimcrack perhaps, but glittering. *Mammon*, *Cecil* (1841) and its sequel *Cecil a Peer* (same year) reveal a sharpness of eye and a power of "appreciating the situation" in social life, which may lead us to say

[1] Buckle, *Life of Disraeli*, Vol. VI.

that she was shrewder than Lytton, but not Disraeli; and nearer the earth than either, for they both took at times, on various wings, to the air of poetry. Her Victorian writings include *The Dean's Daughter* (1853), *Progress and Prejudice* (1854), *Self* (1857).

Other aspects of life were chosen by Samuel Warren (1807–70) for *Passages from the Diary of a late Physician*, the forebear of Conan Doyle's *Round the Red Lamp* and other medical fiction. A manner is recognizable here, a coarse-grained art with certain crudities of expression, that belongs properly to the pre-Victorian times of Egan and Hook. His humour is cumbrous, his didacticism heavy, his passion and horror melodramatic. Resurrection men, bursting blood-vessels, brothels, spooks, cancer and decomposing flesh, fail to elicit a shudder, but accomplish something of an overture to Dickens. *Ten Thousand a Year*, which appeared after *Pickwick* and before *Martin Chuzzlewit*, presents the attorneys Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, as successors to Dodson and Fogg. There is even an M.P. called Gabriel Grubb. But the intense Dickensian vitality is lacking, though Warren, on the merits of this book, was then thought of as a rival of Dickens. Tittlebat Titmouse, whose title to the fortune has been discovered by the lawyers, is a puppet jerking woodenly through absurd adventures; the sentimental department contains the sufferings of the Aubreys. There are physical jokes of the period, fallings off horses, bloody noses, wrenching of knockers off doors. As a picture of men and manners it wants perspective. As a tale of Fortune and her wheel, it has not the incisiveness of Thackeray's comparable *Cox's Diary*.

Meanwhile Robert Smith Surtees (1803–64), from his viewpoint in the saddle, constructed his scenes, whether in London, Brighton, or Laverick Wells, with admirable perspective. He succeeded in converting the pre-Victorian crudities visible in *Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities* into the racy but more finished art of *Handley Cross*, where Jorrocks emerges from puppethood into life; though he recedes somewhat in *Hillingdon Hall*, where there is rather too much "nitrate o'sober". In creating a cockney sportsman who was no muff, Surtees both issued a challenge to snobbery, and broke new ground in fiction. But the Jorrocks trilogy failed, partly, no doubt, because he had not yet found himself. He succeeded better in *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour* when he observed more analytically. Experience of life and art, finish, and ripeness distinguish this novel and *Facey Romford's Hounds*. His characters, even the eccentrics like Lord Scamperdale, or Crowdey with his gibbey-

sticks, reveal probable, acceptable forms. If, as is said, Scamperdale and Sir Pitt Crawley have a common model, the former's humanity is the more striking—perhaps because of his higher blood pressure; beside him Sir Pitt seems fish-like. Sponge and Romford are rogues at a high picaresque level; heroic, hard-living parasites on a society breeding many worse men (Waffles, Puffington) than they. Surtees, like Chaucer, achieves satire without didacticism, the prevailing current of which he stoutly withstands. His fun is spread impartially over a wide field; from the "old sweats" of hunting, Slocdolager (*Mr. Sponge's Tour*), or The Goose and Dumpling Hunt (*Hawbuck Grange*), to the new commercial "squires", Mr. Puffington, Sir Moses Mainchance of *Ask Mamma*; or in social grades from the Duke of Donkeyton (*Hillingdon Hall*), to Sponge's groom Peter Leather, familiar with the treadmill. The satire is ungentle and yet tolerant of most rogues and fools; exceptionally, there is bitter, but brief, comment on the ills of steeple-chasing, or the riff-raff of sport; and some moments of impatience with the crew of bogus captains at Sir Harry Scattercash's house. To every emotive situation he presents an unsentimental front; love, women, and death are taken in the stride of not ostentatiously cool horsemanship. The death of Jack Spraggon, with Lord Scamperdale's lament over this "fine natural bl-bl-blackguard" is epic in conception; but in execution Surtees falls short by defects in style which he could not or would not amend. His "sturdy British independence" of class or clique, or of the niceties of style, is a saving grace. He has been called a Philistine, but is an artist, unique in the century. While at his best in hunting environment, he did sufficient justice to Brighton in *Plain or Ringlets* (pub. 1860) to picture for our time the seaside habits of the 'fifties; and gauged the effect of railways on social behaviour since the horsier age of *Jaunts and Jollities*. He deserves to live as the least didactic satirist in that time.

Dickens[1] leads the didactic school not necessarily by virtue of his understanding of the problems, but by that of his power to delight. To delight, and so to sell, was and no doubt is the novelist's prior aim. *Pickwick*, designed from a notion of Surtees', as a script round comic sporting plates,[2] evolves into Philanthropy Illustrated almost as soon as Mr. Pickwick enters the Fleet. *Sketches by Boz* were published (1836) in the year that *The Pickwick Papers* began to be

[1] 1812–70.
[2] By Seymour.

written. The *Sketches*, and the earlier part of *Pickwick*, share in the order of comic effects, from physical jokes to puns (in the former), and in a flashiness bordering on what some modern readers might call vulgar, reminiscent of Hook; but already in the sketches a coarse-nerved style is yielding to a fine-nerved, and cheerful callousness to humanitarianism; in some sketches the tear of sensibility and the sigh of social uplift are evoked.

In *Pickwick* we observe that while it is funny, at the beginning, when Mr. Tupman is shot, it is not funny at the end, when Mr. Jingle starves. The fun of knocking down as such (Pickwick at the Field Day) gives way to the retributive use of the device at the end of *Martin Chuzzlewit*; Mr. Wegg (*Our Mutual Friend*) is pitched into the mud cart from the highest motives: but the laughter at such misfortune remains; the earlier callousness of the "bang-up" days of The Fancy, has merely been moralized. The coarse-nerved element never entirely disappeared; even while the fine-nerved side of Dickens resented cruelty to children at Creakle's (*David Copperfield*), something comic about floggings was being noted. Its persistence may have helped him to expose sadism without hysteria.

Both Surtees and Dickens carry remnants of late Georgian toughness into the second half of the century; and so does Thackeray, in a less degree. It will also be remembered that in his childhood his sense of humour was nourished by Mrs. Inchbald's collection of *Farces*, George Colman the Younger's *Broad Grins* and Grimaldi, whom as a boy he had applauded, and whose life he edited as a man. The deep impressions of his youth may partly explain his choice of the pre-railway age as a setting for late (*Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*) as well as early novels. On the other hand he grasped the significance of railways in *Dombey and Son*, where he sees the early L.M.S.[1] engines as symbols of "great powers unsuspected", and "strong purposes not yet achieved". *Mugby Junction* with its connected ghost-story, has a full railway setting; a train is used dramatically in *Our Mutual Friend*. Gissing misleads somewhat and Mr. Orwell follows him, on the subject of Dickens' lukewarmness about this invention. Surtees brings in his railways with less interest.

Dickens was an artist of the particular and the heart, rather than of the universal and the head. All detail, from Whitechapel oysters (*Pickwick*) to the water pipe on "our house" in *Our Mutual Friend*,

[1] The old London and Birmingham Railway.

was for him significant detail—so much so as to militate against his ever becoming a realist: he "expressionized" things as he did people. A chair might (as with Tom Smart) come impishly alive at any moment; he retained Miss Kitty Kimeens'[1] faculty for seeing further into furniture than adults do, though this does not prove any allegation of arrested development. His "particularism" may partly account for the absence of general ideas, political, philosophic, and the like in his novels and for his failure (unless *Edwin Drood* is an exception) to master design and plot, despite repeated efforts to do so, aided eventually by the example of the younger Wilkie Collins, who latterly collaborated with him.[2] But perfection of design was rendered the more difficult by the publication of so much of his work, from *Pickwick* onwards, in numbers, the effects of which leap to the eye in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

From a basis of realism Dickens, not unaided in his youth by Smollett, proceeded to dis-nature and then re-shape his world; Mrs. Nickleby and Mr. Micawber grew out of his parents; Dora Spenlow and Flora Casby, it is believed, from two ages of Miss Beadnell. He stylized not only characters and objects, but situations and dialogue too. The defiant conversation of Messrs. Noddy and Gunter in *Pickwick* has all the artifice of comedy hit and riposte; the melodrama of Bill Sykes and Nancy (*Oliver Twist*, 1838), of Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby (1838), is patent; "my curse, my bitter curse upon you, boy!" might be mouthed by Mr. Glavormelly, of the Coburg. The "curtain" at the end of *Martin Chuzzlewit* is the stage-craft of Mr. Crummles. The miracle is that this world of footlights and pasteboard lived intensely, which it did, for three main reasons: his knowledge of acting and theatrecraft, the restless extraversion of his own life, and his intuition of the dreams of the folk. It is this last that has made him a universal writer, and embedded many of his characters in popular mythology. Quilp and Squeers are traditional Pucks or Devils, as funny as bad. Dora and Agnes are two types of which radically bigamous Everyman must have experience. In the Steerforth-Emily episode are seen variants of traditional popular attitudes to a theme of seduction celebrated in folksong. The ancient, simple, dream of punishment for the wicked and rewards for the good is repeated in every novel. The lavishing of food and drink culminates in *A Christmas Carol*, where the Spirit of Christmas Present recalls the mood at least of the earliest

[1] *Tom Tiddler's Ground.*
[2] As in *No Thoroughfare*, 1867.

Graal stories. Such was his appeal to the timeless and universal side of men. There are regional, national, and class appeals. The cosiness and sentimentality may be northern, or bourgeois, or both. English coaching days are mythologized endearingly, their rigours as well as their pleasures;[1] *The Holly-Tree* (1855) may well have inspired subsequent "old-time" Christmas cards. There is the "little man's" myth of drolly inefficient civil servants;[2] the working man, as Stephen Blackpool,[3] is idealized and elevated to the status of a tragic hero. The cult of the fireside (The Wilfers', with cooking and rum punch) is British, and by Dickens chiefly imagined in terms of the middle-class, ranging from Wardle's to Boffin's, when Boffin has risen socially.

One of the modern "intelligentsia" criticisms of Dickens seems to be that he failed to become a traitor to his social class, and to adopt the revolutionary attitude: another, that he preached change of heart instead of change of political creed. There is no imaginable reason why he should be other than he was, a Philistine genius creating Philistine art for Philistines who had little taste for ideas. The main currents, spiritual, political, scientific, flowed past him practically ignored. He mentions Monboddo, but not Darwin. There was then (and is still) a large middle-class public interested, not in ideas, beyond what they might find in *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*, but in the common things of life, whether muffins or circus equestrians. Arnold wrote at them (*Culture and Anarchy*); Dickens wrote for them, with satire to head them off from the ways of a Pecksniff or a Podsnap, and the prospect of conversion (with its old-established Wesleyan background) exemplified in Dombey, Dedlock,[4] or Gradgrind.[5] His point of observation remains outside the society terrain of clubs and nobs; whereas Thackeray's is, or affects to be, inside. His educational background was the blacking warehouse and Mr. (Creakle) Jones' academy: Thackeray's was Charterhouse and Cambridge. His attacks on bad schools, bureaucracy, the operation of the Poor Law, and other abuses, may be unscholarly for their disregard of "provenance"; but their unreason was suitable for an unreasoning public, and, it is claimed, proved fruitful. Like several contemporary novelists, he embroidered social plots with the romantic machines of suspense

[1] As in *Pickwick, Martin Chuzzlewit, David Copperfield.*
[2] *Little Dorrit.*
[3] *Hard Times.*
[4] *Bleak House.*
[5] *Hard Times.*

and mystery; mysteries of Monks,[1] or Miss Wade;[2] the Dedlocks are allotted a quite plausible ghost on the top of the Summerson mystery, and Inspector Bucket, an ancestor of many fictional detectives.

Taking *Bleak House* as a fair sample of the "rich mixed" Victorian plot, the safe basis of tears (Jo's death), cheers (Esther's saintliness) and laughter (Little Swills, Mrs. Badger) bears a load of miscellaneous social satire and mystery; the "possible improbability" of Mr. Krook is exceptional: though this kind of thing, and coincidental strainings, are dear to Dickens. His recipe is a rather untidier instance of the complexity used by contemporaries; but his style is his own. More often than not it looks like a stage style—a brilliant imitation of authorship. He acted the part with tremendous success, however one may carp; but it is significant that "The Ivy Green" was sung at a music hall. His hypnotic power forced, and still forces, acceptance of what the unhypnotized would pronounce vulgar and garish. Its tendency to "rise" into blank verse is well known.

Dickens was inclined to be cocksure and optimistic; William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63) the reverse. Trollope said of him[3] that he was not certain of himself; Disraeli's caricature of him as St. Barbe shows a jealous, plaintive nature. He protected a tender, sensitive soul behind a cynical mask; and like other sensitive souls, took to the debunking variety of satire. His "Catherine Hayes" (the prentice-flogger) debunked the criminal hero in fiction as exhibited by Lytton and others; James Yellowplush did the same in a miscellaneous field. Diffidence, and a certain sourness, were perhaps encouraged in him early by financial mistakes, glorified in the Bundelcund Bank affair,[4] but not palliated by subsequent unhappiness in his home life, or indifferent health. It is characteristic that while Dickens wrote of Christmas in terms of festivity, he did so in those of paying bills (*Roundabout Papers*). He made his reputation the more slowly of the two; when Dickens was acclaimed as Boz, some curiosity was beginning to be felt about the identity of Titmarsh, the Fat Contributor, Fitzboodle, and the other pennames he assumed. His earlier work in *Frazer*, and soon in *Punch*, had mordant and alterative qualities which aroused attention. Dickens had wished him, unavailingly, to illustrate *Pickwick*, as he

[1] *Oliver Twist.*
[2] *Little Dorrit.*
[3] *Thackeray* (English Men of Letters Series).
[4] *The Newcomes.*

had begun as an artist, but shifted to letters, taking with him a rather cruel and slightly clumsy talent for caricature, visible in the back numbers of *Punch*, and illustrations of some of his own novels.[1] Among the early *Frazer* contributions were *Men's Wives*, with the bitter tale of Dennis Haggarty, *The Shabby Genteel Story*, from which *Philip* was to grow, and *Barry Lyndon* (1844), where he already displays a sound eighteenth century background, and a mastery of the picaresque formula. The thoroughness of his impregnation with that period was to be seen to more advantage in *Esmond* and *The Virginians*.

Thackeray's career in *Punch* opened in 1843 with the Tickletoby Lectures, negligible except for the birch rod motif which recurs in his writings, up to the metaphysical flagellation by Lord Ringwood in *Philip*. The most effective of his *Punch* papers became *The Book of Snobs* (1848), probably responsible for a folklore of snobbery diffused through the continent by 1914, and laying Thackeray open to suspicion of that failing; Disraeli evidently had no doubt about it. It was a reconnaissance in force on society, before the main attacks of *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*. His criteria for snobbery were still conditioned by some class conventions, snobbish in themselves, and so he agreed with John Corks that "Marsaly" was "wind no gent can drink".[2] In *Vanity Fair* (begun 1846) he largely overcame the disintegrating effect of numbers, in which it was written; and went so far to perfect a naturalistic psychology that dispenses with heroes. The rogue Barry Lyndon had been given some laudable traits; and so was the she-rogue Becky Sharp, and after her the unscrupulous and dear Blanche Amory (*Pendennis*). Rogues who were brave, intelligent, and amusing won Thackeray's sympathy; neither the wicked Lord Steyne nor, in *Pendennis*, the gaol-bird Altamont, are wholly revolting; and this despite the campaign against criminal-worship in fiction (cf. *George de Barnwell*). Virtue and goodness of heart were not, as they were for Dickens, sufficient for him by themselves; it was no accident that made the goodhearted Amelia and Dobbin stupid, the well-meaning George Osborne a scatterbrained fool, the kindly young Pendennis an ass, and the noble-natured Philip a blundering bull. Saintly Mrs. Pendennis is silly; Laura, good and a prig. Gumption, whether that of Mr. Sherrick (*The Newcomes*), who is a much better fellow than parson Honeyman, or of Caroline, heroic

[1] His drawings are worth studying and comparing with Doyle's and Leech's.
[2] *The Frroddylent Butler*, in Punch.

because clever, was valuable to Thackeray. His letters reflect impatience at the dull, the stupid, and the boring; but he pictures himself (letter to Elwin 6.9.55) as a preacher of "the vanity . . . of all but love and goodness". His time-sense is seen both in his historical novels and characterisation. Mrs. Gamp, Tony Weller, and many of Dickens' "humour" characters, are immortal; even Mr. Dombey, having aged as part of his punishment, threatens to live happily ever after. The more scientific view of mutability appears in Jos Sedley, Major Pendennis, Beatrix Esmond; the change from war to peace is expressed in the economic life of Rawdon Crawley. Arthur Pendennis's progress takes place through moral evolution, not revolution, aided by a probable chain of events —luck indeed, not cunning. Luck, or coincidence, is seen with Thackeray to conform to Aristotelian requirements.[1] The presence of Rebecca and Jos at Brussels is logical, though not wholly unavoidable: the presence of Steerforth off Yarmouth is illogical. The vanity of human wishes is preached systematically, in Sedley's failure, George's death, Becky's thwarted aspirations; and so, while the novel brings us closer to nature than any other in that decade so far, pure realism is not attained, as long as preoccupation with what should (or should not) be in any sense diverts the fable from what is. *Vanity Fair* (and all his work) belongs, as a Comtist might have said, to the metaphysical, not the positive phase.

There is a vein of cruelty or darkness in Thackeray's satire as in his drawings; Mr. Wagg is not spared either here, or in *Pendennis*, where he is made vile; and we note that while Disraeli playfully begets Tadpoles and Tapers, Thackeray sourly discovers a Tapeworm which is, as he appears by comparison in his day, more punitive. The narrow moral outlook loosely termed Puritanism affected him only intermittently, as in his assault on Sterne,[2] on the pretext of "latent corruption" and "an impure presence" in his works; as Macaulay's partial puritanism was evoked by Wycherley. On the other hand he is more indulgent to young Pen's weaknesses and the major's "the ladies, God bless 'em" sentiments than would be expected of a total Puritan; and takes Mrs. Montague Rivers, of St. John's Wood, in his stride. But in regard to her and the Rougemonts, Pinkneys, Keightleys, or Tom Divers, he must, like Mr. Foker, show himself to be rather downy. *Pendennis* comes nearer to plain life, and so further from the romantic tradition which

[1] cf. the fall of the statue, *Poetics*.
[2] *English Humourists of the 18th Century*, 1851.

Lytton still followed; it is in the line, not of Scott, but of Fielding, with a Richardsonian death-scene (Mrs. Pendennis's): the sordid and not profound mystery of Altamont demonstrates how this device may be deromanticized. The rendering of England at the beginning of the railway era, the portraits above and below stairs, keep their freshness to-day, though the topical interest in Bacon or Bungay, or Finucane has lapsed. But Costigan's otto of whisky and the Major's wigs are permanent bequests.

Under the time-spell Thackeray carried on some of the Pendennis characters, including the now decayed Costigan, into *The Newcomes* (1853–55); similarly there was a carry-over from *Esmond* (1852) to *The Virginians* (1857–9). Such "sagas", as we say of Galsworthy, might suggest a wide control of design; but this, except in *Vanity Fair* and *Esmond* is not apparent; he rambles, often pleasantly, but centrifugally. *Esmond* marked a change of tone, as being a historical novel, and openly romantic; *The Newcomes* showed something of the change in the set-up of characters. The Colonel revives memories of mediæval chivalry and courtesy, the modern flavour being imparted by his financial imprudence. Barnes is a villain, Ethel distantly related to the spirited type of romantic heroine in Scott and elsewhere. There is still the trenchant comment on and record of life, in Bryanstone Square or The Back Kitchen; but shaped by heart rather than by head, so that the "adsum" finale for Colonel Newcome—a good rival to the death of little Nell, and in its way equally symptomatic of the earlier Victorian taste, comes as a legitimate climax. Writing to Thompson (25.2.58) he complained that *The Virginians* took him "as much time as if I was writing a history"; and other letters in the decade bear witness to the careful documentation of the book. But the result is, compared with *Esmond*, disappointing; there is excess of matter, and insufficiency of order, exacerbated, probably, by the writing in numbers, which was now probably irksome. The entry of George "out of the machine" is but a cumbrous device, and Harry a less sparkling fool than young Pendennis. Thackeray's own verdict, "clever but stupid", might be modified to "not so clever, but not stupid". He was (letter to Mrs. Baxter, 10.4.58)[1] feeling tired of the handling of plot components, which explains much. The comparatively romantic bloom of *Esmond* has rubbed off, but a solid and sober refashioning of Hanoverian England remains. Beatrix, hard-boiled as the Baroness, whose deathbed is

[1] *Letters and Private Papers of Thackeray*. Vol. IV, ed. G. N. Ray.

unsentimental, carries her worldliness with distinction; Thackeray's next and last old woman, Mrs. General Baynes (*Philip*) deteriorated into a common termagant. Here sordidness reaches its apex in the blackmailing parson and rapacious doctor; it is the darkest of Thackeray's novels, but unfortunately not the strongest, though with some strong flights of satire. He broke less fresh ground in this age of beards than Dickens did with *Our Mutual Friend*.[1] Lord Ringwood, like Lord Steyne, brings out a tang of the eighteenth century aristocratic tyranny which obsessed Thackeray; Hunt has been a feudal chaplain of the kind known to Savage.

Modernity emerges from Thackeray's shorter pieces rather more forcibly than from the full-length novels, except *The Newcomes*. The social reaction to Puseyism in *Our Street* (1847), the *milieu* of Ponto (*Book of Snobs*, 1845–7) and Lovel (*Lovel the Widower*, 1859) and some *Roundabout Papers* of the same year, show him competent to utter tracts for the times in freedom from that historic sense associated generally with romantic emotion. Though he often played, with distinction, the role of his own grizzled and disillusioned jester,[2] his burlesques, of which an early example is *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan* (1838), show some holiday abandon, which was recaptured in *The Rose and the Ring* (1854), a fairy-tale enlivened with blank verse. But his function was also that of a Victorian Juvenal, and more comprehensively, of a Victorian artist with a culture and sensitivity ballasted by a wholesome but moderate philistinism, so that he could pass easily from the "solemn church music" of Keble to the contemplation of railway shares.[3] His range and knowledge of life and letters was much wider than Dickens'; but his genius had not the support of the other's driving power and self-confidence. In his work a striving towards realism, but no more, might be allowed to foreshadow a future trend. As a preacher, he was concerned with the sins of society downward, roughly, to the middle classes, his ethics almost unpolluted by political economy; *The Times* considered his moral tone, in 1855, nearer that of *Candide* than of *Rasselas*; we might demur to-day. His style at maturity retains gracious memories of Fielding's and other eighteenth century prose, with a sensitive suppleness of his own, at its best when most intimate; since the intimacy sets, and keeps to, a frontier of decorum.

[1] Where Eugene also has a beard.
[2] *The Age of Wisdom*, Ballad.
[3] *The Speculators*, Ballads of Policeman X.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64) became an admirer of the work of Dickens and Thackeray, as his *English Notebooks* disclose; he met neither, but ranked as an opposite number across the ocean, where for much of his life he worked—and so did his junior Melville, on the foundations of an internationally acclaimed American Fiction. After his Brook Farm experiences he made his first great hit with *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), now a standard classic. Its historical Puritan setting has contributed to the belief in his personal puritanism, of which there was probably less in him than in Thackeray; his amusement at liberating, when consul at Liverpool, a Doctor of Divinity from a brothel, is worth consideration. *Twice-Told Tales* had already won some success, but not enough to satisfy him. *The Scarlet Letter* reveals him as a novelist rather of situations and ideas than character; he tells a story of sin and its effects in a community hyperæsthetic of sin, but neither writes an historical romance, nor paints a gallery-full of portraits. Dickens expressed disappointment at it;[1] but as an idea-novel it was scarcely his line of country. Henry James,[2] found the persons to be "representatives . . . of a single state of mind", and that the interest lies "not in them . . . but in the situation". There is an art in this form of writing, a difficult one, and the recognition of the book as a classic testifies, no doubt, to Hawthorne's mastery of it. The symbolism which James deplored here has analogues in a tendency to parables and allegory elsewhere, as in *The Blithedale Romance* and *Transformation.*[3] This may have led (through unconscious memory of the allegorical theory of poetry) to excessive stress on the "poetic" qualities of his prose. These are present, but fail to banish, especially in *The Blithedale Romance*, prose with obvious and laudable prose rhythms and "contexts".[4] Greater objectivity may be enjoyed in *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) by those who prefer it. Even the shadowy, vaguely haunted interior of the house may be partly reminiscent of the haunted manse of his early married years in the 1840's. Miss Pyncheon is drawn at full length, with care; but is not the world more aware of Hester (*Scarlet Letter*), not for her portraiture, but for her situation? We foreigners will prize the former for its conveyance to us of a then contemporary New England atmosphere, uncertain of the extent, if any, to which it was idealized, but guessing that Hawthorne was

[1] Forster, *Life of Dickens.*
[2] *Hawthorne* (English Men of Letters Series).
[3] American title, "The Marble Faun".
[4] For which see a well-known footnote to Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.* Chap. XVIII.

no realist. Yet there is strong probability in Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon selling her gingerbread Jim Crows, as there is in Zenobia smoking the gruel (*Blithedale Romance*, 1852). Blithedale is Brook Farm. Zenobia is said to be based on, not to be, Margaret Fuller. The book, with its more richly concrete background, is still removed from realism, being both near a parable in conception, and touched, largely through Priscilla, with that deliberately vague strangeness—a romantic trail—characteristic of his work, and most clearly seen in *Transformation*. Hollingsworth's sin of spiritual arrogance, at Blithedale, was against Nature, and finally destructive. *Transformation* gives us the natural crime of Donatello, which is ultimately constructive, at least of a soul for the faun; but the account of this is more fantastic and improbable than the other. This novel offers us Hawthorne's reaction to some of the things (including Praxiteles' Faun) of the old world, when he visited Italy after the Liverpool consulship. Van Doren[1] suggests that this impact submerged his paganity and brought his puritanism uppermost, but that (and one may well agree) his theory of sin as an educative force brings him again beyond puritanism. But he is always gentler than Thackeray with human weakness, preserving his vision of man as inheritor of eternity. It is not surprising that he was attracted to Browning with whom, in Italy, he agreed over spiritualism, then fashionable. There are ornate elements in his style, which permit flowers to be "amaranthine", or works of genius to be "hallowed"; an emotive prose, usually redeemed by tact from lusciousness; charm is alleged, and is recognizable, except occasionally when a polysyllabic "pinking" develops.

The toughness of Herman Melville (1819–91) renders his use of language in all its variations portentous beside Hawthorne's; it is always sapid, if in its fantastic moods rather mad. Some of his more realistic books (*Typee, Omoo, White Jacket,*) may bring George Borrow to mind; but the Borrovian swank is absent. *Typee* (1846) is more realistic and less lyrical than *Mardi* (1849), but from the first the romantic view of the noble savage is evident; Fayaway as idealized Nature, incarnate, provides matter for dreams of escape from commercial civilization. To Melville's thinking, it seems, the old cannibal rites did less harm than the new effects of missionaries and syphilis. *Redburn* and *White Jacket* record the miseries of sea life or submerged port-life in the days of sailing-ships; a reference to Marryat in the latter confirms the reader's

[1] *The American Novel.*

impression of heritage from this writer, small, but well used to paint a gloomier picture of naval discipline. *White Jacket* assisted in the suppression of flogging. At *Moby Dick* (1851) he touched not only his zenith but the harp of Allegory, with a twang which, across the ocean, seems to convey transcendental harmonies. Spiritual events on the sea of life are evidently intended, but variously interpreted; but something visionary lurks beneath the narrative of facts, a dark conceit, no doubt. Melville succeeded here in elevating, as Hawthorne had not, the novel to the level of romantic epic; Ahab was more than human, the white whale as eloquent of deep mysteries as the phœnix, or the unicorn impatient of his crib. *Moby Dick* is the work of a poet, and a great one, whose attempts at verse are disappointing. The blaze of this work need not cast the more sedate virtues of *Typee* and its followers into extreme shade; all exude energy, and *Typee* an enthusiasm which distinguishes it from the more reflective or disillusioned *Omoo*. Energy and enthusiasm rather than balance and cold judgment, moved him sometimes to strange parables and conceptions, as in *Mardi* (1849), but also to persuasion of the value of his facts, which abound, and may be episodic, like the chapters on palms or cattle in *Omoo*. His vatic sense and his sense for facts, are two distinct assets, combined in *Moby Dick*, alternative in *Mardi*.

By Melville and Hawthorne the power of the American Romantic current, and its comparative purity, may be estimated, at a time when in England modifications, through Dickens and Thackeray, were taking place. Both centuries however shared in the business of moral and social teaching; Melville watched as keenly as Dickens for abuses; and Harriet Beecher Stowe produced, in 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most popular reform novel of the century. Sentimental, vulgar, and vivid, it roused two hemispheres, with the exception of Matthew Arnold, to humanitarian excitement. England was well prepared for its reception, after a multiplicity of social comments, from Dickens to George Eliot, in its fiction.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810–65) a Manchester School in herself, published *Mary Barton* in 1848 and *North and South* in 1855. She possessed, like Dickens, a talent for sentimental death-bed scenes and melodramatic situations—the death of Alice, Mary's pursuit of the ship (*Mary Barton*); and, when away from the blackboard, for ghost stories. Unitarian and philanthropic, she sought a means to social readjustment in the promotion of loving-kindness in the factory; a method of the heart comparable to

Dickens' gospel. From the darkness of *Mary Barton* she proceeded to the silver lining of *North and South*, where Thornton was present at the Hands' dinner. *Ruth* (1853) was a "daring" but improving tale of seduction and typhoid; *Cranford*, one of the "hundred best books", and something more than a magic casement to Victorian fairylands, since it criticises life. The virtues of Hoggins in *Cranford* convey their message no less than those of Higgins in *North and South*: and we should rejoice over the impoverishment of Miss Matty as a culpable rentier. Mrs. Gaskell's skill in tracing the effects of a financial ebb-tide in a small backwater surpasses Peacock's paper-money satire in *Melincourt*; but her skill in creating atmosphere surpasses his. In the air of *Cranford* we breathe a fragrance of lavender, tea, and pathos. Her characters are so well-balanced as to bear their peculiarities without distortion: Miss Pole is an eccentric but not a humour, Mr. Mulliner is a subtler version of the type than Dickens' Mr. Giles.[1] *Sylvia's Lovers* and her last and unfinished work *Wives and Daughters* (1866) continues her warm-hearted charm, but below the peak of *Cranford*. Her enthralling but occasionally imprudent life of Charlotte Brontë deserves high marks and as large a public as the sociological books. She was kindly, with flashes of genius and strong emotional loyalties, but with neither the brain-power of George Eliot, nor the fiery prejudices of Charlotte Brontë.

A fierier, more prejudiced social reformer is seen in Charles Reade (1814–84) whose quixotic and sometimes eccentric talents expressed themselves in a style notably devoid of charm. His ambition was to succeed in drama;[2] his eccentricities were herring-fishing, the sale of fiddles, and abstention from alcohol and tobacco. Contemporaries accused him of sensationalism, of which, despite his denial, he was guilty: the ferocious pleasure he took in creating and unmasking villains (*Hard Cash, Foul Play*), in horrors, torture (*It is Never too Late to Mend*) and Dick-Bartonesque situations, ensured that. After the tentatives of *Peg Woffington*, taken from his own drama, and *Christie Johnstone*, *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856) launched him on a career of social criticism, sometimes relinquished for other interests, with a survey of the prison system. He took the novel-form seriously, regarding it as a kind of prose epic; and may be seen attempting a rugged, and sometimes heroic grandeur in the brutalization of the prisoners, a darkness

[1] *Oliver Twist.*
[2] He did; with *Drink*, adapted (1879) from Zola's *L'Assommoir.*

that cannot stain the white radiance of the Rev. Francis Eden. The pamphlet *The Autobiography of a Thief* awakes perfectibilitarian and Godwinian memories; Reade believed that criminals might be reclaimed; though later (*Put Yourself in his Place*) he seemed doubtful about trades unionists. *Hard Cash* (1863) tackled the lunatic asylum, the alienist, and the dishonest banker of bygone times, and was founded on the rather dubious fact of an action against wrongful confinement. *Put Yourself in his Place* exhibits Sheffield at a period when there was a closed shop in murder, which Mr. Grotait discountenanced if committed by non-union assassins. *Foul Play*, in which Boucicault collaborated, diverges from commercial improbity to detective excitement and Pacific island adventure; *Griffith Gaunt* presents, with historical colouring, a problem of bigamy and a real old-fashioned murder trial. But posterity has acclaimed *The Cloister and the Hearth*, a fine specimen of the Gothic revival romance. There is mitigation here of the jerky telegraphic style expressive of Reade's modernity perhaps, as well as his temperament; there is detachment, and a careful, leisurely turning towards the past, so as more nearly to see its life steadily and whole. This book, like Eliot's *Romola*, marks a change from the historical method of Scott to that of a more scholarly and scientific documentation reflecting, it may be imagined, the growth in the century in all departments of learning, of a spirit of research.

This is even more evident in the novels and the writings of Charles Kingsley (1819–75) who lived in the thick of several frays, as a Christian Socialist and anti-Tractarian; who became Professor of History at Cambridge, and lectured and pamphleteered elsewhere in a popular style on subjects ranging from geology to sanitation. On his thought, Maurice, Carlyle, Wordsworth (who drew tears) exerted some influence. His interest in evolution has been noted. Strain and over-emphasis damaged his prose as it did Reade's; our impression of an age of too positive individualities accumulates. Both had the gift for telling a story of action with power; where there is less action, as in *Yeast* (1848), there is less attention. The dilution of it in *Hypatia* (1853) may partly account for its failure to appeal as much as his other historical novels, *Hereward the Wake* (1855) and most of all, *Westward Ho!*. *Yeast*, *Alton Locke* (1850) and *Two Years Ago* (1857) expose his social criticisms; the historical books too, have their "message". *Yeast* is a not well constructed medley, with agricultural labour prominent,

and tractarianism not forgotten. *Alton Locke* de[illegible] from its biographical design; town labour, sweating, [illegible]ore unity which always inspired him, stimulate a greater livel[illegible]as— Sandy Mackaye some resemblance to Carlyle has been trace[illegible] architectonics of *Two Years Ago*, as he himself admitted, [illegible] defective; there are too many irons in the fire; cholera, slavery, a[illegible] science, sectarianism, delirium tremens, marriage with poets (not recommended) are part of the burden here laid upon his muse; she carries it vehemently, and without grace. In these three writings he swings from the Left position, favourable to Chartism and "Parson Lot"[1] towards one not so far from Disraeli's Young England principles. At least he sees in the landed gentry, the Scoutbush and Minchampstead of *Two Years Ago*, potential leaders and benefactors of the people. In all three he thinks in terms of general, as against Reade's special, objects of reform. What was wrong with the Alexandrian church of *Hypatia* is that it was too neoplatonic and, more widely, too Mediterranean for his sympathy, which lay rather with the Goths, savages as yet but bearing the seed of that northern genius which was to refresh Christian civilization. Greek philosophy was effete; *Hypatia*, its exponent, beautiful but doomed. Sympathy with another Nordic branch appears in *Hereward*; and though much strained by the sack of Peterborough, it holds: *Hereward* is a sinner but a hero, an incarnation almost of the wild north-easter which his creator welcomed. *Westward Ho!* another of our "hundred best books", has fairly recently been blamed for "bigoted jingoism".[2] To-day the wreckage of our empire may bid us think again. He wrote it, as Spenser his *Faerie Queene*, in the love of Protestant England and belief in her destinies;[3] there are less noble, if more comprehensive, moods. So animated, he showed his best form as a recounter of action, an imaginative describer, and an avoider of the bogus antique. Care in documentation solidifies the background of the three; though the interpretation may be controversial. Three other books, *Glaucus*, *Madam How and Lady Why*, and *The Water Babies*, with juvenile and adult appeal, illustrate his passion for natural history and moral instruction. The last of the trio is an acknowledged masterpiece: though the playfulness and allegory are on the ponderous side, with some mannerisms faintly recalling

[1] Pseudonym of his *Letters to Chartists*.
[2] *Charles Kingsley and his Ideas*, by Guy Kendall.
[3] For his expression of a sense of the Empire see the article *My Winter Garden* (*Frazer*, 1858).

th[illegible]e was no stylist for style's sake; but clearly suspected Urquhart Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* he called himself a Art-Un: *Plays and Puritans* discloses agreement with Puritan [illegible]ility to art. In a letter of 1857 he challenges the validity of art except "the art of pleasing and instructing". His literary criticism, as in the Tennyson article (*Frazer*, September, 1850) supports the view. But at the same time he was attracted by, and pondered on, The Beautiful; as conceived by Alexander Smith[1] (and Elsley Vavasour) it was false; but if (as suggested by Tom Thurnall) it was based on the findings of physical science, truth was in it. Beauty revealed by science was as recurrent a notion with him as with Ruskin, though the two were otherwise at variance. In his strict fashion he was faithful to his time and greeted the "great railroad age" sincerely.

The vogue for the Brontë sisters began to yield, a few years ago, to that for the more restful Trollope; but their work still stands as a beacon of the purer romance that survived, largely through them, in England at a time when it was more easily met with in America. Their lives, their childhood and adult work, have been exhaustively discussed; Haworth Parsonage has become a Brontë sanctuary. Of the three Charlotte (1816–55) and Anne (1820–49) came sufficiently into the movement to write sometimes "with a purpose". Anne lifted her hands at intemperance (*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*) and Charlotte considered the relations of employer and employed in *Shirley*. But a strong social conscience was scarcely compatible with the self-centred, or family-centred, Brontë genius; not economics, but the passions, inspired them. Charlotte was the most worldly-wise and satiric of the three; crudely so in *The Professor*, with virtuosity in *Villette*, of which *The Professor* was an earlier *varia lectio*. On her alone the influence of the Brussels experience is manifest; Emily, whose genius M. Heger considered superior, made no use of it in *Wuthering Heights*. Mr. William Crimsworth of *The Professor* is Lucy Snowe in trousers, but more pert and vulgar; and Lucy Snowe is mostly Charlotte. We may prefer Charlotte as Jane Eyre, plain and game like Lucy, but less hard-boiled; she suffers more deeply in a grander manner, and shows finer traits of character.

Jane Eyre (1847) dedicated to Thackeray, is the most lyrical of her novels. Rochester contrasts with M. Paul (*Villette*) as poetry with prose; there is a touch of the demon-lover about him, a distant

[1] *Alexander Smith and Alexander Pope. Frazer.* Oct. '53.

relationship to Emily's less civilized Heathcliff. So the three of ticism and improbability is relieved by realistic detail humanity. the unsparing censure of Mr. Brocklehurst being superiould use better-known facetiousness about curates in *Shirley*. Ther as his enough exaggeration to provide matter for Bret Harte's burlesqur on Miss Mix. In writing *Shirley* she kept stricter watch on herself: and moreover, was then saddened by the deaths of Anne and Emily. The tribute paid to the latter in the character of Shirley Keeldar is graceful; the heroine is not a governess, but Charlotte manages to involve her in the teacher-and-pupil schoolroom romance, finally triumphant in *Villette*. The machine riots are subsidiary to the double love motif, and from them Louis Moore emerges as an enigmatic hero. The characters in *Villette* (1850) are drawn with greater freedom and confidence; even minor persons like Madame Svini (sketched with almost Thackerayan relish) or the mere mention of "Williams Shackspire", ring true; observation was now dominating, but not expelling, invention. We note that whereas the voices mysteriously heard in *Jane Eyre* preserve their spiritual nature, the ghost of Villette turns out to be De Hamal so disguised for purposes of courtship. Art directs malice in the portrait of Madame Beck; hysteria only rises on occasion out of M. Paul and the Scarlet Woman. Charlotte gained a little notoriety for naughtiness, but she preached idealistic love, extracting its romance even from the small beer chronicle of *Villette*. Anne's beer, in *Agnes Gray*, with its governess and curate, was even smaller; but the satire in this and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* belongs to no meek temperament. The sins of society in *The Tenant* hardly seem to be exaggerated if we compare a dinner at the Huntingdons' with one at the Scattercashs';[1] it is her shocked disapproval that gives the luridness.

Anne's inability to render the passionate swoop and surge delimits her: Emily, in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) proved her entire ability. The book has been attributed to Branwell, the girls' artistic brother:[2] it is possible that he may have made suggestions for the plot. The tone agrees with Charlotte's description of "the secret power and fire" in Emily. The style is surprising when it comes to dialogue; we notice a strong vein of "heroic poesy" in *Nelly Dean*, where it would be less expected. The plot is saved from becoming tedious by sheer emotional power; the characters,

[1] *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour.*
[2] *Patrick Branwell Brontë* by Alice Law.

intrusive townsman, Mr. Lockwood, are impregnated Urquhartbre glamour—even Nelly catches a slight infection—Art...le to the presence of elementals (Heathcliff) and spectres; ...is a spiritual, not a ghost story, and a poem. It is also the ...st sentimental of the writings of a generally unsentimental family, and the most pagan.

To pass from the rarified air of these altitudes to Anthony Trollope (1815–82) is to descend into a more easily recognizable mid-Victorian world, to solid prose art by the middle classes for the middle classes; not forgetting however that *Wuthering Heights* is quite as truly Victorian as *The Three Clerks*; illustrating that running-riot of personality which appears only to have diminished towards the end of Victoria's reign. But Trollope's period is the middle of that reign, after Byronism (to which Brontë romanticism owed something) had gone out. He wrote of and for men who had their way to make in the world, to whom money was an object, as it was to him, on his honest admission.[1] After a difficult start he became a prolific novelist and valued civil servant. The first attempt, *The McDermots of Ballycloran* (1847) was a failure. His two most memorable groups of novels, which comprise his best work have to do with (a) the clergy, and (b) politics and political society: (a) consists of *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867) and is called the Chronicles of Barsetshire; (b) of *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864), *Phineas Finn* (1869), *The Eustace Diamonds* (1873), *Phineas Redux* (1876), *The Prime Minister* (1876), *The Duke's Children* (1880). Group (a) has produced some favourite characters in Mrs. Proudie, Archdeacon Grantly, the Signora, etc.; to the making of whom satire has gone with sympathy. The most unattractive of them, Mr. Slope (*Barchester Towers*) is permitted a point of view and a happy ending; Dickens would have subjected him publicly to disgrace and indignity. Group (b) presents the Duke of Omnium and some ably drawn women, Lizzie, Lady Eustace (*The Eustace Diamonds*) not least so.

Trollope has been called a Philistine, perhaps because he was not "arty", was interested in hunting,[2] and put human life before vegetable picturesqueness and sunsets. But the meanest flower that blows gave neither Thackeray nor Surtees thoughts that did lie too

[1] See his *Autobiography*.
[2] cf. *Autobiography* and, in fiction, *The Eustace Diamonds*.

deep for tears. Something at least was common to the three of them; a return, varying in distance, from Nature to humanity. Trollope had a good sense of the picturesque which he could use when he liked (Ullathorne in *Barchester Towers*); but man was his proper study, as it had been for Richardson and Fielding. Humour and pathos, both sometimes a little ponderous, afford the main seasoning: there are almost frisky moments in *The Three Clerks*, and there may be a moderately sentimental sigh for Mr. Harding (*The Warden*); but the staple fare is a detached and bluff envisagement of known human contacts and the difficulties so arising: the detachment continues when (as into *The Three Clerks*) autobiography enters. *Dr. Wortle's School* (1881) is a fair example of the fable of contacts and difficulties; of the dangers to pocket and prestige of a single step off the beaten track. The psychology is simple, unassuming, and effective; the craftsmanship sound. His social satire is strongest in *The Way we Live Now* (1875) where the glittering façade of that decade is found to conceal sordid back premises of meanness, swindling, and scheming. Melmotte the shady financier is Merdle's junior, but he is recognized in his lifetime as not "pukka", and yet asked to dinner: while Merdle takes in everyone except the butler. Trollope makes sure that society shall be true to its culpable self by connivance at fraud.

In the course of his fecund life he varied his modes further with the Irish (early and late), the Australian, the historic, and the prophetic (*The Fixed Period*, 1882)—the genre of Lytton and Wells. He came of a literary family. His mother, Frances Trollope (1780–1863) had sustained the domestic finances with *The Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1831) and many novels (e.g. *The Widow Barnaby*, 1838, *Jessie Phillips*, 1844). His brother Thomas Adolphus wrote, in a manner "forcible, picturesque and racy"[1] several works on Italy and with Italian colouring (e.g. *A Decade of Italian Women*, 1859, *Giulio Malatesta*, a novel, 1863).

Trollope and "George Eliot" (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–80) advanced towards naturalistic realism; the latter doing so under the guidance of Comtist principles. Her powerful intellect was moulded just after adolescence by the unorthodoxy of the Brays and Hennells—the Coventry intelligentsia—through whom indirectly, she came to know, and translate, the rationalistic Strauss's *Leben Jesu*. She abandoned formal dogma but remained religious in sentiment throughout her life. Her assistant editorship of *The Westminster*

[1] *London Reader*, 1865.

Review brought her literary friends in London; Herbert Spencer, and G. H. Lewes with whom she lived with conscientious impropriety on the highest plane. She discovered Comtism, of which Lewes, in rivalry with Miss Martineau, was an exponent. Its effect may be seen in the study of phenomena, of cause and effect, in her fiction. *Scenes of Clerical Life* appeared in numbers from 1857. Blackwood criticized her for describing her characters instead of letting them develop themselves—a practice to be found in Trollope, and admissible in moderation. She overcame this excess in later work, but never, completely, the intermittent attempts at "alto estilo"; compression eluded, verbal heaviness accompanied, her to the end. In use of the melodramatic or sensational situation (*Janet's Repentance*) she rivals Mrs. Gaskell; but she governs heart with head, while giving heart plenty of "room to soar". *Adam Bede* (1859) made a distinct hit; Mrs. Poyser was quoted in the House of Commons. Charles Reade, Lytton and Mrs. Gaskell praised it; a Mr. Liggins was believed to be the author. The plot is a variant of the conventional one of seduction by an upper-class Lothario including a fight ("coom on wi' thy fistes") of the kind recorded, by Dickens, of a melodrama.[1]

Sympathy with human weakness and strength, there and thereafter, characterized George Eliot as a fair critic of life; she attained already a conscientious detachment of opinion that was quite out of the reach of Charlotte Brontë; she was already acquiring a philosophic attitude. Dinah Morris (based on her aunt) stands for what she, as an observer of the effects of religion on the community, found valuable in Methodism; an idealized character fitted for a somewhat idealized midland setting. "Observed" psychology made headway in *The Mill on the Floss* (1806) with the Tulliver family, allowing for the introspective method with Maggie; the relation of character to destiny arises, considered, evidently, by one who has mused on the "development" theory: we are reminded of her friendship with Spencer, and her reading, in 1859, of Darwin's "Book on Species". Stephen Guest (in the Mill) is part of the environment—and no more—that conditions Maggie, whose return (to a convenient drowning) is not according to Cocker; but it seems to illustrate her theory of a moral law able to transcend natural. To Lytton's disapproval of the Guest incident she replied

[1] *Dullborough Town* and *Two Views of A Cheap Theatre: The Uncommercial Traveller*.

that the ethics of art must be adapted to a widening psychology;[1] and elsewhere stated her intention of forming no character for exclusive praise or blame. *Silas Marner* (1861) more restful, and in parts more idealized, was followed by *Romola*, of which she declared that she began it a young and ended it an old woman: the work that she put into it exhausted her. Arduous research went to its foundation. There are tremendous moments in it (Savanarola and the Dominicans), ambitious characterizations (Tito, Romola): yet an impression of sterility, and an over-seasoning as of the British Museum, lingers after reading: though the low-brow humanity of Monna Brigida, who has twins, provides an oasis. The pursuit of realism was resumed with *Felix Holt* (1866), the story of an intellectual and vulgar politician. Leslie Stephen called him cold-blooded,[2] but he might appear, rather, to be ham-handed, in his social and political relations. One might suspect George Eliot of efforts to make him likeable; and certainly one finds her enveloping the bitterness of a study of mid-century provincial radicalism in the chocolate of the Transome-Jermyn mystery.

Middlemarch (in numbers from 1871) satisfies more fully; and may claim to be the best of her "provincial" and indeed all her novels. The complexity of the plot, well-governed, does not interfere with the steady envisagement of life. It focuses on the obstacles which the Real presents to the progress of the Ideal; stupidities, pedantries, grossnesses, which inhibit free development of what is finer, like Dorothea, but flourish triumphantly themselves (Rosamund Vincy). Bulstrode, and his deterioration, roused some excitement at the time. Her perception of the laws, or anarchy, of life was at its deepest here; she admits at last a state of things alien to the highest aspirations, as Shakespeare had, as Hardy was to do. The change from this to *Daniel Deronda* (in parts from 1874), from reality to fantasy, is disturbing. The two outstanding features of the story, the Grandcourt-Gwendolen trouble and the semitic theme, tend to pull away from each other; the Jewish world is a dream world isolated by a dimension from that of Grandcourt's languid sadism. George Eliot was paying a debt of long standing to the Jews, of whom earlier she had said hard things; now she tried to promote awareness of our cultural debt to them. But neither this venture nor the "characterisms" of *Theophrastus Such*, with accentuation of what was mannered in her style, rank high.

[1] Cross, *Life*.
[2] *George Eliot*, E.M.L.S.

She stands not only for "scientific method" in fiction, but for that intellectual integrity that was the best gift of the best Victorian thinkers to our time. Harriet Martineau, in some respects a rival, fell behind her in art. Her novel *Deerbrook* (1839) recalls the tradition of Jane Austen; *The Hour and the Man*, founded on the life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, is her most spirited piece of narrative; but her "juvenile" *Feats on the Fjord* exhibits simple virtues.

With Trollope's Barsetshire and George Eliot's Warwickshire we come to an emphasis on locality, favoured by novelists onward into the present century. Bret Harte,[1] regarded as the parent of localized fiction in America, exploited there the West of gold-mining, saleratus, and firearms. Born in 1839, he discovered as a youth the short story value of the great wide open spaces where men are Colonel Starbottle. Like Dickens,[2] he used the sentimental (*The Luck of Roaring Camp*, 1868) the humorous, and the theatrical, but he is able to invest humble and common things with romantic glamour to an extent that sets a good distance between *The Christmas Carol* and *How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar*. Dickens gave his readers unlimited Dickens; Bret Harte, more anonymously, gave them studied effects. He gave them the short story, with its condensation and rapidly developed climax; a form, imposed by the growth of magazines, which he handled with much greater skill than that of the full-length novel, once attempted (*Gabriel Conroy*). His feeling for technique, clearly seen in the tales, offers another aspect in the burlesques on novels; though here his satire on mannerisms, while it exceeds Thackeray's in uproariousness, comes short of it in sublety (cf. the skit on *The Three Musketeers* called *The Ninety-nine Guardsmen* in *Condensed Novels*). As a humorist he was an influence on Mark Twain; and more recently, Leacock's *Nonsense Novels* have repeated the genre of his parodies. He is not to-day placed on top of the short story column, but was an outstanding pioneer; his mode is still that of the vigorous American romantic movement—he still looks back to Poe; and it was not Bret Harte, but his contemporary Howells, who turned to realism.

