A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

LAFCADIO HEARN

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Lafcadio Hearn
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BY

LAFCADIO HEARN

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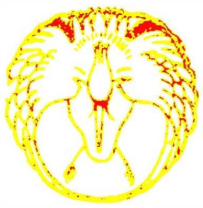

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PREFACE

LAFCADIO HEARN held the chair of English literature in the Imperial University of Tokyo from September, 1896 to March, 1903. He taught twelve hours a week—five hours in reading of Milton, Tennyson, Rossetti, and others, four hours in lecturing on miscellaneous subjects in literature and for the remaining three hours he lectured on the history of English literature. This was a three-year course which he gave twice in his seven years at the University. This book has been edited from the note-books of his students who attended the second series, extending from September, 1900 to March, 1903.

In lecturing Hearn did not prepare any manuscripts, but would sometimes merely look into a small note-book taken out of his pocket. In this note-book he had scribbled dates and titles. The students would listen attentively to the teacher and managed to write down long passages and even whole lectures, word for word.

"Notes on American Literature" was delivered in the autumn of 1898 as one of his series of special lectures on various subjects. His piercing criticism upon the poetry of America had long hampered its publication in that country.

Special acknowledgements are due to Mr. A. S. Whitfield, and Mr. Shigeshi Nishimura for their kind assistance in the Popular Edition published in 1938 which was welcomed so warmly that we have decided to bring out the present fifth edition in revised form.

March, 1941.

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FIRST PERIOD—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BEFORE entering upon the study of English literature proper, it will be necessary to speak of the English people; for English literature did not begin in England at all. Nor did the English begin in the island now called England, but called by the Romans Britannia, the country of the Britons (whom some writers of to-day prefer to call Brythons). Before the English came to England they lived in those parts of Northern Europe about the mouth of the great river Elbe. If you look at the map you will see that to the east and to the north there is the peninsula of Jutland; and in the more southern portion of the peninsula, now called Schleswig-Holstein, the Angles (afterwards called English) lived. But in the same peninsula of Jutland lived a people called Jutes, very close in blood to the English, who afterwards mixed with them. To the west of the river Elbe are the low countries now called Holland and Belgium: and you will see on the map near by the name of a province called Saxony. To-day the limits of Saxony or the country of the Saxons is very different from what it was in former times. The Saxons of old history filled the low countries, or at least a great part of them with their settlements. Now these three peoples—Angles, Jutes and Saxons—all combined to make the conquering race called English. So you will see that the original English people were very much more close in blood to the Danes, the Scandinavians and the Dutch than to other peoples. Of the more northern strain in the race we shall speak later on.

But why should the English have been called English rather than Jutish or Saxons? They were indeed and are still called Anglo-Saxons; but we do not hear anything about the Jutes. The reason is of course that the Anglian element predominated after the races had mixed; but there is a very in-

teresting fact to remember in this connection. The original Angles, or English people, *all* left their own country in a body to settle in England; whereas only a part of the Saxons and a part of the Jutes left their original homes. As for the Jutes they settled chiefly in what is now called Kent: there were very few of them. The Saxons settled mostly in the southern parts of the country. The Angles settled in the northern and middle districts. Of course this resulted in the establishment of three different languages in the country. But really, these languages were very much like each other; they were rather dialects than languages. The three peoples had no more difficulty in understanding each other than a modern inhabitant of Japan would have in understanding the speech of a man of Kyushiu—perhaps not even so much. The three dialects nevertheless had a long struggle for supremacy. At last it was the language of the original Angle or true English that won; but it had been so much influenced in the meantime by Saxons, that it is quite correct to call it Anglo-Saxon.

I do not think that it would serve any good purpose to go further into the history of the English race. There are so many details given now on the subject that only a trained ethnologist could keep them all in his head. But it is very easy to remember about the mixture of Angles, Jutes and Saxons; and if you look at the map you will be able to memorize the essential part of the question very well.

Next we must say something about the character and beliefs of the old English and of their neighbours. You understand that they belong to the great northern family called German, Teutonic, Scandinavian, etc., according to position in time and history. Goths was another general and vague name for them. But I should advise you not to think about names too much in this connection — about the difference between Goths and Teutons, High German, or Low German; only remember that all the races called by these names represent really one great Northern family. The southern part of Europe was peopled by many kindred races—much more civilized—and we still speak of the southern nations of Europe as the Latin races,

a name that indicates the Romanization of their countries, and the diffusion among them of the Latin tongue.