A few more Victorian minor novelists require notice, if for nothing more than their documentary value. Country life, viewed from not quite the same angle as Surtees, is pictured in such novels by

[1] 1839–1902.
[2] For his admiration of Dickens, v. his poem "Dickens in Camp".

George John Whyte-Melville (1821–78) as *Digby Grand* (1853) or *Holmby House* (1860) with hunting duly emphasized; in *Ravenshoe* (1862) by Henry Kingsley (1803–76), Charles' brother, who also dearly loves the West, and will overwork the epithet "noble". *The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn* (1859) like some of Charles Reade's novels, reminds us that the spotlight was then being switched on to Australia. Henry Kingsley suffers even more than Charles from constructive defects, but describes with charm; there are Birket Foster touches in *Ravenshoe*. Frank Smedley (1818–64) purveyed more hunting and hedgerows in *Harry Coverdale's Courtship* (1854); fashionable life in the country, town, and abroad in *Lewis Arundel* (begun 1848) and ragging and high jinks by youths in *Frank Fairlegh* (begun 1846). The Cambridge episode of this last, and the practical joking, has some relationship to *The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green* (1853–7), recounting in its first part the rather cumbrous *fumisteries* of Oxford undergraduates, by "Cuthbert Bede" (Edward Bradley, 1827–89), where there is an application of the Tom and Jerry method to University life.

The tale of horror and mystery had been raised to a high level of excellence by Edgar Allan Poe, whose poetic imagination triumphed, in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Cask of Amontillado*, and other tales, over a certain garishness of style, and mechanical (or mathematical) ingenuity already noted in his poetry. Joseph Sheridan le Fanu (1814–73), inferior to Poe on the poetic side, had unusual gifts for making our flesh creep with ghosts (*In a Glass Darkly*, 1872) and criminals (*Uncle Silas*, 1864). It may be claimed that he sometimes excels Poe in attack on the nerves; the tactical skill of his deployment in *Squire Toby's Will*—the deserted house, the twilight glamour, the blasphemous voices in the dark—is masterful. The concrete and detective section of mystery was the province of William Wilkie Collins (1824–89), two at least of whose many novels, *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868) have proved their longevity. His devices are sensational and can be crude; a feature of the plot of *Poor Miss Finch* (1872) is a man, dyed blue to cure his fits, in love with a blind girl who regains her sight. *No Name* (1862), admired by Swinburne, contains one of his memorable humour characters, the ingenious Captain Wragge; Count Fosco of *The Woman in White*, with his canaries and mice, is one of the notable villains of English fiction. His advance beyond the standard of previous mystery-and-villainy tales in Britain, exemplified in *The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, the*

Ventriloquist (1840) by Henry Cockton (1807–53), is remarkable. Nevertheless, this rather clumsy story is touched already by the social conscience (troubled about private lunatic asylums) as Collins, Reade, and many later authors were touched.

A younger novelist, James Payn (1830–98) has over sixty novels to his credit, many of them forgotten, but not *By Proxy* (1878) with its excitement and Chinese setting. *Lost Sir Massingberd* (1864) has merits of construction and portraiture. *At Her Mercy* (1874) is a story of murder and blackmail, lightened with humour which, together with his spirited style in general, acknowledges the power of Dickens. His lapse into blank verse for picturesque descriptive purposes, is also Dickensian.

CHAPTER VI

NATURE

THE return to Nature stimulated in its first phase the kind of poetry that was mocked, with special reference to Wordsworth, in Peacock's *Four Ages*; its second extended to prose the flight from town to villages, heaths, or forests; Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855) exploited the charm of the remote and rural in *Our Village* (from 1824); and presently George Borrow (1803–81) was to write of gipsy-lore and the open air, with *The Zincali* (1841), *The Bible in Spain* (1843), *Lavengro* (1851), *The Romany Rye* (1857) and *Wild Wales* (1862). The zest of his books, the honesty of his conceit, are splendid; once more we may wonder at the power and confidence of the Victorian ego. Borrow's cocksureness was re-inforced by his physical strength; he was not to be daunted by the truculence of gipsies, the murmurings of unfriendly Welshmen, or the problems of philology:[1] these he confronted with the same naïve self-assurance; as he did the perils of Bible-hawking in Spain—"*viva Inglaterra! viva el Evangelio!*"—where his reckless protestantism brought him into conflict with the Corregidor. As for Nature, he sought her most readily in natural man, the Chiknos and Petulengros; and preferred the "wholesome smell of the stable" to the "sickly odours exhaled" by novelists of high society (*Romany Rye*). But it would be wrong to say that the picturesque aspects of the countryside escaped him; the scenic description in *The Bible in Spain* and *Wild Wales* is richly worked, and one sketch in the latter executed in the consciousness of art history, with allusion to Dutch and English landscapists.[2] He received a shock, appropriate to the nature-æsthete, at the intrusion into beautiful scenery of a colliery belching smoke; which "places" him in regard to industrialism. His narrative formula was an epic elevation of fact to fiction, as practised by travellers and fishermen; the gigantic Tawno, and even larger Isopel Berners, are not to be found by ordinary hedgerows. So Borrow is greatly responsible for the poetical gipsy-cult which has since become something of a

[1] v. *Wild Wales, Romano Lavo-lil* (1874).
[2] Chap. LXIV.

popular affectation; with him it was no affectation, but an aggression.

The gipsy had symbolic importance for Arnold; it remained for Theodore Watts-Dunton mystagogically to expose (in *Aylwin*) depths untried by Borrow.

The call of the wild was also paid to Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) in Concord. It came after he left Harvard in 1837, with a knowledge of Greek, becoming a writer, lecturer, and a friend of Emerson's; his boyhood in the New England countryside had prepared his mind for it. Affected to some extent by the Concord Transcendentalists, and writing for *The Dial*, he kept, nevertheless, a certain aloofness noticeable already in the early entries (e.g. 1840) of his *Journal*; which he translated into the physical terms of his seclusion at Walden pond in 1845. However transcendentally he might interpret Nature, particularly when inspired (like Emerson) by the Vedas and other Asiatic stimulants, his approach to her had this in common with Borrow's—that it was concrete; his interest was botanic and factual as well as lyrical. Stevenson called him a prig;[1] he was probably an extreme protestant of the sort that practises civil disobedience and vegetarianism from principle rather than conceit. The essay on *Civil Disobedience* is principled without being priggish; it is a reminder of what we are forgetting to-day: that a free and enlightened state must respect a power higher than its own—that of the individual. After building himself a hut at Walden, Thoreau completed *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* where he recorded that the very names of commodities encountered were to him poetic (as to Whitman)—a clue to the union of fact with ornament, characterizing his descriptive style; the speculative manner, in which the everlasting Something is discussed, inspires less confidence. *Walden* (pub. 1854) has made him celebrated, as such a naturalist's *vade mecum* should. There we may learn to make "all nature our congratulation"; and behold man schooled by necessity to a pitch of craftsmanship at which he hammers a nail securely with the reflection that he is adding stability to the universe; a kind of high thinking proper to those who studied "stupendous and cosmogonal" eastern philosophies after a day of manual labour and communion with the woodchuck. His books on travel (e.g. *The Maine Woods*) are precise and practical, being designed for use, but "literary", with classical allusions and enthusiastic uprushes. A broadening faculty for observation did not expel the effects of his

[1] Henry David Thoreau: *Familiar Studies of Men and Books.*

academic background; Homer, Chaucer, Rabelais, the Bhagavad Gita and etymology are not forgotten at Bangor or Cape Cod. The essay on Walking brings to hikers the evangel, "all good things are wild and free"; his rendering of sour apples (*Wild Apples*) is more potent in reaction than the greenest products of Cézanne. He is at his best when conveying facts—the process of afforestation, the spring thaw; though if he wishes to argue he can do so forcefully; the man who wrote *Civil Disobedience*, could, one might say, argue the hind leg off a donkey.

The "Greenwood" cult is old in literature; and it is vain to dismiss its more literal interpreters as cranks. James Thomson found nature, but came to London and grew extremely fat. Thoreau found her and pursued her: the former was antecedent, the latter subsequent to the Romantic and Rousseauesque revival. Charles Kingsley's way was, as a respectable parson and professor, to justify the ways of God through nature to man. A pebble was a thought of God's;[1] as were evolution and the Universe. The poetry of Nature does not rest, for him, on symbolism of the eternal but on evidence of the eternal as revealed by science; *Madam How and Lady Why*, *The Prose Idylls*, *Glaucus*, and his other writings on natural history, have divine ordinance for their foundation; the volcano and the holothurian support Revelations, and purvey glosses for the Psalms—"marvellous are thy works, etc." Thoreau loved wildness for its own sake; Kingsley, if he noticed wildness, scrutinized it for signs of god-given law.

The Observations on Natural History of the Rev. Leonard Jenyns (1846), a follower of Gilbert White, less overshadowed by theology, remind the student that observation of Nature raises our thoughts "from this lower world to Him who made it", without labouring the point; but there it stands as a danger-signal to those who, in 1846, might be lured by Nature from orthodoxy. Mr. Jenyns is then able to deal, sedately and unlyrically, with the liver-fluke; and is unmoved by the sexual excitement of the toad. The absence of literary embroidery (apart from a few lines of *Hamlet*) is likely to soothe anyone who has read *Walden* first. "Is not nature", he might ask, "best presented, after all, in a factual unemotional manner, allowing her to speak for herself? Is not her true mirror more likely to be a Fellow of the Linnean Society than a Concord Transcendentalist or a professional propagandist?" There are probably several answers to these questions. The garden and field

[1] *On the Study of Natural History*, lecture, 1846.

naturalists played their part in establishing the outdoor faith among us. Adding exactness to it, they made their mark; it is to them that we look for the difference between Tennyson's and Wordsworth's botany.

Edward Jesse (1780–1868), a disciple of Walton as well as Gilbert White, edited *The Compleat Angler*, and wrote *Gleanings in Natural History* (completed 1835) and *Favourite Haunts and Rural Studies* (1847), with a feeling for country scenery; A. E. Knox's *Ornithological Rambles in Sussex* (1849) treated Sussex, in a smaller way, as Richard Jefferies more fully treated North Wilts; he was a sportsman who noticed the beauty of the land over which he shot, and the first, possibly, of many who have made "nature copy" out of Sussex. Francis Buckland (1823–80) was another naturalist and sportsman, but not at all particular as to his choice of ground: his *Curiosities of Natural History* (1858), a book in which the unnatural figures more than the natural, takes him to Jamrach's and the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, in pursuit of parakeets, marble ladies, Chinese giants, or performing fleas. He is "amusing", and knows it. Buckland became Inspector of Salmon Fisheries, and was a lover of animals and the country, and an editor of White's *Selborne*. His shooting and fishing anecdotes had their oddities; but H. Cholmondeley-Pennell's fishing books (*The Angler-Naturalist*, 1863, *The Book of the Pike*, 1865) give forth a more Waltonian air; like Walton, he had poetical elements, and published verse.[1] He edited the *Fisherman's Magazine*, and wrote a book on fishing, still useful and pleasing, for the Badminton Library of Sport (1885). Buckland's *Logbook of a Fisherman and Zoologist* had appeared in 1875.

The Rev. Francis Kilvert (1840–79) was keeping at this time the *Diary*, which has become available to us through the scholarly labours of Mr. William Plomer. The human interest is peculiarly rich and warm; the country scenes in which the persons live and move, are set with a fine artistry. One of the happiest combinations of both delights one in the account of a father romping with his children among hazel-clad rocks (April, 1870). He observed two districts, the Clyro section of the Wye valley, and the Chippenham region—with subsidiary excursions. Compared, as an impresario of the Wye country, with Wordsworth (whom he discussed with Venables, 28.9.1870), he seems to face nature more boldly,[2] with

[1] e.g. *Crescent? and other Lyrics*, 1864.

[2] It could not be said of him as of Wordsworth, "He touched the hem of Nature's shift," etc. (Shelley, *Peter Bell The Third*).

wit and humour, and without the early Wordsworthian pantheism; as we might expect, he thanks God for "having made the earth so beautiful"; and elsewhere for permitting him to meet beautiful people. He was an unusually civilized and intelligent curate, natural, without the self-consciousness of Thoreau about the "duty" of wildness; and unwittingly shocked the beach company at Seaton by bathing naked (24th July, 1873). As he remarked, he was "unaccustomed to such customs". He did not allow himself to become cut off by country matters from central culture: he knew his Tennyson and Browning, was conscious of Newman, and glanced sardonically at the more skittish gambols of Anglo-catholicism.

Wiltshire produced another and better known ruralist in Richard Jefferies (1848–87); whose *Field and Hedgerow* and *The Story of my Heart*, are still perhaps minor favourites. Wiltshire impressed itself indelibly on his many books, but he himself lived for some time in the suburbs of London and at Brighton. His earliest literary efforts appeared in the *North Wilts Herald*, 1866, and a year before his death he was writing on *The Wiltshire Labourer* for Longman's Magazine. In the 'seventies he attempted fiction (e.g. *The Scarlet Shawl*, 1874) with no notable success. He was at the same time writing rural essays, some of which were gathered into the book form of *The Gamekeeper at Home* (1878); it was honest, though poor to some tastes. It has the ease and strength of talk by somebody who knows what he is talking about—which was not so evident in the novels. He knew about sporting guns, woods, wild and farm animals, and farm-brewed ale; the building of dew-ponds, farm and dairy implements, cottagers' habits, rooks' habits, the plants of country gardens and the timber of copses (*Wild Life in a Southern County*, 1879); with a technical background denied to Kilvert. The practical spirit of these books continues to the end, still active in the *Field and Hedgerow* essays collected by his widow in 1889; there is nothing less dreamy or romantic than the *Steam on Country Roads*. His poetic, and even religious, side emerges from other books; from *Wood Magic*, 1881 where a child is seen, in tune with nature; and there are whisperings of neo-pagan mysticism; Kenneth Grahame's *Dream Days* and *The Wind in the Willows* are a logical sequel. Jefferies' attempt to discover what was "far more deeply interfused" amounts, in *The Story of my Heart* (1883) to a struggle. That "something" immanent in the universe must, he writes, "be dragged forth by might of thought." One must go, to possess it, higher than a god, deeper than prayer. . Too

much strife is conveyed in such expressions; the strife, not the secret, is conveyed. He confessed, at the end of it, the imperfection of his message, which utters itself more clearly, when not driven, in the essays and stories about tom tits, stoats, or Roman encampments on the downs. Of his later novels *Amaryllis at the Fair* (1886) is especially worthy of attention as a study of people with little plot; a strong reaction against the tyranny of plot as encouraged by Wilkie Collins. Amaryllis, a child of sixteen, illustrates the rebellion (afterwards preached by D. H. Lawrence) of Nature against the denaturised civilization centred round money, formerly disliked by Blake. Alere Flamma is an urban, as Amaryllis is a rustic, rebel against Philistinism: he is one of those tiresome Bohemians with an artistic temperament who often act as spanners in the social works. We may conclude that he is nearer to Nature than old Granfather Iden, a warm man, who eats roast pork. His nature was not seen through the rose-tinted goggles of the eighteenth century deists; her redness in tooth and claw, her malevolence peep out at times; these are symbolized by the weasel and the elm in *Wood Magic*. This is accepted, and groves preferred to churches, whose steeples offend (*Field and Hedgerow*). Oast houses, however, do no offence, but "have some use in the world". He called for "life, more life" in this world, when he was soon to leave it.[1]

Jefferies was no elegant stylist; but strong convictions carried him through flats and moments of cheapness. If we take the extreme Beerbohm view, we may decide that the service of Nature is no excuse for failure to cultivate one's expression. But the schoolmasterly touch which has, birch-like, affected us in more than one Victorian author—in Thackeray, Carlyle, Ruskin, to name three, is gone; we may, in reading Jefferies, be warned of the approach of a milder climate in the world of words. To conclude, he wrote a preface (1886) to White's *Selborne*, a book of power in this region of literature; and had been previously attracted by Lyell and Charles Darwin.

William Henry Hudson (1841–1922) also felt the stimulus of Gilbert White and Darwin; and of Jefferies' *Story of my Heart*. He was born in South America; his parents were American citizens; and he came to England at the age of twenty-eight. His closest English friends were Morley Roberts, who wrote his life,[2] and

[1] *The Story of My Heart.*
[2] 1924.

Gissing. Roberts calls him an eagle, a great elemental, which is true; but he was an elemental capable of entering the Café Royal and of tasting the joys as well as the miseries of London life; he was sociable and loved argument. *The Purple Land* (1885) tells more of the men than of the beasts of South America, but leaves behind a lively notion of the appetite of the vinchucha, a flying bug, and a conviction that Hudson is a romantic. Birds, a passion with him, were to become more prominent in *Birds in London* or *The Land's End*; and snakes, another passion, in *Nature in Downland*. Both categories are observed as well as a third, girls, in *The Purple Land*; all these had a significance for him which was to appear fully in *Green Mansions*. *Nature in Downland* (1900) and *Birds and Man* (recast 1915) next year were followed in 1902 by more South American stories, *El Ombu*, 1902, reprinted in *Tales of the Pampa*, 1916. He returned to English country observation with *Hampshire Days*, 1903; the romance of *Green Mansions*,[1] with its dreamlike Venezuelan setting, was re-issued in 1904. *Land's End* (1908) contained a violent attack on the fowling methods of the people of St. Ives. *A Shepherd's Life* (1910) trespassed pleasantly on the domain of Jefferies and Hardy in search of man. For birds he visited the rich haunts of Wells-next-the-Sea, where he met the wild goose, and wrote much of *Adventures among Birds* (1913). *Far Away and Long Ago*, published in 1918, gives some account of his development from boyhood; he wrote the last chapter of *A Hind in Richmond Park* on his deathbed. Hudson preserved a human interest, by allusion or citation, in his accounts of wild life; man and his literature are brought into the fields, with homage to Gerard, Linnaeus, and Gilbert White, whose Selborne is piously visited.[2] There are clear traces of Herbert Spencer's philosophical influence, and of appreciation of the nineteenth century poets, though neither Wordsworth nor Tennyson were found to be good ornithologists (*Birds and Man*). His Cornish saunterings (as Thoreau might have said) brought him not only the pleasure of gannets and wrens, but that of discovering Baker Peter Smith, who had felt at Land's End "the glorifying impress of multiplicious beauty". On the other hand Hudson detested—and his feelings were strong—the most human type of gardening that masses calceolarias and geraniums; here he was more Wordsworthian than Tennysonian. He preferred woods, heaths, and pampas. The

[1] Hudson's first book, originally published in 1885.
[2] *Hampshire Days, Birds and Man.*

mysticism of the wild fermented in him, and *Green Mansions* was written. Its motto might be *ubi aves ibi angeli*; Rima, the forest girl, has bird characteristics, but is also the friend of snakes. She is destroyed by brutal savages, as birds, to Hudson's indignation, were destroyed in Cornwall and elsewhere. Nature-worship inspires this book, but Hudson was not a protesting neo-pagan; he objected in *Hampshire Days*, to the "Stock Exchange God" of the wealthy, but approved of the God of little old churches, blending naturally with the landscape. He evolved a "natural" style in his prose, devoid of mannerisms and giving, with art, a spontaneous effect. And so Hudson brings the gospel of wild things well into the twentieth century, at a fully vigorous and influential stage.

Attempts at a revolt against the Nature-fashion were made, not without effect, in the 'nineties; Wilde wrote that "all bad art comes from returning to life and Nature", in *Intentions*.[1] But the Naturalists not only survived, but expanded, in the years up to 1914. Kenneth Grahame (1859–1932), who contributed to the *Yellow Book*, where Max Beerbohm deplored the deviation from art to nature, promoted both the cult of the child—which reaches from Little Nell to Christopher Robin, and was allied to nature by Wordsworth in his *Ode*[2]—and that of a pretty neo-paganism in *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), better known as "Toad of Toad Hall". The vision of Pan as *tutela* of field creatures is more persuasive to this creed than Jefferies' agonizings in *The Story of my Heart*.

By D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) the objective was named "the untellable flood of creation" (*Mornings in Mexico*) but was at root pretty much the same thing. We come now to dark sources symbolized in the rites of animists; of powers that move, not in the brain, but the bloodstream; and of the nearness of primitive man to, and distance of mechanically civilized men from, these subterranean but vital secrets, familiar to all readers of Lawrence, and reaching somewhat wearisomely their maximum intensity in *The Plumed Serpent*. This last belongs to "fiction" and *Mornings in Mexico* to "travel"; but the underlying theme in both, and in other novels of his, is linked with the present section. The salience of ritual in both books has an added importance for what lies behind it—the anthropological approach.

Anthropology became known to the public when Sir E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) published his *Primitive Culture* in 1871. The

[1] *The Decay of Lying*.
[2] *The Golden Age* (1895). *Dream Days* (1898).

strangeness and poetical potentialities of this lore were made even clearer by the issue, from 1890, of the volumes of *The Golden Bough* by Sir James G. Frazer (1854–1941), the effect of which has been far-reaching on our literature, whether in the revaluation of Arthurian Romance by Jessie L. Weston, Vida Scudder, and others, or in poetry (cf. T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*). *The Golden Bough* is a landmark of trend and achievement, as is *The Origin of Species*. Efforts at art and culture, the growth of myth, magic and song after "the manner of primitive man",[1] acquired a new significance. Its guidance of scholarship at a high level is well seen in Sir Edmund Chambers' *The Mediæval Stage* (1903) with its copious Frazer footnotes; and of the more popular taste, in the revival of folk dancing, peasant arts and crafts, and the collection, by Cecil Sharp and others, of folk songs. This enthusiastic phase reached its climax before the first world war; yielding to another when Freud (*Totem and Taboo*) subjected the findings of anthropology to psychoanalytic interpretation—which became the vogue during inter-war years; a good working model is Bronislaw Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927), where variations of the family complex are picturesquely investigated. This change of direction seemed very portentous at the time; seen now in perspective, with Spencer's synthetic Philosophy looming behind it, it at least seems no longer revolutionary.

[1] See *Double Ballade of Primitive Man*, by Andrew Lang.

CHAPTER VII

TRAVEL

MUCH valuable spade-work for the construction of a temple of Nature was done by the Victorian travellers; Darwin, in the "Beagle", Huxley on the "Rattlesnake". A third naturalist and traveller was Alfred Russell Wallace (1823–1913) whose *Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro* (1853) was followed, in 1869, by *The Malay Archipelago*. The Amazon, and the ferocity of the jaguar, were finally debunked by the much-enduring explorer, Henry Savage-Landor, in 1913 (*Across Unknown South America*). The West Indies were visited by Charles Kingsley in 1869, and his dream of forty years realized. His delight and descriptive fervour expressed itself in *At Last* (1870); he returned from "the lovely Western paradise" with a kinkajou and a parrot.

The Middle East was being "opened" in the 'forties by Eliot Warburton (1810–52) author of *The Crescent and the Cross*, 1844, whom Lytton called "a seductive enchanter", and whose brother George wrote two books on Canada; and by Alexander William Kinglake (1809–91) the friend and formerly the fellow-pupil, under "Barry Cornwall", of Warburton. Kinglake's *Eothen* (1844) proves him to be the more seductive enchanter of the two; his style, never pompous, often colloquial ("I suppose it's all right in the end") is wholly efficient in the task of presenting scenes, things, atmospheres, emotions. We receive willingly the horror of the plague, and the plague-incubating doctor, of Cairo, the perils and drama of a Jordan crossing, the squeals of the romping girls of Bethlehem. Sir Richard Burton is massive and laborious with his recordings of fact, but has not Kinglake's sense of values or composition. Conversely, Burton avoids a kind of over-emotionalized writing which sometimes afflicts Kinglake; the passage (in *Eothen*) about the ambrosial breath of the goddess now seems vapid, but is no doubt a good period piece of Victorian rhetoric, enchanting that age with the romance of distant countries. But Kinglake in writing freely and lyrically, showed the way, which has not been forgotten, to transform travel notes into literature; a process which evidently

prompted Thackeray to his little stab at "Timbuctoothen" in *Our Street*. *Eothen* was a "travel" book, whereas many of those now to be scrutinized were "exploration" books with variously technical aspects.

Sir Richard Burton (1821–90) penetrated further into unknown lands, to Mecca and Harar. He was a soldier and scholar with a genius for adventure. His linguistic gift enabled him to enter Arabia as a Pathan, and Somaliland as an Arab merchant, so that he could see things from the inside, as Kinglake could not. His *Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1855–6) was made under "native" conditions demanding faultless usage not only of language and daily habit, but of the complex ritual required of pilgrims at the holy places, which he describes with characteristic attention to detail; he succeeded, with no more damage than a poisoned foot and some discomfort at the Lapidation of the Devil, a ceremony of which he gives an especially lively account. There are passages of liveliness, of facetiousness, of painstaking record, of literary elegance, in the *Pilgrimage* and other works; what is lacking is unity, the blending of varied elements into a whole, such as his successor Doughty achieved. Burton's expedition to Harar (*First Footsteps in East Africa*, 1856) had a disastrous sequel; an attack by natives from which Burton, after a valiant defence, escaped with a javelin-head fixed in his mouth, and Speke, another explorer and geographer of note, with numerous wounds. The story of the Somali visit is less interesting than the *Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome* (1864), which not only abounds in anthropological data, but in narrations of great gusto; his own dances with, and the parson's hymn-singing for, African royalty, make a stirring passage. It is for his matter rather than his manner—for the details of Arabian and African life before the age of oil-wells and black communists, that his books remain valuable. His translation of the *Arabian Nights* is a monument of scholarship, stunning to those of squeamish moral susceptibilities. The gallantry is rendered with spirit: cohesion of style satisfactorily maintained, and the footnotes entertain as much as Gibbon's.

John Hanning Speke (1827–64), who was with Burton on more than one journey, eventually quarrelled with him over the sources of the Nile, which Speke established after his third expedition to Africa in 1859 with Grant, who made most of the pictures for the *Journal of the Discovery of the Sources of the Nile*; Burton made his own. Speke was an artist too, and pleased black kings with his

sketches. The tiresomeness of these monarchs required constant diplomacy and firmness; Speke seems to have come out of it well, with a present of two wives whom he passed on to his natives. He writes straightforwardly, with some bluff colloquialisms, like a soldier and a good fellow. His route was northward from Zanzibar; meanwhile Sir Samuel White Baker (1821–93) determined to push south to the Nile sources, and started on a river voyage thither in 1861, accompanied by his wife. Travelling by water and land, he discovered the Albert Nyanza, as he named it, when first viewed at dawn from a hill, with deep emotion (*The Albert N'Yanza*, 1866). He tells a tale of many hardships—sunstroke, fever, shortage of food, and the misery of protracted rain; with an appreciation of dramatic encounters, now with a hippopotamus, now with Allsopp's Pale Ale.

African exploration brings up the more familiar names of Sir David Livingstone (1813–98) and Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1841–1904). Livingstone was a missionary and a naturalist, as appears from his *Missionary Travels in South Africa* (1857) and *Expedition to the Zambesi* (1865). He wrote simply without straining after effect, and, we shall agree after reading of the Victoria Falls, ample descriptive powers; and there were occasions for sedate humour. His religious views were expressed without bigotry. He neither grudged the poor African his beer, nor despised his moral code: but he differed, as a convinced Christian missionary, from Burton's belief that Mohammedans alone made proselytes in Africa.[1] Stanley wrote several African books, of which *How I found Livingstone* (1872) and *In Darkest Africa* may be mentioned; the latter was written (1890) in fifty days at the rate of over twenty pages a day; the result is to be regretted, but Stanley was, in any case, the least literary of the group of explorers: yet, however expressed, his narratives abound in good, assimilable fact. Mary Kingsley (1862–1900) composed her *Travels in West Africa* (1897) with sprightliness, at moments excessive; but her book is not easily forgotten; the affair of the ham, with its horror and disappointment, lingers in the memory. She died of enteric in South Africa during the war.

Burton was eminent as an African and Arabian explorer; his successor in Arabia was Charles Montagu Doughty (1843–1926) whose *Travels in Arabia Deserta* gave a new but not popular treatment of the wandering theme—an archaistic and poetic prose

[1] *Zambesi, Chap.* XXIX.

form, to be admired if not loved. "My hap", he tells us "was to travel . . . in time of a great strife"; and this, with the gritty harshness of the desert, is certainly enhanced by the style; but is always a distracting element. Unprotected by disguise, Doughty exposed himself to all the threats and insults that can beset a "Nasrany" in a fanatical land. Danger broods, an unholy spirit, on the face of his Arabia. But his modesty keeps him at the back of this tempestuous stage: T. E. Lawrence writes of him[1] that he refused to be the hero of his own story; but that the memory of him lingers as something of a legend in the country.

Lawrence himself (Thomas Edward, 1888–1935) first visited the near East (Syria) as a student, gathering material for a thesis on the influence of the Crusades on mediæval military architecture. He returned later, with a Magdalen senior demyship, this time to the site of Carchemish (Euphrates), moving about, from Mesopotamia to Egypt, and getting to know people and country, with intermittent visits to England. In 1913 he took part in a military, disguised as an archæological, survey of Sinai, the literary fruits of which were his and Woolley's *Wilderness of Zin* (1915). Already an expert on the terrain at the outbreak of war, he proved himself indispensable to the authorities in charge of Middle-East strategy; and it was not long before he began to play an important part, through the Arab revolt, in the final collapse of Turkey. The history of his enterprise is given in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) and an abridged version, *The Revolt in the Desert* (1927). He then enlisted, under the name of Shaw, in the Air Force, and afterwards in the Tank Corps;[2] and was killed in 1935 in a motor-cycle accident. *The Wilderness of Zin* is informative, sometimes argumentative, and not bland in its manner; other geographers are sent roundly about their business with a petulance that certainly seems youthful. The descriptions have a clean-cut quality about them, enhanced by verbal economy, which confirms faith in the author's powers of observation; here, surely, is the product of cool heads and clear eyes. Lawrence loosens out considerably in *The Seven Pillars*, but the basic austerity continues, in word and thought, as is proper to one who regards "each advance as base for further adventure, deeper privation . . ." But it may be irreverent to a figure so canonized, to suggest that occasionally "purple" turns of phrase were written with an eye to effect—and indeed, why not? *The*

[1] Introduction to *Travels*, 1921.
[2] See *T. E. Lawrence*, by Liddell Hart.

Seven Pillars is a durable tale of warriors' travels, of a guerrilla campaign recounted in a manner sufficiently grand to attract the journalese epithet "epic", more generally applied to cricket matches. It may be added that Lawrence had military genius by which he might have passed to high honours had he so chosen. Why he did not is impertinent here. He will be remembered amongst other things, for the power of his prose, as of his character, which he was not too perverse, in a latter age of growing perversity, to employ on behalf of British prestige. In the inter-war years he was regarded by some young people as a "modern" portent, because of certain unconventionalities in him; but one may claim to see him as one of the last (perhaps) of those intrepid men who, like Baker and Stanley, had suffered hardship after hardship for an increase of our "hope and glory", which are now being so recklessly scattered and repudiated, amid global derision. A different desert was traversed, soon after the first world war by the authoress of *The Secret of the Sahara*, and other works, Rosita Forbes, whose penetration into the forbidden land of the Senussi caused excitement. Accompanied by Hassanein Bey, she played, with verve, the part of a Moslem believer.

Lawrence, in his foreword to Doughty's *Travels*, refers to Gertrude Bell's desert experience; she was authoress of *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) and of *Persian Pictures* (1894), which appeared a year after Edward G. Browne's *Year Amongst the Persians*. Her journeying began after her uncle, in 1891, became Minister in Teheran. She writes with a fine sensitiveness to the beautiful and the ugly, reacting intelligently, as a good Oxford "Honours" mind should, to the unexpected stinks and glimpses of loveliness which Asia springs on the Western visitor. The Syria portrayed in *The Desert and the Sown* entrances with its flowers, and alarms with its drains.[1]

Nineteenth century China was revealed in the *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan*, 1859 by Laurence Oliphant (1829–88). His vigilant eye noted the hideousness of Cantonese women, and the beauty of those of Soo-Chow; he was amused at the social etiquette, and conscious of being a barbarian. He wrote with equal keenness and humour of Japan, its saké and incorruptible officials. Dr. W. A. P. Martin (1827–1916), in *A Cycle of Cathay* (1896) admired Lord Elgin's "high culture", but not his diplomacy. Dr. Martin who spent many years in China,

[1] See also her *Letters*, 2 vols, 1927.

became first President of the Tungwen College; his book is not wholly one of travel, but more of "residence" though travel has its part. Coming there in 1850, three years before his compatriot Bayard Taylor (*A Visit to India, China and Japan*, 1855) toured the Orient, he landed at Canton among a hostile mob shouting for the foreign devil's head. He observed, through the ensuing years, incidents not likely to abate this early xenophobia. His own not very sympathetic American presbyterianism estranged him from some important values—of Buddhism for instance, and of Buddhist monks, for whom he had not a kind word. He is more significant as a pioneer of that American missionary-educational activity which had so marked an effect in China and Japan: he introduced many Chinese to Aristotle. *The Appearances, being Notes of Travel* of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1862–1932) is the much more sympathetic result of his Kahn fellowship tour in 1913. He visited India, Sumatra, Japan, but "China retained his heart". Forster tells us[1] how he once declared to a class of students, that he had been a Chinaman in a previous existence. He travelled to that country not to observe geologic or botanic features, but humanity, with the keenest perception of what is "exquisite in the Real", and no enthusiasm for water-closets. He deplored the invasion of insanitary beauty by sewers, railways, and corrugated iron. A later Kahn Fellow, L. H. Dudley Buxton, reported (as required) in *The Eastern Road* (1924) his experiences in Japan, China and the Dutch Indies.

William Somerset Maugham (1874–) appreciated, albeit with less philosophic penetration than Dickinson, the Chinese sense of the beautiful in *On a Chinese Screen.* His *The Gentleman in the Parlour* (1930) on a journey from Rangoon to Haiphong, is probably better known. To Melville's *Omoo* and *Typee* (see previous section) one more South Sea book of merit may be added, *South Sea Idylls* (1873) of Charles Warren Stoddard; it is he rather than Melville, who provides such stuff as popular dreams are made of.

Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) was a wanderer who settled down as a professor and national in Japan, marrying a Japanese lady. His books, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), *Kokoro; Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life, In Ghostly Japan* (1899), are in no sense those of a globe trotter. His quest was for the spirit of old Japan, which in his day was already becoming rarer, but which he

[1] E. M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson.*

still discovered in Buddhist temples and remote fishing villages; he detested the modernism brought in with the Meiji era.

Wanderings by sea and land are important in the fiction of H.M. Tomlinson (b. 1872), whose best prose appears in his travel books, *The Sea and the Jungle* (1912), *Old Junk* (1918), *London River* (1921), or *Tidemarks* (1924). Like Conrad (*The Mirror of the Sea*, 1906) he has a strong marine sensibility.

A series of expeditions to Central Asia and Western China undertaken, between 1900 and 1916, by Sir Aurel Stein (*On Ancient Central-Asian Tracks*, 1933) brought to light many buried secrets including some ravishing examples of ancient Buddhist art. This is an account, without frills, of professional travel and research in the direction of Marco Polo's route to China; and richly stored with matter fascinating to the antiquary and geographer. The North West Frontier is presented with similar generosity in *Alexander's Track to the Indies* (1929).

Among the unscientific travellers in Asia was Rudyard Kipling, whose *Letters of Marque* (1891) were reprinted in *From Sea to Sea* (1900). Here he is the very observant journalist, vigilant for the characteristic—for example, the chronic nose-running of Japanese children, about which Yone Noguchi wrote a poem. Comparable, and later, books of the higher tourism were Aldous Huxley's *Jesting Pilate* (1930) where the commodities of aphrodisiacs in India and tigers' whiskers in Shanghai are duly noted; and Osbert Sitwell's pleasant *Escape with Me* of 1939, with good "poetic" reactions to China. Peter Fleming (b. 1907), after *Brazilian Adventure* (1933) roamed in Asia and displayed in *One's Company* (1934) and *News from Tartary* (1936) gifts for popularizing travel and writing of it in the manner of a lively novelist. The excitement caused by his novelty as a traveller and writer aroused comments from Beachcomber, when (*Gallimaufry*, 1936) he narrated the journey of Big White Carstairs in Bhoo.

Travel of a specialized kind forms the subject of Sir Francis Younghusband's *Epic of Mount Everest* (1926) a condensed form of the matter used for three other such works from 1921–4. Sufficient details of the attempts on Mount Everest are given to render the great difficulties understandable to laymen; the natural history, and the reference to Tibetan Buddhism, and hermits at 17,000 feet, are arresting. Writers on India are copious and selection, as throughout this chapter, difficult; but as literature, one fairly modern book of the "visit" type deserves attention—the *Hindoo Holiday* (1937)

of J. R. Ackerley. Lowes Dickinson pursued the general soul of China; Joe Randolph Ackerley, the individual souls of certain Indians, and caught them with sympathetic fingers. Psychological or "inner" understanding (prominent again in E. M. Forster's novel, *Passage to India*) is now of the highest importance, because, no doubt, of the change in the visitor's or traveller's attitude to the native. We have clearly come to a marked phase of man-to-man or "horizontal" communion between East and West; the twain meet more nearly on the *Hindoo Holiday* than in Forster's novel.[1] This may or may not be symptomatic of the end of British superiority; in any case Ackerley communicated with charm. One more author's holiday abroad was taken in this period by Edmund Blunden when he sailed to Buenos Ayres and back on a freighter; the main interest of the *Bonadventure* is not sight-seeing, but ship-life, and the characters of merchant seamen, closely studied, and allusively rendered. Ackerley's frankness is neither found nor, one gathers, demanded by the subject as chosen.

Polar exploration has attracted a good deal of notice since the beginning of the century, through the enterprise of men like Nansen, Peary, Bruce, Shackleton, and Scott. Of its considerable literature Commander R. E. Peary's (1856–1920), *Nearest the Pole*, 1907, and *North Pole*, 1910, recall American adventure and past controversy; and the books of Antarctic endeavour by Sir Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922) (*South*, 1919, *Heart of the Antarctic*, 1931) brought home the dangers of that inhospitable quarter to a large public.[2] Captain R. F. Scott's[3] now famous *Journal* appeared in 1913.

An inter-war visit to Iceland by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice was the occasion for the prose and verse of *Letters from Iceland* (1937). Dried fish tasting like toe-nails (how did he know)? was, with other things, eaten: waterfalls and whale-factories were visited, and harmoniums, not infrequent, played. We learn that the Wordsworthian is not the right approach to nature, and that Icelanders are always sick in their 'buses. The literary consciousness of the *Letters* is not like Burton's (Burton's *Ultima Thule*, an earlier Iceland book (1875) is cited); the latter is ornamental, the former functional and critical; Auden is both, when he "places" himself outside the range of ability, possessed by D. H. Lawrence

[1] See also, for the attitude, William Plomer's *Sado*.
[2] *South* ran into five editions in ten years.
[3] (1868–1912).

(presumably) and Aldous Huxley, to make "essays on life" out of travel experiences. We shall note, by the way, that the word "arse" used by T. E. Lawrence with "over tip" (*Seven Pillars*) is now firmly re-established in our written language—a useful pointer to literary progress in the 'thirties. The insertion of bibliographies here is to be praised and followed.

Huxley's *Jesting Pilate* may be imagined to be a specimen of that branch of travel-writing that is descended and expanded from accounts of the Grand Tour[1] (or sentimental journey) of the eighteenth century, as modified by the middle-class and intelligentsia tourism of the nineteenth. Although Thackeray laughed at this latter phenomenon in *Our Street* he was guilty himself, contributing to *Punch*, *The Papers of our Fat Contributor*, containing voyages to Portugal and the Near East (1844–5). This is a burlesque version of the more serious *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Cairo* (1845). From its pages we learn that he had little to say for either Jews or Frenchmen; and still less for the "superior" English globe-trotter, who might be seen anywhere in the world, on Vesuvius or in a Hottentot Kraal "with the same insolent calmness of demeanour". But he found some, at least, of the Turks less repellent; the old Mussulman whom he stood a quart of raisin wine was one of them. He ended with appropriately pious sentiments. The *Paris Sketch Book* (1840) and the *Irish Sketch Book* (1843), with the episodes of continental travel in novels (e.g. *Pendennis*) and travel stories like *The Kickleburys on the Rhine* illustrate various aspects of the trip abroad before the age of Dean and Dawson, the middle-class vulgarization of the Tour in the mid-century is best seen in *The Kickleburys*: the *Irish Sketch Book* belongs rather to Thackeray's special department of Hibernian satire.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910) or "Mark Twain" travelled as Thackeray had done, in readiness for satiric fun (*The Innocents Abroad*, 1871, *A Tramp Abroad*, 1880, *More Tramps Abroad*, 1897). The exuberance of his burlesque sometimes conquered his veracity, which is all to the good; it is the jester in him that survives, caricaturing a relic-hunter ("Chunk busted from the pulpit of Demosthenes") or a coyote, rather than the gloomy commentator on Papist "atrocities". He seemed less resigned than Thackeray to Mediterranean inefficiency, dirt and vermin; to Dickens too, hygiene dictated censure—particularly in *American*

[1] For which see *Grand Tour* (1835) edited by R. S. Lambert.

Notes. The modern attitude to dirt is one of tolerance, almost of approval (v. Lowes Dickinson, *Appearances*). *The Innocents* has worn well: *More Tramps Abroad*, containing some illegitimately second-hand matter, clearly suffers from it.

Dickens was another keen continental traveller, as we know from his novels (*Dombey*, *Little Dorrit*), from *Pictures from Italy*, and several short pieces like "In the French-Flemish Country" (*Uncommercial Traveller*). In this and other parts of the *Traveller* we may detect some tendency towards the sauntering mood, the abandonment of beaten tracks such as, supported by Thoreau, inspired Stevenson to French ramblings. *The American Notes* on the other hand, following the uncomplimentary example of Mrs. Trollope's "Domestic Manners", deal with a more organized and expensive kind of travel, and are one of the duller specimens of the class. Robert Louis Stevenson's[1] *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1878–9), are pretty and not strenuous reading, taking us yet a little further from the uncommercial traveller towards the super-tramp. The conscious postulation of "the heaven above and the road below me" ensures that (in the Cevennes book) there shall be sleeping in the open for its own sake, to the surprise of unromantic Frenchmen. The Stevensonian and romantic combination of roaming and nature-thrills suffered further evolution under Hilaire Belloc (b. 1870) in *The Path to Rome* (1902), where Eastern France and wine are forcefully described in a sturdy kind of poet's prose, with incidental lyrics. *The Old Road* (1904) and *The Four Men* (1912) further prepared for the hiking age. Three of the Four Men who tramp Sussex (avoiding Mr. Kipling's home) are Allegorical Persons in a new guise; and the style of Rabelais reinforces the jollier parts.

Other old theatres of travel have been re-opened in this century: the Mediterranean by Norman Douglas (*Fountains in the Sand*, 1912, *In Old Calabria*, 1915, etc.) or Evelyn Waugh (*Labels*, 1930 —a "smart" work—*Waugh in Abyssinia*, 1936): the West Indies by Aldous Huxley in *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (1934) and Alec Waugh in *The Coloured Countries* (1930); while Walter Starkie (b. 1894) revived memories of Borrow, with *Spanish Raggle Taggle* (1934).

W. H. Davies' (1871–1940) *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1908) appears at first sight to be an Odyssey inspired by purely utilitarian projects, but, taken together with his poetry, to expose him as the servant of Nature after his manner no less than Thoreau

[1] 1850–94.

after his. Inclination for the open road was an ultimate cause of the direction of his steps to America. The America he saw was lower in social rank than Dickens' entourage (*The Notes*) but higher in courtesy. His tramps argue, says Bernard Shaw in his foreword, with the decorum of Socrates; allowing for stylization, it is evident that Davies found beauty in hobos, and in the English griddler; beauty, combined with strangeness. He found too, in an unusual form, that freedom for private enterprise without which art (amongst most other things) deteriorates. And so, in the *Autobiography* an extreme instance of romantic individualism occurs at the threshold of a regimented phase of civilization. The public for travel-books is said to be increasing at the expense of fiction.

CHAPTER VIII

DRAMA TO 1940

QUEEN VICTORIA'S accession was not accompanied by signs of a dramatic quickening. The Romantic Revival had failed or refused to make of the theatre a great instrument of utterance; the Elizabethan department of that revival was as dramatically active as any, but not active enough. Some elders who commenced in this tradition were still writing plays in the 'thirties and 'forties: James Sheridan Knowles (1784–1862) whose best play is *Virginius* (1820) was turning from tragedy with Shakespearian undertones, to comedy, about 1835; *The Love Chase* was produced at the Haymarket in 1837, and *Old Maids*, 1841, at Covent Garden. Knowles is brisk and superficial; Thomas Noon Talfourd, 1795–1854 (Lamb's biographer), was of greater intellectual weight, but no genius; though his first two tragedies, *Ion* (1836), and *The Athenian Captive* (1838) have the historic interest of a protrusion of the Grecian manner before Arnold's *Merope*. He might have, but did not, come nearer to life-like portraiture in *Glencoe* (1840): nor did Miss Mitford succeed on the stage, as she did with *Our Village*, in concreteness, from *Julian* (1823) to *Sadak and Kalascade* (1835). Much of this dream was infected too much by a stagey, "two dimensional" artificiality to become monumental in the Horatian sense. That Thackeray was aware of the infection is borne out by his description of a performance of "The Stranger" (*Pendennis*) with its rouged stage book,[1] and by the sham village scene in *Crinoline*.[2] *Nicholas Nickleby* demonstrates the awareness of Dickens to absurd stage conventions of the time. William Charles Macready, the actor, was then a stout buttress to a rather flimsy temple of Thespian authorship. Talfourd and Browning were both indebted to him; he adapted Taylor's *Philip Van Artevelde* for the stage (1847). Browning's *Strafford*, written at Macready's request, appeared in 1837: and was followed by other dramas, *Pippa Passes*, dedicated to Talfourd, 1841, *King Victor and King Charles*, a tragedy, 1842, *The*

[1] In itself, a pre-Victorian play, acted from 1798.
[2] Burlesque novel by Je-mes Pl-sh, Esq.

Return of the Druses, *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, tragedies, 1843, *Colombe's Birthday*, a play, dedicated to Barry Cornwall, 1844, *Luria*, a tragedy, dedicated to Landor, and *A Soul's Tragedy*, 1846. Some of these were acted; *Strafford* at Covent Garden, with Macready and Helen Faucit. He composed *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon* for Macready (with whom he quarrelled over it), and it was acted at Drury Lane. *Colombe's Birthday*, starring Helen Faucit, was produced at the Haymarket in 1853. But Browning made no great hit; he gave the world some characteristic and robust and enigmatic poetry by these ventures; but it was something to read, not to act: poetic drama seemed to be incompatible with the theatre.

Lytton's dramatic attempts meanwhile, were evidently compatible. *The Lady of Lyons* (1838)[1] succeeded, and continued to be acted from time to time through the century. Compared with the older tradition of romantic and often melodramatic treatment, and the older artificiality, it seemed new and natural; he made further progress in this direction with *Money* (1840).[2] Of *The Sea-Captain* (1839) we have news from Thackeray, whose Jeames Yellowplush attacks it for sham poetry and poor craftsmanship: and it is true that Lytton was not yet out of the wood of "imitation" art: but at least he sighted open country beyond. Leigh Hunt's *Legend of Florence* (1840) showed a gift for characterization and probable dialogue that was then the exception rather than the rule. The dramatic pieces of Darley and Beddoes have been already examined as poetry. Darley aspired to success with stage drama, but, mistrusting the age's theatrical taste, persisted from *Sylvia* to the chronicles *Thomas à Becket* and *Ethelstan* in widening the gulf between library and green-room; and Beddoes, and "Hengist" Horne did the same. Drama was, in fact, "budding off" a silent relative, a form of value to many poets; the form, we recollect, of *Paracelsus*, of *Festus*, of De Vere's *Mary Tudor*, of *Merope*, and *Atalanta in Calydon*.

On what then did the early Victorian theatre subsist? One item in its regimen was dramatized fiction, by Dickens, Lytton, Ainsworth, and later Reade; another was translation and adaptation of foreign, notably French, plays, as practised by Vincent Crummles.[3] Scribe was one of the favourite sources[4] in the decades of 'thirties

[1] See Macready's Diary. Oct. and Nov., 1840.
[2] See Macready's Diary. Oct. and Nov., 1840.
[3] See *Nicholas Nickleby*.
[4] See Allardyce Nicoll, *XIX Century Drama*, 1800-1850. Vol. I. Chap. II.

and 'forties. Melodrama and pantomime continued to be popular; Thomas Dibdin of *Mother Goose* fame died in 1841, and the clown Grimaldi in 1837: Tom Ellar survived him as a favourite harlequin. There was *Harlequin and George Barnwell* in 1836, *Harlequin and Peeping Tom of Coventry*, 1837,[1] Planché's *Harlequin out of Place*, 1847, and the like;[2] Thackeray hits off the prevailing pantomime fashion in *The Roundabout Papers*,[3] as Dickens does the taste for melodrama in *The Uncommercial Traveller*. James Robinson Planché (1796–1880) gave the public what it wanted in the shape of fairy extravaganzas, burlettas (e.g. *Beauty and the Beast*, 1841, *Blue Beard*, 1839) written in facetious colloquial verse, with jokes and puns, and heroic couplets of the kind still heard in modern pantomimes; and of farces, operas and melodramas (of the last *Chevy Chase*, 1836, is a sample); all fugitive and unenduring. The names of Gilbert Abbot A'Becket (1810–56), Tom Taylor (1817–80), and Mark Lemon (1809–70) are associated with the age as playwrights and adapters producing in large volume the kind of dramatic entertainment that has little permanent value. Mark Lemon is better remembered as an editor of *Punch*, A'Becket for his *Comic History of England* (1848), Taylor, both for his long connexion with *Punch* and for his stage collaboration with Charles Reade, as in *Masks and Faces* (1852). His best plays are *Still Waters Run Deep* (comedy, 1855) and *The Ticket of Leave Man* (melodrama, 1863). The former may be regarded as pioneer work in the region of domestic and social problem drama; the latter is noticeable for its "crook" interest, which we find in the novels of Dickens and Reade.

Another *Punch* man who wrote for the stage was Douglas Jerrold (1803–57), famed for *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*. His comedies include *Time Works Wonders*, 1845, *The Catspaw*, 1850, *Retired from Business*, 1851, *St. Cupid*, 1853. The strain of his comic similes may irk the modern sense, but he is capable of more likely drollery:

> *Cassandra.* Your intentions, then, are honourable?
> *Appleface.* Not at present. (*The Catspaw*).

St. Cupid has a historic setting (1715) which is not obtrusive, but fell in with the fashion.

[1] See Macready's Diary, Dec. 26, 1837.
[2] See M. Willson Disher, *Clowns and Pantomimes*.
[3] *Round about the Christmas Tree*.

Reade was more uncompromisingly realistic than Taylor: with his theatrical ambition he might have founded a school of drama with a purpose years before the actual birth of that austerity. His dramas were closely associated with his thoughtful novels; the play *Christie Johnstone* preceded the novel, *Masks and Faces* preceded *Peg Woffington*, the book appearing a month after the play (November and December, 1852); *Gold* (Drama, 1853) was the forerunner of *It is Never too late to Mend*; the play with the latter title produced in 1858 was a pirated adaptation.[1] Having restrained this in the courts, Reade brought out his own dramatized version of the novel in 1865. Here he nearly succeeded in establishing a realistic and serious drama of ideas: the play had something of a *succès de scandale*; but he failed to follow it up. His *Put Yourself in His Place* (first called *Free Labour*, 1870) after the novel, lost him money in London and the provinces. But *The Wandering Heir* (1873) did well, and *Drink* (1879) administered another profitable shock to the public. Reade has been called a realist, but he was a sentimentalist first, and not wholly emancipated from the melodramatic tradition. He was associated not only with Tom Taylor, but with the Irishman Dion Boucicault (1822–90) as in *Foul Play*; a melodramatist (*The Colleen Bawn*, 1859, *Arrah-na-Pogue*, 1864, *The Shaghraun*, 1875), and comedy-writer (*London Assurance*, 1841, *Love in a Maze*, 1851, *Seraphine*, 1869, etc.), of note who took, like Reade, special interest in stage production, and used some startling mechanical devices. His comedy, as was already apparent in *London Assurance*, tended towards breadth, with improbabilities (the Hamilton disguise), and touches of pathos.

The higher as well as the lighter drama was, meanwhile being promoted by John Westland Marston (1819–90) in prose and verse. *The Patrician's Daughter*, Drury Lane, 1842, *Strathmore*, Haymarket, 1849, *Marie de Méranie*, Olympic, 1856, were verse tragedies; *Borough Politics*, Haymarket, 1846, and the *Favourite of Fortune*, 1866, prose comedies. The tragedies go to prove that the past was still as effective a stimulant as ever to dramatic poets and to Marston no less than Tennyson. *Strathmore* is set in the *Old Mortality* Period, with Balfour of Burley, *Marie de Méranie* in the early fifteenth century. The Elizabethan-Jacobean veneer is now wearing thin, though occasionally one encounters a mildly Shakespearian phrase. There is competence in plot, adequacy in

[1] See Malcolm Elwin, *Charles Reade*.

blank verse, discretion in language, decorum, but not power, in characterization; none of the tragedies have the impressiveness of *Philip Van Artevelde.* The wit in the comedies is weaker than the characters, who enjoy more vitality than those of the tragedies: Mrs. Lorrington (*Favourite of Fortune*) has some distinction. There are sentimental moments in the manner of the age; some trouble is taken (*Favourite of Fortune, The Wife's Portrait*, 1862) to convey contemporary idiom and the environment of railways, photographs, Madame Tussaud's. There are worse playwrights than Westland Marston; the comedies of Douglas Jerrold can be more irritating with their patches of laboured humour.

Tennyson attempted the higher drama a little later from 1875 (*Queen Mary*), His other plays were *Harold* (1877), *Becket* and *The Falcon* (1879). *The Cup* (1881), *The Promise of May* (1882), *The Foresters, Robin Hood and Maid Marion* (first pub. 1892). But the stage and its requirements defeated both Browning and Tennyson; his plays were acted at the Lyceum and elsewhere, and attracted notice—chiefly because they were Tennyson's. Read in private they are found, as poetry, not to include his best work. The character of Becket may be admired, or the outbursts of Nordic starkness in *Harold*, and certainly the unfolding of the fables, with vigour, and, in the histories, the Enceladic manner. Nor are these plays unbearably didactic; the Tennysonian message of the 1870's is considerably less oppressive than the Shavian of our century's first decade. *The Promise of May*, with Farmer Dobson (dang tha!) offers, with sentimentality, a lesson in the "blasting" of "natural passions into pains"; but the lessons of the *Idylls* are more solemn; Dora's tendency, like Pippa's,[1] to break into song, is disruptive. It is an old stage convention, and probably no worse than the modern one of breaking into propaganda. Meanwhile Henry James Byron (1835–84) having acquired a reputation for puns and jokes, in the now ageing Hood tradition, attempted more serious but not very strong comedy (e.g. *Cyril's Success*, 1868, *Married in Haste*, 1875): but *Our Boys*, 1875, has lasted longest. It can be claimed that he became aware of social or family problems, if no more.

It was Thomas William Robertson (1829–71) who made it his task to scrutinize more thoughtfully the age and its society. The move towards individual portraiture and away from the remnants of the humour tradition surviving, for example, in Jerrold's Goldthumb, Petgoose, Coolcard, or Miss Tucker, got under way.

[1] And Mr. Wegg's.

Realism was in sight, while sentimentality was not abandoned. Wit began to pass from beneath the tyranny of puns a few steps towards the Wildean epigram. He wrote numerous plays from 1845 onwards; of which *Society* (1865) and *Caste* (1867) adequately illustrate his trend. *Society* (like *Little Dorrit*) satirizes the worship of money and the vulgarity of the "new rich" Chodds; there is some good up-to-date colloquial dialogue as in Smedley's novels, in fact one begins to feel that now drama is catching up with fiction. Lord Ptarmigant ("I believe there is an election going on somewhere") is, like Chesterton's Duke,[1] an ass and a gentleman. The moral is seen when the gentleman (Daryl) wins and the cad (Chodd) loses: there is nothing ominously sociological about it. The theme of *Caste* is class difference hinging on a "mixed" marriage of the kind figuring in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–5). Clement Scott found an echo of Thackeray in this play, but the richness of the sobstuff and one or two other items (e.g. the preparation of Esther for George's return[2]) are quite Dickensian. Mr. Eccles, the boozy old father, is another Mr. Dolls from *Our Mutual Friend*. There is further advance towards realism in the characters, dialogue and setting; but an absurdly stagey "curtain" at the end. Professor Allardyce Nicoll felicitously named him the Giotto of the English nineteenth century theatre.[3]

Iolanthe suggests itself to us as a sequel to the fairy fantasies of Planché, to whom Sir William Schwenk Gilbert (1836–1911) was substantially in debt. Before his musical plays with Sullivan, which began with the operetta *Thespis* (1871) he was writing extravaganzas, farces, burlesques, pantomime (*Harlequin Cock Robin*) and fairy plays. He had his serious and poetically fantastic facets which, together with a satirical awareness of the sillinesses around him, and a genius for *reductio ad absurdum* (whence arises the Gilbertian situation), which he turned to constructive uses in the Savoy operas. The gentleness of his satire disguises its firmness, and that, perhaps, largely accounts for its popularity. The pale young curate, and the æsthete who walked down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily, were well hit off, but not knocked out. The operas began with *Trial by Jury* (1875), continuing through *The Sorcerer* (1877), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), *Patience* (1881), *Iolanthe* (1882), *Princess Ida* (1884), *The*

[1] *Magic.*
[2] Reminiscent of Captain Cuttle's preparation of Florence, in *Dombey and Son.*
[3] *XIX century Drama*, 1850–1900.

Mikado (1885), *Ruddigore* (1887), *The Yeoman of the Guard* (1888), *The Gondoliers* (1889). His rhyming ingenuity (cf. "When you're lying awake, etc.") in its way rivalled Browning's. His topical acuteness and strong reaction to the spirit of the age makes him a force to be reckoned with by any student of the growing national and social consciousness of mid-Victorian drama.

Leaving comic opera, we find that French influence through adaptation continues to the end of the century through the agency of Sydney Grundy (1848–1914), who drew on Scribe, Sardou, Labiche and others. He had a leaning towards farce, (e.g. *A Little Change*, 1872, *Merry Margate*, 1889), and an aspiration towards the serious. *A Pair of Spectacles* (1890), with a French source, brought him into prominence; his opera *Haddon Hall* (1892, with Sullivan), is still remembered. He was not an outstanding pioneer. But Henry Arthur Jones, in *The Nineteenth Century*, January, 1885, cites his *Mammon* (1877) as containing the only serious attempt, so far, to portray a business man realistically. Jones (1851–1929) strove to do likewise in *Saints and Sinners* (1884) with his Mr. Hoggard, but the exigencies of the plot turned him into a rather melodramatic criminal figure. And he strove to present ideas, with the consequence that he overheard this remark about himself: "I hate that fellow, he's always educating the people".[1] Dr. A. E. Morgan[2] sees in Grundy's and Jones's work the beginnings in England of the movement initiated by Ibsen; which was towards the lecture-play. *Saints and Sinners*, with its attack on nonconformist Philistines, elicited the approval of Matthew Arnold, under whose stimulus he attempted to restore literary merit to the theatre, as he tells us in his preface to this play; for we are now approaching the Shavian mode of propagandist prefaces. He began his writing career in the melodramatic-sentimental tradition: his more "modern" development did not wholly divorce him from it; incidents and scenes in *Michael and his Lost Angel* (1896) (e.g. Audrie's death at the end) still reflect its lurid rays. *The Liars* (1897) with those positive, witty and sometimes catty women so characteristic of his art, remind us that he contributed to that revival, in the 'nineties, of the comedy of manners with which we associate Oscar Wilde. In this play and in *Rebellious Susan* (1894) he jettisons a great deal of the sentimentality, and progresses in wit.

Sir Arthur Pinero (1855–1934) began his writing career with

[1] Preface to *Rebellious Susan*.
[2] *Tendencies of Modern English Drama*.

farce (*Two Hundred a Year*, 1877), was trying the more serious comedy in *The Squire* (1881) and came to the front rank of *fin-de-siècle* playwrights with tragedy, "that entertaining play, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*"[1] (1893). Based on the antique moral theme of the Nemesis supposed to pursue light ladies when they turn respectable, its tragedy really arises not from Paula's superflux of sex, but from her lack of brains; which confounds the issue. The dialogue is often unconvincing, especially when Paula indulges in elaborate metaphors. But it is a moving play, in a "footlight" manner. He was a dramatist of society, in which Mayfair opinion weighed on backslidings; with some excursions into the political field, as in *The Amazons* (1893) or *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1895), the left-wing political woman. In *The Gay Lord Quex*, 1899, he efficiently supported the new comedy of manners with a wit that, without the pyrotechnics of Wilde, glitters coolly. Wit in caricature is exemplified by Sir William Gower and some of the theatre-folk of *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898); but it is qualified with a measure of sentimentality of which, if it be a vice, he makes a distinct virtue: he is not afraid of it, any more than he is of the facts of life.

The strengthening process seen in British drama had its analogue in America, after the fashion, in the sixties, for Dion Boucicault or Dickens adaptations. Bronson Howard (1842–1908) has been regarded as the doyen of the dramatic corps. His *Saratoga* (1870) was played on both sides of the ocean; *Baron Rudolph* (1887) has an economic colouring; he faced the matter of contemporary life, but treated it according to the conventions, which he regretfully admitted, of contemporary usage—and of moral decorum. His *Young Mrs. Winthrop* (1882) is still read. David Belasco's (1859–1931) *Mayblossom* was produced at the Madison Square Theatre, the home of the newer and quieter acting, in 1884. Trained under Dion Boucicault, he became a progressive author-manager, with "ideas" on production and situation, as in *The Return of Peter Grimm*, 1911. He continued the adaptation of French plays (e.g. *Zaza*, 1899), collaborated effectively (*Madame Butterfly*, 1900) and promoted the regional theme (*The Girl of the Golden West*, 1905). American play-writing in the 'nineties was not in step with the intensely creative movements at that time in England, the momentum of the work of Percy Mackaye (b. 1875) being chiefly effective in the next decade.

[1] Belloc, *Cautionary Tales for Children.*

In England we see the rise of the antiseptic school of drama with Bernard Shaw, and the zenith of the new comedy of manners with Oscar Wilde. Wilde has been distrusted for his perversities and paradoxes; for his living like a dandy and flirting with Socialism,[1] for his cult of the artificial and exceptional; but the verdict of the continent and posterity on his genius seems to provide some grounds for disagreement with the limitations apparently implied in Dr. A. E. Morgan's estimate.[2] Some of his wit, and sentiments, have dated; but the date-mark is no less observable in Shaw, Houghton, Galsworthy, or Barker. His stage work looks exiguous beside Shaw's; and of it, his posthumous reputation is supported by five plays; *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of no Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband*, *The Importance of being Earnest* (1895), and *Salomé*, in Wildean French (1896) which made him famous on the Continent. Wilde re-discovered the high seriousness of wit, and when he put it first (*The Importance of being Earnest*) he was sublime. When he subordinated it at all to social seriousness (*A Woman of no Importance*) his whole art suffered, as the heavy touch on both epigram and moral in that play testify. He could dive without misgiving into the sentimental (*ibidem*, or *Lady Windermere's Fan*); to emerge with a *bon mot* of the kind that showed its inflence in that decade on Pinero and Shaw, and later on Sutro, Maugham, Noel Coward, Ashley Dukes and others; but was deplored by Chesterton. He discovered the secret of exquisite finish which had eluded hitherto the Victorian age. *Salomé*, a tragedy, sumptuously decorated, is unique, and in England not sufficiently remembered. Here is the Wilde who has absorbed French literature, *A Rebours* and *Salammbô*, and Maeterlinck, whose mannerisms affect the dialogue. It cannot be dismissed as morbid; it can be claimed, if not proved, to be more successfully macabre than *Death's Jest Book*. Perhaps he was most triumphant in vindicating artificiality, hitherto a cause of failure, on the stage—as Aubrey Beardsley did at the easel. While Wilde's view of life was tinged by French thought, notably Huysmans', Bernard Shaw's[3] philosophic background was copiously Germanic, with the prominence of Ibsen, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche; and Wagner as a musical influence. A self-confessed Puritan, he has consistently created, in enormous quantities, a drama incapable of

[1] *The Soul of Man under Socialism.*
[2] *Tendencies of Modern English Drama.*
[3] b. 1856.

bringing a blush to the cheek of the young person. *St. Joan* is, rightly, a favourite set book for the Higher Certificate syllabus; sex is now seen, otherwise than in Wilde or Pinero, through the glass of a Shavian test-tube; but with them, face to face. Behind the mask of the legendary Shaw—a kind of Devil's Disciple, smashing idols, and casting vitriol in Mrs. Grundy's face—may be discerned a kindly, witty Irish gentleman of mild habit, laying to our souls the flattering unction of creative evolution, after Butler and Lamarck. The real devil's disciple, if one exists, is Thomas Hardy.

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw Bernard Shaw's rise to prominence, if not to popularity, with *Widowers' Houses* (1892), *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1898) —which would probably have been shocking[1] if written by anyone else—*Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (1899), and six other plays. In these he established his position as a social preacher, and a master of language; and time may prove what is already suspected, that his greatness lies in his admirable prose. His ideas, particularly in the moral and creative evolutionist departments, are already dated. The "sentimental hog" whom through Professor Higgins (*The New Pygmalion*, 1913) he regards with such horror, is now understood at least to the extent that he no longer engenders repulsion; the stage of self-conscious anti-sentimentality visible in *Misalliance*, *You Never Can Tell*, *How He Lied to her Husband* or *Heartbreak House*, (i.e. from 1898, *You Never Can Tell*, to 1920, *Heartbreak House*), is past: the inevitabilities of sentimentality and its associated sex, are accepted and put in their place. His two most "philosophical" plays, *Man and Superman* (1903) and *Back to Methuselah* (1921), contain notions which, like that of the predatory character of woman and the helplessness of man, or the trial-and-error methods of divine creation, are now mellow with the patina of things old in story. But the importance of Bernard Shaw's function must not be under-estimated; he brought English drama back into some of the main currents of modern thought; it no longer lagged behind fiction.

Like Samuel Butler, and more deftly than him, Shaw employs the gift of witty exegesis; much of this wit has the advantage of a logical basis, or one of logic slightly distorted, or daringly unsound. This should endure beyond the didacticism, a renaissance of which occurred under his obstetric skill. Whether he can be called a

[1] It was shocking to Anthony Comstock who, in 1905, referred to "This Irish Smut-Dealer". See *Anthony Comstock*, Brown and Leech, 1917.

leader of realism and naturalism is more questionable: Androcles and his lion[1] are pure and delightful fantasy, quite unrelated to the photographic technique of Houghton or Hankin. The Shavian world is in some ways as paradoxical as the Gilbertian. As for the alleged Shaw-Shakespeare parallel, it may be suggested that while Shakespeare re-created our world as a beef-eating wine-bibber should, Shaw created his own with vegetarian eclecticism.

There is evidence of the weakening of sentimentality in the art of the 'nineties, but not of its disappearance; which was prevented by at least one playwright—and novelist—Sir J. M. Barrie (1860–1937). A correct word to use of him appears to be "elfin"; but he became more elfin in the new century than the old. *Ibsen's Ghost* (1891) was satiric of the new trend; more characteristic work followed in *The Professor's Love Story* (1894) or *The Little Minister* (1897). *The Admirable Crichton* (1902), sentimental and more critical—even didactic—and the prettily sentimental *Quality Street*, with dear old ladies (1902), followed. In 1904 the zenith of both elfinity and the child-cult was attained with *Peter Pan*. Alice, of *Alice-sit-by-the-Fire* (1905), combines tenderness and puckishness. Maggie, that very different heroine of *What Every Woman Knows* (1908) curiously enough, does the same. But the puckishness culminates in Mr. Lob of *Dear Brutus*, 1917, a full-length essay in the fairy way of writing; a way that was to reach full maturity in *Mary Rose* (1920). His First World War plays, *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916) and *The Old Lady shows her Medals* (1917), exhibit with charming waywardness the old prescription of Tears, Cheers, and Laughter. He decorates his world with quaint fancies, and purveys the finest butter and honey, a diet grateful to many, but not all, stomachs; the north-western peoples of Europe, it seems, are partial to it. Barrie is said not to be a very profound thinker; but he has evolved a peculiar lusciousness of sentiment which strikes deep; it may be bad art, but it is sound psychology.

In contrast to his theriacum are the sterner doses of realism administered by such authors as St. John E. C. Hankin (1869–1909) and Stanley Houghton (1881–1913); than whom H. Granville-Barker (b. 1877) is a shade less severe. Hankin in *The Two Mr. Wetherbys* (1903) scrutinizes marriage and separation, and in *The Return of the Prodigal* (1905) the anti-social waster, with anti-romantic intent and some grim humour; he is more diabolical than Shaw, from whom he derives. His low view of humanity is trench-

[1] *Androcles and the Lion*, 1913.

antly expressed in *The Cassilis Engagement* (1907) a play full of unpleasant people, not excepting Mrs. Cassilis herself. Houghton re-introduces us to the nonconformist middle class, through *The Younger Generation* (1910) and *Hindle Wakes* (1912); but both have to do with that difference between crabbed age and youth which has since been exploited for political ends. His constructive sense advanced with practice, and so, one is tempted to add, did his dullness. But this is discoverable elsewhere in the Edwardian age; a reaction, no doubt, after the brilliance of the 'nineties. Elizabeth Baker gives a precious example of the repertory formula then modish, in *The Price of Thomas Scott* (1913); shabby furniture, small decaying tradesmen, chapels, and cocoa. Other plays of hers were *Chains* (1909), *Miss Robinson* (1918). Harley Granville-Barker needed more room to soar; his scholarship and poetic feeling have carried his realism beyond the common mark; he did not at first reject, but knew how to woo, an atmosphere of strangeness, most noticeable in *The Marrying of Ann Leete* (1901). As he progressed, the realism intensified but remained creative and not merely reproductive (v. *The Voysey Inheritance*, 1905) the artistry of which arouses admiration for grand but wicked old Voysey, but none for good, priggish Edward. The tragic heights of *Waste* (1907) help us to forget the lecturing—as does our sympathetic interest in Trebell, prompting a query whether Barker, radically poetic, was not also of the Devil's party without knowing it.[1] *The Madras House* (1910) reminding us, like Elizabeth Baker's Mr. Scott, that H. G. Wells wrote *Kipps*, is more noticeably flavoured with the rostrum; but the manner is rather that of the suave lecturer than of the harsh pulpiteer. The Edwardian social system, its fine flower of culture, and its fading troupes of Miss Huxtables, is intelligently questioned. Poetry appeared with renewed strength in *The Secret Life* (1923) finding its fullest utterance in the speech of that high-souled American, Mr. Kittrege. The earlier plays, by the way, had marked an advance towards naturalism in dialogue. There is distinction in his drama which transcends the didactic convention; he can describe passion like a man, and uplift like a poet.

John Galsworthy (1851–1933) preached with the milk of human kindness and droppings of warm tears, from *The Silver Box* (1906), onward, in a long series of plays. There is a melancholy detachment, not quite Heraclitan, in his examination of both sides of life's

[1] See Blake on Milton, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

vexed problems, with the comment, "O the pity of it!", which is the verdict of *Strife* (1909) with a wider, "but they *will* do it." Both in his plays and his novels he skilfully employs the striking and often melodramatic incident; the beating on the cell doors in *Justice*, the pop of the suicide "off" in *Loyalties* (1922). The law's harshness to the individual, to the exceptional case, and to private affairs, occupies much space, from *The Silver Box* to *The Show* (1925): the ethical comment on police machinery and newspaper methods implied in this last play seems to be reflected in the work of recent and enlightened detective fiction. Class differences move the plots of those excellent dramas, *The Skin Game* (1920) and *Loyalties* (1922). Criticisms of the slogan "business is business" arise, with little conviction, from *The Forest* (1924) imagining dirty work in the Empire, and *Old English* (1924), introducing Heythrop, a buccaneering old company director. Two major functions of his theatre were, to deplore with resignation the inevitable shortcomings of man, and to consolidate realistic presentation and dialogue. He is more at home among the heavier than the lighter emotions; treatment of the latter, in parts of *The Pigeon* (1912), for example, is alien from late Victorian wit, but redolent of the Edwardian reaction.

John Masefield's *Tragedy of Nan* (1908), following the rustic *Campden Wonder* (1907), endowed Gloucestershire and the Severn with new significance to playgoers of the time. But Mr. Masefield did more in building an anti-Aristotelian tragedy out of "mean persons". The time happened to be ripe for it; the growing cult of folk-art, and the turn of stage fashions from champagne suppers to high teas, assisted in the creation of a favourable environment. Poetic imagination colours the play; the Gaffer becomes positively vatic. This tragedy may be ranked among Mr. Masefield's best work, on or off the stage; but *Pompey the Great* (1910) and *Good Friday* (1917) cannot be so confidently assessed. *The Faithful* (1915) based on the tale of the Forty-seven Ronin, has been admired by intelligent Japanese. *Melloney Holtspur* (1922) is an experiment in the use of flexible time and planes of existence. All of them contribute something towards breaking the spell of representationalism which was then becoming almost a menace.

Of other notable plays of the time, *Milestones* (1912) by Arnold Bennett and E. Knoblock, repeated the "age and youth" theme; G. K. Chesterton in his *Magic* (1913) attacked materialism with a little *diablerie*. The nineteenth century tradition of verse drama

was being kept alive by Stephen Phillips (1868–1915) whose *Paolo and Francesca* appeared in 1902; and by Arthur Symons (1865–1945), author of several tragedies (*Tristan and Iseult*, *The Harvesters*, *The Death of Agrippina*, *Cleopatra in Judea*) in smoothly flowing, but not arresting verse.

After the War "Clemence Dane" (Winifred Ashcroft) came to the fore as a realist with *A Bill of Divorcement* (1921) where she displayed her gift for creating poignant situations. In the same year her poetic play *Will Shakespeare*, was produced. *Adam's Opera*, 1928, suggests that she was fully aware of the anti-realistic trend setting in by that time. Her reaction took the form of a fairy political allegory with nursery rhyme lyrics. *Wild Decembers* (1933) is a play about the Brontës; the biographical, like the war section of literature, was then salient.

Alfred Sutro (1863–1933) carried artificial comedy onward from the nineteenth century, with a sparkle only a few degrees less intense than Oscar Wilde's, and with a serious undertone. Of his numerous plays *The Walls of Jericho* (1904); *The Two Virtues* (1914) and *The Choice* (1919) are thoroughly characteristic, and perhaps the best, specimens. His dialogue is not, as Noel Coward's is, a reproduction of current idiom, but provides a suitable vehicle for his wit. The earlier plays of Noel Coward—grave, *The Young Idea* (1923), *The Rat-Trap*, *The Vortex* (pub. 1924) and gay, *Fallen Angels* (pub. 1925) seem to link the sometimes deadly seriousness of the heyday of Repertory with the more reckless air and quicker tempo of inter-war years. He proved himself to be very clever and witty but not pr[illegible] is rather that of the Edwardian s[illegible] was then that "cleverness" was given some, if b[illegible]. His war-play *Postmortem* (1931) combines the [illegible] troupes of Mi[illegible] with sober and pessimistic contemplation of [illegible] eared with r[illegible]s reasons for persistence.

Cleverness and light[illegible] and it. Kitt[illegible]re attributes of Mr. Ashley Dukes (b. 1885). [illegible] one aspect of the inter-war period. There [illegible]ntly [illegible]tic bitterness in his satiric "antique" play, *The [illegible]ld of Mischief* (1925); *One More River* (1927) is a light [illegible], in light blank verse. He is a craftsman and a stylist, described as "elegant" by *The Morning Post*. He loosened, in those years, the hold of the lecture-realist convention, without offering a substitute that compelled acceptance. The cleverness, the intellectual virtuosity of Aldous Huxley (b. 1894) is well known, and present in his comedy on spiritualism,

The World of Light (1931). With nothing arrestingly experimental about it, it entertains efficiently on a highbrow level, with Vaughan, electrons, and ectoplasm. There is no sermon about Mr. Sludge, nor is there straining after the details of actuality.

Selected detail and unforced realism gave substance to R. C. Sherriff's highly successful tragedy, *Journey's End* (1929), itself the crest of the second wave of war literature which broke then with some thunder. The sensitiveness of his exposition, his sympathy with trench-neurosis as well as with hero worship mark once again the passage of time towards an age of "nerves"; his humanitarianism however, was still linked with the elder system of thought permitting the concepts of "killing" and "suffering"; the newer, more enlightened dehumanization, thinking in terms of "purge" and "liquidation", had not yet fully come into its own. There is, in this play, as in Aldous Huxley's, evidence of thoughtfulness emancipated from the didacticism which enjoyed a brief repose till reawakened in the next decade. A play by Reginald Berkeley (b. 1890) *The White Château*, 1927, adds substance to that revival of war-literature remarked on by Noel Coward in his later *Postmortem*. It aims, not at the highly concentrated unity of *Journey's End*, but at a historic and philosophical awareness of war as a spasm of vice inevitably recurrent through time. Its weakest feature is the chronicler's verse. *The Lady with a Lamp* (1928), who is Florence Nightingale, is an essay in the genre of the biographical play popularized by Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*. Here again we note a fashion not confined to drama—the fashion for biography, which flourished in the inter-war years. Another very successful biography-drama was *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1830) by Rudolf Besier (1878–1942). Biographical fact is here a little more strained and certainly more emotionalized than in *The Lady with the Lamp*: Freudian psychology is not forgotten. One of his earliest plays, *The Virgin Goddess* (1906) was a verse tragedy in the Greek taste and the older "pastiche" diction ("methinks", "afeared"); a kind that did not die without a struggle.

Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell offered a glittering and kaleidoscopic review of the giddiness of the 'twenties; psychoanalysis, new religions, ballet-dancing parsons, and social climbers, in the farcical "tragedy", *All at Sea*, 1927; as the authors then prophesied, it is a period piece, worth collecting.

From 1917 onwards A. A. Milne (b. 1882) was writing plays, popular, but less so than the Matter of Christopher Robin, ranging

from *Wurzel Flummery* (1917) to *The Perfect Alibi*. *Mr. Pim Passes By* and *The Dover Road* were, one remembers, particularly loved. He tends to be elfin; his humour is refined.

In America Percy Mackaye was making an interesting series of experiments in non-realistic drama; Shakespearian in *A Garland to Sylvia* (written 1899), Chaucerian in *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1909), classical in *Sappho and Phaon*. He turned to drama with American colouring, but with fantasy in the treatment, as in *The Scarecrow* (1909), based on Hawthorne's "Feathertop", and *Washington, the Man who Made us* (1920), a "ballad" play. Mackaye had ideas on the combination of other arts with that of acting, and development along the lines of the masque, opera, or folk ritual (cf. *The New Citizenship, a Civil Ritual*, 1916); out of which emerged pieces in which community singing figured (*The Evergreen Tree*; *A Masque for Christmas*, 1917) and even a dramatized biblical work for church performance, *The Pilgrim and the Book*. William Vaughan Moody (1869–1910) a serious poet, with some Puritanism in his outlook, tried both verse and prose plays; of the former, there were *The Firebringer* and *The Masque of Judgment*, the latter were *The Great Divide* and *The Faith Healer*. *The Great Divide*, produced in America in 1906, with its melodramatic plot and complex moral symbolism, made a sensation, and eventually a film.

The most ambitious poetic essay in drama before the first war was *The Dynasts* (1903–8) of Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) in which epic elevation was successfully re-introduced to the stage. Here philosophy of the universe and action on our globe (in Napoleonic times), the natural and the supernatural, the general and the particular, are governed by a sound architectonic sense. It acts unexpectedly well; holding together without episodic distraction. *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* (1923) is too mannered for fame, and innocent of the Celtic glamour. For this the Edwardians would go to William Sharp ("Fiona Mcleod", 1855–1905) for *The House of Usna* (1900) and the "faery dawns" of *The Immortal Hour*, which achieved some success on the stage in 1917; there they would find romantic adventures of the soul, and the symbolic shadowiness of Dalua.

Later on some "Georgian" English poets wrote plays. John Drinkwater (1882–1937) produced quite a number in prose and verse between 1911 (*Cophetua*) and 1923 (*Robert E. Lee*), several of which are historical. *Abraham Lincoln* (1918) attracted good

audiences to Hammersmith, and was followed by *Mary Stuart* (1921–2) and *Oliver Cromwell* (1922). Neither he nor Lascelles Abercrombie (1881–1938) did anything to change the face of drama. The shadow of the nineteenth century is still cast over diction and conception; Tennyson did not write in vain for Drinkwater (cf. *Rebellion*, 1914) or Abercrombie (cf. *Phoenix*, 1923). The "folk" seasoning of the latter's *The Adder* (1913) or *The End of the World* (1914) was contemporary, though anticipated by Barnes and Tennyson: the whipping interest, brought to a climax in *The Phœnix*, may be idiosyncratic. Gordon Bottomley was an older poetic dramatist (b. 1874) of the Georgian stratum, who has remained active into the 'thirties (e.g. *Of St. Peter, A Cathedral Play*, 1933). His *King Lear's Wife* (1915) was not enthusiastically attended at the Old Vic; he writes more gracefully than Abercrombie, particularly on "atmospheric" Scottish themes (*Gruach*, 1921, and some of the *Scenes and Plays*, 1929). There is a flicker of genius in James Elroy Flecker's[1] *Hassan* (1922) where we have oriental traffickings in splendour, cruelty, and the mystery of the dead; but no pioneering, which was to be accomplished in verse-drama by such æsthetic revolutionaries as T. S. Eliot (b. 1888) and W. H. Auden (b. 1907), and in prose by Eugene O'Neill.

Dr. Eliot may stand on an anglo-catholic classical-conservative platform, but he is undoubtedly one of the more potent forces that have made for a change in art. In this newer dramaturgy may be seen one aspect of a universal movement of the arts from outwardness to inwardness;[2] from Ibsen to Strindberg, from Zola to Proust, from Manet to Picasso. Early symptoms of it may be detected in the Symbolist movement; and an extreme modification in Surrealism. The metaphysics of Bergson was among the influences; expressionism, of which premonitory signs were evident in Munich in 1914, was one of its major manifestations, suspected by psycho-analysts but probably a consequence of Benedetto Croce's expression-æsthetic. To use a metaphor, art now attempted to function in four, instead of three, dimensions. Earlier poets (e.g. the Metaphysicals) had been said to view the universe *sub specie æternitatis*: it now seemed as though the view taken was *sub specie animæ*. As an illustration, the difference between Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and Ronald Firbank's *Princess Zoubaroff*, may be noted. Both are witty comedies of manners, but

[1] 1884–1915.
[2] v. Hermann Bahr, *Expressionismus* (1916).

the latter's subjectivity and stylization require a different pigeonhole. In Dr. Eliot's poetic plays the change was even more discernible, being aided by the symbolic implications of the imagery[1] which, in *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)—an austere play—abounds most in the choruses.[2] The extension of the range, and so the greater flexibility, of diction, combines with the verse and prose-patterns in the attainment of that "significant form" which was now being sought as an end. This is more conspicuous in *Family Reunion* (1939). In "real life" Harry and Agatha and Mary would talk consistently like Gerald or Violet, in standard upper class colloquial English. But the dialogue is "expressionized", somewhat as Eugene O'Neill "expressionized" his stage setting. The fable, which carries ethical weight, hinges, as does Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, on the doctrine of expiation, now seen from a Christian viewpoint, whereby Harry, a modern Orestes, is to cleanse from the curse his modern Pelopid house. The unities are observed. Both plays are in debt to Greek tragic forms, and induce an Aristotelian *katharsis*: but it is clear that much has happened to the Grecian Gusto since *Merope*. Here is classicism with the New Look. *Murder in the Cathedral* restored poetic drama to public recognition.

The Dog beneath the Skin (1935) and *The Ascent of F.6* (1936), by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood betray no neo-neo-classical earmark beyond the choruses, but exhale a neo-neo-romantic perfume of the strange and remote. The former play is particularly rich in symbolic imagery, characterization (including a dummy), stage direction, scene, and quotation. Photographically realistic incidents are blended with improbabilities into a total design; somewhat, perhaps, as an exactly reproduced French newspaper was slipped by Fujita into one of his compositions of abstract import. Realism is no longer valuable for its own sake; but when broken up its fragments, assembled in a new pattern, convey ancillary meanings; imagination esemplastically recreates as a unity things both observed and dreamt. More outward modernities, the dance-band and microphone, are by now middle-aged; but certain expressions of thought, mostly political, conserve an illusion of puerility. (T. S. Eliot's thought-expression is always impeccably adult.) In *The Dog beneath the Skin* and the other

[1] The term is used widely, of words with symbolic significance.

[2] On this use of imagery, we have Dr. Eliot's own comment in *The Use of Poetry* and *The Use of Criticism*, "Conclusion".

play, social propaganda, with a left wing bias, may be greeted with the reflection that it is difficult to keep this kind of thing out of English art for long. The rhythms, bold and various, include some related to the "jazz" (had "swing" yet appeared?) of that day. As serious efforts, by true poets, to bring new life and shape to a kind of composition that had suffered too long from debility, they are to be prized.

Eugene O'Neill (b. 1888) published *Thirst* and other plays coloured with his sea-going experience, in 1914; it was *Beyond the Horizon* (1920) with a New England setting, that established his popularity. On this side of the horizon lay the here and now of farm routine; on the other, overseas adventure and romance, but eventually disillusionment—a motif that was to recur later, e.g., in *The Fountain*, and *Strange Interlude*. He paid open homage to Strindberg, who taught him a lesson in "super-naturalism", or the way to approach reality otherwise than by the now traditionally realistic paths of the Ibsen school. The opening scene of *The Hairy Ape* (1922), for which Mr. Wyndham Lewis or one of the Vorticists might have supplied the *décor*, provides a working model. It is a fundamentally abstract play, a fable of the blind dynamism of a machine-led civilization, traced back to its origin in the gorilla's automatic violence. As we read it, we remember the rise of the mode of thought called Behaviourism, suggested again in *Diff'rent* (1920) and *Strange Interlude* (1928). Psychoanalysis is prominent in the latter play, where Nina's "Gordon-fixation" preserves the unity of action through many years. *The Emperor Jones* (1920) peopled with subjective ghosts and shadows, presents the personified abstract, fear, together with the Fall of the Illustrious. The few characters in the play outside Jones and his imaginings are of minor importance. The continual soliloquy here leads up to the device of separating thought and speech in *Strange Interlude*. This internalization was, as a movement, not confined to drama; the novelists (e.g. Joyce in *Ulysses*) were also adopting it. *The Straw* (tuberculosis) and *Diff'rent* (sex-starvation) gave him opportunities, which he took, to prove his versatility in selective and specialized realism. He has a genius for extremes of emotion and hysteria, the inevitability of them as crises of a process can be relied on, whether in a "naturalist" or a "super-naturalist" context. He is large in spirit, splendidly unabashed in sentimental moments, bold in invention, and full-voiced in tragedy.

Susan Glaspell (1882–1948) became aware at an early stage of

psychoanalysis (*Suppressed Desires*, 1915).[1] *Bernice* (1919) is a play, not only of psychology, but of the psychic influence of Bernice, who is dead. *The Verge* (1922) features adventure with the "Breath of Life" in botanical and psychological directions; in the latter there is a quest for a new soul, born of the exploded debris of the old. She is a very serious, and in *The Verge*, a strenuously poetical, dramatist of ideas. In 1930 she was awarded the Pulitzer prize for *Alison's House*, based on the life of Emily Dickinson.

Modernity in American literature has been assisted and practised by Alfred Kreymborg (b. 1883), described as "the harlequin-philosopher".[2] An iconoclast of conventions, he evolved an art calculated to surprise, or at least to amuse. His *Plays for Poem-Mimes* appeared in 1918, *Plays for Merry Andrews*, 1920, *Puppet Plays*, 1926. His agility is remarkable, but he suffers from The Whimsies.

Zoe Akins (b. 1886) is another Pulitzer prize-winner and progressive dramatist. *Papa* (1914), showed her in revolt against stage conventions, moral and literary, which she burlesqued by *hysteron proteron*. *Greatness*, or *The Texas Nightingale* (1922–3), is a character play of some force; other well-known pieces are *Déclassée* (1919), *The Greeks had a word for it* (1929). Recently she has expressed the age by turning from stage-work to movie-work. She is happiest in comedy of grace and lightness. If Claire Boothe's (b. 1903) talents are at all comparable with hers, they are so after large allowance for satiric and hardboiled efficiency. Before the Second World War she had produced *Abide with Me* (1935), *The Women* (1937), *Kiss the Boys Good-bye* (1939).

The cult of the machine in art was promoted by Marinetti and his Futurists from 1909; its dangers had been anticipated by Samuel Butler (*Erewhon*). After the war of 1913, mechanism and anti-mechanism inspired the playwrights of several countries; Kaiser in Germany, Kapek in Czecho-Slovakia, and Eugene O'Neill's *Hairy Ape* expressed a pessimistic view of the mechanical principle. *The Adding Machine* of Elmer Rice (b. 1892) exposed, in 1923, the machinery of modern existence as a vast and depressing superstructure beneath which the feeling of the human adding-machine operates under difficulties, and at last revolts. It was regarded as an example of the expressionist play. The author, a fearless innovator, had already experimented with time in *On Trial*

[1] In collobaration with George Cram Cook, b. 1873.
[2] Poetry, 1916.

(1914), a play "written backwards". Among his later plays are *See Naples and Die* (comedy, 1929), *The House in Blind Alley* (comedy, 1932), *Subway* (1929), *Counsellor-at-Law* (1931). *Street Scene* (1929) a New York tragedy, with Irish and Jewish persons and a tenement background, gained him the Pulitzer prize.

In 1934 *Love on the Dole*, by Ronald Gow and Walter Greenwood (b. 1903) was adapted for the stage from Greenwood's novel. The historical importance of this was the placing on the stage of social propaganda from the proletarian stratum: Mr. Greenwood had been on the dole himself.

"James Bridie" (O. H. Mavor, b. 1888), came to the fore with *Tobias and the Angel* (1931), and is now prominent as a creator of character rather than of plot in its fullest sense; with numerous pieces to his credit, including *King of Nowhere* and *Susannah and the Elders*.

The year 1918 opened an era of promise. Art theories were multiplying and evolving; Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism, were in the air and certainly materialized themselves in stage-production.[1] But out of them there arose in the English-speaking countries, no great dramatic movement; nothing comparable even with the realist-didacticism of the pre-war theatre. Bold experiments by the playwrights (e.g. Elmer Rice) tended to peter out; nineteenth century traces, as in the drama of Sutro, showed unexpected energy. The very wit and cleverness (so typical of the 'twenties and 'thirties, and despite carpers at that period, qualities making for strength), derived from the Wilde decade. Perhaps here were too many 'isms, too many cross-currents; or may be merely that this wood cannot yet be seen for the trees. The greatest and the most consistently persevering figure in the turmoil seems to be that of Eugene O'Neill.

[1] v, *The New Spirit in The European Theatre*, 1914–1924, by Huntly Carter.

CHAPTER IX

POETRY FROM THE MID-VICTORIAN AGE

THE poets mentioned in Chapter Two had already enriched the art with advances in metre, rhythm, language, and in ways of using it. Theories were not wanting. The pre-Raphaelite manifesto had demonstrated the value of the conscientious and liberated artistic spirit; Arnold had opposed sanity and high seriousness to vulgarity and frivolity: Browning still declared for the soul-saving grace of the beautiful: all three of which notions are well apart. But something in common may be traced through the "greater poetry"; a perfection of surface and façade which has to do, probably, with a sense of a "reputation to keep up",[1] seen in the prepared publicity of Tennyson's grief in *In Memoriam*, or of Arnold's gloom in the *Stanzas from The Grande Chartreuse*. Rossetti caused a shock with intimate confessions in *The House of Life*; but here too there is interposition of form and word-craft between the nerves of writer and reader. The magnificent façade of rhetoric erected by Swinburne, the heir of this craft, has misled some into the belief that he is voice, and nothing beyond. It may be that these poets felt, if not always consciously, the high value of frontage; at all events, we come with Swinburne to its extreme development. Frontage was rendered imposing, and non-committal as to what lay behind, by the growth of a poetic diction of a sort likely to discourage undue intimacy; a parapet of "thou", "morn", "of yore", "befell", "wont to", "wherefore", and other basic archaisms with rare or "stunning" words ("geomaunt", "acromia"), often as an upper course. Some of these examples are taken from Browning, whose extension of the kinds of poetic speech did not involve the abandonment of this one. But side by side with the growth of frontage may be observed the beginnings of a tendency to disintegrate the façade, and admit the reader into the secrecy of back rooms; into depth, as distinct from on to surface, a difference perhaps at the back of Canon Dixon's mind when he called Tennyson "a great outsider".[2] It is not suggested that these are the only

[1] Norman Douglas, *They Went*.

[2] Letter from Hopkins, 27.2.79. Abbott, *Correspondence of G. M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon*, 1935.

possible poetic resources; still less that one is necessarily better than the other. The popular notion that "depth" is a criterion for good poetry has long been harmful.

The inward turn of poetry becomes more pronounced in the last forty years of the nineteenth century, without ever monopolizing anything like the whole of what was composed. The powers of Thomas Edward Brown (1830–97) seem to be disruptive of frontage. When he attempts it, he writes one of the world's most lamentable lines

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!

His accomplishment does not lie there, but among the unmasking poems in Manx-English such as the *Fo'c's'le Yarns*, which invite one, with vernacular ease, over the threshold into the adytum. Other poems than the Manx group possess this quality—*Roman Women*, the first half of which burns, not with a gem-like flame but as "the furnace seven times heated". The language has colloquial foundations and an audaciously decorative superstructure ("the booze Gnathic, Trimalchial"). *Dartmoor*, though a less compulsive poem, shows willingness "to rip this obsolete blazon into rags" and find a different poetic scale of values, admitting sandwiches and sherry or the pineal gland; modestly preparing the way, in fact, for the twentieth century. Brown was aware of his propensity to abandon defences, confessing himself "a born sobber". Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch[1] takes the point in his verdict that Brown "was not afraid of letting himself go". The price of abandon is transgression of poetry's "wholesome regulative laws",[2] which he could scarcely afford to pay. Sample debits and credits of his account are contrasted in *Aber Stations*; a heavy debit item is ineffectiveness through indiscipline. His irregular metres, sometimes allotting a single word to a single line ("What?"), and uneven language, full of surprises, might be indictable as eccentric by Arnoldian standards, or be praised as liberating agents by the æsthetic left wing. Either way he fails in centricity; but his ardour and enterprise place him high among the lesser poets. His influence was soon evident in W. E. Henley's verse.

Roden Noel (1834–94) showed resistance to the lures of Rossetti and Swinburne, alleging artificiality in the former and "pure gab"[3]

[1] *Memoir*, in T. E. Brown, *A Memorial Volume*, C.U.P. 1930.
[2] Matthew Arnold, *Preface to Poems*, 1853.
[3] Letter to Havelock Ellis, cit. S. M. Ellis, *Mainly Victorian*.

in the latter. An upper-class radical, he married a banker's daughter, and wrote *The Red Flag and Other Poems* (1872). In the title poem *sæva indignatio* and flat lines abound. The contemporary press called him passionate, impatient of technical restraint, natural; he had the equipment, in short, of a poet of "depth", as opposed to "surface". But in many of the poems before *A Little Child's Monument* (1881) a terrific diction-frontage is interposed; an eye becomes "an orb suffused", dinner is "a savoury repast", and maidens, not girls, are "vestured in a garb of yore". *Livingstone in Africa* 1874 drags its slow length along beneath such verbal burdens, increased now and then by Miltonic sublimities; but it has the merit of sumptuousness. Some of the poems in *A Little Child's Monument*, in far simpler language, achieve intimacy as they confess grief. *In Memoriam* is a poem of public, this of private, mourning; but *In Memoriam* excels in word-craft. Roden Noel's simpler style is uncertain. He seemed to know better what he was about in the purplest descriptive passages—*Suspiria* for instance, or the Keatsian *Azrael*, or the exotic natural history of *Livingstone in Africa*.

Noel's grief, and the melancholy of James Thomson (1834–82) emerge confessionally from depths of experience, giving the effect rather of spontaneous overflow than of remembrance in tranquillity. *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874) was Thomson's heart-to-heart communication of a secret to his suffering brethren. He was no sobber, and joined his vision of melancholy (inspired by Dürer) to an honestly intellectual pessimistic philosophy, with acknowledgements to his friend Charles Bradlaugh, and to Shelley, Heine, Leopardi and Schopenhauer. Fits of melancholy and inebriety troubled him more deeply in later life. When free from them he could ascend to the high spirits of *Sunday up the River* (1869) and the secure contentment of *The Lord of the Castle of Indolence* (1859) with its compliment to the elder James Thomson. His style, when fully developed, is based on a simple sobriety, so evident, that it seems curious that critics should have objected, as H. S. Salt notes,[1] to his economically spaced ornamental words. Poetry in the age of Tennyson and Rossetti might be expected to glitter with double epithets, archaisms, "stunning words". These as assembled by Salt, might alarm, but should not as dispensed by Thomson.

The modern setting of Thomson's *Sunday up the River* and

[1] *Life of James Thomson*, 1889.

Sunday at Hampstead permit the extension of a little realism from generally idealized conceptions. In W. E. Henley's *London Voluntaries* (1891–92), realism was to venture forth a little more boldly. He placed, unselfconsciously, beer, cigars, and trains in English poetry, on equal terms with traditionally poetic sources of beauty. Whatever mannerisms have been attributed to him, he spoke his mind bravely and ingenuously

"Owen Meredith" (Edward Robert Bulwer, Earl Lytton 1831–91) was a better administrator than poet; as the latter he showed fluency, awareness of literary movements in America (Poe) and France (De Musset) as well as England, sound intelligence about the nature of poetry, but little forcefulness in its practice. His first published book was *Clytemnestra and other Poems* (1855), his last *Marah* and *King Poppy*, which appeared after his death. *Lucile* (1860) is a narrative poem in the mode already established chiefly by Tennyson, but with prosier situations in more skipping metre. Charles Mackay (1814–89), renowned as the author of *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*! perpetrated even more pedestrian narrative verse in *A Man's Heart*, 1860. *King Poppy* is a long allegorical and narrative work in which he recommends the fairy way of thinking; beside this he published *Serbski Pesme or Love-Songs of Servia* (1861), *Chronicles and Characters* (1867), *Gleneveril* (1885), *After Paradise* (1887). Like his father, he cultivated the Ideal; and like many poets used abstract personifications rather perfunctorily. There is occasional silliness, and a flimsiness about his frontage which discouraged confidence. Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904) certainly inspired this last when he "sold" Buddhism to the public (*The Light of Asia*, 1879), in an easily assimilable form. He brought back from Poona, where he was College Principal, something fresh, substantial, and religious: he administered it in a bland and elegant form, and so placed it "on the map", where it comforted many who had never heard of Sir William Jones or Max Müller. If he did not make poetry, he made blank verse and history. Comparable treatment of Mahometanism (*Pearls of the Faith*, 1883), and Christianity (*The Light of the World*, 1891) was less successful. He handled the diction, with its archaistic basis, of the time adequately, refreshing it with oriental names, "neem and mango and full mussuks", which he even managed to slip into *The Light of the World*.

After the deaths of Mrs. Hemans and L. E. L. at the outset of our period, numbers of minor poetesses succeeded them. There is no

critical reason why female poetry should be segregated from male; but it happens that Jean Ingelow (1820–97) Adelaide Anne Procter (1825–64) and Emily Pfeiffer (1827–90) were born in the same decade. Of the three Jean Ingelow was the most accomplished; both her novels and poems earned praise in their time, the latter being esteemed for language both strong and simple, for pathos and sympathy with mankind, for observation of nature. She has been more lately charged with gushing; but if a Victorian lady must not gush, who may? This admirable weakness is only intermittent; it may be seen in *The Four Bridges*, and considered as inherent in her heart-to-heart technique; as may the worse fault of tripping glibness which one may deplore in a poem otherwise so excellent as *The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire.* The rustic description of *The Letter L*, and the design (blank verse with incidental lyrics) of *Brothers, and a Sermon*, have analogues in Tennyson. Series of her poems were published in 1863, 1867, and 1885. Miss Procter, whose contributions to *Household Words*[1] were admired by Dickens, was Barry Cornwall's daughter, and inherited his not very striking facility. She was a heart-toucher, moral, devotional, and sentimental; and had skill in feeling the popular "emotional" pulse. *The Voice of the Wind* is instinct with the cosiness of the family fireside; *The Cradle Song of the Poor* is caught up with the Victorian sociological current. *A Lost Chord*, which has acquired the status of folksong not merely through Sullivan's tune, still gladdens radio listeners, and perfectly exemplifies the strain of half-baked mysticism in our national character. Her pieces were published in *Legends and Lyrics* (1858) and *Chaplet of Verses* (1862). It would be unfair to Emily Jane Pfeiffer to associate her only with the trivial.[2] She was capable of serious though not complex thought; and two of her sonnets record the *volte-face* from Nature, the nursery-governess, to nature as a "blind cyclops", a tyrant over men, the "slaves of mad chance"—luck evidently, not cunning. There is another on Evolution, conceived more hopefully as "divine unrest". Her poems were published in 1876, and *Songs and Sonnets*, 1880.