I have said that the Northern races were much less civilized. But they had certain great qualities which, in the end, made them more than a match for the power of Rome. The Romans were able to conquer most of the world: they had the greater part of Central Asia and Northern Africa under their rule. But they never were able to really conquer the North. I may tell you a funny story here about one of their expeditions against the Northmen. The Romans could not frighten those people by ordinary means; but one of their military leaders thought that they might be frightened by lions. It is said that a number of lions were taken in cages to a part of the coast where the German or Gothic barbarians were waiting to resist the Romans. When the soldiers had been landed the lions' cages were opened and the animals driven towards the enemy. But the Northern men took the lions to be only big dogs; and they beat them to death with sticks. The story may not be altogether trustworthy; but the telling of it gives us a good idea of what the Romans thought about their great enemies. You know that Germany and the North eventually broke the Roman Empire into pieces. The conquest of Britain, a Roman colony, was really only a part of the great Northern conquest of all Europe.

Before the Roman Empire was broken up it had been christianized. Those German peoples who came most under the influence of Roman laws and manners had also been christianized. But the tribes more far away from Rome remained "heathen" as those became called who kept to the older religion and the men of the most northern part of Europe were the very last to accept either Christianity or civilization. In Scandinavia Christianity is not even a thousand years old: the people were not converted before the 11th century and perhaps it took at least another century to complete the conversion. Now the English and the other peoples who conquered Britain were not Christians;—and they soon destroyed whatever civilization or Christianity the Romans had left in the island.

It is good to remember these things before beginning the study of English literature. The old Northern character as expressed in and by the old Northern religion is still a part of English character—some of the best of it as well as some of the worst. The old Northern beliefs have not entirely died out of men's lives and language: customs relating to them may still be traced in the folk-lore of the country people and in various festivities and superstitions. I need scarcely tell you that the Northern religion has left its mark upon English geography,—that many and many an English town or village or place still keeps a name derived from Northern mythology;—and you know that the names of the days of the week in English have names of Northern gods,—with the exception of Saturday.

I will only say a few words about their religion. The religion of the Greeks has been called the Religion of Beauty;—we might call the old Northern faith the Religion of War. But the name would not be altogether just; for the Northern creed was not a belief in destruction as the end and object of effort. These men of the North were builders as well as destroyers. I think a better name for their faith would be the Religion of Courage. If I should attempt an outline of the different Northern mythologies it would take very long, and I do not think it is necessary. But I may make some general remarks.

The Gods represented, perhaps, powers of nature; but they certainly represented also great human ideals. Though we may be most impressed by the character of the God Thor—god of battle and of force—because of the wonderful stories preserved about him, we should not forget that Odin, the All-Father, was also the divinity of wisdom and that he is said to have taken out one of his eyes and given it away, for the privilege of one drink of the water that makes men wise. Nor should we forget certain beautiful figures in this mythology—proving that the barbarian North was not without aesthetic sentiment. As Odin gave his name to Wednesday, and as Thor gave his name to Thursday, so does Friday preserve the memory of the beautiful Goddess Frigg to whom prayers were made by lovers. And even the name Sunday suggests the legend of Balder, the god

of light, about whom the most charming poems and songs were written. So you see that these were not all war-gods and that the religion was not altogether for soldiers only, but I think that the character of it is most nobly shown in the conception of the god who gave his name to Tuesday—Týr (sometimes written Tiw).

When the great wolf, the enemy of the Gods, whose mouth opened as wide as the space between heaven and earth, asked for a pledge before allowing himself to be bound, this was the only god who was not afraid. For the wolf had said, "Let one of you first put his hand into my mouth." Týr put his hand into the wolf's mouth; and then the monster was bound with the magic chain. But the god lost his hand. Now it was not to the thunder god of battle, Thor, that men prayed for the higher courage — the courage that asks the sacrifice of self. They would pray Thor for strength, but for noble courage they prayed to Týr. This shows us something noble in their fierce creed.