These three ladies were evidently "going for something", but the poetry of Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–97), *Idylls and Songs* (1848–54), *Lyrical Poems* (1871) was less certain in its aim. Nor does his much used *Golden Treasury* (1861), satisfy the student

[1] Under the pseudonym of Mary Berwick.
[2] See Walker, *Literature of the Victorian Era*, p. 592.

looking for what is representative of any given period. The effect of pre-Raphaelitism is visible in several writers on its periphery; Sebastian Evans (1830–1909), Richard Watson Dixon (1833–1900), Lord de Tabley (1835–95), Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–91) and his brother-in-law, Philip Bourke Marston (1850–87), the son of Westland Marston. Sebastian Evans shared with Morris a preference for the middle ages and applied art. His *High History of the Holy Graal* may be less rarely read than his poetry in *Brother Fabian's Manuscript* (1865). He and Canon Dixon were revivers of *terza rima*. Dixon, the friend of Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones, and later Hopkins, owed something to Tennyson and Browning, but more to the earlier Morris; but in dealing with the middle ages he had over Morris the advantage of the professional historian; so that he described (using *terza rima*) medieval life with more understanding and less idealization in *Mano* (1883), his longest poem. His way, as he developed, lay beyond the confines of pre-Raphaelite sensuous beauty, towards a severer and more abstract region, as may be seen in some of the *Last Poems* (1905). In his first book, *Christ's Company and other Poems* (1861) he is still a disciple of the school; "the little headed willows" of *Love's Consolation* in that volume belong to the environs of Morris's haystack. In the condensation, and so the greater difficulty, of his late poems may be seen, as Professor Abbott suggests,[1] a possible repercussion of his intimacy with Hopkins: but it is in these that he is especially revealing.

John Byrne Leicester Warren, Lord de Tabley, became a friend of Swinburne, falling in some degree under his influence, wakening again with him the Echoes of Hellas,[2] Swinburne with *Atalanta in Calydon*, Warren in *Philoctetes* (1866) and *Orestes* (1867). Several of his shorter poems (*Phaethon*, *Circe*, *Pandora*) revivify Greek mythology, decoratively, with a setting (*The Island of Circe*) in the pre-Raphaelite manner of copious accessory detail. There are turns of speech too, reminiscent of Rossetti, like the "little weary sigh" in *Jael*: but the detail often amounts to "nature notes" entered with the confidence of a trained observer, or of a Tennyson. The habits of the otter, curlew, sea-holly, or hawk-moth, please him and his readers. His knowledge of natural history was considerable. He enjoyed, as Swinburne did, the excitement of rhetoric and the campanology of words, without reaching the stage

[1] Introduction to Correspondence of Hopkins and Dixon.
[2] "Echoes of Hellas" from *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*, 1893.

of sound-intoxication; his rhythms were quieter and he used blank verse freely in non-dramatic pieces. His façade may be judged not gaudy but opulent with ". . . salamander . . . Satanic ebon-amber", or "Tambour and clarion clanging ecstacy", with occasional pasteboard, where the epithets "daedal" and "ambrosial" are abused. *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical* appeared in 1895 and a further collection, *Orpheus in Thrace*, posthumously, in 1901.

De Tabley's poetry is well ballasted with special and general culture, but that of Arthur O'Shaughnessy rides high, sometimes titubant with motions after Swinburne—or after Thomas Moore. His *Epic of Women* (1870) in which the influence of Gautier and Baudelaire was seen, was followed by *Lays of France* (1872) and *Music and Moonlight* (1874) in which there is one not convincing essay in free verse (*Earth*): but it is a pointer. In France the official opening date for the Vers Libre season was 1885; but among the symbolists some prose-poetry was composed earlier. The war of nerves is now evident in his verse (cf. *To a Young Murderess*). Arthur Symons[1] attributes its outbreak to Baudelaire; but while Baudelaire's agency in this development is acknowledged, it is difficult to ignore the hints at a beginning of the change in T. E. Brown and others. O'Shaughnessy married a sister of the blind poet Philip Bourke Marston, writer of *Song-Tide* (1871), *All in All* (1875) and *Wind Voices*. Marston's Sonnets and certain other poems, e.g. *The Ballad of Brave Women* (*Wind Voices*) bear the impress of his master, Rossetti; *Love's Music*[2] is weighted with spondees and has the same Rossettian rhyme that Buchanan parodied in his "Hard is the life of the sailor"—"intolerable—fell": it recurs in *Inseparable* (*All in All*). At times sensuousness reaches a point of intensity still short of *The House of Life*; he was a graceful but not a daring poet.

Sir Lewis Morris (1833–1907) and Alfred Austin (1835–1913) have for so long been guyed by literary knowing ones that unbiased approach is difficult. Sir Lewis's works were remarkably popular (*Songs of Two Worlds*, 1871–1875, *The Epic of Hades*, 1877, *Songs Unsung*, 1883, *Songs of Britain*, 1887); and yet there is nothing low-brow about the mildly Hellenistic *Epic*. But it ends with a long-drawn moral exposition; like so much of his verse it is helpful. He is neither inventive nor imaginative, but he has a knack, something like, but surpassed by, Tennyson's in *In Memoriam*, of happily

[1] *Modernity in Verse.*
[2] In *Song-Tide.*

phrasing a popular sentiment. The gnomic art is not wholly contemptible, nor the nineteenth century wholly wrong in appreciating it. Morris's turn of phrase saved itself from the emasculation that reduced Austin's to a prattle in earlier poems not unlike Ambrose Philips' ("Patter, patter, little feet").[1] He succeeded Tennyson as poet-laureate—a difficult occasion which he did not improve. His poetical works include *The Golden Age, A Satire*, 1871, *The Tower of Babel, A Poetical Drama*, 1874, *Lyrical Poems*, 1889, *Songs of England*, 1898, *Victoria the Wise*, 1903.

This period saw the rise in Massachusetts of a much more formidable figure, that of Emily Dickinson (1830–86). The three posthumous series of *Poems*, 1890, 1892 and 1896, and *The Single Hound*, 1914, reveal not a rare, but a unique genius. There was *incuria* in Henley's attitude to poetic conventions; Emily Dickinson's was one of persistent contempt. Ignoring the façade and the rules for its construction in nineteenth century taste, she remoulded language, syntax and rhyme on unexpected lines to suit her unexpected thoughts. Henley was still sufficiently in the thrall of literary tradition to romanticize clouds as "the magical drifts to north"; Emily Dickinson broke with tradition and proclaimed modernity, when she wrote "the clouds are mean". She and Whitman are important turning points; and yet, what she accomplished was much the same as what the pre-Raphaelites had proposed in *The Germ*, the realization of personal truth, and its independent utterance. Along with this went the recognition, not new, but forgotten, that bald prose phrases are capable of bearing poetic emotions, if rightly handled; the right handling is the difficulty, which she surmounted. The naiveté of some of her expressions is partly due, no doubt, to her writing without deference to publisher or public; it is not so much that she was careless as that she didn't care. Her isolation at Amherst must also be reckoned with; and the fact that she read comparatively little. Both Nature and Death may well have been shocked at the treatment they received in one of her characteristically brief, compressed poems. Christina Rossetti (*One Seaside Grave*, 1884) beautified the dead with metaphor, but Emily Dickinson's penetrating matter-of-factness saw that "The quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies". It was a matter-of-factness which like George Herbert's, pierced through the fact. An undertone of fun and satire in the recounting of her spiritual experiences would not have disconcerted the

[1] "To Beatrice Stuart-Wortley".

seventeenth century, but may well have surprised the nineteenth. Her poetry flowered on the soil of Puritanism and Transcendentalism; yet it belongs to the newer movement of "nerves" no less than the incalculably distant *Fleurs du Mal.*

It is understandable that Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907), another poet of New England origin, should have been, as he was, out of sympathy with Emily Dickinson and Whitman, since he approved of the established beauties of form of the romantic academies, as they became—Longfellow and Tennyson. His works (nine volumes, 1907), include longer narrative poems (*Wyndham Towers*, 1890), but it was in the shorter that he most excelled; there displaying his gradually acquired elegance. A propensity for lavish decoration is seen in *The Cloth of Gold* (1874). He travelled in the East, and was associated with other traveller poets, James Bayard Taylor and Charles Warren Stoddard.

The poetry of the West has become known across the Atlantic chiefly through Bret Harte (*East and West Poems*, 1871, *Poetical Works*, 1872), an Easterner by birth: *The Society upon the Stanislaus* (comic) or *Dickens in Camp* (sentimental) have been widely appreciated in this country as glimpses of the wild West. But more than a glimpse of it was vouchsafed to Rossetti, Swinburne and other British notables when Joaquin Miller (1841?–1913) visited them in 1870, dressed for the part. While in London he published *Pacific Poems* at his own expense, effecting a deep but not enduring sensation. His technique is poor, but he describes with energy—a dashing, rather Byronic and stagey energy—the western migrations or scenery, the ox-carts (he was born in one), the Indians. He is best in his descriptive vein, even though the sea is to him "the awful deep". Editions of his poetical works were issued in 1882, 1902 and several times up to 1917.

A tonic and modernizing influence was exerted on English poetry by George Meredith (1828–1909) whose *Poems* (1851) were followed by many others, *Modern Love and other Poems* (1862), *A Reading of Earth* (1888), *Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History* (1898), *A Reading of Life, with other Poems* (1901), and some books unmentioned here. It was poetry of a cerebral type from which it is difficult to isolate fancy and imagination. Intellect, seen as wit in its austerer meaning, supported him through arid moments, when obscurities and troublesome knots in the sense increased. Smooth correctness was not for him any more than for

Browning; he not only clipped his articles and relatives but committed many graver acts of elliptical riot, witness *The Woods of Westermain.* Another source of confusion is his kaleidoscopic imagery, the rapid shift from one metaphor, which itself may be compressed into enigmatic shape, to another, as in *The Hymn to Colour*, Stanza XI. His restless brain, almost sadistic in its behaviour to language, couldn't leave even the simplest phrase in peace, and "she loved him" must be tortured into "him loved she" (*The Daughter of Hades*). *Modern Love*, a kind of poetry novel, or at least a psychological history of incompatibles (one of them himself), rendering the air of leisure then available for the cultivation of incompatibility, in sixteen-line sonnets, proceeds more steadily and understandably: *The Woods of Westermain*, allegorizing human life, is in total a dark conceit compact of smaller ones. Extravagances in the *French Odes* attracted Owen Seaman's[1] attention as his prose caught Max Beerbohm's;[2] his mannerisms were indeed vulnerable to parody. But his strenuous osteopathic treatment broke down adhesions in the body poetic of the day, to the benefit of succeeding writers from Henley onwards. He conveyed messages without didacticism; it has been said more than once that his "philosophy" steered a middle course between optimism and pessimism. Good sense advised acceptance by earth's children of the ways of earth, good and bad; ways of experience by which the primitive evolves into a civilized self. Meredith did not, like Constance Naden,[3] write a verse on natural selection; but evolutionary ideas underlie more than one of his poems, e.g., *The Thrush in February*, *A Reading of Life.* Wordsworth found peace in Nature where he found war; she was in his conception a slayer, but a cherisher of the "sons of strength".

Arthur Symons (*Modernity in Verse*) noted some debt to *Modern Love* in the *Hospital Sonnets* of William Ernest Henley (1849–1903). The debt might be extended, as one of boldness in phrase and imagery to other poems—*London Voluntaries*, for example. Conversely, Henley had not the subtlety nor the tiresomeness of Meredith's intellectual play; moreover, he had drunk the milk of other paradises, of T. E. Brown with his intermittent racy colloquialisms, and a good deal of modern French Literature from Hugo to Baudelaire and Verlaine. The *In Hospital* series contains

[1] *At the Sign of the Cock.*
[2] *A Christmas Garland.*
[3] 1858–1889: *Songs and Sonnets of Springtime* (1881): *The Modern Apostle* (1887).

unrhymed poems with rhythms now recalling *Hiawatha*, now Arnold's *Rugby Chapel*. There, and elsewhere, occur reminders of Walt Whitman; while the trochaics and alliteration of *The Song of the Sword* (1890) have Old English origins, further developed in *A Song of Speed*, celebrating a 75 h.p. Mercedes. The declamatory *In Memoriam* lines on Queen Victoria's death seem to have affiliations with the irregular ode, with an iambic basis. In none of these did he approach free verse near enough to cut loose from approved metrical units; nevertheless, he was advancing. His rhymed poems included ballades and other French forms revived by his contemporaries Andrew Lang (1844–1912), Austin Dobson (1840–1921), R. L. Stevenson or, occasionally, Swinburne. In neither department is subtlety displayed; the saccharine distilment of *Midsummer Nights and Days*, the blaring trombone tones of *The Song of Speed* or *Pro Rege Nostro*, might disgust amateurs of Hopkins; but beauty and nobility may be claimed for him, qualities which Henley reached through blunders, and some appalling lines. "What have I done for you" and "Out of the night", have been nationalized even if, for the moment, they are discredited. They "crystallized" an aspect of greatness, national and personal, now perhaps forgotten by those who are rationed in "British blood, and bone, and beef, and beer."[1] The freshness of his realism surmounted a florid vocabulary and the conventions of "poetic" phrase. His friend R. L. Stevenson promoted the mood of open air in his poetry (*Underwoods*, *Song of Travel*) as in his prose: and played his part in colloquialising, and so modernizing unobtrusively, the diction of poetry. It is admirably done in the song "I will make you brooches". For his *Song of Rahéro* and *Feast of Famine* he used one of those long galloping metres which dated from parts of Tennyson's *Maud* (1855) and *The Grandmother* (1859) and used also, in America, by Sidney Lanier, were increasingly affected by the late Victorians, whether Swinburne or Rudyard Kipling.

Stevenson achieved something, and Henley more, in setting poetry on the road to modernity before the intensity of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89) was felt, and his mannerisms copied, in the 1930's. Much has now been written about Hopkins and his effect, by David Daiches,[2] Father W. A. M. Peters,[3] and others; so

[1] *The Life-Guardsman* from *London Types*.
[2] *New Literary Values*, 1936.
[3] *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 1948.

that the peculiarities of his form (sprung rhythm, outriders), and treatment (inscape, instress) are now familiar. Mr. Charles Williams[1] conjectures, from the diminution of more glaring eccentricities in his later poems, that, had he lived longer, he might have sloughed off his poetic tricks. As it is, their flashiness has caught the eye of several modern poets, noted by Daiches. A possibly more salutary change was helped by his assault on the façade of Victorian diction, its archaisms, latinisms and barbarisms—even its grammar and syntax; for which he substituted a remarkable vocabulary and usage, with a basis of "current language heightened", of which, despite the careful examination of it by Peters, one might still complain that the heightening often seems to debase the currency. His strange devices may have been attempts to control his violent poetic energy, to reef a tempestuous sail; there are signs of overcoming in the latest poems, whereas in the middle period his manner is so strife-racked that readers might protest, "a plague upon its epileptic visage". The musical delight is for such as love the fortissimo of alliteration and strong internal rhyme, and germanic noises like "fallowbootfellow" or "wimpled-water-dimpled". *Binsey Poplars*, confronted with Cowper's poem on a like theme, confesses the length of Hopkins' journey from the middle way of "correctness"; *The Windhover* illustrates the possibility of being both mannered and gracious; in *The Bugler's First Communion* may be suspected a trifle of that religious mawkishness which has endeared Crashaw—and Carlo Dolce—to us. He had the makings of a great poet, his chief fault being that he did not live long enough. Tennyson did.

It will not be forgotten that Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840–1922) was also an opponent of recognized Victorian values, anticipating in some degree the left wing tendency of certain poets, from Sassoon to Spender, of our century. His *Coronation Ode* (1911) laments the imagined fall of England into the shame of Imperialism: he had accused her already of selling nations to their ruin (*The Wind and the Whirlpool*, 1883.) The Arabian *Golden Odes* are unforgettable in their unrhymed measures and urgency of tone. The tenseness and frankness of the *Sussex Pastorals* is repeated under gloomier conditions in the *In Vinculis* sonnets.[2] Under-statement is not one of his faults. He admired Tennyson openly, and used some Swinburnian rhythms. The poems of Digby Mackworth

[1] Preface to 2nd edition of *Poems*, 1930.
[2] *Poetical Works*, 2 vols. 1914.

Dolben (1848–67) published by his friend Robert Bridges in 1911, are far removed in style from Hopkins but suggest that, had he matured, he might have surpassed Christina Rossetti as a devotional poet.

Robert Bridges (1844–1930) who became Laureate in 1913, was of this generation, but in influence and repute a post-Victorian. He countered the scholarly exuberance of his friend Hopkins with scholarly austerity, by means of which he refined, not abolished, the existing frontage of poetry. Fit audience though few received his earlier sonnets (*The Growth of Love*)[1] and dramatic poems, a Prometheus, an Achilles or a Demeter; the lyrics written before and during the 'nineties—the five books of shorter poems in some of which Elizabethan inspiration is contrasted with neo-Hellenism in the dramatic pieces; and the *New Poems* collected in 1899, where improved Tennysonian botany (*The Idle Flowers*) or a couplet worthy of Crabbe (*Elegy*) indicate no copyist, but a full and eupeptic mind. Glib references to a decadent *fin-de-siècle* cannot hold in these poems. At the age of eighty-five he published *The Testament of Beauty*, which was widely recognized and discussed. Bearing the impress of Victorian evolutionary theories, from which he deduced a predominance of the unconscious, and a purpose in "Nature", it yet fully manifested his loves for Hellas, reason, and Christianity. Its loose Alexandrines might have given a working compromise between blank and free verse, but do not seem to have been repeated since; nor has the pseudo-phonetic spelling. Head triumphs over heart in this late instance of the didactic poem. By the side of that other Laureate, Tennyson, his highly accomplished work is seen to lack Tennyson's mightiness and evocativeness, if, on the other hand, his craft is finer. Yet, if Tennyson sometimes fell catastrophically, craft did not save Bridges from a few surprisingly bad lines. His reaffirmation in *The Testament* of a universal debt to Hellas came at a time when younger highbrows, repudiating it, turned towards Negro sculpture: yet if one considers the recurrence of Hellenism in our literature's past, there seems no reason to suppose that the fruit of Greek beauty is not, as Bridges writes, "everlasting".

The Hellenists of the 'eighties and 'nineties mustered a strong band, including Bridges, Swinburne, Tennyson himself, and Andrew Lang, whose translations of Homer and other Greek poets, and the poem *Helen of Troy*, are of durable stuff. It is to Lang's

[1] The 1889 edition (Daniel) however, was pirated in America.

credit that in his minor verse he celebrated golf. Into the next generation Laurence Binyon (1869–1943) carried the classic fire: from Arnold, as is quite evident in some (e.g. *The Statues*) poems of *London Visions* (1896), and from Bridges, by whose fine precision he is probably benefiting in *Autumn Moonrise* (*Odes.* 1901). His war poems (*The Four Years*, collection from separate volumes) continue in the tradition, which was now confronted by the new voices of Sassoon and Owen. They stood the test well enough for one poem at least (*For The Fallen*) to be adopted as a monument.

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) discovered in 1866 that crass casualty obstructs the sun and rain, largely through "Darwinian" glimpses of blind force automatizing unluckily, but to a lesser extent, from a distinctly Greek consciousness of the power of destiny. Chance and Time are seen in *Wessex Poems* and elsewhere tyrannising over man, whose heroism in the face of the doomsters heaping "travail and teen" around them[1] is appreciated; his protest lives, if his soul flickers out. He is a philosophical poet, with a stress on both words, to the extent that he could comment on cause and effect imaginatively (v. *The Darkling Thrush*, *op. cit.* footnote); it is not easy to discover imagination in commentary parts of Bridges' *Testament*. Hardy's idiom scarcely makes for linked sweetness, but it is masculine and independent, and while coloured with certain dialect words and a few discreet rarities or neologisms, has avoided Hopkins' danger of eccentricity, and Meredith's of acrobatic exhibitionism. His badness when it occurs is of the gnarled kind that admits "a miles-wide pant of pain." Other books of his poetry appeared in 1909 (*Time's Laughing-Stock*, wherein it is seen how time brings fading to the fair), 1914 (*Satires of Circumstance* which plays such ironic pranks that luck seems to have developed cunning), and 1917 (*Moments of Vision*): *The Dynasts* (1904–8) a truly great poem and drama, challenging any poetic play in either century, has been mentioned elsewhere.

Poets born, like these, in the 'forties and the next decade were active in the 'nineties, and formed that period's character; the "decadence" of which might be boiled down to a modicum of influence, a limited group, from the French "Decadents" blended with a rather warped interpretation, by the same group, of the counsels of Walter Pater. Henley, Meredith, Hardy, Bridges, Buchanan, Andrew Lang, ensured some continuity to poetry before and after 1890; there was no sudden lapse into decadence at or soon

[1] "To an Unborn Pauper Child", *Poems of the Past and the Present*, (1901).

after that date; there was indeed no veritable decadence, but rather a renaissance, or at least an increase in the rate of literary metabolism. Wilde, as we have seen, restored the Comedy of Wit to its full splendour; John Davidson (1857–1909) was a rebel in a rebellious age—an age, at least rebellious against old constrictions, and reaching eagerly out, as Shaw and Wells then did, after new liberties. Applied to life, the new urge towards freedom and beauty involved some imprudences and excesses; Wilde came up against the Criminal Law, Ernest Dowson (1867–1900) damaged his health unnecessarily, Davidson, finding the pains of life unbearable, killed himself. Others of the band—a loose one—lived long, and some became Catholics.

John Davidson's *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893 and 95) *Ballads* (from 1894) and *Testaments* (from 1901) reveal strength, and often an admiration of strength (cf. *The Hero* in *The Last Ballad and other Poems*, 1899) which he learned from Nietzsche. A Caledonian gloom and grimness, recognized in the contemporary press, intensified to a climax of blood and torture in *The Testament of a Vivisectionist* (1901), which might be called pathological, but not decadent. His disease was inability to organize and balance. In his fierce but giddy quest for the New Song he arrived at the *Testaments*, with their unremarkable blank verse, no improvement on the vivid earlier ballads and lyric pieces which were not, like Oscar Wilde's *Harlot's House* or *The Sphinx*, experiments in "synthetic" decoration. Wilde's unhappy experiences brought him to the bedrock in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), one of the heirlooms of British culture, but not so precious, may it be suggested, as *The Importance of being Earnest*; there is a difference between the art of Wilde conditioned by a crisis, and the art according to his radical nature.

Of the junior "decadents" Arthur Symons (1865–)[1] and Ernest Dowson (1867–1900)[2] were types, but not outstanding performers. Symons attempted something of a decadent's manifesto in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1893) and expounded the newer French poets. In his own non-dramatic verse he cultivated "mock-roses" and other artificialities conscientiously, with some charm. In certain of his poems traces of Rossetti still linger. His unnaturalistic similes (sun—tin disc), point forward to the practice of our times. Dowson, the better poet of the two, cried for madder

[1] *Poems*, 3 vols. in Collected Works.
[2] *Poems*, 1905.

music and for stronger wine, which was not good for him, in a poem that has become another British heirloom ("Non sum qualis", etc.). As a reviver of Pierrot (*The Pierrot of the Minute*), he came in with Beardsley "on the ground floor" of a lesser wave of taste that was to adorn art for some time in the next century with such fantastic figures, expanded in range to clowns, harlequins and the like; and more popularly, to dismode nigger minstrels on the beach.

The ardent spirit of experimental advance of these young writers towards a purer art found vent in periodicals like *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, *The Dome*. Contributors to the first of these, beginning April, 1894, included Davidson, Symons, Richard Le Gallienne, Hubert Crackenthorpe, Max Beerbohm and, of course, Beardsley. Ernest Dowson appeared in the third volume. Lionel Pigot Johnson (1867–1902) Pater's pupil, was another younger contributor, a poet and critic—especially the latter—of some merit: his *Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894) is still valuable for its proximity to the stable-door.

Although Sir William Watson (1858–1925) contributed to *The Yellow Book* there was something Philistinic about him which emerged in his dispute with the editor over Beardsley's drawings, the morality of which he impugned.[1] In the 'eighties he had shown his paces with his *Epigrams of Art, Life, and Nature* and *Wordsworth's Grave*, and in the next decade kept John Lane busy with new volumes—*The Eloping Angels*, *The Father of the Forest*, *The Prince's Quest* (1893–6)—this last with reminders of William Morris—and more. He wrote with *élan* and sometimes with majesty and clangor; his reputation put him in the running for the laureateship after Tennyson whom he admired, and of whom he was a satellite. He did not belong to the exquisite inner circle of the *Yellow Book*; even less to the modernists of the 1920's, whose "new" poetry he attacked violently (*A Recipe*, in *Poems, Brief and New*, 1925) towards the end of his life. He himself protracted the Tennysonian frontage into that age, when, unfortunately, it was most unfashionable; and stormed, unheard, at the strange young voices. His satire and political verse—and there was a good deal of it—was too often bad-tempered and ineffective; but some of his short lyrics had clear musical virtue.

Francis Thompson (1859–1907) had more of this virtue: his cunning still lured young people especially with Catholic and poetic inclinations at the outset of World War I. He is still referred to as a

[1] See Burdett, *The Beardsley Period*. Ch. IX.

poet of God (*The Hound of Heaven*) and cricket (*At Lord's*). On an opulence of word and rhythm that vied with Swinburne, was sometimes imposed a fervid sensuousness suggestive not only of Crashaw, with whom he is commonly bracketed, but also of Keats; with cloying results, as in some of the irregular *Odes*. His seventeenth century background, which does not apparently exclude Marvell and Cowley, often obtrudes itself—yet another distinguishable ingredient of his "flavorous ooze".[1] The languidness assumed in some of the Decadents' verses, and descended from pre-Raphaelite ancestry, yielded to his astonishing declamations, to a robustness that could fitly commemorate Cecil Rhodes. If Bridges took Greek beauty to heart, Thompson had Baroque at his.

While several associates of *The Yellow Book* gave pagan expectation but Catholic fruition, a genuine, hard-wearing paganism was supplied by Alfred Edward Housman (1859–1936), professor of Latin at London and Cambridge, whose *A Shropshire Lad* aroused notice in 1896, and has continued to do so. His influence was two-fold. The mortalism of his thought increased, no doubt, the impetus of scepticism about a hereafter present, if not prevalent, in books written during his later years. His artfully simple utterance, and rusticity of setting, aided a minor reaction against the sophisticated urbanism of a Dowson or a Symons. Edwardian and early Georgian poetry began to ramble afield. Housman's fastidiously classic muse had nothing truly in common with tastes for folk dancing and peasant pottery, barring her country matters; yet one who looks back may see that the link was made by enthusiasts. Did they forget his poems on war and soldiery, "I did not lose my heart" (*More Poems*, 1936) and those classically restrained barrack room ballads *Grenadier* and *Lancer*, and the more celebrated *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries* (*Last Poems*, 1922)?

Housman saw the soldier in the perspective of death; Kipling, of duty. The latter's *Barrack Room Ballads*, which appeared in 1892, had seriously damaged the Victorian poetic façade; here, with a vengeance, was the New Song, rather than in *The Yellow Book*, or the *Rhymers' Club*. The publication, in 1927, of the inclusive edition of Kipling's verse[2] enabled those interested to grasp rapidly the range, variety and bulk of his poetry and its writer's perennial fertility, romanticism, and daring. And it becomes

[1] *Ode to The Setting Sun.*
[2] Hodder and Stoughton.

abundantly clear that he can be classed neither as an author of "verse" (so Dr. Eliot)[1] nor a "a good bad poet" (so Mr. Orwell).[2] He is a good, and at times bad, poet. He was vulgar, with genius and in the grand manner; he used vulgarity as he used Cockney talk in *Barrack Room Ballads*, as material for art with its own potentialities, just as body-colour has its own potentialities. What shocked the highbrows into disgust, shame and discomfort was probably the intermittent occurrence of a sort of morbid spasm—a *petit mal* of the muse, as it were, sufficient to make any neurotic squirm; examples are in the last chorus to *The Song of the Banjo* and the chorus to *Loot*, both of which are nearer insanity than vulgarity. Such perhaps was the price demanded for his heavy expenditure of nervous force. When free from it he was capable of the splendour, vulgar or not, of *The Young British Soldier*, or the sour satire of *Stellenbosch*.[3] On the other hand, *The New Knighthood*, is without any of the morbid symptoms, a simple and entire failure; *The Young British Soldier*, then, is a good poem, and this one bad. *Recessional*, having stood the test of some fifty years varied criticism, retains its dignity and wholesomeness. The thought-content of his poetry is one with that of his prose, and will be discussed there; suffice it to say that in the poetry he shows himself to be politically neither a jingo nor a fascist, but a severe idealist; and that he was a pioneer among those who found romance and poetry in unorthodox places, in machines (before the Futurists) and boots and monkeys and Masonic Lodges.

Without Kipling's faults or genius Sir Henry Newbolt (1862–1938) sang of the sea and naval traditions in *Admirals All* (1897); or *Songs of the Fleet* (1910). Stanford's music suited his songs well. His muse wore her old school tie—which is no bad thing.

From the middle to the end of the century American poetry continued to show inventiveness and enterprise. Sidney Lanier (1842–1881),[4] musician, poet, metrist and lecturer, composed from a theoretic base of musical form. His theories are assailable, but his poetry sings tunes that would occasionally be facile, were it not for the weight of epithet and imagery often, but not always, striking; the marshes of Glynn are "candied and simple and nothing-withholding and free"; we may admire this flight, but not the "watery sod". His *Song of the Chattahoochee*, displays the good points of the

[1] *A Choice of Kipling's verse.*
[2] *Critical Essays.*
[3] From the Boer War series of *Barrack-Room Ballads.*
[4] *Poems*, 1884.

Lanier system. He had a disciple in Richard Hovey (1864–1900) of *Stein Song* fame, compared with Henley by Blankenship. His verse, even more rhythmic and ringing than Lanier's, (*Songs from Vagabondia*, 1894, etc., *Along the Trail*, 1898) began to moderate its exuberance before the end of his short life: during which he did something, as in the *Songs from Vagabondia*, towards the reinvigoration of poetry. In the Songs he collaborated with Bliss Carman (1861–) a hearty rhymester, with his "hoy and rip and rolling ship." Edward Rowland Sill (1841–87) also a theorist (*Principles of Criticism*) and a lover of music, spoke more soberly, and improved the occasion (*The Hermitage*, 1867, *Poems*, 1887, *Hermione and other Poems*, 1899). His New England descent blended its influence with that of his Californian environment. James Whitcomb Riley's[1] modern "Folk poems"[2] became (and remained) exceedingly popular on the publication of *The Ole Swimmin' Hole* in 1883. He is one of those who exploited, and no doubt stimulated the growth of, the transatlantic interest in angels, whom he offers to board at the end of that pleasantly and characteristically sentimental piece, "When the Frost is on the Punkin".

Whitman might be regarded as an ancestor of modern poetry on both sides of the Atlantic; William Vaughan Moody[3] (1869–1909) was its immediate fore-runner in America. He questioned the motives of the history of his time at home (*On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines*) and abroad; he scrutinized man and his antecedents in *Gloucester Moors* and *The Menagerie*, and man and his machinery in *The Brute*; he left, in short, his early asylum of British influences, notably Rossetti, to engage the enemy, with social and political idealism, the latter inspiring his *Ode of Time of Hesitation*. His style is neither exquisite nor easy; there are signs of strain, with the earnestness and power: there are some difficult ellipses, and some rarities in diction and imagery, which make for comparatively slow movement and assimilation. The social theme of *The Man with the Hoe*[4] by Edwin Markham (1852–1940): may be noted as further evidence of the quickening of humanitarian awareness in the 'nineties; a like process in England was not quite so clearly seen among the several renaissances in this last decade. In England the influence of the French poets and prose writers was then strong, but in America its full effect was seen after 1900. The

[1] 1849–1916.
[2] Complete Works, 1913.
[3] Poems and Poetic Dramas, 2 vols. 1912.
[4] *The Man with the Hoe and other Poems*, 1899.

American-French impetus then passed over to England, largely through the media of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Blankenship notes[1] Zola as well as Hardy and Crabbe as a factor in the genesis of the poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869–) who was writing in the 'nineties,[2] and accelerated the advance towards the "new poetry" with intimate phrases and turns which do not, however, banish nineteenth century diction entirely, so that the transition effect is strong. In 1910 appeared *The Town down the River*, the characterisms of which anticipated those of Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*; while the ironic penetration, the clean surgical cut, as accomplished in some verses of *Miniver Cheevy*, seems preparatory for the skill of Eliot. *The Man against the Sky* followed in 1916, where incisive expression and concentrated thought are salient merits. His counter-Tennysonian treatment of Arthurian matter (1917–20) reminds us of the swing away from Tennyson at this time and later. Other books have appeared since, and his poems are collected in one volume.

Transition takes on a different aspect in the writings of Edgar Lee Masters, born in the same year as Robinson. In the late nineteenth century he drew sustenance from the romantic poets up to and including Swinburne. In 1914 he turned to the naturalism of *The Spoon River Anthology*—a series of psychological post-mortems, to free verse and "unpoetic" language, to American provincial life viewed unsentimentally. It shocked the æsthetic right wing, but the genuine new note was discovered on the other side of the house; its reputation crossed the Atlantic. It is curious that after discovering a *genre* so fresh and promising, he should afterwards have retired, even though not permanently, beneath the shade of Browning, as in *Toward the Gulf* (1918). *The Spoon River Anthology* was modern poetry itself: and America got there before Britain, if the late publication of Hopkins' poems is allowed for. One might even antedate its American birth to Stephen Crane's[3] experiments in free verse from 1895 (*The Black Riders*, and *War is Kind*, 1899): these at least should be taken into account.

There were signs of a halt or at least a lagging, after progress in England as the new century opened. Joseph Hilaire Belloc (b. 1870) and Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874–1936) returned to romance tinctured often with imaginary medieval glamour, and to the

[1] *American Literature*, by Russell Blankenship, 1934.
[2] e.g. *The Children of the Night*, 1897.
[3] 1871–1900.

vicinity of Morris. Belloc's highly finished *Verses* (1910) are those of a manly man to ben an abbot able. The styles of both these writers betray a conscious art, most strongly in Belloc's prose, and Chesterton's verse, which avoids intimacy. Chesterton's technical debt to Kipling has been rightly remarked on by George Sampson;[1] but there is throughout a galumphing of his own, audible in *The Ballad of the White Horse* and *Lepanto*, no less than in the comic-satiric measures from *The Flying Inn*.

Poetry by Gordon Bottomley (b. 1874, *Poems of Thirty Years*, 1925) and Thomas Sturge Moore (1870) seems at the moment to be even less viable: but a reaction in favour of Edwardian Georgian literature may be expected fairly soon. Sturge Moore pursued the then narrowing Hellenic way (e.g. *Danae*, 1903), but others as well, with some attempts to break with fossilized traditions of speech; Bottomley too had moments of strife against these, and the width of the gulf between life and poetry, which was being more efficiently bridged in America. William Henry Davies (1871–1940) and Ralph Hodgson (1871–) composed with the expert simplicity proper to each, the former[2] having a name for nature-warbling, the latter for his sympathy with animals. The R.S.P.C.A. element in this last, as old as Chaucer, suggests that after 1900 poetry for a time became, mildly, more national, and that the influence of a wide range of Frenchmen, from Hugo to Huysmans, including Gautier and Baudelaire, was waning. But this, as will be seen, was only partly true. The appearance of *Georgian Poetry* (1912 *et seq.*), an anthology including Bottomley, Moore, Davies, and subsequently Hodgson, confirmed the impression. Walter de la Mare's[3] *The Listeners*, which appeared in the first number, beautifully exemplified his ghostly fantasy; these, with graceful quaintnesses and oddities, characterized his prose and verse.

A few still living will recall the excitement roused by the publication in the *English Review*, in 1911, of *The Everlasting Mercy* by John Masefield (b. 1878).[4] The young called each other "you closhy put"; older persons began to hope that poetry was looking up. This long, rather sensational narrative poem with a revivalist flavour, has not maintained its first appeal, but it made Masefield's name, and helped towards appreciation of his delightful *Salt Water Ballads* (1906). Since then he has written many longer

[1] *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.*
[2] *Poems*, 1940.
[3] b. 1873. *Collected Poems*, 1920.
[4] *Collected Poems*, 1923.

poems, and become Poet Laureate. Lowlier environment continued in *The Widow in the Bye Street* or *Dauber*, but there was some social ascent in *Reynard the Fox* and *Right Royal*. The crudities of *The Everlasting Mercy* were mitigated in the later works, in which some have seen a diminution of vigour. But if there is ground for disappointment at his poetic progress, it may rest rather in the failure to emancipate himself completely from conventional poetic idiom, or to avoid empty and dully-reverberating passages on the one hand, and stagey or melodramatic effects on the other. Both faults are illustrated in *King Cole*, where poetry of the heart, and rather naïvely so, attains to pleasant sentimentalities of quite Dickensian flavour. The present Laureate is happy in describing actions and things, less so in discussing his quest for beauty. He stands high in an age of Little Masters. Among these he took his place in *Georgian Poetry* with Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878–), Harold Monro (1879–1932), Lascelles Abercrombie (1881–1938), John Drinkwater (1882–1937), James Elroy Flecker (1884–1915), D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) and Rupert Brooke (1887–1915). They were all men of ability and taste. They had skill in handling words, but their poetry, as poetry, led nowhere in particular. Abercrombie and Drinkwater were more impressive in their dramatic pieces. Harold Monro's services to poetry, in running the Poetry Bookshop with its readings, *The Poetry Review*, later *Poetry and Drama*, and from 1919 *The Chapbook*, were valuable; he fostered the reputation of several poets of worth, among whom was Charlotte Mew (1870–1928) who made her mark with *The Farmer's Bride* (1916).[1] His poems, in avoiding Victorian emphasis and rhetoric, whether of Tennyson, or Swinburne, exhibit a tendency that may be called Georgian.

The style of Wilfrid Gibson, when unadorned with northern dialect (cf. *Krindlesyke*, 1922) seems, in attempting to avoid Victorian lusciousness, to be embarrassed by its vows of poverty: yet not wholly to sever the connexion, still maintained by a "poetic" phrase or word or inversion (cf. *Fires*, 1912). He too, like Masefield, treated of lowlier life, but was more reticently grim. Mr. Herbert Palmer refers, in his sprightly *Post-Victorian Poetry* (1938) to the first Georgian Revolt; but one may be inclined, on the evidence, to change "revolt" to "escape". D. H. Lawrence was lonely as a rebel; and the full force of his defiance is sensible in his prose works. He wrote a good deal of free verse, with Whitman's

[1] Also, *The Rambling Sailor*, 1929.

manner often uppermost (cf. *New Heaven and Earth, Collected Poems*, Vol. II, 1928). His exploitation of the hypnotic power of repetition affects the technique of both verse and prose. He was associated with the Imagists, but had neither their care nor their concentration; he was not a careful, but a voluble poet. It might be said that he reached a higher poetic standard in his prose than in his verse. An examination of the latter reveals occasional extrusion of the older speech between the newer colloquialisms. The language of James Elroy Flecker (1884–1915), a contributor to *Georgian Poetry*, but isolated in his individuality, is more openly derived from later Victorian sources; he was even indebted to Keats for his rendering of "sensuous beauty". His style as a whole was not Victorian; a denuding or simplifying process, aided no doubt by the Parnassian influence noted by Mr. Palmer and others, is evident—a typical way of escape in those days. His care for line and form counterbalances the carelessness in Lawrence.

Rupert Brooke (1887–1915) died early; his poetic stock was inflated by a popular gushing now on the wane. One sonnet[1] (*The Soldier*) ranked him among war-poets; but he preferred (as in *The Great Lover*) commoner, nearer things. With clear nineteenth century origin he achieved at least one verse, *The Chilterns*, of which one might say, "here is the very type of Georgian poetry". The metre is Housman's; the taking of the road a Stevensonian subject. Alfred Noyes (b. 1880) stood a little apart, retaining more of the Later Victorian manner, more rhetorical and rhythmic melody, from *The Loom of Years* (1902) to *The Torch Bearers* (1922–30). It can still be said of him, though more truly of Brooke, that he is of the generation that reduced the circumstances of a lately rich, poetic tradition. The knobs and cusps of the façade were crumbling rapidly, but the whole of it did not suddenly vanish in 1900, as W. B. Yeats[2] seemed to think.

At the end of World War I, *The London Mercury* was established as a second Georgian focus, where the "Squirearchy", a coterie consisting of Sir John Squire,[3] (b. 1884), Edward Shanks (b. 1892), and others, prevailed, and routes of escape from Victorian formulæ were reconnoitred. Squire achieved brilliance as a parodist. His serious poetry, whatever it owed in its beginning to Baudelaire, still acknowledged, like so much written at that time, the old

[1] *Collected Poems.*
[2] Introduction to *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.
[3] *Poems First Series*, 1918 et. seq.

British conventions which died so hard (cf. *An Elegy*). *The Lily of Malud* was born in a mud (not so secret after all) of nineteenth century detritus. In comic verse he achieved greatness with the *Ballade of Soporific Absorption*, whose burden is "But I'm not so think as you drunk I am". In some of Edward Shanks' poems signs of the Little Return to Nature, in which Davies was a leader, are visible. John Freeman (1880–1929) sang pleasantly of milkwort and sorrel, and the heavenly bodies (*Poems New and Old*, 1920). Edmund Blunden (b. 1896), starting as a legitimate descendant of Clare, struck a more distinctive and strongly stressed country note, of which we were made aware in *The Waggoner and other Poems*, 1920. Since then he has widened his horizons considerably (cf. *Poems*, 1930–40, pub. 1941). Grecian and seventeenth century beauty have, amongst other things enriched the resources of his allusive and rather knotted style, ornate, as it develops, in contrast to the "Georgian" denudation. He was the first, or one of the first to rediscover Birket Foster (*A Favourite Scene*, from *Retreat*, 1928).

Catholic poetry has been less copious since the age of Alice Meynell (1847–1922, *Collected Poems*, 1923), Francis Thompson, and Chesterton; but among later Catholics, Wilfred Childe (b. 1890) has distinguished himself with the colour and melody, founded in scholarship, of several books, *The Little City* (1911), *Gothic Rose* (1923), *The Happy Garden* (1932), and others.

Literary events in America in these years were more stirring. The first agitations of the novelist Stephen Crane's (1871–1900) short concise essays in free verse (*The Black Riders*, 1895, *War is Kind*, 1899) were scarcely recognized. A rallying point was forthcoming in 1912 when Harriet Monroe founded *Poetry*, an earnest, honest, and eager periodical; and these three epithets are applicable to much of the New Poetry—that of Robert Frost (b. 1875) for instance. Unshadowed by any frontage of tradition, he perfected a limpid and economic ordering of language, which, possibly because of the incorporation of New Hampshire usage, has a kind of racy tang for the Britisher, redeeming it from the stodginess of some plain styles. He has made an art of compression without under-communication; he denudes to some purpose. His avowed aim—to employ art to strip life (in his case especially rustic life), to form, is reached with peculiar efficiency. In 1914 he lived for a time in Gloucestershire, near Abercrombie and Drinkwater, but does not seem to have influenced either for good. When in England he published his first volumes, *A Boy's Will*, 1913, and

North of Boston, 1914. *Collected Poems* was issued in 1930 and 1939.

After Frost's quiet punctuations the racketty-dacket[1] of Vachel Lindsay (1879–1931) may startle. His *General Booth enters into Heaven* appeared (1912) in *Poetry*, causing an appropriate shock, and introducing corybantics as a "modern" element. He has been called " a jazz Blake", but one might demur to the "Blake". The bouncing rhythms and high-pitched excitement hint that Kipling (whose sweep was, however, much wider) might be nearer the mark, and still not near. A middle westerner, an evangelist of romantic optimism with anti-saloon leanings, he infused American poetry with seething doses of emotion, rhythm, and racket; which was a good thing for once in a while. He widened the range of poetic treatment and subject; assisting in the turn towards the negro motif (*The Congo and other Poems*, 1914), and developing his verse along community-song lines. Whereas in England a section of the Georgians chanted, in subdued tones, faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon, Lindsay raised an unrefined clamour; and while neither way provided a satisfactory new idiom, his was at least the more indicative of renewed vitality. But control and judgment were lacking. More satisfaction was obtainable from the unconventionalities of Edgar Lee Masters (b. 1868) and Carl Sandburg (b. 1878). The former raised American provincialism to first grade status as material for poetry in the ironic and realistic *Spoon River Anthology* (1915) the success of which was not repeated in *New Spoon River* (1924). Sandburg added to the vocabulary of poets a number of such colloquial terms as are familiar to readers in American detective fiction, but appear to be expressive of Chicago. He wrote several books of poems after *In Reckless Ecstasy*, 1904, including *Smoke and Steel*, 1920, (and see *Selected Poems* 1926), winning some literary prizes and a decoration from the King of Sweden. An important section of American poets was, as we have seen, then forcibly restoring Poetry to Life. Sandburg's grip on the scruff of her neck was stronger than most. The foundations of Whitman's form and emotional attitudes are sometimes (e.g. in *Chicago*), but not always, perceptible; he builds his own very individual patterns upon them; his methodical resources are greater, his variety preserves the element of surprise. We are reminded frequently of the mention, in Marinetti's Futurist manifesto of 1909, of some objectives—speed, modern capitals, railways,

[1] If I may borrow a word from Mr. E. M. Forster.

factories. In Sandburg and in other of the more audacious modern American poets, moments of wildness or indiscipline might be deplored; but the contemporary tameness of a good deal of English poetry is a sadder spectacle. There was clearly a renaissance in America, with its characteristic faults; if English poetry had a decadence, it was at this time.

The Imagist movement caused a brief and mild flutter in both countries. Its operative group, sponsored by Ezra Pound (b. 1885) comprised John Gould Fletcher (b. 1886), Hilda Doolittle ("H.D." b. 1886), Amy Lowell (1874–1925) and the Englishmen—F. S. Flint (b. 1885) and Richard Aldington (b. 1892). D. H. Lawrence was associated with the movement; also the theorist T. E. Hulme (1883–1917). Their manifesto (1913) revealed disciplinary aims involving a turn away from philosophical poetry towards a hard and clear expression, concentration, and a preference for particulars as against "vague generalities". Dissolution of the group as such soon followed as the individual ways of a Pound, an Aldington, or a Lowell, parted. Some improvement in precision, clarity, and so in vividness, may be their contribution to verse-writing. They were represented in *Some Imagist Poets*, 1915–16, and individual volumes, e.g. *Sea-Garden*, 1916, by H. D., *Images of Desire*, (Aldington) 1920, *Cadences* (Flint) 1915, *Irradiations* (Fletcher) 1914. Their art, with its *simplesse*, was rather chaste than frigid. Amy Lowell, passing from romantic influences through an imagistic phase, carried thence her developed gift for clear and not overcrowded decoration, and for free verse, in which the Imagists made progress. Paul Fort[1] now took the place of Whitman as a model. Her strong sense of form and pattern supported her in the practice of her theory that poetry was valuable not for its "message", but for its created beauty. The concrete beauty of externals, used in the "applied" manner, is a strong point of her work from 1914 (*Sword Blades and Poppy Seeds*) to the end (*What's O'clock*, 1925): as treated by her it has exhibited an antidote to the spiritual fevers that threatened the muse of Sandburg and afflicted that of Lindsay. Like Louis Untermeyer (b. 1885) she was both poet and critic, though not of the first rank; her *Tendencies in American Poetry* (1917) and *John Keats* are well known. Untermeyer's *American Poetry from the beginning to Whitman*, 1931, and *Modern American Poetry* (1921), both critical anthologies, are standard works. As a poet his rich exuberance has expressed itself in rhyme when others

[1] One of her *Six French Poets*, 1915.

turned for a season to free verse. When weaned from the early nurture of Housman he pursued, at increasing distances thence, colour form and fantasy with ardour, but not always with severe correctness. *The Roast Leviathan* (1922) is both luxuriously adorned and great fun;[1] his liveliness whether as a paradist (*Collected Parodies*, 1926) or as a beauty-hunter, persists.

The modernistic urge did not divert Edna St. Vincent Millay (b. 1892) from the sonnet, or from moments of naïve limpidity distinctly recalling Emily Dickinson, between hours of the more sophisticated and standardized poetic expression. For the latter, "O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!" will suffice; placed against a line like "flat upon their bellies", it helps to explain the unevenness of her texture, noticeable alike in *Renascence* (1917) and *The Harp-Weaver* (1924). She offers a fragrant refuge of unaffectedness from the dust and strife of the ultra modernist campaigners, as did John Crowe Ransom (b. 1881) a pioneer of the half-rhyme or assonance, used later by Dylan Thomas and others, who succeeded in new effects without free verse. Ransom could even make modern art of pastiche (*Captain Carpenter*). But his application of ironic comedy to sentimental situations was—defensively perhaps—up-to-date; his obstinate use of archaistic diction is no real obstacle—on the contrary—to his communication of a pungent and romantic criticism of life (cf. *Chills and Fever*, 1924).

Masefield provided in *Earth Triumphant* (1914) a stepping-stone for Conrad Aiken to different if not higher things. He became more and more naturally musical[2] in his passage through *The Charnel Rose* (1918) and *The House of Dust* (1920); and philosophical in *The Pilgrimage of Festus* (1925). He remains at his best, might one hazard, when he captures, in lyric form, water-dream effects with fountains and pools—a delimited sensuous beauty. Let Pound philosophize in verse. He and the two mentioned before him expose an evolutionary, not disruptive, aspect of the new poetry.

Ezra Pound, for whom the constrictions of Imagism proved inadequate, has exceeded most modern poets in flamboyance; protean, perversely wayward and irritating, he has given us at least grounds for suspecting in him a genius superior to that of re- festo-

[1] The fun has some curious echoes of the *Ingoldsby Legends* and the "Southey" *ected Addresses.*

[2] If I ke the hesitating notes of Chopin". Prof. W. L. Phelps, *The Advance of oetry in the Twentieth Century*, 1931.

Aiken, Miss Lowell, or Untermeyer, though his fatal play-boyishness is damaging. He has suffered from being written up too much before his fascist broadcasts and their unhappy consequence; and from undue disillusion afterwards. The *Cantos* (volumes from 1933) and the prose *Guide to Kulchur* (1938) if read together as they should be, for their community of thought, attest to an intermittently noble mind not yet o'erthrown; to intellectual fire ignited by a rapid friction of thought, and a philosophic sense of history and its documents. The worst element in these Cantos is the satire, which requires the very patience that he lacks; it begins well, falters, and goes astray into clownery or abuse. Throughout his career he has widened the horizons of poetic form, content and treatment; his early volumes (*Exultations*, 1909, *Personæ*, 1910, *Lustra*, 1916) were already meritorious for this, but not for their mannerisms. From Chinese, Provençal, classical and other sources he proceeded towards the mature idiography of the Cantos. He was associated in England with T. S. Eliot's intellectualizing *Egoist* and Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist *Blast* (from 1914); declaring himself to be still a Vorticist as late as the *Guide to Kulchur*. Wyndham Lewis (b. 1886) gave his version, fortissimo, but not falsetto, of vorticist poetry in *One Way Song* (1933) where he diagnoses the importance of contemporary literary activity from Eliot to Auden; " we are a little age". Pound and T. S. Eliot were then jointly responsible for an inoculation of a rather debile British art with stimulating ideas, intellectual curiosity and enterprise; the American renaissance came overseas with them.

Dr. Eliot seems always to have had a safer and more adult mind, which has brought his poetry in triumph through varied adventures. Modern French poets, notably Laforgue, presided at the birth of his genius; evident in *Prufrock* and other earlier pieces.[1] Towards the end of the First Great War, it was being noticed that he stressed the use of subjects hitherto discouraged by poets in England: trousers, housemaids, smells of steaks in passageways. England was probably not aware of the extent of this development in America during the war, and forgetful of W. E. Henley: but Eliot's rendering of urban squalors was pungent, penetrating, and according to one commentator,[2] almost morbid. This feature, partly accounted for, no doubt, by his keen awareness of "the skull beneath the skin", like his Webster, continued until, with a

[1] *Poems*, 1909, 1925.
[2] *The Lyric Impulse in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot*, by A. Brown. *Scrutiny* II, 1931.

kind of negative grandeur, he uncovered the squalid nonentity of life in *The Waste Land*. Another characteristic, provocative of hotter controversy among the intellectuals, was his scholarly allusiveness—striking indeed, but not new: Browning and Donne were only two of the past allusionists, and Burke's speeches were enriched with unacknowledged quotations. Eliot and Pound effected in *The Waste Land* and the *Cantos* a return of exiled philosophic poesy; the former opening the way of the soul, the latter, that of political economy.

The movement was almost synchronized with a revival of interest in metaphysical poetry, whether Dante or Donne. Professor Grierson's campaign for the Metaphysicals—an important event—had been launched in 1909. *The Waste Land* may be called a modern metaphysical poem introducing the passage of the soul through its Dark Night towards salvation—by Anglo-Catholicism no doubt, but certainly via Buddhism and the Upanishads, whence the final benison is derived. The appeal to the intelligent American as far back as Emerson at least, of oriental religious writings, will be remembered: while the debt of this poem to Miss Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, puts us in mind of the rise of anthropology, already mentioned, to public recognition; Dr. Eliot, bringing it so victoriously into poetry, crested the wave. He has been both lucky and laborious.

Beneath the Anglo-Catholicism and classicism to which he turned, the French and metaphysical influences, the charnel eloquence from Webster, may be discerned a substratum of Puritanism —the strong and spare American kind, imparting toughness in spiritual strife, but also an intolerance that might be called narrow by apologists for Sweeney and the rest of his symbolic gang. One questions whether this limitation, as alleged, may not some day be cited in evidence against claims to first rank. Such claims have been made already.[1] One reason for hasty canonization and unfairly excessive worship may have been, at bottom, that he "busted" what survived of the Victorian façade, and the intense Victorian individualism, more effectively than anyone else to date—a demolition which may soon be regretted; another, that he consolidated the poetic use of colloquial idioms and "swing" rhythms (cf. *Sweeney Agonistes*, 1932). And once again he arrived at a critical moment when the British intelligentsia were ready for a kind of expression more enigmatic than that of a Masefield or a

[1] See *New Bearings in English Poetry*, by F. R. Leavis. 1932.

Squire—for intellectual puzzles, and seven or more types of ambiguity. All this he purveyed, doing much to change the texture of our poetry. Of this poet of both "imagination" and "fancy" it might be urged that the diabolical cleverness of his fancy, apart from other virtues, constitutes a valid claim to greatness. At all events, he dominated much of the literary life of the inter-war period, his periodicals, *The Egoist* and *Criterion*, giving aid: though no strongly classical movement followed.

Eliot was not directly associated with another little revival which had its rallying-point in the anthology *Wheels*, first published in 1916. The promoters of this, the three Sitwells, Edith (b. 1887), Osbert (b. 1892) and Sacheverell (b. 1897) were then primarily redecorators, anti-Georgians and next, satirists. In those days one asked which way poetry would take: it seemed a toss-up between Eliot's bones and rats, and the Sitwells' harlequins and parrots. There was a youthfully rebellious energy in *Wheels*, with inclinations towards the left, and to mocking elderly persons who it was felt (quite wrongly) invented war; a friskiness loosely uniting so heterogeneous a crew as Aldous Huxley, Nancy Cunard, Victor Perowne, Iris Tree, Helen Rootham, Sherard Vines, Wilfred Owen, Arnold James, Paul Selver, or J. J. Adams. They have since gone their several ways; but Edith Sitwell is still wholly a poetess.

In youth the French symbolists made and left their mark on her as they had on many poets, from the 'nineties forward: Diaghilev's Ballet added to her cultural background. She reached the apex of her decorative period in *Façade*, published in *Bucolic Comedies*, 1923, but recited with memorable *verve* through the stentorphone a year or so earlier. Her virtuosity, as at sense-transference (furry wind, light braying like ass), surpassed itself. Feather Town[1] imposed its spell, but less certainly, in *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924), where a keener note of human regret and frustration is struck by the gardener. Her notes to *Rustic Elegies* (1927) refer to Anthroposophy and Steiner as aids to the increased thoughtfulness there: and to inspiration from Gertrude Stein (*v. infra*). Her use of words, sometimes out of relation with accepted sense, may owe something to Miss Stein. In *The Song of the Cold* (1945) she was still digesting Rimbaud with perfect eupepsia. Both she and Eliot have shown that to derive such nourishment is not plagiarism. Both, again, have advanced in the commando technique of raids on the nerves, with the weapons of suspense and apprehension—from the roman-

[1] See *Song* in *Street Songs*.

tic arsenal: typical, it might be alleged, of the fear-haunted inter-war age. Rats and bones and sepulchral properties became significant to Miss Sitwell in *Rustic Elegies* and *Gold Coast Customs* (1929). Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell have distinguished themselves even more in prose than in poetry: in the latter neither achieve the nerve-searching poignancy of their sister. Osbert's satire is efficiently indignant but atoxic (e.g. *The Winstonburg Line*, 1920); Sacheverell's poetry has continued to provoke admiration for its cornucopious luxury of descriptive image, or neo-metaphysical conceit—a mystical marriage, indeed, of Dr. Donne and Gargantua (cf. *The Cyder Feast*, 1927, *A Hundred and one Harlequins*, 1929, *Dr. Donne and Gargantua*, 1930, *Selected Poems*, 1948).

The intellectual drift of poetry between, roughly, 1915 and 1930, towards a difficulty requiring (like Eliot's) annotation, and remarked on by a later left wing criticism as heralding the eclipse of bourgeois art, is well seen in the writings of Marianne Moore (b. 1887). She had already contributed to *The Egoist* (1915) before her *Observations* were published in 1925, a year after Masters' *New Spoon River*. The latter's elder generation had not yet finished delivering their "back to life" message when such juniors as Pound, Eliot, and Miss Moore seemed to be destroying the lines of communication. She improved American poetry with wit and condensation; and sparkled with a cool glitter sometimes, however, intercepted by oddness; even though she recognized that "enigmas are not poetry". Alfred Kreymborg (b. 1883) aimed at condensation, eschewed the older rhetorical modes, but not the enigma every time: he had more enterprise than artistic seemliness (cf. *Mushrooms*, 1916). More enigmatic but not more sophisticated experiments are seen in the departings of E. E. Cummings (b. 1896) which led us, despite the defensive efforts of Laura Riding and Robert Graves,[1] up the cul-de-sac of typographical enterprise, covering some sins of banality (cf. *LVI Poems*, 1925, *Collected Poems*, 1938); so that we put greater trust in Marianne Moore. The Marinettist Guillaume Apollinaire indulged in typographical fun with his *Calligrammes* in 1918. Harry Crosby (1898–1929) went so far into the private world then being created by a section of artists that he wrote some verses in a private and not pretty language of his own. He was "taken up" by literary leaders; his *Poems* are favoured with prefaces and notes by D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. But Gertrude Stein (b. 1874) was already the

[1] *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927.

doyenne of idiosyncrasy; hers was the abstraction of words from the context of actuality, and so the formation of a "pure" rather than "applied" style, which remained consistent in prose (e.g. *Three Lives*, 1909) and verse (e.g. *Tender Buttons*, 1914); a queer usage, suspected by many of being a hoax. The vocabulary itself is limited, and used naïvely; with frequent repetitions and reduced punctuation, both, apparently, highly significant. Words she believed, should "take care of themselves".[1] Cocteau pronounced her style poetic; she discussed it in *Composition as Explanation* (1926). It would be hasty to accuse William Carlos Williams (b. 1883, *The Tempers*, 1913, *Sour Grapes*, 1922, *Spring and All*, 1923), of being a charlatan, even though his integrity does not leap to the eye as Miss Stein's does. He fell too easily into imitations of the *chic* modernisms like Cummings's, then on show. But his underlying earnestness is uncovered when, forgetting to be modern, he describes natural particulars. The short-lived Hart Crane (1899–1932) was one of those American poets to whom the word "mystic" has been applied. When one finds it used of Carl Sandburg, Emily Dickinson, and John Gould Fletcher, one might excusably beg for a redefinition of the term. His life and poetry were romantically irregular; the latter less so to the extent that he used blank and rhymed verse. He conveys alike the glamour of the far-off, and of present machinery—it is said that he intoxicated himself with machine-sounds[2]—through a rhetoric affected by the tendency, comparable but not identical with the one already noted, to isolate words from their accepted meaning and associations. Eliot and Donne were in his background, but he paid full tribute to Walt Whitman (cf. *Collected Poems*, 1933). One may suspect in him the beginning of an inclination towards re-erecting a façade. Some irritation may have been felt at the eccentricities of several of these American poets; but it could be argued that their faults of excess were those of health and not disease; misdirections of a greater energy and initiative than the British were able to arouse, unsupported by the "Marshall aid" of Eliot, Pound, and others.

The First War invaded poetry much more deeply than the Second—we had not yet, it may be supposed, learnt the contempt of familiarity for it as a subject. Osbert Sitwell,[3] Wyndham Tennant, Wilfred Owen, inside the *Wheels* circumference, and outside, Robert

[1] *Narration*, 1935.
Poets at Work, 1948.
[2] See *Argonaut and Juggernaut*, 1919.

Nichols (1893–1944), Richard Aldington, Siegfried Sassoon (b. 1886), Robert Graves (b. 1895), Herbert Read (b. 1893), and Edmund Blunden, were among those affected. With some of these the war-inspiration was short; with Sassoon, Blunden and Aldington and Read, it revived in prose works later on. Robert Nichols had not reached his best in *Ardours and Endurances* (1917) but did so in his "peace" poetry (e.g. *Aurelia*, 1920). There and elsewhere he attempted successfully to realize his once-expressed wish that English poetry might reassume some of that rhetorical grandeur[1] that it had foregone. Richard Aldington after demonstrating how war-themes might be fitted to the Imagist frame (*Images of War*, 1919) reappeared in a robuster aspect, and with some relation, if not debt, to Eliot, as author of *A Fool i'the Forest* (1925), and the simpler *Dream in the Luxemburg* (1930). An ingenuous frankness of expression in parts (especially the satiric) of the former and most of the latter is characteristic of his prose fiction as well. Sassoon and Owen have been contrasted as war-poets, with the verdict in favour of Owen. But surely they looked to different horizons. Sassoon made for a sharp, objective form of satire, demanding concrete particulars, as in *Counter-Attack*, 1918: Owen's path seemed to lead through a catharsis of pity and terror to a tragic rather than satiric, conception; though satire was not absent (cf. *Disabled*). There is symbolism too, a metaphysical outlook, and sometimes intenser lyricism. Herbert Read's *lumen siccum* opposes this last (*Naked Warriors*, 1919): and discloses a severely abstract deviation from T. S. Eliot, glimpses of whom are, however, vouchsafed (cf. *Formal Incantation*, *Mutations of the Phœnix*, 1923). The new classicism is more evident in his poems, with their carefully-wrought "free" forms and subordination to "the teased fibrils of reason",[2] than in any writers of the time. Eliot's moving and insuppressible romance checkmates rigid decorum: and the new classicism has as yet failed to cohere as a movement. Sound workmanship and dignity with less constraint in free verse, characterises *Mood without Measure* (1927) by Richard Church (b. 1893) who avoids the dark and troubled conceits of the metaphysical Herbert Read, and takes kindly to almost "straight" description. Robert Graves' war-poems (*Over the Brazier*, 1916, *Fairies and Fusiliers*, 1917) tended to prattle; decorum continued to be flouted in some of the verses of *The Pier-Glass*, 1921. Skelton, a prattler of virtue,

[1] Cf. his *Madrigal of the loving-kindness of Love*, 1024.
[2] *The Analysis of Love.*

was now reappearing as a motive force, soon to be encountered in other poets. *The Marmosite's Miscellany* (1925) repeats such chattiness, which is considerably subdued in his prose. He has advanced recently towards a more metaphysical austerity. Metaphysical leanings have also been noted in the poetry of Edwin Muir (b. 1887), *Chorus of the Newly Dead*, 1926, *Variations on a Fine Theme*, 1934). Like Robert Graves, he has pulled his weight as a critic (cf. *The Structure of the Novel*, 1928). W. J. Turner (1890–1948) survived the Georgian decadence to join the seekers after signs of modernity. His earlier fantastic work of which *Landscape of Cytherea* (1923) is representative, was deficient in that effect of inevitability that gave power to Miss Sitwell's. But he shone in satire of a roughish kind, as in passages of *The Seven Days of the Sun*, 1925.

The satiric spirit let loose by the war did not languish in the next two decades, and constituted yet another little movement. The melodious Humbert Wolfe (1885–1940), a very sweet and charmful master of retrospective technique (cf. *The Unknown Goddess*, 1925), included a lighter form of it in his repertory; Roy Campbell (b. 1901) wrote couplets with the pugilistic relish of Churchill himself. *Whips and Scorpions*, an anthology of modern satire (1932) included, beside several of the above-mentioned, W. H. Auden, Julian Bell (1908–37), Douglas Goldring (1887), Jack Lindsay (1900) formerly editor of *The London Aphrodite*, Herbert Palmer (1880), William Plomer (1903), Edgell Rickword (1898), Paul Selver (1888), William Kean Seymour (1887), and a number of others, thirty-five in all, with little in common except disapproval of life and letters in that time. Goldring proved himself (*Streets*, 1912) to be a deft lyric as well as dramatic poet. Julian Bell made his bow in the first issue of *Cambridge Poetry*, 1929, an undergraduate anthology following the lead of *Oxford Poetry*, founded in 1913. Herbert Palmer with ebullient *sæva indignatio* and unfashionable rhetoric, has waged a gallant war of literary independence; but *Cinder-Thursday*, partly referring to Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*, was not his best missile. The *Satiric Sob* was a better one.[1] Edgell Rickword grew from an "Eliot" rootage (v. some poems in *Invocations to Angels*, 1928) into a poet of both grim and ornamental powers; with him anti-sentimentality, evident in its beginnings as far back as the 'nineties, reached a climax. The satire in *Twitting-pan* (1931) is trenchant, and original while still

[1] *Collected Poems*, 1933.

of the school of Donne resuscitated; nor is Swift forgotten. Two of the younger men, Campbell and Plomer, imported astringents from South Africa. Campbell, aloof, defied in *The Georgiad* (1931) with his couplets, the free verse fashion, and the London literary cliques. *The Flaming Terrapin* (1924) contains a dynamic protest against slackness of nerve: he cultivated the "sucker-punch".

William Plomer, a forceful novelist and biographer, who experimented as a poet in *Notes for Poems*, 1927, was finding his own way among modernistic cross currents in *The Family Tree*, 1929, and emerging as an independent in *Five-fold Screen* (1932). He retained that independence as contributor to *New Signatures*, the *point d'appui* of yet another little movement (1932). The preface to this anthology, written by Michael Roberts, makes the good intention of closing the gap between the "esoteric", allusive, and obscure poetry which was then noticeable, and the public apprehension; and of returning sometimes at least from free verse to rhyme. Plomer's two poems were lucid, and so were Julian Bell's. Those of William Empson (b. 1906) the most brilliant of the then young Cambridge group, required an explanation, not wholly convincing, of their tortuousness.

From Oxford came the triumvirate W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, and Stephen Spender, the "outward" semblance of whose work is delusive; leaders of a further movement, this time political and leftward. They expressed finely, but still obscurely, the inter-war shift in that direction of bourgeois intellectuals, the red of whose flag was tinged with sentimental humanitarianism (v. Spender's *Vienna*, 1934). Dialectical materialism of a kind infiltrated into æsthetic, via Russia. Edmund Wilson's critical *Axel's Castle* (1934) attributed to social and political causes the shapes which both art and science were taking. Christopher Caudwell (*Illusion and Reality*, 1937) provided apparatus for distinguishing capitalist-bourgeois art, whether Victorian or surrealist, from "people's front" art, where he lists Auden, Day Lewis and Spender. Since the Second World War we have heard less of that kind of thing. Mr. George Orwell's *Critical Essays* (1946), starting from the new economic basis, proceed to reveal their author as an idealist with liberal sympathies—which is understood to be bourgeois, and deserves applause. The same, one suspects, is true at heart of our triumvirate. There can, of course, be no questioning of the importance of social environment to the

study of literature. Auden's early poetry had a jolly rowdiness, the heritage of both public school traditions and Skelton[1] (cf. *Orators*, 1932, Part IV to John Warner). The stronger mannerisms of Gerard Manley Hopkins recur frequently—an English as compared with the predominantly French background of many poets mentioned above. Spender (*Poems*, 1933), evading the heartiness of Auden, more than once caught Whitman's rhythm and enumerative descriptive method. Day Lewis came nearer to Auden in his hearty patches (*Poems*, 1936, *The Magnetic Mountain*), and use of dactylic and trochaic, i.e., English-Teutonic, measures. These writers have invention and copiousness; their enthusiasm for the poetry-life course—already started in America—carried poetry yet further from the low water mark registered somewhere between 1900 and 1915. Among associates of the group were Louis MacNeice (b. 1907, *Poems*, 1935) with his own political and poetic formula; the latter arising partly from Eliot, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence; and John Lehmann (b. 1907, *The Noise of History*, 1931), listed by Caudwell as "communist revolutionary".

Dissent from certain tendencies of our march of mind inspired parts of the work of John Betjeman (b. 1906, *Continual Dew*, 1938, *New Bats in old Belfries*, 1946); who remembered Slough before it was industrialised. His recent appreciation of Victorian architecture has been lamented by a reviewer; he is rather to be congratulated for the sanity and farsightedness revealed by him whether as topographer or poet.

Dylan Thomas (b. 1914) set up "across the way" an opposition show of non-didactic experimental poems with psycho-biological interest. His 18 *Poems*, 1934, were frequently iambic, sparing of simile, but rich in metaphorical epithets ("the kissproof world") aiming through ellipsis at condensation. There are clues to a background of Hopkins ("Jack") and James Joyce in a treatment of language at once individual and characteristic of its epoch.

Reference to the American renaissance in poetry from about 1912 as a major event will probably remain in the textbooks. In England a complex of minor excursions, from the negative Georgian efforts to escape Victorian riches, to the positive neo-didactic clamour of the early 'thirties, is notably less imposing, and may have deluded leftist critics, blind to American evidence, into the belief that "bourgeois art" was bankrupt; a belief enforced by a recent attitude summed up in Mr. Cyril Connolly's phrase, "the uneasy

[1] So Daiches: the Skeltonics cannot be missed.

fatuity of post-war England."[1] The little movements since 1917 have shown a hopeful increase in vigour. The distance between the "new" poetry and the average intelligence might be interpreted as a sign not of despair, but of optimistic enthusiasm: the advance-guard of poets, in an ecstasy of reconnaissance, moved for a time, at least, ahead too quickly, confident that the main body would soon overtake them. A recent decrease of the distance in T. S. Eliot's work may signal a tactical change.

England scored over America earlier, by having a brilliantly active finish to its nineteenth century, with Kipling and Swinburne in full cry. It may be unpalatable to some of the smaller and more elderly "highbrow" coteries to savour the probability that on some not too distant day these two may be rated at least equal to T. S. Eliot, or that a generation may mature as deaf to Eliot's music as his was to Kipling's, or Wordsworth to Dr. Johnson's. Now that the inter-war years have acquired some perspective, the likelihood of such changes is more easily seen; and further, it appears that the glory of our poetry suffered, after Queen Victoria's death, an eclipse from which it is beginning to emerge; an historical pattern different, it may be noted, from that given by the course of drama.

It looks as though from the time of Matthew Arnold to the end of our period (1935) literary theory has become, progressively, a greater force behind the practice. Attention was paid to Walter Pater (1839–94) in the 'nineties, but it is probable that the denudation of poetry in early years of the next century was in part due to the objection to "surplusage" expressed in *Appreciations* (1888). His waning influence was opposed and supplanted by Dr. I. A. Richards'[2] theoretical works with their psychological approach (e.g. *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1925). His dissolution of æsthetic experience, his recipe for value, elucidation of levels of Response, and the Pseudo-statement and possible unimportance of the sense of words, became articles of faith favourable to the poetic developments of that last half decade; just as the "political poetic" of the 1930's accompanied a corresponding shift. Wyndham Lewis, in *The Caliph's Design* (1919) and elsewhere set before unwilling eyes the desideration of reasoned grandeur and *nobilitas*. Herbert Read's *Reason and Romanticism* (1926) belongs to the psycho-analytic portion of this substratum of criticism. T. S. Eliot, also

[1] *The Condemned Playground*, 1945.
[2] b. 1893.

hostile to Pater (*The Sacred Wood*, 1920), taking his stand on reason and scholarship, questioned aspects of Richards' pseudostatement in *Dante* (1929). His profession in the foreword to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928) of an objective, "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion", emphasized his stoutness against left-wing Midianites. William Empson, trained in the school of Richards, drew attention in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) to the problems, now seen to be formidably complex, of interpreting poetry; and to the advantages of intellectual analysis. A detached critique of recent tendencies, *A Survey of Modernistic Poetry* by Laura Riding and Robert Graves (1927) acknowledged by Empson, was notable for its honest endeavours to find order in apparent chaos. C. Day Lewis (*A Hope for Poetry*, 1934), proposed a refreshment of this craft on the now familiar lines of "pink" left wing content, retreat from obscurity, etc. Stephen Spender (*The Destructive Element*, 1935) argued more cogently for art rooted not in itself but on the political life of the time. If some of this was *ex post facto* theorizing, it makes no difference to the contention that particularly careful thought was being given then, as in Romantic, Neo-classic and Elizabethan times, to the principles of composition and appreciation. But doubts may arise whether the poetic wool has this time been proportionate to the theoretic cries, and whether the latter were not too various. These seem on the whole to be justified; though theory between the wars has striven for better poetry, this has not bettered to the extent hoped for, and cannot yet compete with Victorian greatness. The reason may be fundamentally political: the Victorians enjoyed more favourable conditions in a land of at least more settled government, and of worship and renown.

CHAPTER X

WIT AND HUMOUR

WHEN Queen Victoria began to reign, Regency fun still prevailed. Sydney Smith (1771–1845) collected his articles for publication with the *Peter Plymley Letters* of 1839. Theodore Hook (1788–1841) was still writing; and the revival of punning by Lamb had, through Thomas Hood (1799–1845), already become an institution (cf. the two series of *Whims and Oddities*, 1826–7). Hook, in *The Christmas Box* (1828) warned his "little dears" against "that very silly thing indeed which people call a pun", but which he, too, promoted. But *The Ramsbottom Letters* in *John Bull* depend for their facetiousness on wrong spelling and mutilated French devices afterwards used by Thackeray in his Yellowplush writings:[1] though Thackeray modified his tone in this department to suit the Victorian young person, to whom Hook's breadth was inappropriate. *Punch* ran a bowdlerized Mrs. Ramsbottom in the 'nineties. The Smith brothers, James (1775–1839) and Horace (1779–1849) famous for the parody of the *Rejected Addresses* (1812) entered the period, and Horace contributed to *Punch* a "Christmas Commercial Report" in January, 1847;[2] a thing of poor puns, of which the best is "Yarns, long—see G. P. R. James". Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1803–39) had only a few more political verses to write; and after him the art deteriorated. His disciple in society verse, F. Locker-Lampson (1821–95, *London Lyrics*, etc.) had neither his spirit nor his substance, but was elegant. Richard Harris Barham, born in the same year as Hook, brought fun into the neo-Gothic domain of horror and wonder (*The Ingoldsby Legends*) as others, from Dickens to Lewis Carroll, did after him. The *Legends* began to appear in Bentley's *Miscellany* (from 1837), on the staff of which Dickens was working. There is a full-bloodedness in his grim jollity, and cheerful sadism on occasion, which suggests a pre-Victorian background; it still survives in the earlier Dickens, and the earlier numbers of *Punch*.

The first number of *Punch* appeared in July, 1841. The manifesto introduced it as a GUFFAWGRAPH, an asylum for homeless

[1] Smollett had had his fun with spelling in *Humphry Clinker*.
[2] M. H. Spielmann, *The History of "Punch"*.

jokes, including puns. But its underlying seriousness, with a bias to the left, soon became apparent, which is not surprising, since Henry Mayhew (1812–87), sociologist and author of *London Labour* and *The London Poor* (1851), was one of its founders. The satiric pace set in the first number was hot, but well maintained: *Punch's* duty, it was explained, would be to hang the Devil. But lighter drollery, puns and popular catchwords, had their space; "does your mother know you're out?", "don't you wish you may get it?", "over the left", allusions to *à la mode* beef and Jim Crow, were safe laughs. There were fine old piratical and libellous flavours—again indicating a "hangover" of Regency standards: the advertisement, in the first number, of "Mr. T. Hood, Professor of Punmanship", was sheer piracy, which Hood resented, though he became a contributor some two years after. The early numbers had also the support of Thackeray and Douglas Jerrold. Hood did not live long enough to alter the kind of fun purveyed, and in any case *Punch* began under a widespread punning influence for which he and Hook were largely responsible. Jerrold's substantial contributions (*Punch's Letters to his Son*, *Punch's Complete Letter Writer*), had an elevating effect through witty satire and a prose style descended from the previous century. The tension is relaxed in *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, his most popular work, and a little of Hook's comic apparatus ("bigotry and virtue" for "bijouterie and vertu") is borrowed; but clownery is in general avoided. Thackeray ascended from the low level of Mrs. Tickletoby to the apex of the Snob papers, over a long period of connexion with *Punch*, ending in 1855: during which he too raised the literary standard of the paper with his saturnine wit and sensitive English. He was more incisive than Jerrold and more "Victorian" in his moral attitudes.[1] Gilbert a'Becket (1810–56) and Albert Smith (1816–60) were more volatile humorists. A'Becket contributed his "Comic Blackstone" from 1844, and afterwards a "Comic Bradshaw". But his *Comic History of England* (1848) still amused preparatory schoolboys in 1900: and he was the creator of Ally Sloper. Jerrold commented on him to Dickens, "some men would, I believe, write a Comic Sermon on the Mount".[2] Smith's *Physiology of the London Medical Student* (he had been one himself) in 1841, was Cyder-cellarish and Bob-Sawyerish but inferior to Dickens. His vulgarian humour—not always for the young person

[1] Cf. Lord Tamarind's Story, *Punch's Letters to his Son*, No. *xviii*.
[2] Spielmann, *op. cit.*

—had more room to soar in his novels, *The Adventures of Jack Ledbury* (1844) or *Christopher Tadpole*, 1848. Comic-realistic description of low life, Clare Market for instance, was probably his strongest point.

Outside the orbit of *Punch* moved at least two comic writers of genius, Charles Dickens and Edward Lear (1812–88). Dickens, gifted beyond Thackeray with powers for grotesque nonsense, and caricature, ascended more easily towards the realm of pure jocularity; satiric intent has frequently to yield to humorous achievement in the process of creating a Pecksniff, a Mrs. Nickleby, a Flora Casby. His whimsical aspect is seen in concentration throughout the four "holiday romance" stories; but even here there is a logical basis, a reference to common ethical standards (e.g. in Miss Alice Rainbird's Romance). It was for Lear to cross the frontier of unreason. The ethics of *The Book of Nonsense* (1846) are often deplorable on this our plane, to which they do not belong. He invented, even more audaciously than Dunsany, a universe, with a causality of his own. Pobbles benefit from loss of toes, butter cures plague, sieves are navigated by Jumblies on perilous seas to færylands forlorn, where the Terrible Zone and the Chankly Bore are encountered (*The Jumblies*, a richly romantic poem). Lear used, but did not invent, the "Limerick" metre, indispensable to subsequent humorists, proper and improper, and generally anonymous. George du Maurier's *Vers Nonsensiques* were to appear in *Punch* in 1868; the Limerick is happily fitted to literary allusion in the one beginning "Cassez-vous, cassez-vous, cassez-vous."

Francis Smedley, whose novels have been already mentioned, entered comic journalism with *Scenes from the life of a private Pupil* in Sharpe's *London Magazine*, 1846—the embryo of *Frank Fairleigh*, and in 1854 edited *George Cruikshank's Magazine*. The next year *Mirth and Metre*, in collaboration with Edmund Yates, appeared. His comic verse is flavoured strongly with Hood and Barham; the characteristic trend of his humorous narrative is towards the practical joke (*Frank Fairleigh*) and the hoax (*Lewis Arundel*). William Edmondstoune Aytoun (1813–65), Professor of Literature at Edinburgh, collaborated with Theodore Martin in *The Bon Gaultier Ballads* (1845) bringing parody up to Tennyson's date and winning in "Phairshon swore a feud" (more accomplished than Peacock's "The mountain sheep are sweeter" from *Elphin*) one more victory for the Comic Muse. *Firmilian, a Spasmodic Tragedy*, satirised that school of poetry for which Aytoun invented the name.

His alertness and scholarship supported his combative abilities in the task of making "light" verse illustrious. *Punch* did not secure all the great guns; and *Punch's* "Professor", as he was nicknamed, Percival Leigh (1811–89), had not Aytoun's calibre, but a penchant for classical fun resulting in the prose *Labours of Hercules* (1843) some mock-classic and satiric verses, and *Mr. Pips's Diary* (1849) with Dicky Doyle's pictures. Doyle's hilarious attacks on the Gothic revival increased Mr. Punch's brightness in the 'forties. The *Punch* artists John Leech, Richard Doyle, Thackeray, Charles Keene, Tenniel, George du Maurier, Harry Furniss, and Phil May must be mentioned, among many of distinction, as important propagandists of wit and humour during the century.

After Edinburgh, Cambridge succeeded as nurse of University wits. Charles Stuart Calverley (1831–84) leaving Oxford as "sharpest" Blayds, became a *lumen et decus* at Cambridge, as don, parodist, examiner in *Pickwick*, and practical joker. A skating injury in 1866 affected his powers, and his output (*Verses and Translations*, 1863, *Fly-Leaves*, 1866) was small.[1] But he purveyed the higher waggery of the time in its most civilized form: *The Ode to Tobacco*, and *The Cock and the Bull* (a skit on Browning's *The Ring and the Book*) are major comic poems. His felicity was partly inherited by J. K. Stephen (1859–92 *Lapsus Calami*, *Quo Musa Tendis?* 1881), whose distich, "When the Rudyards cease from Kipling", etc., in "*To R.K.*", has been often quoted. At Oxford Charles Lutwidge Dodgson ("Lewis Carroll", 1832–98), inspired by the Liddell children and other little girls, built for himself a wider reputation. The juvenile aspects of his work will be discussed elsewhere; but it has its adult appeal in parody, satire, allusion, and the logical basis of the humour. Experiments with time, as proposed by the March Hare (*Alice in Wonderland*, 1865) or implicit in the habits of the Jub-Jub (*The Hunting of the Snark*, 1876), or with semasiology by Humpty Dumpty (*Through the Looking Glass*, 1871) illustrate a type of jesting that is of the head rather than, like Lear's, of the heart; the play, without pedantry, of a highly-trained intelligence.

American humour was distinctively national in tone when in 1835, the first series of Sam Slick Sketches, by Judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796–1865), a native of Nova Scotia, and not an American, appeared.[2] Four others followed, two of which

[1] *The Literary Remains* were pub. 1885.
[2] *The Clockmaker; or Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville.*

brought Sam Slick (and the Judge) to England, where he was not unappreciated. He was a vulgar but racy creature. On the other hand Mrs. Partington, created by B. P. Shillaber (1814–90) was less exclusively Columbian in her origin (*Life and Sayings of Mrs. Partington*, 1854, etc.): being descended from Mrs. Malaprop, related to Mrs. Ramsbottom, and less incisively absurd than either. If exception is taken to choosing Sam Slick as prototypical, we may pass to the "Artemus Ward" of Charles Farrar Browne (1834–67) whose adventures and reflections occupy a number of volumes from *Artemus Ward, His Book*, 1862, to the *Artemus Ward Complete*, 1890. The art of exaggeration is now raised to that high level of unblushing effrontery—an aspect of the Sublime omitted by Burke—at which Mark Twain practised it in his account of journalism, with the *Morning Glory and Johnson County War-whoop*: Browne had more gift for this than for maintaining interest in bad spelling, though such was as appropriate to Artemus as to Mr. Yellowplush. He came to England where, after writing for *Punch*, he died. About American hyperbole there is a generosity rarely attained in Britain; Thackeray's Major Gahagan comes reasonably near to it. Another American trait was salutary irreverence, as shown by Artemus Ward at the spiritualistic seance, or Huckleberry Finn towards *The Pilgrim's Progress*; "the statements was interesting, but tough". Bret Harte who, with Browne, influenced Mark Twain, excelled in exaggeration throughout his *Condensed Novels*; Mr. Rawjester, for example, kept three mad wives; his verse abounds in comic devices, one of which, the conclusion of a romantic stanza with a prosaic anti-climax, is to be found in Mrs. Leo Hunter's *Ode to an Expiring Frog*;[1] both amount to literary satire of a kind overdone by Mark Twain (Emmeline Grangerford's Elegy, in *Huckleberry Finn*). Bret Harte's parody prose succeeded along uproarious but not subtle lines; in verse he sometimes missed his quarry; *The Geological Madrigal after Herrick*, misses Herrick but catches geology, though with less assurance than Truthful James. But nothing could be happier than *The Swiss Air*, in which the art of the Somethingean Singers[2] is quintessentialized.

Amusement resulted from Mark Twain's *The Jumping Frog*, etc. (1867) but better was in store. The burlesque and comic independence of spirit in part of *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *A*

[1] *Pickwick Papers.*
[2] *Pickwick Papers.*

Tramp Abroad (1880) reveal, especially in the latter, that while he was capable of carrying his fun to giddy heights, he sometimes overbalanced. The aim of *Tom Sawyer* (1876) was primarily to give, not mirth, but a truthful picture of childhood as he knew it. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), however, abounds in drollery, from skits to satire, culminating in the episode of the King and the Duke. Tom Sawyer's ingenuities recur here to excess; and once more the balance is disturbed—a complaint applicable to *A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* (1889) which after one has accepted as fundamental the thrusting-in of clowns with kings,[1] may still be found to contain irreconcilables. The spirit of his outrageousness is seen as its most ardent in two at least of his short sketches, the "Tennessee Journalism" and "How I edited an Agricultural Paper". To an older man, Charles Godfrey Leland (1824–1903), may be attributed the invention of the Funny German in the Hans Breitmann's Ballads: an adhesive type to be met with later in Storer Clouston's *The Lunatic at Large*, and now degraded in spirit to the Katzenjammer Kids of American comic strips. Herr Breitmann, his "barty" and other very Teutonic adventures, have worn thin; whereas the obituary rhymes of Charles Heber Clark ("Max Adeler", 1841–1915) from *Out of the Hurly-Burly* (1874) still preserve some vestiges of nap. Their cheerful ghoulishness anticipates in some measure Harry Graham's *Ruthless Rhymes*. The prose pieces tend to be more laboured and diffuse; the story of Mr. Gunn, insurance agent, is standard American hyperbole, as is that of the Mormon Bishop Potts.

In the 'sixties, when "Artemus Ward" was in England, F. C. Burnand, who became editor of *Punch*, brought out his *Happy Thoughts*, the moderate quips of which make little showing beside the American school.[2] The appearance of W. S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* (1869) was more significant; verse satire of a playful kind of which Peter Pindar and Prior had been exponents, was here to be found side by side with the nonsensical and radically British burlesque of Agib Prince of Tartary. It has been said that his fantasy has a rational foundation; but this is not always, though often, true. While the fun in talk of "the Cook and the Captain bold" arises out of its strict logic, that in "Prince Agib" depends on such irrationalities as the unnecessary presence of hard-boiled

[1] v., Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie.*

[2] Artemus Ward's *Punch* pieces must be excepted; when they were written he was a sick man.

eggs in the poem. His refusal to abide rigidly by the "rules" enhances the impressions both of vitality and surprise for which his work, dramatic or not, is rightly valued, as well as for the Gilbertian logic. The refinement of Gilbert and Burnand in this decade may be contrasted with the Hook tradition, still evident in jokes about bottoms in the first volume of *Punch*. Bret Harte sometimes achieved breadth while avoiding lewdness; Eugene Field (1850–95) writing in the 'eighties (*The Tribune Primer*, 1882, *A Little Book of Profitable Tales*, 1889) also made for refinement, which was not exclusively Victorian-British.

Gilbert's device of reversing usual orders, was fully worked out by Thomas Anstey Guthrie ("F. Anstey", 1856–1933) in *Vice Versa*, 1883. He was effective too in the projection of the supernatural into common life, with logically amusing sequelæ (*The Tinted Venus*, 1885, *The Brass Bottle*, 1900). His Baboo Jabberjee, B.A. of *Punch*, fixed the Baboo-English joke in the public mind; but there was too much of it. His music-hall skits (*Punch*) are brief and brilliant. The humour of Jerome Klapka Jerome (1859–1927) within a small circumference, is good of its kind, which is related to a section of the Dickens of the "Boz" phase, brought up-to-date, after *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* (1886), with *Three Men in a Boat* (1889). This was a roaring success, and had a democratic tang in its narrative of democratic amusements: the Cockney materialism of Harris and that of Mr. Lowten (Pickwick) deserve comparison. *Three Men on the Bummel* was notably inferior. *The Diary of a Nobody*, by George and Weedon Grossmith, originally in *Punch*, 1889, fulfils like *Three Men in a Boat* the classic direction that comedy shall treat of inferior persons. The humour is of the grade at which someone in making a dignified exit trips over the mat. Barry Pain (d. 1928) had some range as a miscellaneous humorist (e.g. *Playthings and Parodies*, 1892, *Eliza*, 1900, *The One Before*, 1902, *Wisdom while you Wait*, 1912, etc.). He contributed moderate scintillations to *Punch*, 1889–92; the best of his essays in parody was "The Poets at Tea", which is showy but superficial. The plot of *The One Before* required supernatural machinery of the Anstey kind; Anstey was the defter conjuror of the two. But it was William Wymark Jacobs (1863–1948) who most nearly succeeded Dickens in inventing popular characters of humble station, with whom the public were long on familiar terms. In *Many Cargoes* (1896), *Light Freights* (1901), and their successors, Ginger Dick and Old Sam, the Nightwatchman

(marine), Henery Walker and Bob Pretty (rustic), have lived, though not with Dickensian intensity. Outwitting and scoring off the dull-brained is a feature here, symptomatic of a moral change since Dickens. Formerly we were to love Sam Weller, smart but good; now we were to love Bob Pretty, smart but bad: we were in the 'nineties.

This was a decade in which wit stole a march on humour, through the generalship not only of Oscar Wilde but also of Max Beerbohm (b. 1872) equally accomplished in *pictura* and *poesis*—for his imaginative satire is poetic. He is so obviously a great artist that the critic may become timid or over-suspicious before such inscrutable perfection. His precocious maturity in youth should have been followed, according to the wiseacres, by a rapid decline; but the reverse took place; the excellence of his later work revealed that after all there had been youthful indiscretions of style in the earlier, e.g. The *Works* of 1896; and that while his youth was mature, his middle age was youthful. The *élan* of the parodies in *A Christmas Garland* (1912) is young, the æsthetic judgment in them, old. *Zuleika Dobson* (1911) is important for its audacious design—that of a comic tragedy effectively arousing pity and terror as well as mirth. Meredith elaborated the counter-aristotelian comedy of superior persons in *The Egoist*; but Beerbohm, with greater daring, discovers sublimity in a hero who is an ass, and a heroine "beautiful but dumb", and so the more lethal. Exquisite poetry and romance are made to serve the ends of mockery: his control over these and other elements is unrelaxed. *Seven Men* (1919), in more subdued tints, ridicules not unsympathetically Enoch Soames, that obscure diabolist of the 'nineties, and the deliciously Elizabethan twaddle, in dramatic blank verse, of Savanarola Brown. In the middle of the book are rare patches of sufficient dullness to prove that "Beau Beerbohm"[1] is, like Homer, not superhuman; for which we may love him the more.

Hector Hugh Munro ("Saki", 1870–1916) was two years older than Sir Max Beerbohm, though it may be pardonable to think of him as ten years younger. It is not merely that the wit of his *Reginald* (1904) or *The Chronicles of Clovis* (1911) is so youthfully exuberant, but that it bears the mark of an art in which a high finish, like Beerbohm's, no longer counts for so much. That his elegances tended to be hard and crystalline rather than malleable became clear enough in *The Unbearable Bassington* (1912) a satire

[1] *Men of Letters*, by Dixon Scott, 1923.

on an anti-social type; adorned with gloom, epigrams, and bitter jokes. Written at a time when sociology was muttering on the stage, it renders the bridge-playing classes, as they then were, with power and with no "repertory" dullness. The garishness of some of his *mots* (no longer *justes*) seems to consort ill with the sobriety of his reflections, and to displease modern critics.[1] There is no just impediment to the marriage of wit and serious thought; what is wrong here is non-consummation.

Hilaire Belloc, born in the same year as Saki, yielded also a liquor somewhat cruder than the suave vintage of the 'nineties, when he published *Lambkin's Remains* (1903) and *Caliban's Guide to Letters* (1903). Parts of the former and rather more of the latter might still be considered funny: the naïve displays of temper at Rudyard Kipling may well amuse. Irony, a rapier in Beerbohm's hands, becomes a cudgel. There is some excellent burlesque; there is Lambkin's Newdigate. Historically these two works are important background documents for the student of "Beachcomber". Belloc has written several satirical novels varying in tone from the hebetude of *Emmanuel Burden* to the frolic of *A Change in the Cabinet*. The books of comic verse illustrated by B.T.B., whether *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*, or *More Peers*, have given delight at a high level to children and adults. With G. K. Chesterton, humour becomes even more hearty and Catholic and jolly and open: there is plenty of it in his novels, for example *The Man who was Thursday* (1907) or *The Flying Inn* (1914) but it remains ancillary to the didacticism. There is full-bodied jocosity in several of his fugitive verses and ballades; the burden of one of these, "will someone take me to a pub?" is an excellent sign-post for the tendency-trailer; the best is *The Ballade of Suicide. Biography for Beginners* by E. Clerihew Bentley (b. 1875), a light skirmisher from the Chester-Belloc camp, won quick recognition; the "clerihew", his "free" but rhymed metrical unit rivalled, for a time, the limerick. The essence of most but not all clerihews was a point at once surprising, characteristic and elliptic (cf. Edward The Confessor, Henry Ford).

H. G. Wells came his nearest to pure comedy in *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910) and *Bealby* (1915); in both physical or mechanical action figures in the entertainment, as it does in one of the funnier patches of *Kipps* (1905) where the automatic musical box plays. Polly and Kipps are in the line of the Dickensian Humour, which

[1] e.g. John Gore in *English Wits*, ed. L. Russell, 1940.

is in the line of Smollett's; although they are in this later age diluted with naturalism, their type is still recognizable.

A relish for nonsense had, in America, the ministrations of Gelett Burgess (b. 1866), who was "pleasant" in the *Nonsense Book*, with some varied fooling, good on its day; several works about Goops, who become a little tedious; and *Burgess Unabridged*, an inventive and illustrated dictionary to which words critically descriptive of social behaviour ("bripkin" or "huzzlecoo") impart satiric sportiveness. His fame probably rests on his invention of the once fashionable term "bromide" (*Are you a Bromide?* 1907) and his quatrain on a purple cow. The Dooley books of Finley Peter Dunne (b. 1867), *Mr. Dooley in Peace and War*, 1898, *Mr. Dooley Says*, 1910; etc.) introduced an American-Irish comic who had a good run in his time.

Nearer and dearer to both sides of the Atlantic were the *archy and mehitabel* of Don Marquis (b. 1878) the fruits of whose efforts to surmount typographical obstacles rival E. E. Cummings. The nonsensical element again protrudes. Canada had a distinguished nonsensifier and parodist in Stephen Leacock (1869–1944) an economist by profession. His *Nonsense Novels* (1911) make a brilliant third chapter to Bret Harte and Thackeray; *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) exemplify the use of exaggeration with decorum; in *Further Foolishness* (1917) and *Frenzied Fiction* (1917) a certain professorial mean was observed. Taking humour seriously, he has left us individual and general studies of value (e.g. *Mark Twain*, 1932, *Humour, its Theory and Technique*, 1932). There is kindly sympathy of the old school of Mark Twain and Bret Harte in his analysis of human folly and frailty.

We may set against this not only the wrath of the newer Belloc mode, but the cheerful cruelty of *Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes* (1899) and *More Ruthless Rhymes* (1930) by Harry Graham (1874–1936) wherein the spirit of Max Adeler advances farther into the terrain of a century where head threatens once more to usurp heart. The reversal of moral values which places toast above sudden death had been elaborately exploited by De Quincey,[1] but without the modern callousness. The attitude to death here and elsewhere (e.g. Chesterton's *Ballade of Suicide* and E. C. Bentley on Clive) is doubly significant of post-Victorian attitudes, in its "unsentimentality" and its relation to the increasing cheapness of life in our epoch; further, there are probably more to-day than

[1] *Murder as one of the Fine Arts.*

formerly who agree with Bentley that "there is something to be said/For being dead".

Nonsense was brought ingeniously into common life when J. Storer Clouston (b. 1870) enclosed his hero, Mr. Mandell-Essington, in an asylum (*The Lunatic at Large*, 1905) and gave him sanity, unscrupulousness, and a taste for practical joking. The experiment —for delight only, not for instruction—succeeded with effervescence. Several "lunatic" books followed thereafter till 1929 (*The Lunatic still at Large*), but the champagne sparkle was not quite recaptured. His junior Ben Travers (b. 1886), even more riotously farcical, indicated again the Pleasure Theory of Art with *The Cuckoo in the Nest* (1925), where among other preposterous souls the funny mild clergyman, heritage of Gilbert and Thackeray, reappeared. Among his several other farces are *Rookery Nook* (1930) and *Turkey Time* (1934).

Mr. Orwell's "In Defence of P. G. Wodehouse"[1] (*Critical Essays*, 1946) was an act of critical integrity, done in defiance of the hue and cry after quislings which helped to dissipate war-energy. He finds in Wodehouse nothing more sinister than "a harmless old-fashioned snobbishness": it is now suggested that even this objection does not exist. His social background was Edwardian, i.e., less dirty than to-day; that is all. From a public-school basis he developed the silly-ass comedy of Bertie Wooster and the more complex comedy of Psmith who concealed astuteness behind a silly-ass mask. Psmith had first appeared as a schoolboy in a juvenile magazine.[2] A sequence of Psmith books followed (e.g. *Psmith in the City*, 1910); and a sequence of Wooster books up to *The Code of the Woosters* (1938). A third popular creation was Jeeves, requiring a third sequence (up to *Thank you, Jeeves*, 1934). The recognition of this Machiavellian gentleman's gentleman as the descendant of the ingenious slave of Plautine comedy is defensible; but Wodehouse certainly has plots in the antique comic line, though his jests are like those of the later *Punch*, "clean, wholesome and witty". It is wit for lowbrows, surreptitiously enjoyed by the intelligentsia, easy, sometimes slangy, and with more literary allusion than at first appears. The exchange of his ingenuous rentiers for our venal careerists is a poor one.

Wodehouse maintains, classically, his liaison with the probable, while Robert C. Benchley (b. 1889) severs it on occasion. The

[1] b. 1881.
[2] *The Captain.*

approach to Benchley may be facilitated by the remark of another American wit, Donald Ogden Stewart, that Mr. Benchley sometimes signs himself "Yelhcneb C. Trebor. rM". His habit of slipping quietly over the border of the rational, and as quietly returning, diverts us in *Love Conquers All* (1922), *The Treasurer's Report* (1930) or *From Bed to Worse* (1934). He has been called naïve; but here a trap may be suspected. In his art the old exaggeration of the actual (Twain) and the younger nonsense (Burgess) have kissed each other. Several later American comic writers (e.g. Stewart or Thurber) seem to owe him a technical debt; he ushers in a noticeable change, with something strongly different from the mirth of his British contemporaries Wodehouse, A. A. Milne or A. P. Herbert (b. 1890); almost as *The New Yorker* differs from *Punch*, as edited by Owen Seaman (1861–1936) from 1906.

The drift of *Punch* was for some years then towards a harmless refinement bordering on effeminacy. Owen Seaman's own writings, however, had the strength of a classical foundation and satiric temperament. He took off the mannered or feeble, and Alfred Austin among them, ruthlessly, and, well before 1914, had ridiculed the Kaiser in one of those short and fairly acrid pasquinades in which he excelled (cf. *The Battle of the Bays*, 1896, *Cap and Bells*, 1899, *A Harvest of Chaff*, 1904, *Interludes of an Editor* (prose) 1929. He was not as technically careful as might have been expected of a Professor; we find, for example, the drollery of "wopses" for "wasps" repeated three times in his verses. It is funny once. But his wit was more potent than A. A. Milne's; which with its slender, not always sapid, grace and faint sentimentality, caught and mounted some ephemerids, quite significant to the historical snooper, of securer days, in *Punch* (1906–14), in *The Day's Play*, 1910, *Not that it matters*, 1919, etc. The Dahlias and Simpsons and Myras of 1911 were merry and rather tedious little victims: they are gone. Poohs, who now cost £5, will be glanced at in chapter XII. A. P. Herbert, on the staff of *Punch* in 1924, helped that paper to reascend from its nadir. There is quite an Orbilian severity about *The Word War* (1935), despite which common usage has sometimes won: the verb "condition"[1] is established. In lighter mood he wrote comic opera (e.g. *Tantivy Towers* or *Light Articles Only* 1921). His work has been sometimes brusque, always tonic. Evidence of snappier jocularity may be noted in *Punch* during the Herbert era: the dialogue-legend

[1] Used by M. Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna.*

beneath a picture, for instance, was beginning to give way to the single "pregnant" line in the manner of *The New Yorker*.

The Daily Express, meanwhile, afforded space for the gambols of "Beachcomber" (J. B. Morton, b. 1893), a, or the, pupil of the Belloc-Chesterton school; a violently fantastic critic of much folly, and some sensible things; for he does not always discriminate nicely when laying about him in an habitual ecstasy of disgust; and he damns modernity for a crime. Those who like the lusty, swashbuckling demi-gargantuan manner, have enjoyed *Gallimaufry* (1916), *Stuff and Nonsense* (1935), *A Bonfire of Weeds* (1939), etc. On the constructive side are found *Mr. Thake*,[1] quieter, more wistful (1929), Dr. Smart-Alleck of Narkover, Dr. Strabismus, Mrs. Wretch, and other absurdities; all however, are object-lessons. Beachcomber instructs while he raves. He succeeded, as jester on the *Daily Express*, D. B. Wyndham Lewis (b. 1894) to whom many, no doubt, have been grateful for two anthologies, *The Stuffed Owl* (1930, bad verse) and *The Nonsensibus* (1936). J. B. Morton valiantly attacked his age; the guying of the Victorians had been more safely undertaken by Lytton Strachey (1880–1932, *Eminent Victorians*, 1917). The art of sneering at greater men and women than we have now may require arduous ascents. Strachey made these, with only a few lapses into caricature; helped by his polished, but mannered, prose style. In *Queen Victoria* (1921) sympathy with and tenderness over the Queen's old age obstruct unity of design; but both books are first-class illustrations of the Amusing, at its best, as demanded by and supplied to highbrows of that decade. One more comic event in the department of history, between the wars, was the publication of 1066 *and all that* (1930) by W. C. Sellar (b. 1898) and R. J. Yeatman, in the style of the School Certificate howler; here was richness indeed, and a fico for the intellectuals. *And now all this* (1936) did not (one is sick of such remarks) maintain the same standard of fruitiness.