How fierce it was you can best imagine from the fact that it was considered, in some parts of the North, the greatest shame for a man to die of sickness or to die of old age. To die fighting was a kind of sacred duty: so when men felt themselves getting old they would leave their homes and try to find some chance of getting killed in battle. Even after the English became converted to Christianity the horror of a natural death remained with them. I think you remember the story of the great Siward who, on being told that he was going to die, put on his helmet and armour and stood up straight that he might die upon his feet, like a soldier. The great virtue for these people was courage; the great vice was cowardice; and it is significant that in the Northern hell the chief place was for cowards and adulterers. But you see that these men thought of adultery chiefly as a kind of cowardice. For them, sin was weakness and crimes of sense were crimes of weakness—want of moral courage. So, it is not wonderful, that long before these people became Christians their bitterest enemies admired them for their moral ideals. You remember that the Roman

historian Tacitus held up as an example to the Romans the domestic virtue and chastity of the Germans. The English modern ideas in regard to woman, home, and the sacredness of the family tie are very much older than Christianity.

All the foregoing implies certain possibilities of tenderness. Fierce as these men were, they could not have been only fierce and crafty. They had two directions in which their affections could be cultivated; and they cultivated them well. One was love of family; another was love of their lords—loyalty. There is something to be said here that is worth remembering. The conditions which prevailed in the North of the old pagan times were very much like certain conditions in feudal Japan. Every chief—and all the country was divided into chieftaincies—surrounded himself with the best men of war that he could find. The chief held a relation to his men very much like that of the relation between a *Daimyô* and his *Samurai*. It was less refined than the Japanese relation; but it was not less strong and sincere. And there was a curious freedom about it. Though the chief had power of life and death over his men, he did not keep them at a great distance; he was familiar with them,—would eat and drink with them, would join their amusements and their songs. Birth was not an important consideration so long as a man was free. The great qualities were courage, intelligence, skill in arms and loyalty. With these qualities any man might fight to become a chief. He might even hope to become a king. Only certain faults would never be forgiven and a stupid man had very little chance of improving his condition. There was yet no European feudalism; but the conditions very much resembled some things in Japanese feudalism. This was a system of society introduced into England.

And now for the subject of this lecture. Just as much of the literature of Japan in olden times was made by court poets, or by a *Samurai* in houses of great lords, the old literature of the North took its origin in the palaces of kings and chiefs. It was made mostly by warriors: the poets were soldiers. Later on they might be only poets; but at first the poet was also a fighter; and his poems were chronicles of battles,—songs about

great deeds. Gradually different schools of poetry came to exist. Gradually a particular class of singers, minstrels, gleemen came into existence. But the art remained connected in some way with the military profession: even the professional singer was attached as warrior or attendant to the train of some chief; and the form of poetry remained substantially the same. It is interesting to remember that the oldest form of this poetry in existence is English. It is not German or Scandinavian. Very much older than any other modern poetry is the old English of the pagan period.

THE OLD HEATHEN POETRY

WE may divide the old heathen poetry, as it has been called, into two classes, first, that which was written before the English came to England; and second, what was written after they came to England, before they changed their religion. Of the first class we have only five poems—but one of these is an epic of more than 3,000 lines in length. Before we speak of these five of most ancient poems, it will be necessary to say something about the form of the verse.

Northern poetry was totally unlike the poetry of the Greeks and the Romans; and the construction everywhere had a certain family likeness. At first it may have been everywhere the same; at a later date the Scandinavians in Iceland and Norway, as well as the Germans beyond the Roman boundary, elaborated their runes or verses into many forms; but I think that the distinguishing character of Northern verse always remained. Now English verse represents the earliest form of this rough poetry. It has no rhyme. It has no fixed number of syllables—a line might be 10 syllables long or it might be 13 or 15 syllables long. Many books have been written about an imaginary law of construction; but impartial critics will prove to you that these laws of construction really do not deserve the name of law. The most correct statement that we can make is that the average number of "beats" to a line was eight; and that four of the syllables were strongly accented;—that the line was divided by the pause, which had no fixed place; and that, of the four accents, two were in the first half of the line and two in the second. Remember, however, that these are only loose statement. The great characteristic of Northern verse was *alliteration;* and even about alliteration the rule is not easily fixed. You know that alliteration means the recurrence in a line of words beginning with the same sound. In

the Northern line there were generally two alliterative syllables in the first half and one in the second half; and the alliteration was effected either by the repetition of the same consonants at the beginning of certain words or by the repetition of vowels. But when vowels were used they were not always the same vowels. So that the alliteration was not wholly carried out in all cases. However, the best way to illustrate the matter is to give you examples of the Northern verse, turned into English with corresponding alliterations. We shall mark the alliterations by the use of big black letters.