The progress of *The New Yorker* towards a high grade of intellectual jocosity was aided by James Thurber (b. 1894) when on the staff 1926–33; the acidity of his drawings and writings reminded us in those days that our *Punch* was still over-sugared. His formidable playfulness in *Is Sex Necessary?*[2] (1929), *The Owl in the Attic and other Perplexities* (1931) or *My Life and Hard Times* (1933), imparts a special pleasure in the suspicion that it does not intend

[1] *The Cumulative Book Index* lists this under both D. B. Lewis and J. B. Morton.
[2] With C. B. White.

honourably. The first book's duty was to burlesque the solemn approach to sex then ripe for treatment; and incidentally, the jargon of the quasi-scientific thesis, equally ripe. He uses the wild improbability, as does Donald Ogden Stewart (b. 1894) at times. Stewart is also a parodist (*A Parody Outline of History*, 1921, *Perfect Behaviour*, 1922, a skit on the etiquette manual) and a censor of manners, through his Haddock books (*Mr. and Mrs. Haddock Abroad*, 1924, etc.). Some of Ogden Nash's[1] skittish verses remind us, in form, of the clerihew, and like Bentley (in his *Henry VIII* at least) he makes play with "stretched" rhyme. Of the poems in his several books, *Hard Lines*, *Free Wheeling* (1931), *The Bad Parent's Garden of Verse* (1936), etc., the most important, perhaps, is that composed on the high theme, "Men never make passes at Girls wearing glasses." When he is at ease, which is not always, he evokes a happy smile; but Dorothy Parker (b. 1893) though generally so and on top of her form, offers the very sours of wit; she is a mistress of outraged dislike, and of short stories. Formerly on the *New Yorker*, she detached herself to write verse (*Enough Rope*, 1927, *Sunset Gun*, 1928) and prose (*Laments for the Living*, 1930, *Here Lies*, 1939). Her satire launches corrosive assaults on the nerves, though they are assaults of violence rather than sublety: vitriol is thrown, in nightmares. If, on the other hand, it is possible to devise a kind of satire that shall be at once light, elusive, and hard-boiled, Mr. Noel Langley (b. 1911) has devised it in *Cage me a Peacock* (1935), *Hocus Pocus* (1941) and more recent works; he is aware of both British and American—or Hollywoodian —foibles.

The serious Victorian age secreted humour copiously, and some of the greatest in our literary history; wit, yielded more sparingly, made most progress in the 'nineties. In England the present century cannot yet be said to rival its predecessor; the honours, like those of yachtsmanship, have gone to America. Nevertheless some signs of strengthening mirth are not wanting—in the *Ready-made Rhymes* and *Sports and Pastimes of the English*[2] of Ralph Wotherspoon (b. 1897), or in *Parody Party* (1937) which keeps the specific flag aloft. Nor can one ignore the *Diary of a Worm* and weekly bittersweetness (in *The Sunday Express*) of Nathaniel Gubbins, who as a self-confessed socialist possibly labours to out-jest his heartstruck injuries.

[1] B. 1902.
[2] With L. N. Jackson.

CHAPTER XI

ANGLO-IRISH WRITERS

IT is proposed to exclude as far as possible those who, like Bernard Shaw, have made English life their main study. Ireland was already being presented to us at the opening of the period by an active group of novelists, Michael and John Banim (1796–1874, 1798–1842) whose *Tales of the O'Hara Family* had appeared in 1825; Samuel Lover (1797–1868), Charles Lever (1806–72), and Gerald Griffin (1803–40). William Carleton (1794–1869) succeeded even better outside his novels (e.g. *Fardorougha the Miser*, 1839) than within them, in *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1850), and his *Autobiography*. Patrick Kennedy (1801–73) extended the field with *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts* (1866) and *Bardic Stories of Ireland* (1871); Oscar Wilde's mother, Jane Francesca Wilde or "Speranza" (1826–96), examined *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887) as an accomplished amateur, in comparison with the research of the older Dr. George Petrie whose *History and Antiquities of Tara* (1839) was acknowledged as a source by Ireland's literary historian, Douglas Hyde. But, after Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1820) it was the novels, especially those of Lover and Lever, that carried out most effectually, if inaccurately, the propagandist task. Samuel Lover, with *Rory O'Moore* (1836), and *Handy Andy* (1838) created for the English a conception of the comic Irishman (Marryat, by the way, contributed to it), which considerable labours by the Celtic Revivalists have, perhaps, succeeded in destroying. Charles Lever's rollicking Irishman became an equally popular myth through his slickly brilliant earlier novels, *Harry Lorrequer* (1840), *Charles O'Malley* (1841), *Jack Hinton the Guardsman* (1883); which have offended because of their "stage-Irish" propensities. Lever had not yet "got down" in these to scrutiny and portrayal of Irish life; this came later (cf. *The Martins of Cro'Martin*) when serious attention to Ireland's economic plight imparted weight to the loose episodic framework that he had used in those earlier more frivolous fables, which it suited better. Gerald Griffin (1803–40) with more artistry, achieved the tragic without sentimentality and

the comic with a minimum of those physical mishaps which tickled early Victorian no less than Augustan readers. His *Collegians* (1829) deserved its success, despite unevenness in characterization and episodic looseness: he died before reaching maturity.

These novelists may be credited with offering the Irish theme in a form likely to be palatable to an English public, and so without a strong nationalistic flavouring. This last was supplied by a group of writers for *The Nation*, founded in 1842 and expressive of the aspirations of the Young Ireland party, of whom satiric mention was seen in *The Falcon Family* (1845) by Marmion Savage (1803–72), better known in this country for *The Bachelor of the Albany* (1847). *The Nation*, founded by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903) whose chief associate was Thomas Osborne Davis (1814–45), opened as a prose periodical but soon admitted poetry, including Davis's own, e.g. *The Lament for the Death of Owen Roe O'Neill.* His *National and Historical Ballads*, etc., was issued in 1846. The soundness of Duffy's generalship may be gathered from the objects set forth in the foreword to his *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* (1845); among which is that of cultivating "strength of simplicity" and so redeeming the national style from rhetorical excess. Other *Nation* writers were Denis Florence McCarthy (1817–82) the translator of Calderon, and Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825–68); but among the elder poets Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810–86) stood out as rival to James Clarence Mangan (1803–49) for the laureateship of Young Ireland. Ferguson was an antiquarian scholar, recognized as such by Hyde; his poetry, wrote Duffy, differed from Mangan's as Scott's (romantic-historic) from Coleridge's (reflective, metaphysical)—an approximate placing. Poems in the *Lays of the Western Gael* (1864) are based on the ancient "Matter of Ireland"[1] which was henceforth to become a potent inspirer of national literature; *Deirdre's Lament* in the volume being a good example of his method and ballad style. He attempted epic with *Congal* (1872): his *Poems*, 1880, continued the development of Red Branch motifs. Mangan carried his passionate surge and sweep nearer to Poe than to Coleridge; the *locus classicus* being *Dark Rosaleen* with its subplangent refrain. Kinetic imagery—"the wounding wind, that burns as fire," was appropriate to his genius (*Poems*, 1859, 1904): but that genius was fitful. He combined the vices of Coleridge (opium) and Poe (drink), but the greatest obstacle to a steady

[1] The Red Branch Cycle: v. Hyde, *History*, Chaps. XXIV, XXV.

advance was, no doubt, his poverty. Timothy Daniel Sullivan (1827–1914) a later editor of *The Nation*, carried on its patriotic mission in lyric songs; and like Ferguson, turned to the past (*The Madness of King Conchobar*). Contemporaneously with the Young Irelanders Francis Mahony (1804–66) was writing, as Father Prout and for *Fraser's Magazine*, in a popular vein not to be despised (*Reliques of Father Prout*, 1836). Thackeray's Irish Ballads are Proutesque in the manner of *The Sabine Farmer's Serenade*; but Thackeray never caught the elusive spell of *The Bells of Shandon*, facetious and nostalgically romantic.

Two poets, Aubrey de Vere (1814–1902) and William Allingham (1824–89) were linked with English schools. The former, a disciple of Wordsworth, turned to Irish subjects in his later years (*Inisfail*, etc., 1861, *The Legends of St. Patrick*, 1872, *The Foray of Queen Neave*, 1882). Allingham, Rossetti's friend, is the more taking of the two. *Poems* (1850) showed him fluent, rhythmic, never profound, but gifted with a landscape eye (*The Winding Banks of Erne*).

The next phase in the evolution of Irish poetry from its epic ancestors was ushered in by Standish O'Grady's (1846–1928) *History of Ireland* (1878-80). A poet at heart, he entered fully into the epic spirit of the Irish heroic Cycle, continuing his imaginative treatment in historical romances from *Red Hugh's Captivity* (1889) to *The Triumph and Passing of Cuculain* (1920). Research into ancient Irish literature accelerated. George Sigerson (1839–1925), a scholar, translator and poet of distinction, published *Bards of the Gael and Gall* in 1897. *The Love Songs of Connacht* of Douglas Hyde (b. 1860) had appeared in 1893, followed by his *Songs ascribed to Raftery* (1903) and *Religious Songs of Connacht* (1906). His renderings of these in poetic prose influenced by the Gælic idiom of the originals affected, as Boyd demonstrated, the use of language by several Anglo-Irish revivalists, and Synge in particular. Hyde's revealing *Literary History of Ireland* (1897) and Sigerson's *Bards* throw light on the continuance, *mutatis mutandis*, in modern Irish poetry, of the ancient use of internal rhymes, assonances, and cognate sound-patterns.

After the Young Ireland group, the Fenians had their journal, *The Irish People*, and their poets, Charles Joseph Kickham (1828–89), R. W. Joyce (1830–83), Ellen O'Leary (1831–69) and J. Keegan Casey (1846–70). The plaintiveness which Boyd notes as a sign of transition to the modern modes, is intermittent; a brighter and

lighter spirit animates the favourite ballad, "Maire my Girl", by Casey.

From 1883 onwards a literary movement more independent of politics grew up with the formation of specific societies in London and Dublin; in the formation and functions of which Douglas Hyde, George Sigerson, W. B. Yeats, A. P. Graves, Katharine Tynan, Lionel Johnson, and others were busied. The first fruit of the movement was the anthology *Poems and Ballads of Ireland* (1888); its oldest contributor, John Todhunter (1839–1916), formerly reflected English tastes, including that for Hellas (cf. *Alkestis*, 1879, *Helen in Troas*, 1886). But in 1888 he signalled his turn to Irish matter by the publication of *The Banshee*, which O'Grady's History inspired. His experiments in rhymeless verse at this early date are interesting and sometimes (as in *The Banshee*) acceptable, with varied rhythm, as suited to a declamatory style, none the worse for recalling (*The Death-Song of Turann*) Macpherson. The metres in *Fand and other Poems* (1892) by William Larminie (1850–99), also "free", are the result of conscious experiments in the assonance which had a traditional system in Irish poetry.[1] But assonance seems to be instinctive with the Irish poets; anyhow, it may be found in the ballads of Edward Walsh (1805–50) and in Yeats' poems. T. W. Rolleston (1857–1920) critic, editor, and poet, contributed to the *Poems and Ballads*, published his own *Sea Spray*, *Verses and Translations* (1909), and collaborated in producing the *Book of the Rhymers' Club*[2] (1892–4), and *A Treasury of Irish Poetry*, 1900; turning in criticism from earlier studies of Whitman to *Imagination and Art in Celtic Literature* (1900). "Katharine Tynan" (Mrs. Hinkson, 1861–1931), after pupilage to Christina Rossetti (*Louise de la Vallière*, 1885) became in *Shamrocks* (1887) an exponent of Celtic mythology with the others, while retaining in some poems a Catholic outlook.[3] *Ballads and Lyrics* (1891) was followed by *The Wind in the Trees* (1898) where her gift for nature-poetry, delicate, romantic, and frequently ornate, was unquestionable and perhaps a shade too generous.

Lionel Johnson, one of the Rhymers' Club, (*Poems*, 1895, *Ireland and other Poems*, 1897) writing also from the Catholic angle, brought something of the word-consciousness of Pater and the

[1] See Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*.

[2] The best known of the Club were Yeats, Johnson, Le Gallienne, Dowson, Rolleston, Todhunter, and Arthur Symons.

[3] And cf. her *Our Lord's Coming, and Childhood, Six Miracle Plays*, 1895; and *The Rhymed Life of S. Patrick*, 1907.

'nineties in England within the scope of Irish poetry; but his style is not characteristic of the fluent and elusive manner then developing and best seen in the younger poetry of W. B. Yeats (1865–1939). After *Mosada* (1886), *The Wanderings of Vision* (1889), *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899) and *The Seven Woods* (1903), Yeats made it clear that there was nothing careless about his fluency. The peewit and curlew, symbols of the wild melancholy which is one important ingredient of Irish poetry, cry at exactly the right moment. He cultivated, with much subtlety, the inevitable word—yet not so inevitable as to avoid the mannered dreaminess of *The Shadowy Waters* (1900), his first poetic drama. The mystery in this and some of the early poems is rather oppressive; but the music and "sensuous beauty" redeem them. The symbolism, owing something to Blake and to the Dublin mystics and Irish mythology, is richly decorative. He was then making his "song a coat covered with embroideries" which he was to discard. *The Green Helmet* (1912) marked the putting-off of some embroidery, a process continued in *Responsibilities* (1914) but not completed in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), though nearer an end in *The Tower* (1928), and *The Winding Stair*, 1933; where there is a marked reduction in terms of languor such as Rossetti and Pater bequeathed to the 'nineties. The mature Yeats is distinguished by thoughtfulness,[1] aided by study of philosophy; by a dryer, more sinewy expression, a nearer approach to "reality", and the practice of satire. The embroidery is not, however, completely discarded: nor at this de-romanticizing stage is the romance, as of "a bird's sleepy cry/Among the deepening shades" (*The Tower*) wholly absent. He retains and extends his consciousness of word and musical delight; continuing to be more intensely what the 'nineties had made him—an artist in life and letters. Modernity drew him towards but not into realism; he stood apart from the machine enthusiasts from Marinetti to pylon poetry. *Dramatis Personæ* (1936) suggests that Synge was an agent in his change of direction. His prose evolved like his verse, by simplification. The difference between early and late may be gauged by reading *Dramatis Personæ* (1936) immediately after *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903). The last simplicity sometimes voices itself in blunt outspokenness—about Dowson's amours,[2] for example; he had mentioned them in *Per Amica Silentia Lunæ* (1918), with more reticence. But he never entirely lost his inheritance from Pater; the

[1] For discussion of which see L. MacNeice, *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*, 1941.
[2] *Dramatis Personae, VI.*

dying fall, the asyndeton, the apposition, which are still to be found, if rarely, in his last writings. Both poetry and prose reveal a craftsman of the highest order, and one who, while he never forsook ideals of form, obtained enthronement among the moderns. Among them; but his comments on the younger poetry in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936) suggest that he was not of them, whose utterances were to him "The rattle of pebbles on the shore/Under the receding wave" (*The Winding Stair*, 1933). In any case his aristocratic choice required aloofness.

His desire for symbols had been first supplied through association with the Dublin mystics, whose beginnings go back to 1885, and whose members included "A.E." (George W. Russell), John Eglinton, Charles Johnson, and Charles Weekes. It was the decorative side that appealed particularly to Yeats, who was more poet than mystic, as A.E. was the reverse. Russell (1867–1935) sought the eternal truth beyond the symbol, like a true visionary (cf. *Transience* in *Voices of the Stones*, 1925); his needs were more for revelation than perfection of form. A special beauty in verse was mystical meteorology, as he found esoteric secrets in winds and sunsets: but he celebrated also the divinity of the earth.[1] His essays, were transcendental, political (*National Being*, 1916) critical (in *Some Irish Essays*, 1906), or autobiographical (*The Candle of Vision*, 1918). He was a genuine pilgrim of an eternity whose white radiance was pleasantly stained with oriental and Irish colours.[2] John Eglinton (W. R. Magee, 1868–), an essayist capable of poetry, traced, in *Two Essays on the Remnant* (1895), the spiritual return to nature, after his master Wordsworth. He developed the transcendental gospel of γνῶθι σεαυτόν in *Pebbles from a Brook* (1902) and later essays; his attitude, whether to philosophy or life, may be the one satirized by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, through Buck Mulligan's ribaldries.[3] Moore (*op. cit.*), declared that A.E. stood for belief, and John Eglinton for unbelief—a difference, possibly, of heart from head. James H. Cousins (*The Quest*, 1906, *Straight and Crooked*, 1915, etc.) formed a liaison between the mystics and the dramatic movement: two of his own plays; *The Sleep of the King* and *The Racing Lug* being produced in 1902.

The literary group with their journals from *The Irish Theosophist* (1892) to Eglinton's *Dana* (1904) formed a cultural matrix

[1] Cf. *Collected Poems*, 1913 and later works.
[2] See G. Moore, *Salve*, 1912.
[3] p. 207, in 1st edition.

fecund in births—the writers of *New Songs* (1904) for example of whom "Seumas O'Sullivan" (James Starkey, 1879–) and Padraic Colum, (1881–) have most achievement. The former, stemming from A.E. and Yeats, has worked sensitively in the sad twilit province of beauty which we now regard as traditionally characteristic of the Anglo-Irish revival (cf. *Selected Lyrics*, 1910, *Poems*, 1912). Padraic Colum's *Wild Earth*[1] (1907) broke with the sometimes atonic mysticism of the elders, by a more but not wholly realistic approach to the countryside, and emphasis on its savage harshness. Chesterton[2] found in him "the hardness of the real Irishman." His style at its best takes advantage of a no doubt natural tendency to starkness. With James Stephens (b. 1882), whom A.E. discovered, we encounter a distinct and soon self-sufficient off-shoot. His best-known prose work, *The Crock of Gold* (1912) treats the mystical-mythological background with a larky puckishness which is Irish but not Dublin-mystical. Fun, philosophy and fairies are happily combined. Fantasy and realism, irony and imagination, are neighbours in *Here are Ladies* (1913) and *The Demi-Gods* (1904). The same qualities energize his poetry (e.g. *The Hill of Vision*, 1912, *Songs from the Clay*, 1915) which can reach from lyric "of the morning-O" to satire, but suffers from impediments in its diction; why the "-O", for example? one might ask. He is original and entertaining with a decentralized art.

An older man, Alfred Perceval Graves (1846–1931) constituted a movement, far from mystical, in himself; encouraging Irish culture in poetry, prose, folk-lore and music; and that blessedly without highbrow pretensions. As the poetic descendant of Lover and Mahony he won celebrity for "Father O'Flynn" (*Father O'Flynn and other Irish Lyrics*, 1889). *The Irish Poems of A. P. Graves* appeared in 1908. Nimble in wit and metre, he did some good work in writing, translating and editing songs (cf. *The Celtic Song Book*, 1928). The prose *To Return to all That* (1930) with its modesty and humour, stands high among the frequent autobiographies of this century. Lord Dunsany (1878–) expressed his fantasies and strangenesses in poetic prose stories of gods of his own making, in dream universes (*The Gods of Pegana*, 1905, *The Book of Wonder*, 1912, etc.). Shortly before the first war there was a fashion in England for his decorative imaginings, among those who did not perhaps fully realize the pessimism of his underlying doctrine of mutability.

[1] And see *Wild Earth and other Poems*, 1917.
[2] *Foreword to Eyes of Youth*, 1911.

Of the younger poets, Thomas MacDonagh (1878–1916, *Collected Poems*, 1916) while following the Celtic way, and translating with freshness, did not ignore wider literary interests,[1] which are reflected in some of his short lyrics. Francis Ledwidge (1891–1917) a discovery of Lord Dunsany's, died all too soon, but left behind him poems of great promise, (*Complete Poems*, 1917). When on active service he wisely wrote about nothing more martial than Finn and the Sidhe. Austin Clarke (1896–), (*The Vengeance of Fionn*, 1918, *Collected Poems*, 1936), began as a florid disciple of Yeats, continuing, but with more epic and other breadth, the firmly-established tradition of Celtic mythology and legend. Realism was, as we may see, rare (though there are touches of it in Clarke's *Cattledrive in Connaught*, 1925), and regarded with disfavour as essentially Saxon; James Joyce (1882–1941) published in 1907 his elegant but not realistic lyrics, *Chamber Music*. But before him George Moore (1852–1933) had shown signs of a turn from fantasy to fact, however stylized (v. *Confessions of a Young Man*, 1888), aided by that scepticism which derived strength from his French contacts—as was the case with Joyce. He did not find Ireland a land of endless enchantment (*Ave*, 1911); but on the other hand the "shameful and vulgar materialism" of England revolted him. His homage to Dublin mysticism had its tongue in its cheek; he took to naturalistic fiction in a cosmopolitan spirit without wholly forsaking Irish scenes (cf. *A Drama in Muslin*, 1886). His anti-philistinism, already noticeable in *A Mummer's Wife* (1885) was fully expressed in *Esther Waters* (1894), his best novel if not, compared with *Hail and Farewell* (1911, 12, 14), his best prose work. Here he forced the problem of illegitimate motherhood on reluctant libraries. There followed *Evelyn Innes* (1898) and its sequel *Sister Teresa* (1901) with which his boldest and most intensely creative period closed. The Wildean epigrams and attitudes, "art is logic, nature incoherency" (*Sister Teresa*) may be noted; but their surface is matt rather than glossy. A more rarified and less masculine prose succeeded; at first with a return to Ireland (*The Untilled Field*, 1903, *The Lake*, 1906). The exquisitely feline manner of *Hail and Farewell* is its crowning mercy; *The Brook Kerith* (1916) proves that his audacity, now employed in a rationalistic task, after Strauss and Renan, but imaginatively so, was still alive. His true religion was art; Degas and Manet were his saints. He was not the only one to be

[1] e.g. *Thomas Campion and The Art of English Poetry*, 1913.

led astray by Wagner; his taste was not impeccable, but he clung to the gospel of "art through direct experience of life", and eschewed humanitarian sentimentality, consolidating his "objective" outlook in later writings (e.g. *Conversations in Ebury Street*, 1924). In style he was indebted to Pater, but admired and no doubt profited by, European authors, Flaubert, Maupassant, or Turgenev; one of his functions was to preserve the Irish revival from parochialism. Susan Mitchell refers[1] to his "ugly old soul", but he was clearly a dear, good creature at bottom, while James Joyce was not.

Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914) emphasized locality; but the treatment was not parochial. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) gave more room for his analytical and descriptive gifts. It had been Thackeray,[2] previously, and not Lover or Griffin, who noticed the unromantic squalor of Irish town life; now Joyce, in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* (1922) found in it matter for the true poetic inspiration. His intellectual calibre was greater than Moore's, and while the latter shunned ideas, he welcomed them with a dialectically trained mind. The naturalism of *A Portrait* gave way to the inwardness (which has been called expressionism) of *Ulysses*; natural simplicity of form to artificial complexity. The intended Odyssey-design fails to hold the book together satisfactorily; but in any one episode first-class work may be found. The dazzling displays of virtuosity, as in the Shakespeare criticism passage or the maternity hospital section, fail to become organically necessary. There is cheap as well as precious wit: *sufflaminandus erat*. Moore achieved some elegance, and the classic shape of beginning-middle-end: Joyce attempted to cross the classic and other frontiers in *Ulysses*, where he dodged giddily between the "here and how" and the "there and then", and extended the use of language to the extreme limits of common assent. His treatment of sex, generally discouraging, laid the book for some time under an official ban. It is an important mark in the history of fiction and the work of a genius enormously fertile but not fully dominated. After it came *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) with aberration in a linguistic wilderness where few would care to accompany him.

Popular tastes were satisfied, not by Joyce, but by novelists in the line of Griffin and Lever; by E. Oenone Somerville (b. 1861) and "Martin Ross", (V. F. Martin, 1865–1915), and George A. Birmingham. The two ladies made good with *Some Experiences of*

[1] George Moore.
[2] e.g. *Men's Wives*.

an Irish R.M. in 1899, where unorthodox hunting, eccentric railways, peasantry with a bent for merry lawlessness, practical jokes and physical mishaps, were items in a *genre* repeated in other books, of which a late example is *In Mr. Knox's Country* (1905). George Birmingham (James Owen Hannay, 1865–1950), more rollicking and farcical, created a jolly, muscular and reverend hero for *Spanish Gold* (1908). He has written a large number of novels and short stories; and was "still going strong" in 1935 (*Millicent's Corner*). His Protestantism was at one time objected to in Ireland, but he survived a burning in effigy.

The serious task of exhibiting a "debunked" Ireland in fiction was undertaken by others beside Joyce; by Daniel Corkery (b. 1878) whose selective realism is seen in *The Threshold of Quiet* (1917) and Brinsley Macnamara, *The Clanking of Chains*, 1939, *In Clay and Bronze*, 1921, exposing the drabness of town and country life. Both of them were dramatists, and so doubly operant in the evolution of realism in Irish art, signs of which had been already perceptible on the stage at the Abbey Theatre in 1908, though its policy was not deliberately to foster realism. It will be remembered that in England the movement was well under way in the 'nineties when Moore was "naturalizing" in fiction. But selective realism was not Moore's aim; rather, it was Gissing's. With Liam O'Flaherty (b. 1897) there has been a diversion of realism in a romantic direction, with melodramatic overtones; the sordid has assumed a strange and even mystical significance. His is a kind of writing which clearly dates after Dostoievski and in the cinema-glamour era. He tells us in his rather too highly-coloured autobiographical *Two Years* (1930), that he attempted to write stories in the manner of De Maupassant. He has written several novels and books of short stories (*The Informer*, 1926, *The Martyr*, 1927, *The Assassin*, 1928, *The Puritan*, 1932) of great power and with a brave *incuria* for the niceties of style. O'Flaherty is one of the authors to whom we may feel ourselves indebted for the wave of comparative "toughness" which broke on British fiction, without swamping it, between the wars.

To pass back to the beginnings of drama, the Irish Literary Theatre was founded in 1899, supported by A.E., John Eglinton, Lady Gregory, George Moore, W. B. Yeats, and Edward Martyn; the first two plays acted being Yeats' *The Countess Kathleen* and Martyn's *The Heather Field*. From these beginnings rose the Abbey Theatre in 1904. Martyn, a disciple of Ibsen, completed *The*

Heather Field and *Mæve* by 1899. His *Tale of a Town* (of which Moore produced a version as *The Bending of a Bough*), and *The Enchanted Sea*, followed in 1902. Fairy glamour, thoroughly native to the soil and owing nothing to Ibsen, was employed equivocally in *The Heather Field*, undisguisedly in *Mæve* whose soul departs, with poetry and pageantry, for Tir-nan-Ogue: and less obviously in *The Enchanted Sea*. *Grange Colman* (1912) is a domestic play with some repertory atmosphere; its ghost is imprudently imitated by Catherine—providing a melodramatic end. Domestic psychological problems, with strange aspects, best display his abilities; he had, writes Denis Gwynn, no interest whatever in peasant plays.[1] However it was these latter that drew the fancy of English publics when the Irish players came over. The potency of the genius of J. M. Synge (1871–1909) was chiefly responsible for this. His study of French literature, new and old, benefited his sense of form and ironical view of life; to which qualities he added his native talent for the bizarre or grotesque, as was evident in his grim comedies, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, 1905, and *The Tinker's Wedding* (pub. 1908), more farcical and less condensed; or the tragic *Riders to the Sea* (1905). There was no untidiness either in his plots or dialogue, as the patterns increased in complexity until fully-developed in *The Playboy of the Western World*, 1907. They are all well constructed plays; but their specialist nature, strong peasant flavour and stylized diction, takes them out of any main dramatic current. His attempt, in *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (pub. 1910), to apply the same sort of treatment to heroic myth is difficult to commend. *The Aran Isles* (prose, 1907) with or without Jack B. Yeats' pictures, is a pleasant bedside book. He had greater imaginative ingenuity than Padraic Colum, while Colum enjoyed gifts of steadier observation and sobriety of manner. His major plays, *The Land* (1905) and *The Fiddlers' House*, 1907, a *rifacimento* of *Broken Soil* (1903), proclaim him both a realist and a poet. *Thomas Muskerry* (1910) the most solidly realistic of the three, avoided the "Midland stodginess" of English repertory through some fantastic minor characters, but needed the pruning-hook. The petty burgess setting of this play affords some relief from the greater depths of peasantry in which English readers might fear to be whelmed, through Synge, George Fitzmaurice, (*The Country Dressmaker*, *The Pie Dish*, etc., *Five Plays*, 1914) and Lady Gregory (1859–1932). This last worked variously for the national

[1] *Edward Martin and the Irish Revival*, 1930.

revival. Miscellaneous prose includes *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), *The Book of Saints and Wonders* (1906), *Our Irish Theatre*, (1913), and *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (1920). Her plays are numerous, and distinguished by her use of kiltartan speech, farcical plots, and run-on characters like Bartley Fallon or Hyacinth Halvey. Her first successful play was *Spreading the News* (1904). Further pieces, many farcical, were collected in *Seven Short Plays* (1909) and *New Comedies* (1913). History and political satire occupied her in *The White Cockade* (1905) and *The Deliverer* (1911); another group of plays dealt with folk-history or mythology (*Irish Folk-History Plays*, 1912), of which *Grania* represents her highest poetic flight. Her works reveal genuine talent capable of inducing moderate transports. She collaborated more than once with Yeats; in *The Pot of Broth* (strongly seasoned with Lady Gregory) and *The Unicorn from the Stars.*[1]

Yeats continued, after his too *Shadowy Waters*, poetical and legendary drama with *The King's Threshold* and *On Baile's Strand.* In the former the dearth of action, Seanchen being so long a-dying, makes for greater tedium on the stage than in the study; the latter was worked up from an early version into tragedy of some power, with a marked improvement in the complication and unravelling. Nevertheless here, as in *Deirdre* (1907), vividness is wanting; we may begin to be impatient of the ghosts and shadows. He applied comic treatment to the Matter of Ireland in *The Green Helmet* (1910)[2] presumably with the intention of "debunking" the heroic element; but produced a queer mixture of flyting and grotesque. *The Player Queen* (1919) is fantastic but concrete, and enlivened with some of that higher gaminerie which the author cherished in his later period. He was more at his ease away from the theatre. The fantasist Lord Dunsany portrayed limbo with fine irony and economy in *The Glittering Gate* (1909). The plays of strange gods and countries, *King Argimenes*, or *The Gods of the Mountain*, are pleasing for their satiric philosophy. When idols walk about in the mysterious city of *Kongros*,[3] all is well; but when they walk about in Yorkshire (*A Night at an Inn*, 1916) the "thriller" is suggested; and there is actually an analogue, the short story *Nightmare Jack*,[4] by J. Metcalfe. Lord Dunsany becomes less dexterous when he enters the known world; and so *The Lost Silk Hat* fails where *The*

[1] See *Plays*, by W. B. Yeats, 1922.
[2] Metrical version of *The Golden Helmet.*
[3] *The Gods of the Mountain.*
[4] From *The Smoking Leg.*

Glittering Gate succeeds. He may be heartless, but he is certainly amusing—to become which was a serious aspiration before 1939.

Several junior Irish dramatists have followed Lennox Robinson (b. 1886) into realism. Of his plays, *The White-Headed Boy* (1916), satirical-comical, is deservedly the most popular, arousing heartier laughter, it may be imagined, over the cunning of Denis, and the humours of Duffy and Aunt Ellen, than had hitherto greeted comedy of the Revival. *The Lost Leader* (1918) based on the Parnell legend, was less successful. *The Big House* (1926), with its house-burnings, class-difference, and a ghost thrown in, is a landmark rather than a masterpiece. Robinson and T. C. Murray (b. 1873) are realists, as was Corkery, from County Cork; the latter's first play, *The Wheel of Fortune* (1909) notable for its uncomely quarrels over financial settlements, being produced by amateurs in Cork city. *Maurice Harte* (1912), *Autumn Fire* (1924), dealt efficiently with Irish family difficulties. But a touch of the mystical-romantic illumines *The Pipe in the Fields* (1927). Seumas O'Kelly (1881–1918) struck dramatic though not romantic sparks out of legal situations (*The Shuiler's Child*, 1909), or politics, local and national (*The Bribe*, 1913, *The Parnellite*, 1917). He possessed an adequate gift for narrative prose (e.g. *The Waysiders*, 1917).

Sean O'Casey (b. 1881) created drama with a punch which awarded him the championship of the realists. Perhaps the nearest approach to his genre hitherto was Corkery's *The Labour Leader* (1919). O'Casey, a working man and Trades Unionist, has employed his inner knowledge of labour life and back streets in Dublin with "cinematic" actuality; but political controversy was not uppermost in *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923) a tragedy and satire on male courage. There are worthless men and suffering women in *Juno and the Paycock* (1924). The nervous tension of both plays depends largely on the setting of civil war, with its threat of sudden violent irruption. *The Plough and the Stars* (1926) even more harrowing, is again a tragedy of civil war, and woe for women. The concentrated though episodic horrors and the contrasts are excessive, unity is deficient, and dialogue forced; but taken with the other pieces it points towards a possible increase in "toughness".

Ulster had its revival, its Literary Theatre, its magazine *Uladh* (from 1904), and its writers, of whom the most distinguished are Joseph Campbell and St. John G. Ervine (b. 1883). Peasant drama caught on there, as in Dublin; for which demand Campbell supplied *Judgment* (1912) and Rutherford Mayne several plays, *The Tunnel*

of the Road (1907), *Red Turf* (1911), and others. Campbell is happiest as a lyric poet of the Ulster soil and peasants, and folk-tinged Christianity (cf. *Mountainy Singer*, 1909, *Irishry*, 1914). *The Gillie of Christ* is a bold example of the latter. He vies with Colum in earth-redolence. Ervine has two manners, the Ulster and the English. *John Ferguson* (1915) grim, Protestant, but with sentimental undercurrents, yields a texture easily distinguishable from that of the rural dramas of Eire. *Jane Clegg* (1914), in the English, not the Irish, gusto, was as sordid a little drama as any repertory enthusiast of the period could have desired. Sentimentality creamed and mantled somewhat in *The Ship* (1922), where we hear the protest of youth against parental control which had amused Jane Austen, and was a romantic feature favoured by the Edwardian-Georgian dramatists. By the time we come to *The Second Mrs. Fraser* (1929) he has seen the other side of the question; "one of these days", says Janet, "there will be a terrible revolt of the old against the young". He carries more weight than Lennox Robinson but has not his sharpness of edge in dialogue. Of the three main branches of the splendidly vigorous growth of Irish creative literature, the Lover-Lever tradition, the Folk-and-Fairy taste, and the realistic, the first has come to be depreciated—and unduly so; Hibernian comedy is born of virile sires; nor should it be forgotten that Longinus thought nobly of laughter.

CHAPTER XII

LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

THE Romantic Revival, during which Wordsworth discovered the Babe to be a "best philosopher", brought about bullish conditions for the prestige of children. Lamb himself catered for them; and Wordsworth more condescendingly exclaimed "that way look, my Infant, lo!"[1] Books for the young multiplied and improved at the hands of Ann and Jane Taylor, whose cautionary and otherwise moral verse tales have enriched the literary sources of later authors (e.g. Lewis Carroll who parodied "Twinkle twinkle little star", and Belloc, with his *Cautionary Tales*). The didactic movement may be traced back into the eighteenth century in which Thomas Day wrote *Sandford and Merton* (1783–9), the Mr. Barlow of which was still robust enough to offend Dickens (*Uncommercial Traveller*) about 1860. *The History of the Robins*, pleasing to generations of small Victorians, originated in *The Fabulous Histories* (1789) of Mrs. Trimmer (1741–80); as an animal story its delight obscured the teaching which, indeed, one didn't notice. Didacticism reached a climax in the oppressive and even lurid *Fairchild Family* by Mrs. Sherwood (1775–1851) published in separate volumes, 1818–47. But moral improvement held no monopoly; the pleasure-theories were early in the field, with Roscoe's *Butterfly's Ball* (verse 1807). The limericks of Lear, and his nonsense, were anticipated by a set of books, published (1820) by Marshall of *Anecdotes and Adventures, of Fifteen Gentlemen*, fifteen ladies and sixteen old women. Another solid tradition is founded with

> There was a young man of St. Kitts,
> Who was very much troubled with fits.

One more significant entry before the Victorian era was a translation of Grimm's *German Popular Stories*, now called Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, 1823–6. Before continuing, we may assume a difference between what is written for children, and what they read for choice; also that some writers partly or wholly use the child as a stalking-

[1] *The Kitten and the Falling Leaves.*

horse for adult game; and thirdly, that some writers with bona fide juvenile intentions like Lear, have created something artistically valuable to the grown up (see chapter X). Assumption (1) is supported by the findings of A. J. Jenkinson in *What do Boys and Girls Read?* (1940); which indicates not only what "adult" books are appropriated by children, but which ones are avoided. Thus Dickens, Kingsley, and Kipling are popular among the three thousand children from 12 to 15 plus years old; Hardy less so, Peacock and Meredith being absent from the lists. Belloc's *Bad Child's Book of Beasts* figures in them, but not prominently. In the "12 plus" list (girls) where the readers are children not adolescents, Dickens gets 54 points, Orczy 21, Lewis Carroll 20, Blackmore (*Lorna Doone*) 19, Kipling 6, Barrie (*Peter Pan*) 3. Such girls will probably never have heard of Mrs. Sherwood or "Peter Parley" or Lady Callcott. *Little Arthur's History of England* by Maria Callcott (1785–1842) began its long life in 1835; and was still useful to nursery governesses sixty years later.

"Peter Parley" was all the rage in the 'thirties, in America and England. He became composite through piracy, but was originally an American, Samuel Griswold Goodrich (1793–1860) a New Englander, a most encyclopedic person and a crank with objections to fairy stories and nursery rhymes, for which he attempted, like Mr. McChoakumchild, to substitute a regimen of facts. He wrote some one hundred and seventy books of which the instructive stories formed, between 1827 (*Tales of Peter Parley about America*) and 1857 (*Parley's Balloon Travels of Robert Merry and his Young Friends to the Holy Land*) a bulky section. There were tales about Great Britain, animals, the Pacific Islands, the sun, moon and stars. His sales touched seven million. The pseudo-Parleys[1] soon cashed in on this sweeping triumph. Among their works was *Peter Parley's visit to London, during the Coronation of Queen Victoria* (1838). There is no doubt that "Parleyism" satisfied a vast hunger for informative books, which it would have been as cranky to starve as it was to attempt the suppression of fairy tales. Dickens overdid his protest against "facts" (which children love) in *Hard Times*: Kingsley more wisely combined factual and fairy matter in *The Water Babies* (1863). Jacob Abbott (1803–79) of Maine, moral and tutorial, carried out a similar task in his *Young Christian, The Way to do Good*, praised by Dr. Arnold, *The Rollo*

[1] v. Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England*, 1932: and Allibone under *Goodrich*.

Books, 28 volumes, *The Franconia Stories*, 10 volumes, *The Little Learner Series*, etc. which penetrated Asia as well as Europe. Instruction without tears was, however, already an English institution; the century had opened with Mangnall's *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions* (1800, and later edition) known to Thackeray:[1] and Mrs. Ward's *Children's Guide to Knowledge*, 1828, was being given in its revised form (*The Child's Guide to Knowledge*, 1875) to the disgusted young on their birthdays in the 'nineties.

In opposition to the general knowledge party "Felix Summerley" (Sir Henry Cole, 1808–82) edited *Popular Fairy Tales*, 1845, and the Home Treasury (numbers, 1841–5) which comprised traditional tales like "Jack the Giant-Killer" and "Red Riding Hood", as well as the "grammatico-allegorical ballad" *Sir Hornbook*, which had been written by his friend, T. L. Peacock in 1814. The old rhymes and tales, whether English or French, had been kept circulating by means of chapbooks in the earlier part of the century.[2] Perrault's fairy-stories had been staged (e.g. *Blue Beard*, Drury Lane, 1809) and re-edited; the N.B.L. catalogue[3] notes Cinderellas in 1820 and 1830, a Puss in Boots, 1840, a Red Riding Hood and Sleeping Beauty in the same year, etc. Tales from the *Arabian Nights* were published pretty frequently throughout the century; fancy kept on its way in defiance of the Cautionary and Instructive. But one foreign work rich in information blended with adventure and piety maintained its popularity for over a hundred years. This was Johann Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812–13) first translated by Godwin in 1814. Shipwreck near an island, and life there, with the peril of savages, formed the subject of Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841)—which was designed for juvenile consumption, as also *The Children of the New Forest* (1847): both providing good clean adventure, and moral elevation. But the juveniles explored further afield into *Frank Mildmay* (1829) or *Percival Keene* (1842), the latter hero being more immoral though less carnal than the former. Marryat became a boys' author throughout. Robert Michael Ballantyne (1825–94) was entirely one; his adventure stories (*The Young Fur-Traders*, *Martin Rattler*, *Coral Island*, etc.)

[1] And to Dickens' Miss Pupford, who had also studied Pinnock's *Catechisms*, based on Mangnall.

[2] e.g. the Banbury Chapbooks (388 in Nat. Book League Exhibition Catalogue, 1946, "Children's Books of Yesterday") include *Jack The Giant-Killer*, *Tom Thumb*, *Cinderella*, *Dick Whittington*, *Cock Robin*, *Jack and Jill*.

[3] Ibid.

have long been stock components of boys' preparatory school libraries. Fenimore Cooper's novels were adopted by the children, and inspired their games; while they retained, and still retain, an appeal, in which Ballantyne is deficient, to grown-ups. Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* is, again, double-barrelled. R. H. Dana's *Two Years before the Mast* (1840), was written for boys, and read also by elder persons. Mrs. Sarah J. Hale's[1] numerous writings are not: her nursery book, *Poems for Children*, 1830, is remembered only for the delightfully fatuous "Mary had a little Lamb".

An Englishwoman, Mary Howitt, author of much forgotten miscellaneous work, made "history" for children when she translated Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales (1846)—a bull-point for Fancy; though there is no evidence that Fancy had been, during the earlier part of the century, in serious danger of bankruptcy. By this date, however, the literature of romanticized "real" life, whether with the Robinsons or Masterman Ready or Natty Bumpo, was becoming formidable; but the two have continued to flourish side by side, satisfying two basic needs. In 1846, too, appeared Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense*; *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets*, being collected in 1871, and *More Nonsense Songs* in 1872. The originality of his comic genius has attracted more and more adults, although he described himself in 1846 as "an Old Derry Down Derry, who loved to make little folks merry". Those who still hold to the myth of the ferociously inexpugnable Victorian father may note in one of the alphabets that a satirical attitude to papa is encouraged. But Lear (see previous chapter) was a consistently demoralizing factor—such as is requisite in the education of the young. The orthodox *Shockheaded Peter*, an Englishing of Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, was published before 1850. But these cautionary tales are not as uplifting as they might be; they are told with waggish, fantastic, and gruesome touches suggesting that the author knew very well the taste of children for ruthless rhymes; Harriet burnt to ashes between weeping cats, or Conrad's thumb cut off by the Great Tall Tailor.

Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* (1855) offered the pleasures of two efficient lions, a cancelled execution, a battle, an offensive warming-pan (applied), and some boiling oil (not applied) to his young readers, it is true: but the satire, social, political, and literary, is for their elders, and may still seem to them as it has seemed to certain predecessors, a trifle heavy and forbidding.

[1] (1799–1888).

To romance of the sea and the shipwreck must be added the Biblical and historical romance, of which a fair number were written by Mrs. J. B. Webb between, roughly 1840 and 1868. The present writer has endured readings, on Sundays, of *Naomi, or The Last Days of Jerusalem* (1840); later came *Ishmael the Yezidee; a Romance of Syrian Life* (1864). There was also *Julamerk, A Tale of the Nestorians* (1848), and *Arthur Merton, A Story for the Young* (1862). She had a reputation (*Athenæum*, 1860) as a juvenile author, which has since faded. Equally faded are the four stories by Harriet Martineau grouped in the Playfellow Series (1841) of which *Feats on the Fjord* still keeps a wraith of vitality—the pirate episode imparts a sedate thrill; but her persons were anæmic at the start—she herself was in poor health about this time.

The Public School story—another romantic department—was ushered in during the 'sixties by two writers of great ability, Thomas Hughes (1823–96) and Frederick Farrar (1831–1903), who led off, respectively, with *Tom Brown's School-Days* (1856) and *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858). If the latter is sentimentally morbid, the former is too aggressively salubrious; but both tales are told with undeniable skill. The objectivity of *Tom Brown* persuades the modern reader that here is a true account of Victorian Rugby: but he might complain of Eric's Roslyn that there could never have been such schools or such goings on. Yet it has its subjective truth; school life is often invested with a glamour composed of the mushiest sentimentality and crudest melodrama by boys (and girls too, no doubt) round about the time of puberty, when they evidently require these stimulants. Farrar, with entire success, gave his public what it wanted.

Hawthorne and Kingsley brought Greek myth and other cultural matter to the children in assimilable form. Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* (1851) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1852) are "alpha" juvenile classics, for a style from which the heavy hand is withheld. Kingsley began to write matter suitable for children with *Glaucus* (1855) purveying sea-shore natural history; *The Heroes* followed in 1856; though *Westward Ho!*, adopted by little protestants, appeared in the previous year. It is the more acceptable of the two to the child since, if it "talks down", it does so to grown-ups. The *Water-Babies, a Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863) included both natural history and piety, but also some acceptably imaginative flights, and something of the pompousness of "that way look, my infant, lo!" Geology was the theme of *Madam How and Lady Why, or first*

lessons in earth-lore for children (1869); and there was a preface to "my dear boys" which would have been better without the mildish flavouring of gush and condescension which is tasted intermittently in the whole series. But the idea of bringing science to the nursery was a good one; and to bring it in a shape that would fit theological requirements in those controversial decades (Darwin's *Origin* appeared in 1859) a prudent one. *The Water Babies* surpassed the others through its well planned and executed adventure narrative and descriptive colouring of a clarity equal to that in *Two Years Ago* or the *Prose Idylls*. While Kingsley lectures the little ones he seems to be aware of the presence of parents and guardians in the congregation, and to enlist their attention; he is never dull but quite often calculated to overpower listeners of any age. The "talking-down" tradition was, however, actually waning when he wrote; Mr. Lear, whom it was so pleasant to know for his consumption of chocolate shrimps from the mill, and other foibles, had damaged it considerably.

And now, in 1865, when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published, there was nothing pedantic, parental, or even avuncular in Lewis Carroll's attitude towards the various babies who took his fancy. He did not suppress his natural intellectuality, but let it play in a ground accessible to young and old. The focus shifts from book to book; *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876) and *Phantasmagoria* (1876), which became *Rhyme? or Reason?* (1883) contain more jests for the old than for the young, though the latter are not debarred from enjoyment. His task of bringing joy to the mind was complementary to and probably harder than Lear's imaginative function, because of the danger, in his province, of condescension; but his grin without a cat imparts mental glee as surely as Lear's runcible cat with purple whiskers glorifies the spirit.

Dickens wrote his *Holiday Romance* for the American paper, *Our Young Folks*, where it appeared in 1868. It is not a satisfactory children's piece, but amusing as a satire, by an adult, on adults, for adults; to whom also is addressed the plea for more understanding of the young mind. The young themselves seem to ignore it, going instead to *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*,[1] and his other "main" novels.

Several children's magazines were in existence at the beginning of the Victorian era, in which improvement tended to preponderate over fun. There was the long-lived *Child's Companion*, or *Sunday*

[1] Jenkinson shows that these are very popular in the 12–15 plus ages.

School's Reward, *The Children's Friend*, *The Infants' Magazine*, *The Youths' Monthly Visitor*; and in the 'fifties came *The Boys' and Girls' Companion for Leisure Hours*, *The Youths' Instructor*, and providing more amusement, *The Charm*. *The Boys' Own Magazine*, running from this decade into the 'seventies, also struck a merrier note. In 1866 two new magazines began, *The Boys of England*, notable for sport and "thrilling" adventure fiction, and *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, more serious in tone and edited by Margaret Gatty (1809–73). She was already known as the writer, for children, of *Fairy Godmother* (1851) and *Parables from Nature* (beginning 1855); with her, but more with Kingsley, the child was acquiring nature-consciousness allied to right thinking. There had been nature books of an older fashion for young romantics: *May-Day Eve*, or *The Royal Chaplet* (1808) or the Rev. A. Crichton's somewhat later *The Festival of Flora*, a fanciful botanical poem: both less emotional than Kingsley or Gatty. It might further be noted that in the *Parables* the winning manner of moral guidance supplants the mandatory. Her daughter, Juliana Horatia Ewing (1845–85) contributed to *Aunt Judy*; she is most remembered for the vividness of *Jackanapes*, which first appeared there (1879); her gifts for pathos and the dramatic situation may remind us of Mrs. Gaskell. Other works of hers were *Lob Lie-by-the-Fire* (1873) and *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot* (1881). She wrote for another child's magazine, *Little Folks*, which has lived on from 1871 into the present century. *Good Words for the Young* began its short run in 1868 under the direction of Dr. Norman Macleod (1812–72) who was succeeded by Dr. George Macdonald (1824–1905) one of its most notable contributors. *At the Back of the North Wind* and *Ronald Bannerman's Boyhood* appeared in the paper in 1871. The former taught spiritual lessons a shade too emphatically, but the visionary quasi-mystical element was found distinctly exciting by some readers, and the affair of the Kelpie in the latter probably by more. His touch of Celtic glamour was decidedly an asset; and the Celtic gusto was making some headway elsewhere in literature under the auspices of Matthew Arnold. But one felt something Sundayish about *Good Words for the Young* which sent one thence, precociously, to *Punch*. Two other improving periodicals of fairly late inception were *The Children's Prize* (*The Prize*, 1864), and *Chatterbox* (1866). Ruskin's disapproval of the former in *Fors Clavigera* is quoted by F. J. Harvey Darton (*op. cit.* p. 277). Both were duller than *Good Words for the Young*. Another contributor to

this last, as well as to *Cassell's Boys' Paper*, was William Brighty Rands (1823–82) who took several pseudonyms and wrote three Lilliput books, *Lilliput Levee* (1864), *Lilliput Lectures* (1871) and *Lilliput Legends* (1872). He adorned his nonconformist earnestness with fantasy and sentimental quaintness. In 1879, *The Boys' Own Paper* was first issued by the Religious Tract Society, and has continued ever since. During its earlier years its contributors included Jules Verne and Ballantyne; Talbot Baines Reed, the writer of school stories; W. G. Grace, Captain Webb (swimming), and other celebrities. G. A. Hutchinson, whose face we may remember in a cartoon by P. V. Bradshaw, preserved a continuity of policy as editor from 1879 to 1912. George Orwell[1] mentions this paper with *Tom Brown's Schooldays* as illustrating (through its correspondence column) the "sex-ridden atmosphere" in boys' literature of those times, in contrast to the sterilization of *The Gem* or *The Magnet*. Sexual matters are discussed, it is true—and why not? But to call the atmosphere of either *Tom Brown* or the B.O.P. sex-ridden seems exaggerated. The policy of the latter, with Dr. Gordon Stables as medical adviser, was in favour of as much clean hard living as any member of the White Cross League could wish.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was evidently more welcomed by the children of the world than other books which she designed expressly for them (*A Geography for my Children*, 1876, *Little Pussy Willow*, 1870, *Betty's Bright Idea and other Tales*, 1876). Susan Warner ("Elizabeth Wetherell", 1819–85) provided tears for such as relished them in *The Wide Wide World* (1850), and *Queechy* (1852). In these and in the "Elsie" books of Martha Finley (1828–1909) there was a close, confined atmosphere, pathetic and pietistic. It was for Louisa Alcott in 1868 (*Little Women*) to open the windows, to be widely accepted at once by the young girls for whom she wrote; and to retain her popularity with *An old-fashioned Girl* (1869), *Little Men* (1871), *Rose in Bloom* (1876) or *Good Wives* (begun, 1868), the sequel to *Little Women*. Her charm lies particularly in the simple description of domestic joys and sorrows, with humour and innocuous sentimentality—neither in excess. When (as in *Good Wives*) she attempts a continental tour, the spell is broken. She understood Brook Farm better than the Riviera. Her ability to demonstrate her moral ideals through the actions and characters without lecturing or talking down was considerable, and doubtless endearing. She is

[1] *Boys' Weeklies*, in *Critical Essays*, 1946.

firmly established as leader of the American women who wrote for children; a quite numerous bevy, among whom may be mentioned Mrs. Mary M. Dodge (1838–1905, *Hans Brinker*, 1863, *Donald and Dorothy*, 1883), Rebecca Clarke (1833–1906, *The Dotty Dimple* and *Little Prudy* books in the 1860's), Sarah Woolsey[1] (1835–1905, the *Katy Did* books in the late 'eighties). One of the greatest successes of the time was *Helen's Babies* (1876) by John Habberton, whose humour seems, unaccountably, to have been forgotten; it offered aspects of the American child unrevealed in *Little Women*.