(Example)

In his **G**rimness wrathful (*PAUSE*)
Gripped he on his foes
With **C**ruel **C**lutch (*PAUSE*)
Crushed them in his **G**rasp.

(Example)

Growling is the **G**rey Wolf (*PAUSE*)
Grim the war-wood rattles.

[By "war-wood" I need scarcely say are meant the shafts of many spears.]

Of the two examples just given, the second is the better—because here we have the triple alliteration only; whereas, in the first example, one line has only two alliterations. But I have chosen the deficient line on purpose: it will help you to remember that in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and in Northern poetry generally the rule is not strict. Only in general way can it be said that in each line there should be three words in alliteration—two in the first half of the line, and one in the second half. You see that the line is divided by a pause.

The pause was not properly understood in the last century; and many persons imagined that the Northern runes, as such verses are called, were very short. The truth is that they appear to be short only because one verse was written in two lines instead of in one. Really the line is quite long, sometimes

extremely long; for there is no strict rule about the number of syllables. I believe that Professor Brooke was the first to try to translate these long lines and print them without cutting them in two; and though his page is wide the line will sometimes run over. Of course you can print them in either way, quite correctly; but, if you cut the line, it would be better to begin the second line with a small letter instead of a capital, that is, for teaching purposes. English poets do not do this when imitating Anglo-Saxon verse; but they are not teaching. For example:—

> Crieth then, so Care-worn,
> With Cold utterance,
> And speaketh Grimly,
> The Ghost to the dust:
> 'Dry Dust! thou Dreary one!
> How Little didst thou Labour for me!'

This imitation by Longfellow of a part of the *Discourse of the Soul to the Body* really reproduces the irregular alliteration of the original, and is really good. But each of the two lines, as he writes them, is but one line of Anglo-Saxon verse. The same thing may be said in regard to Tennyson's magnificent translation of the *Battle of Brunanburh* with such lines as—

> Never Had Huger
> Slaughter of Heroes
> Slain by the Sword-edge.

The short strong verse is obtained only by cutting the ancient verse in two. But Tennyson does not always do this. In some parts of the poem he preserves the original length of the line, thereby producing a splendid effect of contrast,—for example:

> Many a Carcass they gave to the Carrion.

Here is the whole line: the original pause would fall after the word "carcass"; the Anglo-Saxon pause has no fixed place —we know where it is only through the accentuation of the verse. I may also call your attention to a fine modern imita-

tion of Northern poetry by Kingsley in his *Longbeards' Saga* containing such fine reproductions of Northern expressions as the alliterated line—

Girding Gray iron on.

But we need not more than mention it. I prefer to speak to you of the influence of the Northern form on our original English poetry. Our great masters—especially Tennyson and Swinburne—learned a great deal from the Anglo-Saxon poets on the subject of alliteration; and both of them have admirably imitated Anglo-Saxon forms. But the original metre is now very seldom attempted. I know of but one recent example worth mentioning; and I am going to quote a little of it, because it will show you that fine effects can be produced even to-day by simply following the rules of the Northern poets:—

England my mother,
Wardress of waters,
Builder of peoples,
    Maker of men,—

Hast thou yet leisure
Left for the muses?
Heed'st thou the songsmith
    Forging the rhyme?

* * *

Yet do the songsmiths
Quit not their forges;
Still on life's anvil
    Forge they the rhyme.

* * *

Trees in their blooming,
Tides in their flowing,
Stars in their circling,
    Tremble with song.

God on His throne is
Eldest of poets:
Unto his measures
Moveth the Whole.

These verses are by William Watson, a living poet; the measure looks very different at sight from the old Anglo-Saxon. But if you analyze it a little, you will find that it is only different from rune verse in being more regularly accented, and that it consists only of rune verses broken up. I think that this is enough to say about the structure of ancient English poetry. Only remember that nearly all Northern verse was of a similar kind. The strongest examples of what can be done with such verse are Scandinavian rather than English: the Icelandic poets did better than the English. If you are interested in learning for yourselves what strange and terrible poetry they could write, you will find all that is left of their poetry in *Corpus Poeticum Boreale.*

As I said, before the English came to England, they had made poetry of this sort; and we have pieces of such continental poets. These five are *Widsith*, *Beowulf*, *The Fight at Finnsburh*, *Waldhere* and *The Complaint of Deor*. Of these the oldest is the first mentioned — probably it is older than any poetry in any modern language of Europe. It may have been written as early as the 4th century, but its date is uncertain. It consists of little more than a rhymed catalogue of names of places and persons visited by a wandering minstrel. Except that it gives us some idea of the life of these times, the customs of professional singers, and the methods of rewarding them, it has but little interest outside of philological interest. It can scarcely be called poetry. But it is very different in the case of *Beowulf*.

The great epic of *Beowulf*, 3,200 lines in length, is really a noble poem; and it has the honour of being the oldest epic in any modern European language. (When I say "modern" in this sense, I mean later than the dead languages of Greece and Rome). Remember that the first great epic that appeared, at least the first of which we have any record, after the death of Greek and Roman literature, was the English epic of *Beowulf*. It may have been written in Sweden or in Denmark—there is no mention in it of England. The hero himself comes from

Sweden; and his great deeds are performed in Denmark. The story of *Beowulf* will remind some of you of a Japanese hero, Watanabe-no Tsuna, who cut off the arm of a demon, and had it afterwards stolen away from him by a trick. Of course there are great differences, but the resemblances of which I speak are very striking. The king of a small province in Denmark, whose palace is called Heorot, is strangely tormented by a man-eating goblin. The king's name is Hrothgar. Every night the goblin enters the king's hall, seizes some of the guards or warriors, and tears them in pieces and devours them—just as a cat might enter a hall and kill the rats at its pleasure. No sword or spear can hurt the goblin: therefore weapons are of no use. Only the king himself cannot be hurt—the sacredness of his kingship preserves him from the power of the monster.

At last Beowulf, a brave retainer in the service of a Swedish king, comes to Denmark to protect King Hrothgar. Beowulf knows that he cannot wound the goblin with sword or spear; but he trusts to overcome him by bodily strength. For Beowulf is the strongest man in the North: in the grip of his hand he has the force of ten men. He lies in the hall and waits for the goblin. When the goblin comes it seizes Beowulf, but Beowulf in the same moment catches it by the arm and twists. The arm breaks at the shoulder and Beowulf twists again "till the bone coverings burst." Off comes the arm, followed by a stream of blood, and the goblin flies away howling to die. Beowulf hangs up the arm in the king's hall, and everybody comes to look at it. It is a dreadful thing to see; for the nails upon the hand are like great spikes of spears.

In the Japanese story to which I referred it is the goblin itself that comes back for the arm, disguised as an old woman, but in the old English epic it is the mother of the goblin. (I forgot to tell you that the name of the monster is Grendel.) When Grendel's mother comes, Beowulf happens to be away; and the female goblin kills and eats many of the king's best warriors. Moreover she takes away the arm. In all haste the king sends for Beowulf. Beowulf follows the female goblin into a cavern under the sea, and there has a terrible fight with

her. By the help of a magical sword, he kills her; but her blood is so poisonous that the steel of the sword melts away.

The third part of the poem tells us of the death of Beowulf. After conquering the goblins he has to fight with a fiery dragon, which guards a great treasure in jewels and gold. His companions become frightened and run away so that he has to fight the dragon almost alone. He kills it; but the fire entered his lungs and the poison entered his blood. After distributing the treasure to his men he died. And the poem ends with a grand description of the burning of the body of the hero. That is the story in short; but it is not the mere story that makes the poem. It is the study of character, the description of incident, the revelation of the custom with which the epic abounds, that delights us in reading it. The character of Beowulf is really very fine: it is explained to us chiefly through his speeches to his men, and to his friends and to his enemies. We have a glimpse of the man of worth in three aspects—first as the loyal retainer, then as the generous hero, able to forgive his enemies—lastly as a just and unselfish ruler, anxious only for the happiness of his people, but stern in regard to the performance of duty. Considered merely as poetry—as strong ringing verse—the epic is grand. We have not got it in the purely heathen form. It was copied in Christian times; and the Christian copyists thought it their duty to interpolate verses here and there about God, hell, and heaven, which had nothing to do with the original. Probably these interpolations took the place of verses containing references to the Northern Gods. But we can never know, because the original is hopelessly lost. However, you must not be deceived by the Christian passages into supposing that this is a Christian poem. It is a thoroughly pagan poem, with some later additions. The date is uncertain, but we have the right to suppose that in its present form it belongs to a period not later than the 6th century. The lost original is probably many hundred years older. We can guess the age of it by its certain references to historic characters.