Adventure books for boys multiplied in the 'sixties at the hands of such writers as W. T. Adams (1822–97) and Horatio Alger (1832–99), in whose work we may see the development of action and thrill without harmfulness, comparable with the kind of thing Ballantyne was doing in England. Adams ("Oliver Optic") produced a number of series, e.g., the *Starry Flag* and *Young America* (1860), *Young America Abroad* (1890): as did Alger, the *Luck and Pluck* (1865) and other series; Alger specializing in young go-getters who make good. Adams taught Sunday school and Alger was a Unitarian minister, both being "not unmindful of their moral responsibilities" but rather, unmindful of literary aspiration. E. S. Ellis (1840–1916) wrote his series the *Deerfoot*, etc., about Indians and forest life, without the former's sense of duty. Such work was for boys only; but Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, though not his too serious *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882) proffered joy to all ages and sexes for whom, as generally, humour and action furnish meeting-places.

Women authors in England did not perhaps achieve at this time results quite as far-reaching as those of Louisa Alcott; but Mrs. Gatty and Mrs. Ewing and Mrs. Molesworth (d. 1921) maintained British prestige; the last of the three with *The Tapestry Room* (1879), where there is a pleasing incursion into mystery, and *Carrots* (1876). Jean Ingelow, too, gave the best of her naïve freshness to *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869). The dowdier *A Sister's Bye-Hours* (1868) had none of this charm. But Charlotte May Yonge (1823–1901) had the gift not only for enlivening domestic subjects (*The Daisy Chain*, 1856) but for the historical and romantic (*The Lances of Lynwood, The Little Duke, The Heir of Redcliffe*). This last (1856) was hailed enthusiastically by junior pre-Raphaelites at Oxford. The whiff of Anglican incense, a tribute to Keble's in-

[1] Pseudonym, "Susan Coolidge".

fluence, was not ungrateful to them. If they overpraised her then, she has since been overblamed for "milk-and-water"; a misleading phrase. Mrs. Henry Wood (1814–87) of *East Lynne* fame, wrote other, more sedate tales (*Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles*, *The Channings*, 1862), and conducted her magazine, *The Argosy*. Two "good" books then esteemed, and now useful period pieces, were *Ministering Children* (1854) by Maria Charlesworth and *Jessica's First Prayer* (1866) by Sarah Smith, called "Hesba Stratton".

On nursery poetry, Christina Rossetti bestowed lustre through her *Sing-Song* (1873); though her rhymed alphabet (1875) ended devastatingly with "zoophyte"—the very deuce for undocumented parents. A few of the verses are pedagogic; one at least indicates behaviour; the majority intend pleasure in their fanciful treatment of babies, pigs, flowers, food, and other natural objects; but the tiny tots of to-day seem to prefer *Tiger Tim's Weekly*. Eugene Field's several books of poetry for children opened new words and pastures to little Britons, if they had the luck to read them and, taste for "angel song" and dialect. *Wynken, Blynken and Nod* had penetrative qualities. Jean Ingelow strewed a few lyrics about the prose of *Mopsa*; but a more important poetic event was the appearance in 1885 of R. L. Stevenson's *Penny Whistles*, later, the *Child's Garden of Verses*. The fanciful treatment here is more on the lines of childish imagination ("my bed is like a little boat") whereas Christina Rossetti's was rather according to rarefied pre-Raphaelite ideals, and imposed on the child, as it were, from above. Stevenson does his best to sit naturally on the nursery floor; there are poems in which observed and remembered child-thought is rendered; and only very seldom is the brat told to behave; we are approaching modern times. The attempt was good; but *Treasure Island* (1883) for older boys, was better, as a piece of writing consistently on the adult level, without those patronizing descents which the later children, at least, are quick to detect; it was welcomed by all who enjoyed an orthodox romance of adventure. It has doubtless attracted the young to Stevenson's work as a whole until fashion, not age, suggested that they were no longer the thing.[1] *Treasure Island* first ran serially from 1881 in Henderson's *Young Folks* magazine, which specialized in "thrillers"—of which Stevenson's tale is a paragon. France began to export the quasi-scientific romances of Jules Verne in the 'seventies; *A Voyage to the Centre*

[1] Jenkinson shows that Stevenson remains popular with secondary school children: boys, 12–15 plus, girls, 12–14 plus. Haggard is read, but less so.

of the Earth, From the Earth to the Moon, or the famous *Round the World in Eighty Days* have an obvious significance; the excitement of scientific possibilities was exploited before Wells, the shape of things to come adapted for children who would be less likely to greet it with scepticism.

An event of equal, or perhaps even greater moment, occurred in 1880 when Joel Chandler Harris (1848–1908) of Georgia, published *Uncle Remus, his Songs and Sayings*; the fascination of Brer Rabbit enthralled many nations; as the "vieux Frère Lapin" he migrated to France in 1910. Animal stories were not new; they had been found in Grimm; Southey had recounted the tale of the Three Bears (*The Doctor*, 1834–7). But here was a treasury rich in resourcefulness, cunning, mischief, and ruthlessness, of which the hero had all the odds against him; the whole based, no longer on altruism, but on the principle of the survival of the fittest. Sometimes indeed, murder was wantonly committed; no Darwinian precept excused either Brer Terrapin's behaviour to Brer Buzzard, or his subsequent ribald allusions to it. The cheerfully anti-social nature of these folk-tales implied (as probably they were meant to do when first told), a holiday from contracts and conventions. Grimm's "Bremen town Musicians", by the way, is kindred in spirit, but mildly so. A more quietly celebrated animal story, still remembered and read with affection, was *Black Beauty*; *the Autobiography of a Horse* (1877) by Anna Sewell (1820–78), which, compared with Uncle Remus, is moral and idealistic.

The glamour of the British Empire entered young people's fiction not with Kipling, but with Rider Haggard (1856–1925); Zulus, dangers, and diamonds, enthralled young and old in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). The junior master who was told off to read to us at school enjoyed this, its sequel *Allan Quatermain*, and *The People of the Mist*; but *She* was not in the syllabus. Read surreptitiously, it was found distinctly passionate. From this time onward there was an increase, by Stanley Weyman and others in the intermediate kind of fiction, not written "at" children, but sufficiently de-intellectualized and exciting to provide, in secret, a debauch for highbrows.

Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) introduced Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* (1888), and though not the originator of detective fiction, created the master sleuth type who has since persisted in forms varying from Sexton Blake to Mrs. Bradley. But Dr. Watson is unique, and now as proverbial as Holmes; their saga

was carried through *The Sign of Four* (1889), *The Adventures* and *Memoirs* (1892–3), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902): and may be considered the true foundation of English detective stories. His other romances (e.g. *The White Company*, 1891, *Rodney Stone*, 1896) have won deserved admiration in the face of Holmes's greater popularity; the *boxiana* of the latter and the bow song in the former remain in our memories. Stanley Weyman (1855–1928) adopting the *genre* of Dumas, in a number of thrillingly European stories such as *A Gentleman of France*, 1893, *Under the Red Robe*, 1894, efficiently enlarged the field of action; but "Anthony Hope" (A. H. Hawkins, 1863–1933) created the very essence of mittel-Europa in his Ruritania, scene of breathless happenings in *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) and *Rupert of Hentzau* (1898). Henry Seton Merriman's[1] variety and clarity of utterance enabled him to succeed equally well in the Napoleonic (and nobly sentimental) *Barlasch of the Guard* (1902?), the modern intrigue of *Roden's Corner* (1898), and some twenty-five other plots of which *The Sowers* (1896) seems to have reprinted most often.

This sort of literature pleased with its worldliness; but there was apparently a good market for the unworldly kind such as was being written by "Edna Lyall" (Ada E. Bayly, 1857–1903) during these very years (*Donovan*, 1882, *We Two* 1884, *To Right the Wrong*, 1894, etc.), whose attitude was that of a churchwoman, but not a bigot. Pious or near-pious fiction, addressed specially to girls, was comfortably maintained to the end of the century; Charlotte Yonge died in 1901. But one worldly authoress, Ouida, made an acceptable gift to children in 1882 with *Bimbi*, a collection of stories possessing artistic balance, and thoughtfulness in an acceptable, or non-didactic, guise. The sensation of the decade, however, was probably *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886) by Mrs. Hodgson Burnett (1849–1924) published in America. This depressing child and his collar have become as proverbial as Mr. Pickwick and his tights and gaiters; partly because Mrs. Burnett gave substance to a dream close to the hearts of many; and partly because she had great skill in retaining interest. One wondered what prank of virtue little Cedric was to be up to next; and there was the episode of the false claimants to the title, with its suspense, and the artfully deferred reconcilement of the old Earl and "Dearest". It is the "classic" of the sentimental school of the Charlesworths and Warners.

During these years the specialists in, separately, boys' and girls'

[1] H. S. Scott, 1862–1903.

stories were active; Girls' school life was emerging into literary subject-matter; the *Girls' Own Paper* made a good start in 1880 with Alice Corkran (d. 1906, *Down the Snow Stairs*, etc.) as a contributor. Elizabeth (or "L.T.") Meade (d. 1914), wrote school tales (*A World of Girls*, 1886, *Betty, a Schoolgirl*, 1896) which are still current. G. A. Henty (1832–1902) who had served in a hospital at the Crimea, beginning his strenuous boys' books with *Out in the Pampas*, 1868, broke into historical romance (e.g. *The Cat of Bubastes*, 1889) and ended with Boer War books (*With Buller in Natal*, 1901, *With Roberts to Pretoria*, 1902); in spite of which small boys were beginning to speak disparagingly about his books before he died: there was a little too much manly heartiness about them. This was not the case with G. Manville Fenn (1831–1909) who, on the whole was better received; he had, too, a natural history interest which counted for something, (cf. *Nat the Naturalist*, 1882). His output and variety of subject were immense; the latter ranging from *The Queen's Scarlet* (1895) to *Marcus the Young Centurion* (1904).

Among several notable happenings of the 'nineties was the founding of *Comic Cuts* in 1890; a weekly paper where funny "strips" familiarized us with sub-music-hall drolls, tramps, landladies, soldiers, animals and the like: all was for amusement only, on a generally "slap-stick" plane. Physical injuries are now inflicted with those stylized noises now accepted in Barney Google or Pop-Eye strips as a matter of course. The kicking of Private Raw by Gertie, the Regimental Mule, was phoneticized as "whooster! kerplonk!". Such now occur in the picture itself, and no longer, as then, in the dialogue beneath. Comic pictures sometimes, as in the Ancient Roman series, portraying physical damage, were an attraction in *Chums* (from 1892) a paper preferred by some boys in 1900 to the *B.O.P.* which they pronounced "moth-eaten". An addition, staid by comparison, to journalism, was made by *The Girls' Realm* in 1896.

The distance between high and low is easily seen in the publication of Kipling's *Jungle Book* in 1894 and the issue in the same year of the first Sexton Blake Story (by Hal Meredith) in the Union Jack Library of High Class Fiction. The cynical Leftist who inquires which was high and which was low may be ignored. The two *Jungle Books* (1894 and 96) were as justifiably taken to the hearts of all, as *Stalky and Co*, was, in general, rejected. It was one of the "epileptic" patches in Kipling's literary life, which

spread embarrassed discomfort among even his admirers. By the time of *Kim* (1901) he had completely recovered, showing especial tact in balancing the colour of the journey through service and duty with the limpidity of the spiritual end beyond it—a consummation seldom forgotten. But the *Just so Stories* (1902) displayed a jerky boisterousness which has been deplored. The faultless approach to the child was not made here, as it was by Helen Bannerman (1863–1946) in *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1897?) editions of which are still multiplying, together with other Sambo episodes, and stories of little Black Mingo, Quasha, or Quibba. Mrs. Bannerman carefully excluded all adult posturings. Little Sambo, we note, is not heroic, but fortunate; destiny smiles on him in the course of overthrowing the tigers, vulnerable in their jealousy and vanity. As alternative to the Fable of the child who succeeds through virtue, it may have brought relief: but its chief attraction lies probably in the manner of the telling. Kipling—to return to him—improved again in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1926) though, beside some bad misses among the hits the *malaise* of child-consciousness was not banished, and the beauty of his historical sense there is rather for the older person.

The 'nineties brought H. G. Wells to youthful appetites already whetted, perhaps, by Jules Verne; now one might "figure to oneself" adventures in time (*The Time Machine*, 1895), the laboratory (*The Stolen Bacillus and other Incidents*, 1895, *The Invisible Man*, 1897), the operating theatre (*The Island of Dr. Moreau*, 1896), and, in a little while, the moon (*The First Men in the Moon*, 1901). Verne had sometimes strained one's willing suspension of disbelief. Wells was more plausible. The growing importance of toys in nursery stories by that time, when the word "kindergarten" was heard, is illustrated by three books, *The Wallypug of Why* (1895), by G. E. Farrow, where there is a toy Parliament, *Katawampus* (1895) by Sir E. A. Parry, with a voyage in a toy-boat, and the first of the Golliwog rhyme books, by Florence and Bertha Upton, where dolls of several kinds come to life. *Tiny Tots* (founded 1900), a paper like *Little Dots* (1887), has made a feature of both toy and animal tales. The way is prepared, in fact, for Winnie-the-Pooh; though the first two tales are retrospective in their development of wonderlands after Dodgson. Moreover Parry kept up the didactic drone of the old dispensation, at a period when the new, with its play-time objective, was opening up vistas of drivel.[1] Animal

[1] Well burlesqued by Angela Thirkell in *Wild Strawberries*.

stories for pre-school ages were given fresh impetus by Beatrix Potter[1] (1866–1943) when she started her lengthy *Peter Rabbit* series at the beginning of this century. Peter Rabbit is not the only one of her creatures to have attained an European reputation; Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle has appeared as *Poupette-à-l'épingle*: others, familiar at home, are Pigling Bland, Squirrel Nutkin, and the Flopsy Bunnies. The quaint cosiness of these stories, enhanced by the drawings, soon became (and perhaps still is) almost as requisite to the nursery as talcum powder. In extreme opposition to this, Belloc's sometimes humorously grim and satirical *Bad Child's Book of Beasts* (1896) and *More Beasts for Worse Children* (1897), delighted the parents and elder relations; though the satire of the Big Baboon may have initiated some of the little ones into that art. The tendency in these (e.g. "The Porcupine") to guy the moral idealism of the old dispensation is accentuated in *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1918); but it was the grown-ups that used to quote it to each other. In 1908 Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* was published, and is still selling; an animal tale with (see Chapter VI) deep feeling for nature and the grace of a sensitive style. The individuality of the creatures, strongly marked, fits into a comedy of the "character is destiny" type. The purification of Mr. Toad through suffering is, like that of Shakespeare's Leontes, ethical without didacticism. Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) was more zoologically probable, and so was *White Fang* (1905); though his wolves and dogs are touched with human qualities.

Excellent work was done in the fairy department by Andrew Lang, beginning as editor with a Grimm in 1884, proceeding to a Perrault, 1888, and then to the collections of tales in the *Blue Fairy Book* (1889) and its different coloured successors; a corpus of what was best in the lore of several nations. Some enterprise, not always well directed, was shown in the twentieth century by way of the invention of new fairies. Thackeray's Blackstick was correctly traditional; but Barrie's Tinker Bell broke new ground in *Peter Pan* (1904): she was rather low in a refined manner, and laughable in some aspects, as though her creator were striving to avoid the "pretty-pretty". *Peter Pan* is an apotheosis of the element of playtime which we have seen gradually making headway against that of sermon time. Further, the child cult for which Dickens did so much is now carried, or almost, to its apex: Peter himself being

[1] Mrs. William Heelis.

childhood deified. Quite a few children's plays of a more refined "type"—*Pinkie and the Fairies* by Graham Robertson (b. 1866), for instance—in contrast to, and perhaps rivalry with, the Widow Twankeyesque pantomimes with their music-hall tang, correspond to the division, in print, between "tender" literature (Beatrix Potter or Rose Fyleman) and "tough" (Tiger Tim, and the *Rainbow* animals and their numerous progeny). *Pinkie* was performed in 1910 and Algernon Blackwood's[1] *Starlight Express* (where his customarily potent occultism suffered some milk-and-watering down) in 1916. Rose Fyleman (b. 1877) has evolved fresh fairies and nursery rhymes, of a high class, whimsical sort and tender rather than tough; but a little too sterilized and cellophaned. She has contributed to *Punch* and written for children, especially verses and plays, from 1918 (*Fairies and Chimneys*).

The incidence of A. A. Milne's "juveniles" was between the two wars; *When we were very Young* appeared in 1924, *Winnie-the-Pooh* in 1926, *Now we are Six*, 1927, *The House at Pooh Corner*, 1928, followed by various later Christopher Robin books. They inaugurated a craze comparable to those after *Peter Pan* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*; and all three undoubtedly have in common a wistful sweetness highly grateful to many but intolerable to some palates. Of the three recipes, that for Christopher Robin seems on the whole to be the most saccharine, the effect being intensified by the deftly tripping verses. It is suggested that *Peter Pan* was after all a false summit of pediolatry, from whence might be observed, on the true, Christopher Robin saying his prayers. A few grains of powder may be suspected in this abundant jam; if there, they are well hidden with the author's pervasive cleverness; fun comes first. Joy is, again, the keynote of the writings of Eleanor Farjeon (b. 1881) whose *Ameliaranne* series was well known in 1933–4. Enjoyment of the best kind obtainable from the best authors was supplied by the publisher (the always inspired Basil Blackwell) of *No. 1 Joy Street* and its followers, between the wars; to which G. K. Chesterton and Walter de la Mare contributed with other notables. From the same house issued Hugh Chesterman's *Merry-go-round* magazine. Walter de la Mare's delicately quaint *Songs of Childhood* (1916) and the later *Poems for Children* (1930), furnished additional luxuries with some caviare, possibly, to the twentieth century child. Playtime wonders came plentifully from "E. Nesbit" (Mrs. Bland-Tucker, 1858–1929) who, while she failed to reach the first rank as

[1] b. 1869.

a poetess, stood high as the inventor of imaginative family stories and of the Bastables. The adventures of these last are to be found in the trilogy, *The Complete History of Bastable Family* (1928). These were holiday reading; for term time she followed the Lambs' lead with *Children's Stories from Shakespeare* and similar works. In America the family spirit was encouraged by Kate Douglas Wiggin (1856–1923) whose *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903) and *Mother Carey's Chickens* (1911) have had a wide public. She herself was an enthusiast of the kindergarten movement.

By 1919 something of a reaction against the fairy craze set in; *Punch* noted in that year, with regret, Madame Montessori's disapproval of it. The American Sunday School paper *Dew Drops* banned fairy and also "animal talking" stories in the 'twenties. Not that either form was generally abandoned, but there were at least signs of a possible, eventual recoil in the Peter Parley direction. Elves singing, with Miss Fyleman, to "a quaint wee tune", were at last confronted; even though Brownies had been perpetuated by the Girl Guide movement.

The school story industry has prospered in this century, after a good opening with Eden Phillpotts' *The Human Boy* (1900). The application of the realistic, or at least repertory, method to it by Alec Waugh[1] (*The Loom of Youth*, 1917) caused more sensation than the "debunking" of the maudlin school spirit in Arnold Lunn's sound and, by comparison, sober effort, *The Harrovians* (1913). P. G. Wodehouse inoculated the *genre* with a kind of jollity which, without severely literary professions, gratified, between 1902 and 1910, a number of rather jaded schoolboys. *Mike* and *Enter Psmith* (1909) led them on to the after-school tales where *Psmith in the City* forms a link with the past. Wodehouse's standard was well above that of a jungle of school fiction spread through the first half of our century. Only a few (and, one hopes, representative) flora of this can be noted, American and British. "Richard Stillman Powell" (R. H. Barbour, 1870–1944) wrote some sixty books (*Crimson Sweater, The New Boy at Hilltop*, etc.). A. S. Pier (b. 1874, *Harding Of St. Timothy's*, etc.) was fecund, but less so. Generations of later little girls have had the advantage of Angela Brazil's rapid output, *Harum Scarum Schoolgirl* (1920), *Popular Schoolgirl* (1927), and the like. In the jungle undergrowth flourished, up to the second war period, periodicals which specialized in school stories: the *Magnet* (tales of "Greyfriars" by Frank Richards),

[1] b. 1900.

The Gem (tales of "St. Jim's" by Martin Clifford), and for girls *The Schoolgirl*, where Hilda Richards narrated; but George Orwell, writing so percipiently about them in "Boy's Weeklies", points out that girls also read *The Gem* and *Magnet*. The fiction in both of these papers deals with characters invented forty years ago,[1] which retain to-day a curiously fossilized collection of "dated" environmental items—and even, as Mr. Orwell says, nineteenth century relics: and not even a phantom of sex. The urge towards high ideals for the young is perhaps more positive in America; the *American Boy* would not accept love stories, while in *The Child's Gem* (to quote the blurb) "all matter must have a purpose that pulls upward."[2]

The jungle undergrowth embraces a pretty wide variety of juvenile periodicals: *Comic Cuts* and allied "funny" papers, *The Rainbow*, *Playbox*, etc., for juniors, *The Mickey Mouse Weekly*, *Film Fun*, *The Wizard*, *The Champion* and even *The B.O.P.* and *The Scout*. *The Wizard* and *Champion* emphasize the wonders of science and adventure which ranges from the Wellsian to the "Tarzan" motif. There are also the American comics—garish weekly supplements of comic and adventure strips—the latter often surpassingly crude. A sample of these contains a Walt Disney, a "Bringing up Father", a Katzenjammer kids, a "Snookums", a "Flash Gordon" (Tibetan wizards), a Tarzan, a "Phantom" (Dick-Bartonesque, only worse), and a Pop-Eye. In several of these strips all cultural signposts are lost; the road to pure amusement peters out in a desert of fatuity. The early nineteenth century publications of Catnach, placed beside them, suggest that popular mentality was formerly higher in both young and old. But this matter, linking up with the cinema and numerous other social phenomena, passes out of our province. It may be complained with justice that the Tarzan books of Edgar Rice Burroughs (b. 1875) show[3] a sad falling-off and lowering of values after *The Jungle Books*, but the efforts to maintain a good standard at various age levels have been unremitting; the house of Blackwell has so striven, whether through "Joy Street" or "The Jolly Books", where Mabel Marlowe and Harry Rowntree have combined (cf. *Zipalong, the wicked whisker-wizard*, 1933); Louis Untermeyer's anthologies have included *This Singing World* (1923)—"modern poems for modern children"—and the later *Rainbow in the Sky* (1934?):

[1] *Gem*, established 1907, *Magnet*, 1908.
[2] *Writers' and Artists' Year Book*, 1927.
[3] *Tarzan of the Apes*, 1919, and many others to *Tarzan the Magnificent*, 1939.

while T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939) has detained more than one professor in the library. Higher levels remain, but beneath them apparently lower levels have been reached. In the middle, the "William" stories of Richmal Crompton enjoy a steady popularity. On the moral and devotional side, despite the "playtime" trend, outpourings of children's hymns, sermons and the like, continue, considerably inflating the now vast body of juvenile writing: the modern child may choose story-sermons in variety, or *Chalk Talk Sermonettes*. If these are literature, so are the publications that satisfy the child's desire for "technical" things, *The Meccano Magazine*, *Boys' Practical Aid*, or *The Stamp Lover*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MODERN NOVEL

THERE was no moment from which modernity can be dated, but it may be contended that three authors, Meredith, Howells and Hardy, did much to shape the course or courses since taken by fiction.† George Eliot's fundamentally religious idealism modified her positivistic views and restrained her on the brink of the "development theory". Meredith's chthonic paganism was guided by an inherent romance towards a glorification of heroic human qualities; not quite to the Swinburnian "Glory to Man in the highest", however, since man's folly was satirized whenever exposed. *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856), "a new Arabian Night", as George Eliot called it in her review, contains the pattern of the Meredithian process—evolution of the heroic by ordeal; it is seen that Fortune builds on thwackings. The idea is so refined on in *Beauchamp's Career* (1875) that fortune is no longer the reward of the hero, but is heroism itself, as recognized at length by Everard in his almost priggishly quixotic nephew, who, like Sandra Belloni and Diana of the Crossways, is nature very much methodized. Taking care that these suffering initials should, no less than Shibli Bagarag, abound in faults, Meredith raised these, and their virtues proportionately, above the common level, so that his art stood out in sharp contrast to the moderate realism of Howells or the "mechanistic" realism of Hardy. The romantic effect is enhanced by the presence, under modern conditions, of the spirit of *amour courtois*; while elevation pervades character, dialogue, and style. He evolved out of his feverishly unrestful aspirations, an *alto estilo* of his own; fascinating in its baroque accumulation of rhetorical figures, and rampant ingenuity, but too often irritating. His newer, finer nerve-stimulants coarsened and staled after a time into insupportable mannerisms as in *The Amazing Marriage* (1895); where we are not surprised at opaque conceits, and debilitated classical allusions, or empty periphrasis, none of which ornaments impart life or open a new approach to the matter in hand. But even at the height of his powers, in 1885, he had sometimes pursued wit into tawdriness and vacuity. In attribut-

ing to Diana (of the Crossways) that dreadful *mot* about Cape Turk, he proclaims her a bore; but makes amends through his genius, undimmed then and thereafter, for describing her valour, and passage through the characteristic ordeal. Wit, when his servant and not his master, invested him and fiction with honours scarcely awarded since Congreve; it is best displayed in the kind of sharp satiric comedy that reaches a climax in *The Egoist* (1879). He used it too as an alternative, to break up earlier Victorian sentimentality, devise other than happy endings (*The Egoist's* sting in its tail is a case in point), and by its probings into motive, to set an example of psychological alertness not easy to follow. He traces ironically the turn of the comic towards the tragic in that early work *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1858); which is significantly modern in that the narrator, like Hardy, comments in detachment on the lamentable workings of destiny without putting his oar in, as Thackeray did.

The novels of this early period, to which *Evan Harrington* (1861) with its admission of sartorial ancestry[1] and the musical *Emilia in England* (1864, later *Sandra Belloni*) and *Rhoda Fleming* (1865) with its rare suggestion of a link with George Eliot, belong, partake of an ease of style impeded in the next phase by growing ellipsis, epigram, aphorism and rhetorical flamboyance: which, however, still seem to express his abounding life in the "middle" novels, from *Vittoria* (1867) so tensely dramatic and charged with action, to *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), where exacerbation is still pardoned. It was in the 'nineties that mannerism defeated him (*One of our Conquerors*, 1891), though passages in *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* (1894) and *The Amazing Marriage* where there is some redeeming landscape work, declare him unconquered. His romanticism, and exaltation of the crowded hour of glorious, but not of necessity martial, life had nothing new about it; it was indeed an element which William Dean Howells (1837–1928), a landmark but not, like Meredith, a genius, discarded for realism. He was a landmark, and a harbinger; absorbing much from the newer Europeans, Turgenev, Zola, or Tolstoy, an ever deepening influence, more visible in his later work, he set himself to observe and represent life as he found it, in its ordinary functions. Dickens and Thackeray in the previous generation, had their recesses in his background; and he admired Jane Austen. *Their Wedding Journey* (1871) showed Howells on the track of the average and habitual.

[1] Shagpat was also a clothier.

A Chance Acquaintance (1873), with something of a problem plot, exposed the effect of Boston snobbery on love. While it was his intention to avoid the theatrical and passionate exceptions in character and incident, he conceded at least one conspicuously dynamic heroine in Marcia Gaylord (*A Modern Instance*, 1882); and there is a tense social situation in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1884); a rise seen to be ultimately spiritual. The influence of Tolstoy soon further aroused his social conscience to the point at which class-problems and Utopian dreams attracted him. Industrial unrest, and industrialized New York, were reflected in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889): the speculative romances, *A Traveller from Altruria* (1894) and *Through the Eye of a Needle* (1907) measured his leftward swing towards idealised socialism. The first of these appeared three years after Morris's *News from Nowhere*, the second a year before Wells' *New Worlds for Old*. Howells was one neither to strive or cry nor to dwell on the uglier side of life; the large number of books he wrote, of which some fifty were works of fiction, in both centuries, reveal a spirit kindly and increasingly wise in its search, like his own Judge Kenton (*The Kentons*, 1902) for what is "simplest and purest and kindest" in human relations. He was not then as much a realist as Zola, whose *vidange* appalled Tennyson. Avoiding extravagance in fable and style, he has sometimes been called dull, presumably by the kind of reader that prefers mountains to plains; but there is satisfaction, too, in plains.

Thomas Hardy was younger than Howells, but has been noted as influential on him; there is certainly more affinity with him than with Meredith. He too embarked on a realistic course with a final curve towards the social problem. His world-wide reputation is partly due to the architectural simplicity, compared with Meredith, of style and plot, but also to the presence throughout of ideas and attitudes easy to discover and relate to nineteenth century philosophy.[1] When *The Dynasts* appeared (1904–8) a compendium of the ideas basic in much of his previous fiction came conveniently to hand. If Meredith saw the ascent of man from his earthly matrix, Hardy noted his descent under the impetus of the laws of an ultimately Hobbesian universe, at least in *Jude the Obscure* (1896). But his first published novel *Desperate Remedies* (1871) already indicated his determinism and recognition of the clash between

[1] Intelligent Japanese who, in 1923, knew their Herbert Spencer, were enthusiastic over Hardy.

humane and natural law.) Otherwise it was not fully characteristic of what is generally looked for in him, being coloured by the mystery fashion that affected both Dickens and Eliot, and culminated in Wilkie Collins. From the pastoral delicacy of *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) grew his great exposition of Wessex, its soil, and its people, higher and humbler: he was well into this task by 1874, the year of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which won him deserved recognition. Gabriel Oak's importance as his first satisfactory lower-class hero may be gauged by scrutiny of Dickens's stagey Stephen Blackpool or the melodramatic halo round Adam Bede. The Stephen Smith of his own *Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) merged into the general grimness of that rather mechanical comedy. His strength, and feeling for the power of Wessex soil, rose to the pitch of *The Return of the Native* in 1878. (Here sombre Egdon Heath, a geological Destiny, has the ordering of tragic events. Personal character may be seen responding to inscrutable forces beyond its scope.) A lighter period followed, with an idyllic picture of Wessex in Trafalgar days (*The Trumpet Major*, 1880), a less pleasing mystery tale (*A Laodicean*, 1881), and *Two on a Tower* (1882) conveying a sense of man's insignificance in a cruelly vast universe. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) opened the period of Hardy's deepest thought, of which *The Dynasts* was to be the crowning achievement. The rise and fall of Henchard illustrates more amply than hitherto the ironic functioning of Destiny, which defeats an aspiring character. The dismal twilight of pessimism is rendered in a noticeably chastened style. The historic foundations of Dorchester are exposed with the same brooding care as went to the sylvan setting of *The Woodlanders* (1886–7) which does not, however, quite blend with the sexual problems of Dr. Fitzpiers. But these prepare the way for Hardy's gloomier treatment of such relations in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude The Obscure*. Both of these begin in depression and end in disaster, while they illustrate not only the cruelty of sexual conventions, but that of the pastimes of the President of the Immortals. *The Well-Beloved* (1896) completed his published novels in a mood of relaxed tension, and his Wessex topography with Portland Bill. He was the chief, but not the first, topographer of fiction; for George Eliot's Midlands had preceded and perhaps influenced his choice. But his feeling for the significance of locality, going deeper than hers, is so impressive as to set an example for more recent localisers. His use of accident and improbability, despite any philosophic justification

in *The Dynasts*, remains unclassical. In style his mixture of plain and "fine" writing, which distresses in early works (cf. *A Pair of Blue Eyes*) suggests again some affinity with Eliot, who also had attempted seriously to penetrate English agricultural life. But he outstrips her in daring and pessimistic realism, and differs in an irreligion that becomes a revolt. His art and thought were more at the service of the future than Meredith's romance-bound splendours.

Among minors, William Hale White (1829–1913) stands out as a realist, a portrayer without caricature of things as they were in the earlier part of the century (*Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, 1881, *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, 1887, *Catherine Furze*, 1893, *Clara Hopgood*, 1896, etc.). His studies of nonconformist sects and provincial life, and his unpretentious style, reveal an honest and rather depressed observer, quiet even in his satire. Samuel Butler obtained posthumous fame for his satirical fiction, *Erewhon* (1872), *Erewhon Revisited* (1901), a less inspired sequel, and *The Way of all Flesh* (begun 1872, published 1903). The first two attack Victorian religion and morals, and *l'homme moyen sensuel* of the time, typified in Mr. Nosnibor. The method of reversals makes sickness a crime and crime a sickness, but Mrs. Grundy Ydgrun; which, like the whole satire, is amusing though not thorough. *The Way of all Flesh* exposed the Victorian parent as a bully; collateral evidence seems to point to the rarity of this aspect. The fashion for these books between 1903 and 1914 was largely due, no doubt, to their anti-Victorian tone; now that it has passed, they survive as gifted eccentricity.

William Black (1841–98), a romantic with an eye for landscape, ranged from the lowlands (*A Daughter of Heth*, 1871) to the Hebrides (*A Princess of Thule*) with some narrative grace. He had a sense of the significance of locality less pronounced than Hardy's and, may one venture, that of Richard Blackmore (1825–1900) who appropriated Exmoor in *Lorna Doone* (1869); a work that has eclipsed his other novels. It is one of the monuments of the later romanticism which, with Meredith as its chief architect, challenged realism across the road. Blackmore's own preference to *Lorna Doone* and other tales, e.g. *Alice Lorraine*, 1872, *Mary Anerley*, 1880, *Tommy Upmore*, 1884, was *The Maid of Sker* (pub. 1872), a mystery romance of a type as old as *Daphnis and Chloe*, with a bounce and unctuousness quite Victorian, but exceeded in *Lorna Doone*. He was an artist of externals, not of psychological *nuances*.

"Ouida" (Louise de la Ramée 1839–1908) succeeded G. A. Lawrence (1827–76) whose *Guy Livingstone* is a minor anti-classic, as a challenger of middle-class conventions; her absurdities and extravagances were by-products of an ardent talent, seen at its best perhaps in an Italian setting. Her early novel *Strathmore* (1865) was parodied by Burnand;[1] others were *Under Two Flags* (1867), *Folle-Farine* (1871), *In Maremna* (1882). She entertains more than Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837–1915), whose long list of exciting works includes *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), *Henry Dunbar* (1864), and *Ishmael* (1884), or Rhoda Broughton (1840–1920, *Red as a Rose is She*, 1870, *Belinda*, 1883, etc.). Mrs. Humphry Ward (1851–1920, née Arnold) was cultured and dignified. Her conscientious attempts to infuse into *Robert Elsmere* (1888) some of the thoughts and problems, there chiefly religious, of the time, brought some protest, to which she replied in the preface to *David Grieve* (1892). She continued to write novels with ideas, *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (1898), *The Marriage of William Ashe* (1905), *Fenwick's Career* (1906); and others. In *Helbeck* local colour (the Lake District) is strong. She had not an adequate sense of form or economy; and has left posterity some stretches of heavy going. *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) by Olive Schreiner (1862–1920) is a prose work of unusual poetic fervour, expressed simply and with power; a vision of earth, spirit and flesh in forms as improbable as Bonaparte Jenkins, a comic villain. Technical objections may be raised to him and other features of the book; but these cannot dispose of its value as creative literature.

Robert Louis Stevenson, a finer artist than either of his juniors, Rider Haggard or Stanley Weyman, resembled them in lightening romance of much of its burden of strictly adult interest, and appealing to most ages; not only in *Treasure Island*, but in *Kidnapped* (1886), *Catriona* (1893), *The Black Arrow* (1888) or that favourite mystery, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). He evolved a style which, like tartan, was both neat and gaudy, but fatiguing over a long stretch; though it did not quell his exuberance, but adorned it with self-consciousness.

The sensitive imagination of George du Maurier (1834–96) pulled in another direction. There are moments in *Peter Ibbetson* (1891), *Trilby* (1894), *The Martian* (1897) when Thackeray is remembered; and situations appropriate at least to the age of Meredith; but without Thackeray's weight or Meredith's variety and movement.

[1] "Strapmore", in *Punch*.

Trilby, the most intense and successful of his novels, achieved the sensational without such cheapness as belonged to the lower level of "Marie Corelli".[1] The glamour of dreamland is infused through *Peter Ibbetson*; that of religious feeling though *John Inglesant* (1880) by Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834–1903) and the less enduring *Sir Percival* (1886). His work, written with studious care, impressed his generation, and reinforced its part of the anglo-catholic movement. Maurice Hewlett (1861–1923) developed romance consciously and archaistically—and sometimes after Meredith in a series of mannered works which include *Earthwork out of Tuscany* (1895), *The Forest Lovers* (1898), *Richard Yea-and-Nay* (1900), *The Queen's Quair* (1904), and later, without "tushery", *Mrs. Lancelot* and *Bendish* (1912–13). Here the new romantic spirit seemed to have lost something of its freshness. Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901) with whom James Rice (1843–82) generally collaborated, had a lodgement in both camps, romantic and quasi-realistic, like the early Victorians whose tradition he followed; *Dorothy Forster* (1884) being his best example of historical fiction, and *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882) of the modern social problem piece, but he was not modern as Hardy and Gissing were.

Nor was William de Morgan (1839–1917) detached from the older tradition, which he brought, with no outstanding accomplishment, into this century, when he first took to the novel, with *Joseph Vance* (1906) memorable for its record of the progress of our sewerage. Others followed—*Alice-for-Short* (1907), *Somehow Good* (1908) and more, with no improvement on his first venture. Richard Whiteing (1840–1928), showed a keener sense of reality in *Number 5 John Street* (1899); but George Gissing (1857–1903) broke more cleanly in revolt with the past, and the sentimentality often present in its sociologizings. After the *ballon d'essai Workers in the Dawn* (1880), he wrote a series of novels, among them *The Unclassed* (1884), *Demos* (1886), *Thyrza* (1887) of a virtue not recognized till the appearance of *New Grub Street* in 1892. Against a background of French realism he might seem at first to be comparable with Howells; but he differed from him in his acceptance of the unpleasant, and a certain brusque pessimism: he excelled in drabness. Yet his sympathy with and understanding of Dickens found expression in the still not superseded *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1898). His travel book *By the Ionian Sea* (1901)

[1] Minnie Mackay.

dispels illusions about Southern Italy; *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903), an autobiographical variety of the novel, revealed a mellower and less defiant self than the novels and short stories did. Scotland produced at this time a minor but gifted exponent of gloom in George Douglas Brown (1869–1902). His *House with the Green Shutters* effectively countered the kailyard school;[1] he should have lived longer.

The imposing craftsmanship of Henry James (1843–1916) was far from perfect in *Roderick Hudson* (1876) where its beginnings had to contend with a certain weight of melodrama. It indicated those preferences for a mature art and culture, a fineness of civilization, which he found rather in his own genius than in the old world where he sought it. In the course of his fecund authorship he became rather a culture-hero than, like Dickens, or Hardy, a mythologist. It is not so much any individual story (unless *The Turn of the Screw* in *The Two Magics*, 1898), as the method of the whole, which has become enshrined. Beginning under the influence of Hawthorne, of whom he wrote for the *English Men of Letters* series, he discovered and profited by European masters, chiefly Flaubert and Turgenev;[2] whence he proceeded to his own intricacy of line and shade; an elaborate dry-point technique noxious to Wells[3] and other realists. Pugnacious Mr. Harold Frederic, himself a novelist with no affectation,[4] called James an effeminate old donkey. Ignoring the donkey, we might suspect an almost elderly caution in crossing the road of self-commitment to be the secret of the many qualifyings and reservations that entangle his statements. As for subject, a characteristic theme is that of the conflict of the American Innocent Abroad, of whom the very type is Christopher Newman in *The American* (1877) with sophisticated European tradition.[5] The tables were turned in *The Europeans* (1878), and the design varied in *An International Episode* and *Daisy Miller* (1879). He reached full strength and greater detachment in the still American-European *Portrait of a Lady* (1881). Local satire in *The Bostonians* brought him home, but in *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) he revived that enigmatic lady from *Roderick Hudson* with fresh overtones, and a sense of European unrest. Art and its temperament, already a problem in *Roderick*

[1] e.g. John Watson ("Ian Maclaren"), 1850–1907.
[2] Balzac and Georges Sand were further in the background.
[3] cf. *Boon.*
[4] cf. *In the Valley, The Damnation of Theron Ware.*
[5] For the other side of the argument v. *Les Transatlantiques*, by Abel Hermant.

Hudson, became more so in *The Tragic Muse* (1890), where the art of imaginative living, dear to the 'nineties, was envisaged. He contributed several stories to *The Yellow Book*; and wrote during this decade two studies of the corruption of the young, *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), where there seem to be hints that a fundamentally bourgeois morality has felt the horrid fascination of decadence. Renewed architectonic energy after 1900 brought a succession of highly finished novels, of which *The Golden Bowl* (1904) shows how sordid matter may be beautified with the most dædal manner; one which had long quitted the tutelage of the Frenchmen to become seldom imitable James. In this novel, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Wings of a Dove*, he reached the zenith; but in *A Sense of the Past* (begun 1900) and *The Ivory Tower* (pub. 1917), the sensitivity of his word patterns was keener than ever. His promotion of a fine taste in writing, his artistic integrity, deserve permanent homage; but it might be said that if he saw life steadily, he refused to see it whole; the part of the international world that he chose was mostly the aristocratic part that has ceased to be, except in his pages, where the quintessence of the leisured classes is preserved. He and Meredith were both romantic decorators; but Meredith seemed to have the better understanding of emotive expression, while James excels in analytic research among conversational and facial significances.

"Joseph Conrad" (1857–1924), a Pole (T. J. Korzeniowski) who had been a French sailor, became a friend of Henry James, and a novelist sometimes reflective of James's technique. John Galsworthy, casually encountered on a voyage, gave him his first encouragement; and some years later (1895) *Almayer's Folly* appeared. Between 1898 and 1903 he published tales which included some of his best narrative work: *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, *Youth*, *Typhoon* brought a new variety of sea-romance, and tropical glamour, to a willing public, and the device of Marlow, whose personal touches—Conrad's own indeed—convey enrichment of atmosphere. The South American tale *Nostromo* (1904) was followed by the excellent and essay-like *Mirror of the Sea* (1906). It was by this time intellectually correct to admire both him and James; but there was matter of a more popular grade of stories written between 1907 and 1912 (*The Secret Agent*, *A Set of Six*, *Under Western Eyes*, etc.). But in 1914 his *Chance* registered further upward progress. After more tales of South-East Asian Waters (*Victory*, 1915, etc.) he brought romanticism to Spain (*The Arrow*

of Gold, 1919) and finally turned back to Napoleon's time (*The Rover*, 1923, *Suspense*, 1925). His style was careful and conscious, with only slight and not unpleasing mannerisms. If he can be attached to a school, the romantic psychologists, led by Meredith and James, will do. But Far Eastern interest was also purveyed by Maugham and Tomlinson: while India became familiar through Kipling, and later, Forster and Myers.

Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* was written and published in India, as were *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, *The Phantom Rickshaw*, *Wee Willie Winkie*, and other tales, in 1888: old buffers remember the grey paper-bound series.[1] From these beginnings it became clear that the author took no sahib's-eye view, but one much wider; the souls of humble natives and private soldiers were valued; there was audacious vulgarity, glare and blare, cynicism and mawkishness, and a subtlety beneath it all which invalidated any accusation of cheapness. If James's writing was in the best taste this, by the same standard, was in the worst; but it compelled public attention; the cleverness was admitted, and by some the genius, though this latter sometimes needed the guidance of good sense.[2] But the "Bouverie-Byzantine style, with baroque and rococo embellishments"[3] dispenses with "flats" and neutral passages, no less than do the elevated manners of James or Meredith: there may be crudities, but not dullnesses. His first novel-length tale, *The Light that Failed* (1890–1), missed perfection and remained an elongated short story; but illustrated vividly a frequent teaching of its author's, that love of work (as with "William the Conqueror" and "The Brushwood Boy") comes before love of women. Of his other long tales *Captains Courageous* (1897) still suffered from attenuation, but with *Kim* (1901) he achieved mastery and prose epopee of high excellence. The story books of the 'nineties, *Life's Handicap* (1891), *Many Inventions* (1893), *The Jungle Books* (1894–5), *The Day's Work* (1898) abound in imagination: the thoughts of animals or machines or hermits are disclosed by a sensibility much refined since the year of *Plain Tales*. After *Rewards and Fairies* (1910), he wrote many stories, but on a downward grade from *A Diversity of Creatures* (1907) to *Thy Servant a Dog* (1930). He has been called wrongly an imperialist jingo; he approached the imperial theme humbly; to him

[1] Wheeler's Indian Railway Library.
[2] For which see Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*.
[3] *The Day's Work* (1898).

the white man's burden was heavy with responsibility. He ranks as one of the most eminent of those who made the second romantic revival in fiction, and the recorder of a great national spirit, since diluted.

Two of Kipling's contemporaries, Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863–1944) and James Barrie, were knighted, and wrote accomplished though not great novels. The wholesome blitheness of "Q's" Cornish series, *The Astonishing History of Troy Town* (1888), *Hocken and Hunken* (1912), etc., leaves a happier memory than the spectacle of Barrie wrestling with sensibility in *Sentimental Tommy* (1896) or *Tommy and Grizel* (1900). Extra-territorial fiction as well as nationally American, was written freely by the polyglot Francis Marion Crawford (1854–1909) who in the course of his travels once edited a paper in India,[1] and was born in Italy. The international colourings of his earliest novels (*Mr. Isaacs*, 1882, *Dr. Claudius*, 1883, *A Roman Singer*, 1884) is quite dazzling; and by the time we come to murder in *To Leeward* (1884), the makings of a melodramatic are clearly seen. Opposing the problem novel, social or psychological, he pursued romance and the plot of action. His most substantial achievement was the tetralogy of the (Italian) Saracinesca family, from 1887–98,[2] where his local knowledge gave substance to the framework. He showed his sense of the past in the Crusading tale *Via Crucis* (1898), and of national affairs in *An American Politician* (1885). For him, the story was the thing, and character subservient to plot: and the business of the novelist, as he maintained in *The Novel: What it is* (1893) was to please, and avoid excess of particulars such as local colour enlists; which is all healthy and Aristotelian. His theory was well practised in *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance* (1890). He was a remarkably efficient worker at fitting the classic skeleton with romantic meat.

Winston Churchill (b. 1871), far more characteristically American, supported the earlier tradition of historical romance, then waning, with *Richard Carvel* (1898, the Revolution), *The Crisis* (1901, Civil War) and *The Crossing* (1904, Migration westward), after which he yielded to the newer sociological mode, as in *The Dwelling Place of Light*, where industrialism was scrutinized. His change was significant; the new century demanded, and got, lectures on its problems, in place of dioramas of its past; whether from Upton Sinclair, or H. G. Wells.

[1] *The Indian Herald.*
[2] *Saracinesca, Sant'Ilario, Don Orsino, Corleone*

When Wells wrote his scientific romances (see last chapter) in the 'nineties, he burnt with a moderately hard and gem-like flame; and one felt the romance; and the promise of graceful satire in *The Wonderful Visit* (1895). His *début* in this decade was noted by Wilde, writing of him to Ross (6.4.97) "you mentioned Henley had a *protégé*?"[1] By 1905 Utopianism (*A Modern Utopia*, 1905) and social criticism (*Kipps*, 1905) were encroaching on his artistry, though the élan of *Tono-Bungay* (1909) and *The History of Mr. Polly* (in both of which economic and sex problems appeared) was entirely pleasant. The sex problem troubled his pages for years, whether in *Ann Veronica* (1909), *The Passionate Friends* (1903), *Joan and Peter* (1918), which is also educational, *Christina Alberta's Father* (1925), or *Meanwhile* (1927); in which it became progressively less interesting. Sociology, politics and the like inspired numerous other works, narrative, descriptive, argumentative, from *New Worlds for Old* (1908), *via The New Machiavelli* (1911) and *Men Like Gods* (1923) to *Things to Come* (1939). Here too he lost in brilliance as he gained in earnestness; and his contempt for stylists, Henry James or Moore, was expressed in *Boon* (1915). He seemed, soon after, to relinquish any attempt to "get there splendidly".[2] Didacticism clawed him in its clutch; but a real vintage Wells, say *Tono-Bungay*, will no doubt be permanently esteemed.

John Galsworthy tackled his problems with sympathy and bland satire, in place of doctrinaire answers; and rendered a landscape, or a passion, with a feeling for sensuous beauty. He began to write as "John Sinjohn" in the late 'nineties (*The Four Winds*, 1897) crossing the time frontier with *Villa Rubein* (1900) and *A Man of Devon* (1901); among these tales *The Salvation of a Forsyte* introduced a motif of his biggest work. The Forsyte saga, of which Soames is the tedious hero, stretches through two groups of novels; the first are *The Man of Property* (1906), *In Chancery* (1920), *To Let* (1921) and some minor pieces: the central plot concerns Soames' trouble with his first wife, Irene. The second has to do with Soames' daughter Fleur, who also causes trouble, in *The White Monkey* (1924), *The Silver Spoon* (1926), *Swan Song* (1928), and others including *Over the River* (1933), after Soames is disposed of. Wells, in *Marriage* and elsewhere, considered the sexually difficult male; in these groups, and in novels outside them, *The Country*

[1] *De Profundis.*

[2] "The way of doing it isn't the end . . . get there as splendidly as possible, but get there." (*Boon*).

House (1907), or *Fraternity* (1909), the little model, Mrs. Bellew, Irene and Fleur, illustrate female difficulties which, however, fall into perspective in the labyrinth of middle class life, Galsworthy's especial concern. If he had a sociologist's nose, he made compensation with an artist's hand, caring more for style than Wells did. But some glory of the elder century seems to be departing, confidence, perhaps, or that presence as of an intense individuality alleged in earlier chapters.

Galsworthy missed the realist's detachment often hit by Enoch Arnold Bennett (1867–1931), most seriously creative in *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908) and the first third, at least, of the trilogy, *Clayhanger* (1910), *Hilda Lessways* (1911) and *These Twain* (1915). Bennett, without humanitarian sighs, spent a good deal of working time in being a Denry (e.g. *The Card*, 1911) and dwelling on what is enjoyable in life—not excluding its ugliness, and certainly admitting its sumptuousness, symbolized in *The Grand Babylon Hotel* (1902) and *Imperial Palace* (1930). The Five (pottery) Towns engrossed (from *Anna of the Five Towns*, 1902) much of Bennett sober; but Bennett drunk with the fun of venturing on life, as a Card, originated in the same frowsy matrix. His astuteness prompted him to take advantage of the demand for mystery plots and to tell the public *How to Live on 24 hours a Day*—to touch, in fact, at various levels of taste. But he gave the congregation a half-holiday, while G. K. Chesterton attempted the less happy compromise of decorating his rostrum with carnival emblems, whether masks and balloons (*The Man who was Thursday*), or false whiskers (*The Club of Queer Trades*, 1905). Chesterton had begun his paradoxical career as an essayist (*The Defendant*, 1901); his first novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* appeared in 1904; other essays, *Heretics*, 1905, *Tremendous Trifles*, 1909, etc.) and stories followed. In *The Flying Inn*, 1914, the murmur of innumerable bonnet-bees is heard; the "Father Brown" stories (from 1911) show detective fiction employed for moral and religious ends.[1] Belloc's novels did not display his imposingly mannered craft as well as did his books of essays (*Hills and the Sea*, 1906, *On Nothing*, 1908, *On Everything*, 1909). His antisemitism, but not his Catholicism, strongly flavours his novels, of which *Mr. Clutterbuck's Election* (1908), *Pongo and the Bull* (1910) and *The Green Overcoat* (1912) may be mentioned beside those noticed in the previous

[1] Cf. the employment of the eclogue for didactic purposes by Barclay, Googe, Spenser.

chapter. The plot is often broadly farcical, and political satire, not unlike that of Chesterton in *The Flying Inn* and after, prominent. Both have their message; and the work of both turns away from Victorian spaciousness towards a period of little craftsmen.

Naturalism, stimulated rather than influenced by Zola, is an approximate term for the most striking quality of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). Born in 1871, a year after Belloc, he wrote *Maggie: a Girl of the Streets* when he was twenty; it was a tough Bowery tale, then practically unsaleable in New York, on unsentimental and non-didactic lines. He himself objected to Tolstoy's tendency to stop and preach, noticeable also in most of the British authors just mentioned. Nevertheless there are reminiscences of *War and Peace* in *The Red Badge of Courage*, a story of the Civil War, with psychological understanding of the young soldier. He died in 1910. Frank Norris (1870–1902), a pupil of Zola, reinforced the American naturalistic movement with two novels on wheat, *The Octopus* (1901) where it is grown, and *The Pit* (1903) where it is distributed; elemental stuff in which, as in Kipling, romance and realism combine. His style had power rather than chastity.

The colours of romance were rejected by Theodore Dreiser (b. 1871), who may be regarded as the keystone of American naturalistic fiction. Giving momentum to the representational turn taken by Crane and Norris, he has composed his pictures of modern America, on a plan dictated by a pessimistic view, comparable with Hardy's, of the struggle for existence. The president of the immortals seem to sport with Carrie Meebler (*Sister Carrie*, 1900), but the president is rather a machine than a living entity; and Jennie Gerhardt (1911) is another of its victims. As Fortune it dominates the saga, designed as a trilogy, of Mr. Cowperwood, a big business man, in *The Financier* (1912) and *The Titan* (1914). After his less organic *The Genius* (1915) he produced his masterpiece, *An American Tragedy* (1925), an enormous record of the gradual entrapping and extinction of an unfit hero, and a document rich in social detail. It imposed through sheer weight and bulk, and through its effective arousing of pity and perhaps fear, in spite of an ineffective style. His strength lay in accumulation, not in omissions designed to intensify the significant: for to him so many things were significant: the habits of bell-hops, collar makers, birds and as much more as four hundred pages can contain: his deficiency in style and wit accounts for dreary stretches through

which it is necessary to persevere until his massive virtues, which include an even painfully conscientious vigilance and a strong but heavy hand at sensational crises, are appreciated. It is difficult to find in him a parallel to Hardy, whose satiric laughter may be heard in the remoter parts of the universe.

Related to, but divergent from, this group was another, concerned with sociological problems, and joined, as has been noted, by Churchill. Robert Herrick (b. 1868) attacked the naturalistic foundations of life in Chicago during the 'nineties in *The Common Lot* (1904) and *The Memoirs of an American Citizen* (1905). Another outstanding serious novel was *Waste* (1924), of documentary rather than purely literary interest. He made his mark with all the force of an outraged social conscience but not with any elegance of style. Yet outrage did not work him into such a frenzy of protest as inspired *The Jungle* (1906) of Upton Sinclair (b. 1878) which astonished the world, or as much of it as could read fiction. Here Sinclair offended all the human senses with great virtuosity, and, it was said, gravely affected the sales of tinned meat. After 1918 he launched a series of attacks on capitalism with *The Profits of Religion*, *The Brass Check* (the money-controlled Press), and *The Goose Step* (big business and the universities). Belloc had used the two latter themes,[1] with less noise and more fun; but Sinclair has a stronger flair for the sensational disclosure; perhaps that is his chief merit.

Jack London (1876–1916) became known to English children for his animal stories in 1903. His proletarian sympathies and origin soon expressed themselves in political tales and forecasts, *The War of the Classes* (1905), *The Iron Heel* (1908), *The Revolution* (1910). He possessed fire, imagination, a wealth of experience gathered as a casual labourer and super-tramp, and something like the prophetic strain of Wells, like whom he could range from the remote past (*Before Adam*, 1906) to the future (*The Revolution*). Something youthful and possibly naïve in the gusto of his descriptions seems to have attracted older children from *The Call of the Wild* to the more adult books; one choice being *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), dominated by a grim person called Wolf Larsen. The company of American realistic sociologists differed from the roughly corresponding British company in several respects, but particularly in this; that they broke more forcefully through the surface of what was accepted as art. Indeed, with Dreiser there seem to be migra-

[1] e.g. in *Emmanuel Burden, Pongo and the Bull.*

tions from the artistic to the documentary area; the disadvantages of which are clear in *The American Tragedy*.

A sense of formal beauty was preserved by a fair number of writers for whom the vast and the massive had little attraction. Norman Douglas (b. 1868), beginning as a topographer of charm (e.g. *Fountains in the Sand*, 1912, *Old Calabria*, 1905) emphasized the Mediterranean setting that he knew so well in *South Wind* (1917) a comedy of the manners of exiles. His witty, desultory manner pleased the connoisseurs of the time. He was cultured and Horatian in his satire, gently shocking, and unhampered by bourgeois morality; in short, amusing. The satire in *They Went* (1920), a tale of the Druid age, was harsher, and the book less popular. It is even a book with a message, delivered by the quite-too-chaste-and-venerable Mother Manthis; but *South Wind*, not quite a masterpiece, remains the better of the two, and *In the Beginning* more monotonous than either.

Douglas's decorative use of perversities and oddities was exceeded by the younger Ronald Firbank (1886–1926) who derived more obviously from the Beardsley period, and failed in his short life fully to curb his undoubted genius. A curious epicene aura (if the epicene have them) proceeds from his fantastic tales, lavishly sensuous in their decoration, and at moments magnificently inaccurate in their detail;[1] though this ceases to be important in a world largely expressionized. His works, precious in format and content, began with the slender *Odette D'Antrevernes* (1905), *Vainglory* appeared in 1915, *Inclinations*, 1917, *Caprice*, 1917, *Valmouth*, 1919, *The Flower beneath the Foot*, 1923, *Prancing Nigger* (*Sorrow in Sunlight*), 1924–5, and *Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli*, 1926. All are worth reading, not only because of their remoteness from literary arterial roads, but for the makings, though not the completion, of high endeavour.

One of the few who appreciated Firbank intelligently was Carl van Vechten (b. 1880). His first novels, *Peter Whiffle, his Life and Works* (1922) and *The Blind Bow Boy* (1923), reveal a spiritual kinship at some distance; but this grew fainter as he swung nearer to the problem novel with *Nigger Heaven* (1926); though he never treated the real dully nor lost his feeling for fantastic absurdity in this or subsequent work, e.g. *Spider Boy* (1928), *Parties* (1930). His way did not lie in the lyrical country of Firbank, but in that of prose; and he adhered to the accepted logic of life. His ornament,

[1] In *Valmouth* somebody throws dead flowers out of a clerestory window.

especially before *Nigger Heaven*, had rarity and what the pro-realists called sophistication; and was to this extent allied with or influenced by James Branch Cabell (b. 1879), an artist first and foremost, a romantic theorist and anti-realist afterwards. He re-discovered the importance for humanity of a poetic dream world, and created, though not quite as Dunsany did, an imaginary realm, the romantic kingdom of Poictesme, where Dom Manuel was found as inspiration to a sequence of works including *An Eagle's Shadow* (1904) and *The Way of Echen* (1929). Cabell's most notable book was *Jurgen* (1919) over which, and the morality of which, there was controversy; its style was something that required notice at all costs, opulent rather than fine, and loud with echoes whether of medieval, Jacobean, or modern ages. *Jurgen*, an oasis of refuge from a surrounding wilderness of sociological platforms, was built on the foundation of romance honestly recognized as an emergency exit from life's little ironies; for which the author supplied his own ironic machinery, even to romance itself; a talisman to dreamland (*The Cream of the Jest*, 1917) turns out to be the metal top of a cold cream jar. He is permanently important as a counterweight to the documentary novelists.

Flight from reality into regions "just this side of Dream"[1] was arranged by Walter de la Mare in prose as well as in poetry; his delicate curiosity, his gifts for half-lights and suggestions, were well employed in *Henry Brocken*, *The Three Mulla-Mulgars* and *The Return* (1910), *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921) *Ding Dong Bell* (1924) or *At First Sight*, 1928; the ghostly was admitted, but not forced, into his service. Algernon Blackwood (b. 1869), however, greeted the unseen with a shout (*John Silence*, 1906, *The Listener*, 1909), and throve on horrors, until he turned to milder, or more theoretical, and certainly duller, occult subjects (e.g. *Jimbo*, 1909). For sound ghost-stories in the best ingle-nook tradition Montague Rhodes James (1862–1936) should be honoured, as long as this form of escape is favoured; his *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904) was rightly acclaimed, and followed by *More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1911) and *A Thin Ghost and Others* (1919). Maurice Baring (1874–1947), poet and author of several novels, notably *Cat's Cradle*, 1905, *Daphne Adeane*, 1926, *Tinker's Leave*, 1927, included strangeness beyond nature among the effects of his finely finished tales in *Half a Minute's Silence* (1925): but Arthur Machen (1863–1949) was more at his ease among the ghosts and shadows.

[1] *Henry Brocken*, 1904.

Beginning in the 'eighties with *The Chronicles of Clemendy* (1888), Machen was still writing after the First War (*The Shining Pyramid*, 1924, *Children of the Pool*, 1936). His visionary war books, *The Bowmen* (1915), containing an "Angel of Mons" story, and *The Terror* (1917) had not the haunting atmosphere previously enjoyed in *The Great God Pan* (1894), or *The Three Impostors* (1895), where his strange variant of romantic beauty marked a further advance from the antique base of Horace Walpole's wonder-and-horror; and from Poe's advance too. While Ambrose Bierce (1842–1913, *Can such Things Be?*, *In the Midst of Life*, etc.,) has been compared with Poe, he did not imitate him in his stories, but stands out as an intensely and seriously individual trafficker in things of darkness. Poe was sometimes diffuse; Bierce always concentrated, and also exerted, though narrowly, some inflence on the art of narrative.

Readings of this life, varyingly intellectual, and at different levels, occupied quite a number of authors born chiefly in the 'seventies and 'eighties. J. D. Beresford (b. 1873; *Jacob Stahl*, 1911, *A Candidate for Truth*, 1912, *The Invisible Event*, 1915, etc.), wrote with a careful eye and memory; William Somerset Maugham (*Liza of Lambeth*, 1897, *Of Human Bondage*, 1915, etc.) with the high ability of perfected mechanism, which offers a contrast to the humanitarian emotions of E. M. Forster (b. 1897), who has the art of not writing like a professional. A group of novels and stories (*A Room with a View*, 1908, *Howard's End*, 1910, *The Celestial Omnibus*, 1911, *A Passage to India*, 1924) illustrate Forster's search for sweetness and light, and his march against the Philistines. His satiric laughter is gentle in *A Room with a View*: harsher in *A Passage to India*. Cecil, a crypto-Philistine, is let down lightly in comparison with Indian Civil Servants. In 1924 some held that Forster's interpretation of India annihilated Kipling's; to-day that may be doubted. His work is a good example of the quarto presentations which have pretty continuously replaced the Victorian folios.

The reflective work of H. M. Tomlinson (b. 1873) in *Gallions Reach* (1927), *All our Yesterdays* (1930) or *All Hands!* (1937) with marine, tropical or dockside colourings, pleases with no ambition to be other than its realistic-romantic self. Compton Mackenzie (b. 1883) was once considered "advanced"; and *Carnival* (1912), *Sinister Street* (1913–14), *Guy and Pauline* (1915) and *The Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett* (1919) passed for daring until the reaction against romanticism, which colours them not unpleasantly, outmoded them. While the glitter of the style is now a little tar-

nished, the virtue of concentrated rapture still lives at least in the largely autobiographical *Sinister Street* and its sequel. Since then he has extended his field, while intensive cultivation has not kept pace; but the comic aspect seen in *The Red Tape Worm* (1940) is a lively one. Joyce Cary (b. 1888) appears to have absorbed the modern miasma more completely in *The Horse's Mouth* (1944), the last of a set of three and preceded by *A House of Children* (1941) and *To be a Pilgrim* (1943), dealing with a period of England. His range, from delicacy to toughness, is wide, his strength imposing.

Hugh Walpole (1884—1945) has the air of a quarto that tried to be a folio. *Maradick at Forty* (1910) and *Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill* (1911) encouraged belief in a triumphant future; his reputation was believed to be secure after *The Cathedral* (1922), a solidly John-Bullish tale, of less distinction than *The Dark Forest* (1916) with its Russian setting. The Herries saga, which ran from *Rogue Herries* (1930) to *Vanessa* (1933) followed competently the still fairly prevalent mode of regional fiction. He left his safe and well-established "middle" position for a raid into the Edgar Wallace terrain, in *Portrait of a Man with Red Hair* (1925); so good a thriller that one may regret that this efficient story-teller did not write more of them. A photographic quality, evident in Walpole's books, is more pronounced in those of Gilbert Cannan (b. 1884) whose association with Repertory beginnings and debts to the thought (but not the perkiness) of Samuel Butler[1] and Shaw were reflected in a number of novels which seem at present to have gone underground awaiting, no doubt, a glorious resurrection. Cannan began writing novels in 1909 with *Peter Homunculus*, translated Rolland's *Jean Christophe*, composed plays and further novels in some of which (e.g. *Little Brother*, *Annette and Bennett*) he seemed to revel in the drab and dreary. But revels seemingly more Dionysiac attracted attention in the tales, long and short, of D. H. Lawrence, to whose crescendo from *The White Peacock* (1911) to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) it was impossible to be deaf. The characteristics of his books have become well-known: sex, almost religiously approached in a truly English spirit, the dark powers of the unconscious, variants on the autobiographical motif of elopement; the hero whose passion subdues the female is himself, but the fable has disguises as different as that of *The Lost Girl* (1920) is from *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). There are beautiful passages, mainly descriptive, but much hysterical outcry and some sheer

[1] v, his *Samuel Butler*, 1915.

dullness; his bad health seems to have disturbed (as Stevenson's did not) the state of balance required for successful composition. He worked within narrow confines, became for a time a little god to literary leftists, and is now perhaps unduly neglected.

The three Powys brothers, John Cowper (b. 1872), Theodore Francis (b. 1875), and Llewelyn (b. 1884) infused into their novels, stories, and essays a freshness which was grateful to intellectuals in the 'twenties and 'thirties. They refashioned our world as they saw it with a naïve poetic vision, aided or obscured at times by romance, and a symbolism that becomes a drawback in some of T. F. Powys's tales. The sex element, conspicuous rather than preponderant, seems to be used catalytically. All three have reached a standard of prose that is marked but not mannered. Their more notable works include *Wolf Solent* (1929) and *A Glastonbury Romance* (1932) by J.C.; *Mr. Tasker's Gods* (1925), *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* (1927) by T.F.; and *Ebony and Ivory* (1923) and *Impassioned Clay* (1931) by Llewelyn. Another favourite of inter-war highbrows was L. H. Myers (b. 1881) whose Indian trilogy, *The Root and the Flower* (1935), contains much fineness and even fastidiousness of expression. Caradoc Evans (b. 1883) trenchantly satirized national shortcomings in *My People* (1915), *My Neighbours* (1919); his poetic rancour should not be forgotten. Douglas Goldring (b. 1888) has marked down, without undue bitterness, mistakes and sillinesses of the Freudian age. *Nobody Knows* (1925) and *Cuckoo* (1926), sufficiently illustrate his unobtrusive wit; while *Mary Lee* (1922) shows how the eloquence of Geoffrey Dennis (b. 1892) may be used effectively for a criticism of (non-conformist) life.

A number of women novelists, active both before and after the first war, set themselves tasks of excellence which, if not fully-performed, served to maintain a fair cultural level; none of them reached the first-class, and all added something to that confusion of tongues, to that unhappy air of crowding and aimlessness, which seems to have set in early in our century and still to flow. May Sinclair (b. 1865?) philosophical by study and naïve in her views of life, was already writing before 1900 (e.g. *Mr. and Mrs. Nevil Tyson*, 1898). *The Divine Fire* (1904) was one of her many books which reached a cheap edition; *Tasker Jevens* (1916) brought in the war with sentimentalities, ultra-heroisms and shaky military details: *Uncanny Stories* (1923) opened a door to the old familiars, suspense and horror. Rose Macaulay's cerebral satire was more up-to-date,

perhaps with some acknowledgment to Anatole France, as she surveyed contemporary follies in *Potterism* (1920), *Mystery at Geneva* (1924) and other novels. The historical *They were Defeated* (1932) was one of several scattered attempts during the last forty years to revive the past. One of the more effective of such attempts was made by her junior, Naomi Mitchison (b. 1897) in the 'twenties and 'thirties, with several novels, beginning with *The Conquered* (1923). Margaret Irwin's *Royal Flush* (1932) and *The Gay Galliard* (1941) are adequate; Robert Graves' *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God* (1934) have been deservedly commended; but *The Wanderings of Wenamen* (1936) and other historical tales by Jack Lindsay are worth closer acquaintance.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) catered admirably for the intelligentsia, in five books, *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928) and *The Waves* (1931); all were experimental, and *Orlando*, a Pythagorean fantasy, most obviously so; but none sustained. The rendering of the inward view and subjective time, the keen observation, and most of all the frequent decorum of expression which roused neo-classic memories, gave more than the shadow of pleasure, less than the whole substance; less, it may be added, than her essays, *The Common Reader* (1925 and 32) or *A Room of one's Own* (1829). The short excursions in the former among nineteenth century women novelists nourish the powers of thought. Dorothy Richardson (b. 1882), another interesting experimentalist, used copiously the silent soliloquy, so important to James Joyce, in *The Pilgrimage*, a saga extending through various books of increasing subjectivity, the main subject being a woman called Miriam. Her method of characterization is antithetic to Mrs. Ward's or Miss Sinclair's, her style to Henry James's, whose long sentences and commas she largely replaced with short sentences and full stops. Both she and Mrs. Woolf seemed to be feeling their way towards a new conception of the novel, tentatively rather than with a grand conviction. The freshly individual manner of Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) was more attractive, and her attitude to human goings-on that of the witness unshakeable under cross-examination, in such tales as those of *In a German Pension* (1911), *Bliss* (1920) or *The Garden Party* (1922). Her limpidity was, and is, valuably rare. Neither E. M. Delafield[1] (b. 1890) nor Sheila Kaye-Smith (b. 1888) are pioneers, but both support literary decency; the former with the wit and *verve* of her

[1] E. E. M. de la Pasture.

novels (e.g. *Zella sees Herself*, 1917, *Jill*, 1926) and contributions to *Punch*, the latter with the regionalism that has earned her the title of "the Hardy of Sussex", among several competitors, and her preoccupation with the soil and religion (*The Tramping Methodist*, 1908, *Sussex Gorse*, 1916, etc.).

Mary Webb (1883–1927) exploited Hardy's regionalism without his philosophy (as did her junior, Sheila Kaye-Smith) choosing the Shropshire district for her country tales, *Precious Bane* (1924, admired by Earl Baldwin) and the previous *Golden Arrow* (1916), *Gone to Earth* (1917), *The House in Dormer Forest* (1920) and *Seven for a Secret* (1922). She excelled in rendering atmosphere, emotional or rural; she had intuition, intensity, and a style erring on the side of heaviness. Phyllis Bentley (b. 1894) has contributed efficiently to, and written efficiently about, regional fiction. Clemence Dane scored a hit with *Regiment of Women*—a loud comment on our sex-segregation—in 1917, and a miss with *Legend* (1920). Romer Wilson (1891–1930) began a career of vividness and intuition for dramatic values with *Martin Schuler* (1918), continuing it both in her novels (*Latter Day Symphony*, 1927, etc.) and her biography of Emily Brontë (*All Alone*, 1928). The intense virtuosity of Stella Benson (1892–1933) was sustained from her rising (*I Pose*, 1915) to her zenith (*Tobit Transplanted*, 1930). Her awareness of style has been always evident, and has doubtless helped to sustain her upward flight; while Margaret Kennedy (b. 1896) after the success of *The Constant Nymph* (1924) did not reach higher. After these, Winifred Holtby (1898–1935) and Vera Brittain (b. 1896), both Somerville products, continued the tradition of cultured narrative generally above, never below, the middle-brow line. The former's work improved steadily from *Mandoa! Mandoa!* to *South Riding* (1936); the special interest of the latter is even more in her autobiographical *Testaments of Youth* (1933) and *Friendship* (1940) than in her novels (*The Dark Tide*, 1923, etc.). There has been much talent but little genius of the kind imagined by Longinus.

War narratives were written by both older and younger men. Of the former C. E. Montague (1867–1928) satirized staff inefficiency, popular journalism, and other faults of those days in some of the short stories of *Fiery Particles* (1923), the novel *Rough Justice* (1926) and *Disenchantment* (1922) which is a conspectus of causes and effects. A delicacy of style adorned with literary, often Shakespearian, allusion, blends curiously, but blends nevertheless,

with the grimness of the matter. Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939) brought his Tietjens saga which ran from *Some do Not*, 1924, *No More Parades*, 1925, etc., to *The Last Post*, 1928, through the war. The quixotism and suffering of Tietjens, the bitch-like propensities of his wife, become tedious before the end. Disapproval of the abuse of war conditions was registered by R. H. Mottram (b. 1883, *The Spanish Farm*, 1924, *Sixty-four, Ninety-four!* 1925, *The Crime at Vanderlynden's*, 1926) and by Richard Aldington in *The Death of a Hero* (1929). The ingenuousness of Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of George Sherston*[1] (pub. as such, 1937), continues to be attractive; Robert Graves' *Goodbye to all That* has been mentioned. But patriotism and duty received support in "Ian Hay's"[2] popular *The First Hundred Thousand* (1915) or J. B. Morton's *The Barber of Putney* (1919). Edmund Blunden recorded enjoyment of war's comradeship and backwaters as well as a lively awareness of its horrors, in *Undertones of War* (1929).

Ernest Hemingway (b. 1898) became well-known as the writer of *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) a poignant and unhopeful comment not only on war, but on other human shortcomings. Romance tinges the book as it does the others referred to in this section. Hemingway's gift for penetration has more recently triumphed again in *For whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). His despair is that of the poet of unusual sensibility; but it does not drive him into retirement; he remains a man speaking to men,[3] and one of the few major creative forces in the inter-war period. *The Three Soldiers* (1921) of John Dos Passos was impressive, but did not as yet fully expose this author's resources.

After Crane and Theodore Dreiser, American representationalism found a robust exponent in Sinclair Lewis (b. 1885). One would like to regard him as keeper of the middle way between the slickly optimistic Booth Tarkington (b. 1869)[4] and the fuliginous broodings of Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941): but his observation of provincial characters, actions and towns was not neutral; his documents are strongly marked with satire, most strongly in *Elmer Gantry*. *Our Mr. Wrenn* (1914), though youthfully immature, pointed towards the phase of great factual accomplishment which, after several works of beneficial exercise, he reached in 1920 with

[1] Includes *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man*, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, and *Sherston's Progress*.
[2] Sir John Hay Beith, b. 1876.
[3] cf. Wordsworth on the poet in Preface to *Poems*, 1802.
[4] *The Conquest of Canaan* (1905), *The Turmoil* (1915), etc.

Main Street, a sociological study of the Middle West. Britons may find it helpful to compare his method with that of Bess Streeter Aldrich, whose best-selling and sentimental *A Lantern in her Hand* (1928) is familiar here. But it was *Babbitt* (1922) which so impressed its portraiture on this island as almost to create a myth of America as one vast Babbitt warren; and at least replaced the old popular image of the thin American with a goatee beard, by that of a fat American with spectacles. Babbitt is a colossal Humour, the concentration of all that was typical of his class; and however much one may assume superior airs, one cannot extinguish Babbitt's significance. Dr. Pickerbaugh of *Arrowsmith* (1924) is good but more specialized as a modern Trappola, *Elmer Gantry* (1927) an epitome of the American religious racket; the picaresque tradition is adroitly fitted to new times and places, and Ferdinand Count Fathom given a worthy descendant. After two minor works (*The Man who knew Coolidge*, 1928 and *Dodsworth*, 1929) Lewis was awarded the Nobel prize in 1930. His humour brightened corners as dull as a Baptist theological college; his love of the highest (when he sees it) is perhaps a disturbing factor in descriptive satire, when coolness is required. *Sæva indignatio* may become excessive.

The attempts of Sherwood Anderson, who has been called "expressionistic", to intuit the springs of behaviour brought him through an early phase of externals (*Windy McPherson's Son*, 1916, *Marching Men*, 1917), to *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921), both groups of pieces with some poetry in the latter, though both have poetic elements of a kind even more prominent in *Many Marriages* (1923) and *Dark Laughter* (1925); where he tended to lose himself in symbolism more obscure than that of the egg. Revolt from mechanized civilization brought him dreams of escape into vaguely Utopian or primordial heavens. Man in his present state is a monstrous caricature. Anderson is sometimes reminiscent of D. H. Lawrence, though he is gloomier and more inventive. Repression-theories, characteristic of inter-war psychology, have marked him. His *Home Town*, in the "Face of America" series, appeared in 1940. Willa Cather (b. 1876) comes nearer to the norm of realism—if there is one—as a re-creator of provincial happenings, with their essentials, but not their superfluous detail. The tradition of her style goes back into the nineteenth century; she can write without strain or affectation, as may be seen in *O Pioneers* (1913), *My Antonia* (1918) or *Death comes to the Archbishop* (1928).

The recording of American lives has been continued, with a fervour sometimes lyrical, by John Dos Passos (b. 1896) whose *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), *The 42nd Parallel* (1930) or *1919* (1932) reveal his alertness to the social significance, but also to the poetic value, of detail, rendered with glittering impressionism. The "stream" soliloquy of the James Joyce order is combined with objective portraiture to make a well-balanced whole; the vitality of which suggests that the "slice of life" school is by no means exhausted. But the manner has been opposed in the earlier works of Thornton Wilder (b. 1897), *Cabala* (1925), *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), *The Woman of Andros* (1930). Wilder's prose, tinted and perfumed with something traditional from the 'nineties, protests, like his subject matter, against modern harshness, from which he escaped with graceful motions. There has since been something of a counter-march in *Heaven's my Destination* (1935), where a plainer critical utterance on man may be heard. It is not easy to credit his charms with the power that may be reasonably expected in a masterpiece; it is easier so to credit *Manhattan Transfer*. The agitations of William Faulkner (b. 1897) succeeded in rousing an excitement for some time, when he was hailed as the descendant of Poe and Bierce. His work in *Sartoris* or *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), showed considerable appreciation of the grotesque and the shudder. Gaudy rather than neat as a stylist, he has perplexed reviewers, with doubts as to whether he is a genius with mystical lights, or a mannerist with copious *panache*. As a by-product—modern Gothic, perhaps—of modern American literary evolution he cannot be ignored. William Saroyan (b. 1908) has shown in *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1934) great ability for story-telling in a characteristic American idiom, full of life and promise.

The realism of J. B. Priestley (b. 1894) seems to be a heritage of the Galsworthy and Bennett era; but it did not, in *The Good Companions* (1929) aim at Galsworthian high seriousness, nor had it Bennett's sharp tonicity. The reviewers mentioned Dickens; but there was none of Dickens's caricature or didacticism, and the sentimental parts had their own flavour. *The Good Companions* provided substantial, popular and anti-Bloomsbury entertainment. *Angel Pavement* (1930) a more pugnacious and sombre work, presents lives of business people in London under the risks of unlimited enterprise with some acutely observed detail, but does not compare very favourably with the "observed" novels of the Ameri-

cans, from Dreiser to Dos Passos; not omitting the acrid products of research into American sexual manners by Henry Miller (b. 1891) in *Tropic of Cancer* (1935), where the real and the mystical, though blended more than once since Whitman, were now infused with the newer, tougher spirit.

Aldous Huxley stands the test pretty well with a series of novels in which the fruits of observation become increasingly lixiviated in the acid of ideas, the whole being adorned with eruditely strange allusion. He began to write when the Amusing was a cult; but the amusement of *Antic Hay* (1921) was already of a satiric and atrabilious kind. An alternative to the bodily life found so disgusting was being sought in *Those Barren Leaves* (1925); and a Swiftian revolt from the flesh and from a "mixture of sensuality, abhorrence and self-hatred" before it (*Time must have a Stop*, 1945), has kept him active in the search, and set him among the gloomier prophets (*Brave New World*, 1932). Wit and science and Yoga have helped him on his way; one may believe the best French (and no doubt Latin) prose to underlie the decorum of his style. The cleverness of his wit is ancillary to reflection; but the cleverness of William Gerhardi (b. 1895) seems to flash, as in *Futility* (1922) or *The Polyglots* (1925) sometimes for flashing's sake. But his talent for exposing queer situations and geographical oddities, is considerable. His satirical outlook, like that of Eric Linklater (b. 1899), suggests that there was then still some amusement to be gleaned from human behaviour; the doom of the little victims was not yet fulfilled. Linklater's sportive *Poet's Pub* (1929) was the prelude to an energetic series in which *Juan in America* (1931) most successfully combined frolic with censure: the laughter in its sequel, *Juan in China* (1937) tended to be rather forced. *Magnus Merriman* (1934) displayed his gifts for territorial representation, and that other more rugged aspect of his muse which some may prefer to un-abridged jesting. The mordant jests of John Collier (b. 1901) in *His Monkey Wife* (1930) illustrate even more poignantly the heroic laughter of the doomed of this century; mirth which became more subdued in *Tom's a' Cold* (1933) and *Defy the Foul Fiend* (1934). Sex is treated by Gerhardi, Linklater, and Collier, in a manner less portentous than formerly: one was now getting used to it as an ingredient.

David Garnett (b. 1892) has followed another line of country with several short and delicately-told novels in which the effects of cleverness are disguised by simpler and perhaps designedly naïve tones; his writing could never be called "smart", as Linklater's has

been. From the fantasy of *Lady into Fox* (1922) and *A Man in the Zoo* (1924) he proceeded to the more naturalistic but less arresting *The Sailor's Return* (1925), *Go she Must!* (1927), *Beany-Eye* (1935) and other pieces. Richard Hughes (b. 1900) dealt gracefully with perils and strange events, seen or unseen, in *A Moment of Time* (1926), *High Wind in Jamaica* (1929), *In Hazard* (1938), etc.

The foreign scene was not neglected in this period; to Myers' India of the Past, and Hughes' Jamaica, must be added China, variously revealed by Pearl Buck (b. 1892) or Ann Bridge, Japan, responsible for William Plomer's most thoughtful tales, *Paper Houses* and *Sado*, and Malaya once more, as interpreted by E. Arnot Robertson (b. 1903) in *Four Frightened People* (1931). Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* (1931), widely known in print and film, has been followed by Chinese novels in which she has devoted herself to the oriental standpoint; Ann Bridge (*Peking Picnic*, 1932) wrote with understanding but did not surrender the base of legation life. The glitter of Arnot Robertson is as good as gold, and evidently disguises a seriously critical spirit. Plomer's books strike one at once as containing a more ballasted criticism, and a witty detachment of observation.

Younger workers on the English scene include H. E. Bates (b. 1905) who has been prolific since 1926 (*The Two Sisters*); the anti-idealistic or debunking trend of the age underlies, applied to country themes, *The Poacher* (1935). The town life exhibited by Graham Greene (b. 1904) in *It's a Battlefield* (1934) or *Brighton Rock* (1938) combines the sordid and the sinister with noticeable romance. A Catholic attitude, and an awareness of popular crime literature, have no doubt played their part as stimulants. Evelyn Waugh (b. 1903) another of the modern Catholics, has written brilliant farcical satire in *Vile Bodies* (1930), *Scoop*, 1938 (inferior to *Vile Bodies*), and quite recently *The Loved One* (1948). Charles Morgan (b. 1894), has become notable for fiction (*The Fountain*, 1932, *Sparkenbrooke*, 1936, etc.) and criticism (*Reflections in a Mirror*, two series). He has the vision and the faculty divine, but it is not every reader that can attune himself to its reception. The Kafkaesque products of Rex Warner (b. 1905, *The Wild Goose Chase*, 1938, etc.) are more palpable and more easily labelled as period pieces.

Three branches of the narrative tree, in this period, demand notice; crime and mystery, popularized biography, and autobiography. The first was more invigorated by the commercially

sound romance of Edgar Wallace (1875–1932), than by the mechanical ingenuity of "John Rhode" or the psychological ventures of Gladys Mitchell. A whole gallery of queer detectives have succeeded Holmes; Van Dine's Philo Vance, the composite Ellery Queen, Rhode's Dr. Priestley, Miss Mitchell's Mrs. Bradley, Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey, Agatha Christie's Poirot, Mr. and Mrs. Cole's Inspector French, are but samples. The industry has attracted even poets to try their luck; and "Nicholas Blake" (Cecil Day Lewis) has made good. The early Victorians mixed their mystery into their "social" novels; their descendants have made of it a separate literature. After Edmund Gosse (*Father and Son*, 1907), Maurois, and Lytton Strachey, the light biography has expanded through the labours of Harold Nicolson (b. 1886), "Hugh Kingsmill"[1] (1889–1949), Peter Quennell (b. 1905), "C. E. Vulliamy"[2] (b. 1886), D. B. Wyndham Lewis, and others.

Autobiography too, has become since Robert Graves' *Goodbye to all That*, a popular feature, with dazzling variety which includes Vera Brittain's *Testaments*, Beverley Nichols' *Twenty Five* (1924), Alec Waugh's fictionally reminiscent *Myself when Young* (1925) and *Thirteen such Years* (1932), Sacheverell Sitwell's *All Summer in a Day* (1926), Christopher Isherwood's *Lions and Shadows* (1938), to be read "as a novel", and Noel Coward's *Present Indicative* (1937). Such excursions may spend some of the energy absorbable otherwise by novel-writing, but the disease of twentieth-century British literature lies deeper. Hundreds of gallant artists may be seen—all honour to them—fighting a losing battle against unsuitable environment; while the growing superiority of American letters may be attributed to the continuance of a favourable environment. The artist must enjoy some such measures of freedom as have been denied to him by those menaces of totalitarian despotism which the last war has merely served to aggravate. The broad sweep, the long course in which the wheels take fire, was possible to the Victorians, but not to their children. Every promise—and these are not wanting—of revival fails to reach fulfilment; the momentum of attack seems to waver in a confusion of voices. Those writers who were fortunate enough to emigrate from this country to America may indeed congratulate themselves; for it is to the United States, rather than to Britain, that we may be inclined to look for grandeur in the coming days.

[1] H. K. Lunn; *Matthew Arnold*, 1928, etc.
[2] A. Rolls: *James Boswell*, 1932, etc.

TABLE OF DATES

1830 Accession of William IV.
Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical.*

1831 "New Sporting Magazine" (Surtees' *Jorrocks' Jaunts* begin).
Harriet Martineau begins *Illustrations of Political Economy.*
Thomas Hood's *Dream of Eugene Aram.*

1832 Sir Walter Scott died.

1833 Dickens' *A Dinner at Poplar Walk* in "Monthly Magazine".
Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus,* (1st bk. pub.).

1834 Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii.*
Ainsworth's *Rookwood.*
Sir Henry Taylor's *Phillip Van Artevelde* (1st edn.).

1835 Clare's *The Rural Muse*
Darley's *Nepenthe.*
Browning's *Paracelsus.*
T. C. Haliburton's *The Clockmaker,* or *The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville.*

1836 Dickens published *Sketches by Boz*; started *Pickwick Papers.*
Thomas Noon Talfourd's *Ion.*
Lyra Apostolica (pub.).

1837 Accession of Queen Victoria.
J. Fenimore Cooper's *Adventures of Captain Bonneville.*
Disraeli's *Henrietta Temple.*
James Sheridan Knowles's *The Love Chase.*
Browning's *Strafford.*

1838 Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–1839).
Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons.*
Martin Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy.*
Samuel Lover's *Handy Andy.*

1839 Charles Darwin's *Journal of Researches during the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle.*
Harriet Martineau's *Deerbrook.*
Philip James Bailey's *Festus.*

1840 Darley's *Thomas à Becket.*
Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship.*
Leigh Hunt's *Legend of Florence.*
Charles Lever's *Harry Lorrequer.*
R. H. Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends* (Published).

1841 George Borrow's *The Zincali.*
Emerson's Essays (1st series).

First number of "Punch".
Marryat's *Masterman Ready.*
Theodore Hook died.

1842 Ruskin began *Modern Painters.*
John Westland Marston's *The Patrician's Daughter.*
The Nation (Ireland) founded.

1843 Wordsworth appointed Poet Laureate.
Carlyle's *Past and Present.*
Thackeray started to write for "Punch".

1844 J. R. Lowell's *Poems.*
Richard Hengist Horne's *Orion.*
Robert Chambers' *The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.*
Macaulay's Essays collected.
Disraeli's *Coningsby.*
A. W. Kinglake's *Eothen.*

1845 Thackeray's *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Cairo.*
Sidney Smith and Thomas Hood died.

1846 Thackeray began *Vanity Fair.*
Melville's *Typee.*
E. Lear's *Book of Nonsense.*

1847 Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1847–1848).
Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.*
Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights.*
Melville's *Omoo.*

1848 Clough's *Bothie.*
Germ and *Art and Poetry.*
Macaulay's *History of England* (1848–61).
Marryat died.
Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton.*
Kingsley's *Yeast.*

1849 Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture.*
E. A. Poe died.

1850 T. L. Beddoes' *Death's Jest Book.*
Tennyson's *In Memoriam.*
Clough's *Dipsychus.*
Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.*
Wordsworth died.

1851 J. Fenimore Cooper died.
Melville's *Moby Dick.*
George Meredith's *Poems.*
E. Gaskell's *Cranford* (1st number).
H. B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1st number).

1852 Thackeray's *Esmond.*
Masks and Faces by Charles Reade and Tom Taylor.

1853 Matthew Arnold's Preface to *Poems.*
Thackeray's *The Newcomes* (1st number).
Kingsley's *Hypatia.*
1854 Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (pub.).
Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* begins.
1855 Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring.*
Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.*
Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Psychology.*
Trollope's Barsetshire Chronicles started with *The Warden.*
Sir Richard Burton's *Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1855–56).
Tom Taylor's *Still Waters Run Deep.*
Longfellow's *Hiawatha.*
Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*
1856 Reade's *It is Never Too Late to Mend.*
Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays.*
Meredith's *The Shaving of Shagpat.*
Whittier, *The Panorama and other Poems.*
Charlotte M. Yonge's *The Heir of Redcliffe.*
1857 David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels in South Africa.*
Trollope's *Barchester Towers.*
1858 Matthew Arnold's *Merope.*
F. Farrar's *Eric*, or *Little by Little.*
1859 Darwin's *Origin of Species.*
George Eliot's *Adam Bede.*
Mill's *Liberty.*
Washington Irving died.
1860 George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss.*
Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White.*
Dion Boucicault's *The Colleen Bawn.*
1861 Lowell started *Biglow Papers.*
Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth.*
1862 Charles Browne's *Artemus Ward, His Book.*
Calverley's *Verses and Translations.*
1863 Kingsley's *The Water Babies.*
Thackeray died.
1864 Jean Ingelow's *Poems.*
Browning's *Dramatis Personae.*
John Clare died.
1865 Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon.*
T. W. Robertson's *Society.*
J. H. Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* (pub.).
Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland.*
1866 Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1st series)

1868 Louisa Alcott's *Little Women.*
Bret Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp.*
Morris, *Earthly Paradise* (1st vol.).
1869 W. S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads.*
Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad.*
R. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone.*
1870 T. H. Huxley's *Lay Sermons.*
Bronson Howard's *Saratoga.*
Dickens died.
1871 William Dean Howells' *Their Wedding Journey.*
1872 Ruskin's *Munera Pulveris.*
Roden Noel's *The Red Flag and other Poems.*
Holmes' *The Poet at the Breakfast Table.*
Tennyson's *Idylls of the King.*
Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree.*
Samuel Butler's *Erewhon.*
1874 James Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night.*
Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd.*
1875 Morris, *Sigurd the Volsung.*
Buckland's *Logbook of a Fisherman and Zoologist.*
Tennyson's *Queen Mary.*
Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury.*
1876 John Habberton's *Helen's Babies.*
Henry James's *Roderick Hudson.*
George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda.*
1877 Samuel Butler's *Life and Habit.*
1878 James Payn's *By Proxy.*
R. Jefferies, *The Gamekeeper at Home.*
Standish O'Grady's *History of Ireland* (1878–80).
1879 R. L. Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.*
J. H. Ewing's *Jackanapes.*
First issue of "Boys' Own Paper".
Meredith's *The Egoist.*
Henry James's *Daisy Miller.*
1880 Disraeli's *Endymion.*
Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus, his Songs and Sayings.*
1881 Thomas Carlyle died.
Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady.*
T. E. Brown, *Fo'c's'le Yarns.*
Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1st number).
The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford.
1882 Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse.*
1883 Richard Jefferies, *The Story of My Heart.*
Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm.*

1884 Henry Arthur Jones, *Saints and Sinners.*
David Belasco's *Mayblossom.*
Sidney Lanier's *Poems.*
Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage.*
1885 William Henry Hudson's *The Purple Land.*
R. L. Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses.*
Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines.*
Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways.*
1886 W. B. Yeats, *Mosada.*
Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy.*
1887 Mark Rutherford's *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane.*
1888 Matthew Arnold died.
Poems and Ballads of Ireland (anthology).
John Todhunter's *The Banshee.*
George Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man.*
Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet.*
Arthur Machen's *Chronicles of Clemendy.*
1889 A. P. Graves, *Father O'Flynn and other Irish Lyrics.*
Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat.*
G. Manley Hopkins died.
Walter Pater's *Appreciations.*
1890 Emily Dickinson's *First Series of Poems* (pub.).
Henley's *The Song of the Sword.*
"Comic Cuts" founded.
J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (Vol. I).
Stanley's *In Darkest Africa.*
1892 Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan.*
G. B. Shaw's *Widowers' Houses.*
Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads.*
"The Irish Theosophist" (Vol. I).
George Gissing's *New Grub Street.*
Tennyson died.
1893 Sir Arthur Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.*
Sir William Watson's *The Eloping Angels.*
1894 G. B. Shaw's *Arms and the Man.*
George Moore's *Esther Waters.*
Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda.*
Kipling's first *Jungle Book.*
George du Maurier's *Trilby.*
Walter Pater died.
1895 Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of being Earnest.*
Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly.*
1896 Laurence Binyon's *London Visions.*
Dr. W. A. P. Martin's *A Cycle of Cathay.*

A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad.*
W. W. Jacobs, *Many Cargoes.*
H. Belloc's *Bad Child's Book of Beasts.*
1897 Edward Arlington Robinson's *The Children of the Night.*
Douglas Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland.*
1898 Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol.*
1899 Percy Mackaye's *A Garland to Sylvia.*
Robert Bridges's *New Poems* (pub.).
E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross, *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.*
The Irish Literary Theatre founded.
Eden Phillpotts's *The Human Boy.*
1900 Fiona McLeod's *The House of Usna.*
Rudyard Kipling's *From Sea to Sea.*
John Ruskin died.
1901 Thomas Hardy's *Poems of the Past and Present.*
Kipling's *Kim.*
Death of Queen Victoria.
1902 J. M. Barrie's *Quality Street.*
Stephen Phillips' *Paolo and Francesca.*
H. Belloc's *The Path to Rome.*
Owen Wister's *The Virginian.*
Bret Harte died.
1903 St. John E. C. Hankin's *The Two Mrs. Wetherbys.*
G. B. Shaw's *Man and Superman.*
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild.*
George Gissing died.
1904 J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan.*
Alfred Sutro's *The Walls of Jericho.*
Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts* (Part I).
Carl Sandburg, *Reckless Ecstasy.*
Eglinton's *Dana.*
The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, started.
Henry James, *The Golden Bowl.*
Robert Herrick's *The Common Lot.*
M. R. James, *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary.*
1905 Harley Granville Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance.*
Ernest Dowson's *Poems* (pub.).
H. G. Wells, *Kipps.*
J. Storer Clouston's *The Lunatic at Large.*
Bliss Carman's *Collected Poems.*
1906 Galsworthy's Forsyte saga started with *The Man of Property.*
Galsworthy's *The Silver Box.*
William Vaughan Moody's *The Great Divide.*

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle.*

1907 Gertrude Bell's *The Desert and the Sown.*
James Joyce's *Chamber Music.*
J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World.*
G. K. Chesterton's *The Man who was Thursday.*
Gelett Burgess's *Are You a Bromide?*
Francis Thompson died.

1908 John Masefield's *The Tragedy of Nan.*
Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows.*
W. H. Davies's *Autobiography of a Supertramp.*
Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale.*

1909 Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives.*
George Meredith and A. C. Swinburne died.

1910 H. G. Wells, *The History of Mr. Polly.*
P. G. Wodehouse's *Psmith in the City.*
Walter de la Mare's *The Return.*
Ezra Pound's *Provenca* (Selected poems).
(First post-Impressionist Exhibition, Grafton Galleries, London).
Death of Edward VII.

1911 John Drinkwater's *Cophetua.*
John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy.*
Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson.*
Stephen Leacock's *Nonsense Novels.*
D. H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock.*
W. S. Gilbert died.

1912 Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes.*
Milestones by Arnold Bennett and E. Knoblauch.
William Vaughan Moody's *Poems and Poetic Dramas.*
Georgian Poetry (1st vol.).
Harriet Monroe founded *Poetry.*
Vachel Lindsay's *General Booth enters into Heaven.*
James Stephens's *The Crock of Gold.*
Max Beerbohm's *A Christmas Garland.*

1913 G. K. Chesterton's *Magic.*
Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street* (1913–14).

1914 Eugene O'Neill's *Thirst.*
Zoe Akin's *Papa.*
Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *Poetical Works* (pub.).
Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons.*
First World War begins.

1915 Gordon Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife.*
Some Imagist Poets.
Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology.*

John Gould Fletcher's *Irradiations.*
1916 *Wheels* first published.
James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*
Lennox Robinson's *The White-headed Boy.*
Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems.*
Henry James died.
1917 Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Renascence.*
Fiona Macleod's (W. Sharp) *The Immortal Hour* (staged).
1918 Conrad Aiken's *The Charnel Rose.*
G. M. Hopkins's *Poems* (pub.).
First World War ends.
1919 Susan Glaspell's *Bernice.*
Sir Ernest Shackleton's *South.*
J. B. Cabell's *Jurgen.*
Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio.*
1920 Galsworthy's *The Skin Game.*
E. Blunden's *The Waggoner and other Poems.*
Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones.*
Wilfred Owen's poems first collected.
William Dean Howells died.
1921 Clemence Dane's *A Bill of Divorcement.*
G. B. Shaw's *Back to Methuselah.*
S. Anderson's *The Triumph of the Egg.*
1922 James Elroy Flecker's *Hassan.*
Louis Untermeyer's *The Roast Leviathan.*
James Joyce's *Ulysses.*
R. C. Benchley's *Love Conquers All.*
Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room.*
Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt.*
William Gerhardi's *Futility.*
T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land.*
1923 Noel Coward's *The Young Idea.*
Lascelles Abercrombie's *The Phœnix.*
Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine.*
Edith Sitwell's *Facade* (pub.).
1924 Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock.*
A. A. Milne's *When We Were Very Young.*
E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India.*
1925 Ashley Dukes, *The Man with a load of Mischief.*
Marianne Moore's *Observations* (pub.).
"A.E." (G. W. Russell), *Voices of the Stones.*
Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy.*
T. F. Powys, *Mr. Tasker's Gods.*
Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter.*

Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay.*
Thornton Wilder's *Cabala.*
John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer.*
1926 T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*
Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer.*
Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven.*
1927 Reginald Berkeley's *The White Chateau.*
1928 Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude.*
D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover.*
Thomas Hardy died.
1929 R. C. Sherriff's *Journey's End.*
E. Rice's *Street Scene.*
Robert Bridges's *Testament of Beauty.*
St. John Ervine's *The Second Mrs. Fraser.*
E. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms.*
W. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury.*
J. B. Priestley's *The Good Companions.*
E. Linklater's *Poet's Pub.*
1930 Rudolf Besier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street.*
Aldous Huxley's *Jesting Pilate.*
Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies.*
Hugh Walpole's *Rogue Herries.*
Robert Bridges died.
1931 Aldous Huxley's *The World of Light.*
1932 *Whips and Scorpions* (pub.).
New Signatures (pub.).
1933 Sir Aurel Stein's *On Ancient Central-Asian Tracks.*
Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* (1st vol.).
Peter Fleming's *Brazilian Adventure.*
1934 *Love on the Dole* by Roland Gow and Walter Greenwood.
1935 T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral.*
W. H. Auden's *The Dog beneath the Skin.*
1936 George V died and accession of George VI.
The Ascent of F.6 by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood.
Carl Sandburg's *The People.*
W. B. Yeats's *Dramatis Personae.*
1937 J. R. Ackerley's *Hindoo Holiday.*
J. M. Barrie died.
1938 Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock.*
John Galsworthy died.
1939 James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake.*
Second World War begins.
1941 Joyce Cary's *A House of Children.*
James Joyce died.

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Note.—Some death-dates have occurred since the compilation of these bibliographies.

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