Very little need be said about *The Fight at Finnsburh* and *Waldhere*—because they are only fragments, one of which is

60 lines long, and the other a little longer. The fragment of *Waldhere* was discovered in the binding of a book. You know that during the Middle Ages and before them, in Europe, books were written upon parchment; and old books were often broken up, and the parchment leaves used for binding. All that need be said of the fragments is that they show qualities of poetry quite equal to these displayed in *Beowulf* and so make us regret the lost originals. But in other languages of the North we have the whole of the stories or epics which these English fragments represent. The story of *Waldhere* is very much the same as the story of Walter of Aquitaine—a story of the time of the Huns. The hero takes his sweetheart, a hostage, away from the camp of the Huns; and, being pursued, he turns alone, and fights against twelve men. In the English fragment it is the girl who makes him turn and encourages him to fight; whereas in later versions of the epic she asks him to kill her and to make good his escape. So the English fragments much better illustrate the real character of the Northern woman, who in all the most ancient Northern poetry as well as in all the Northern history appears to have been quite as fierce and courageous as her mate.

The *Finnsburh* fragment treats of a great family feud—it is a story of blood, treachery, revenge, and heroism; a story so much resembling the great story of *Sigurd the Volsung* about which I gave you a lecture[1] last year that it is not necessary to mark the differences. The fragment tells us only that part of the story where the heroes are surrounded at night in the hall, and their chief cries out to them to play the man, for their time has come to die bravely. And now we may say something about the 5th and last poem.

The Complaint of Deor, brief as it is, must be considered one of the most important documents in the history of the evolution of English poetry—because of its peculiar form. It is the first English poem and perhaps the oldest poem existing, in any *modern* language of Europe, which is regularly divided into stanzas. It is also the oldest poem of the kind possessing a

1. *On Poets*, Ch. VII. "William Morris."

refrain. At the end of each stanza, for refrain or burden, a single line is repeated, of which the meaning may be thus translated.

That was undergone: this can be so too.

This burden or refrain exactly fits the sense and purpose of every stanza, each stanza being a reference to the great sorrows and misfortunes undergone, and patiently endured by some hero or heroine of the past. And the poet who is singing of his own sorrow says to us: "Since such and such misfortunes have been endured—so can I find strength to bear my sorrow."

The grief is chiefly this:—that he was supplanted in his position as a professional minstrel at some court and his place and property were given to his rival, yet he does not sing like a jealous man, nor does he speak evil of the one who has supplanted him. He only prays that he may have courage, like the heroes of old, to suffer bravely. The stanzas are not quite regular: some are 6 lines long; some only 5—but the average is 6. I think you can see how very important this old poem must be considered, in the history of English form.

When we have once discovered the art of dividing a poem into stanzas and the art of adding a burden to the end of each stanza, the discovery of rhyme is not very far away. If nothing had interrupted the natural growth of English poetry in those years, it is almost certain that rhyme would have followed. There was one rhymed poem written about a century or two later at earliest, possibly much later; this was probably imitated from the Northmen who made rhyming verses about the 9th or 10th century. But English poetry could not develop naturally, owing to the terrible condition of the country and owing also to another potent cause—the introduction of Christianity, which completely changed the whole course of Anglo-Saxon literature. However, do not forget the name of this poem: it is a land-mark in our study.

OLD ENGLISH POETRY IN ENGLAND

Christian and Profane Literature

There was Christianity in England before the English came; and they destroyed it. But after a time missionaries came from Rome—the most celebrated of whom was Augustine, called the Saint; and Christianity was again introduced into the Island. Progress was somewhat slow; it took about two centuries and a half to convert all England to Christianity—indeed, it was not until the beginning of the 11th century that all traces of the Northern religion had disappeared. But the learned classes rather soon adopted the gentler creed; and it was from monasteries chiefly that the new literature came. On the whole Christianity was not favourable to the growth of original English poetry. On the contrary it almost silenced it and what is really good in the Christian poetry, with some few exceptions, is the heathen part of it. Put into the simplest form of statement, the facts are these:—

Nearly all the old English poetry written in England with the exception of what might be printed in about 30 pages consists of translations or paraphrases of the Bible in verse, or lives of saints and homilies in verse. Consequently the impulse to make original poetry seems to have almost died out. And the best parts of this religious literature are, curiously enough, those parts describing battles and terrible events of war.

The bulk of old English literature, being religious, need not greatly interest us at present: we can dismiss it with a few paragraphs. But there was some profane literature — which would make, as I have said before, about 30 pages in print. And these 30 pages are, from the literary point of view, worth more than all the religious literature of the time. In this brief

summary of profane literature I do not include two splendid war songs—the last great songs sung by the English before they lost their freedom in the 11th century. I am speaking only of the poetical productions up to the time of Alfred.

As the profane poetry is the more important, let us speak of it first. Why should it be important? Because it shows us a good deal of the emotional nature of the English people—the best of it, the tender side and the thoughtful side. There are perhaps a dozen pieces of verses which do this for us. Some are short poems complete in themselves; some are fragments of longer poems that have been lost. You should try to remember the names of at least five:—

The Wife's Complaint,
The Wanderer,
The Seafarer,
The Husband's Message, and
The Ruined Burg.

By the best critics the last named poem is most admired as poetry. But I think that you will be more interested in *The Wife's Complaint* and *The Wanderer,*—which we shall first speak of.

The Wife's Complaint may be a fragment, but that does not matter. The value of the piece is in the fact that it expresses the beautiful character of a woman who has been separated from her husband by slanderers. He has been made to believe her guilty of some wrong which she did not do; and she is not angry with him. On the contrary she not only loves him as before; but she does not even talk about her own pain, so much as about his. What most grieves her is the thought of how much he suffers because he believes the bad things said about her. Now a character capable of such generous and unselfish affection is typical of the perfect woman in every time and country; the woman speaking here is just as much a Japanese woman, as of an English woman. I have no doubt that you could find in many a Japanese romance suggestions of the very same type of woman character as the following lines sug-

gest. This is how she thinks of her absent husband, though he has wronged her so much:—

For my husband is sitting
Under the o'erhanging cliff, overfrosted by the storm:
O my Wooer, so outwearied, by the waters compassed round
In that dreary dwelling! There endures my dear one;
Anguish mickle in his mind; far too oft remembers him
Of a happier home! Woe is his, and woe,
Who with weary longing, waits for his Beloved!

All the poem is beautiful because of the unselfishness and affection expressed. And there is another poem that might remind you of sad things in old Japanese romance. That poem is *The Wanderer.*

The Wanderer is a man who has lost his lord, his home, everything—through the fortune of war. He is exactly what you would have called in old days a *Rônin*—but he has become such not through any fault of his own; and he remembers his lord with love and gratitude. Now he has to make his living, wandering over the sea, sharing the fierce life of the Vikings. It is a very hard and terrible and cruel life—spent in storm and slaughter. And sometimes on the deck of the ship he falls asleep from weariness even in the time of storm, and dreams. He dreams of his dead lord and the palace of the old times. But when he wakes up he sees only the roaring sea about him, and the hard faces of the terrible men with whom he now must live.

Now, it is not until we come to the time of Campbell that we find exactly the same form of pathos in an English poem—I am referring to *The Soldier's Dream*, of course. But I do not think that *The Soldier's Dream* is even so touching as is the old, old English poem which is not a dream of home in the same sense at all, but a dream of loyalty. I may quote a few lines about the dream on the deck of the ship.

Both sorrow and sleep bind the poor solitary;
He dreams he clasps and kisses his lord,
And lays his hand and head upon his knee,

As when he whilom enjoyed the gift-stool.
Then awakens again the friendless wanderer,
Sees before him the fallow waves,
The sea-birds bathe and spread their feathers;
Sees fall the snow and frost-rime mingled with hail.
Then are to him harsher the wounds of his heart;
In grief for the loved one, sorrow grows anew,
And memories of kindred pass over his mind.

(*Translation by Ten Brink*)

The English retainer was obliged, in taking the oath of fealty, to kiss his lord and embrace him, also to lay his head upon the lord's knee in token of devotion. After that he was given what is called the gift-stool—really signifying the right to sit at the lord's table and to be nourished by him. The translation I have given is rather plain and loose—it is by Ten Brink. A better translation and closer is Brooke's. The poem occupies several pages. I may in this case quote a little from Brooke. It is interesting to compare the two translations:—

Fallen is all that joy!
O too well he wots of this, who must long forego
All the lore-redes of his Lord, of his loved, his trusted friend,
Then when sleep and sorrow, set together at one time,
Often lay their bondage on the lonely wretched man.
And it seemeth him, in spirit, that he seeth his Man-lord,
Clippeth him and kisseth him; on his knees he layeth
Hands and head alike, as when he from hour to hour,
Erewhile, in the older days, did enjoy the gift-stool.
Then the friendless man forthwith doth awaken,
And he sees before him nought but fallow waves,
And sea-birds a-bathing, broadening out their plumes;
And the falling sleet and snow sifted through with hail—
Then the wounds of heart all the heavier are,
Sorely aching for One's-own! Ever anew is pain.

(*Translation by Brooke*)

In the above the Anglo-Saxon is almost exactly reproduced, with all the fine alliterations. I think you should admire especially the hissing lines describing the falling of the sleet and

snow on the sea. And how very strong and true the closing cry, "Ever anew is pain"!

The piece called *The Ruined Burg* is so much admired by Professor Saintsbury that he declares there is nothing more like it to be found in English literature before the days of Thomson. This is extraordinary praise, but it is given for a particular reason. The Professor is not praising the verse merely as verse, but the deep human feeling that the verse contains. That feeling is melancholy and kindly regret for ancient things—things passed away before the time of our own civilization—perhaps I might call it "Retrospective Sympathy." Certainly retrospective sympathy does not appear often in English literature before the time of Thomson. Such a sentiment comes only after great experience of life and men, a wide knowledge of human suffering and a tender interest in all earnest human effort. For these reasons the poem is really almost startling. Startling, because of the strangely modern feeling displayed. For, although I have not hesitated to compare these old English to the old Japanese by their best qualities of courage and loyalty, you must remember that they were not civilized like the Japanese of the same period. They were not by any means savage, but they could not be called a civilized people; —they would not even live in cities, and when they captured a city they always destroyed it. Their trade was fighting and plundering, and yet we find among them evidence of the better feeling which prepared the highest civilization. That is why this poem is so strange.

The story seems to be about as follows:—

When the English conquered Britain they did not think of trying to preserve anything of the Roman civilization; and they destroyed theatres, temples, public gardens, palaces, just as they destroyed fortifications and military walls. Among the cities destroyed by them was Bath, — which was a very beautiful city in Roman days, and is said to have derived its name from the splendid bath the Romans built there. The English destroyed everything except some of the masonry which it would have been too much labour to pull to pieces, stone by

stone. After destroying the city they went away from it, making for themselves huts on the hills and river banks in the neighbourhood. Between two and three hundred years passed away and the ruins remained just as they were. Then some wandering English minstrel went to the place and saw the remains of the grand buildings and composed a poem about them. Here are some of the lines which he wrote translated into corresponding English verse of to-day:—

> Wondrous is its wall of stone; Weirds have shattered it!
> Broken are the burg-steads! Crumbled is the giants' work.
> Fallen are the roof-beams; ruined are the towers;
> All undone the door-pierced towers; frozen dew is on their plaster!
> Shorn away and sunken down are the sheltering battlements,
> Undereaten of Old Age! Earth is holding in its clutch
> These, the power-wielding workers; all forworn are they, forlorn in death are they!
> Hard the grip was of the ground, while a hundred generations
> Move away of men.

Roman architecture, the most solid that the earth has ever known, might well impress the mind of this simple Northern singer as a work of giants. Giants or not, the builders were men—human beings with hearts like his own; and he cannot help feeling for them and grieving to see their beautiful work destroyed—though he knows that the destruction must have been by the will of the gods; for, as he says, only the "Weirds" (i.e. the Destinies) could have shattered it. Then he begins to think how these men lived—how proud and happy they must have been in the days of their strength—how loudly they must have laughed for joy,—how stoutly they must have drunk (for he imagines that they drank mead like his own people).

Now the earth has them; and it never gives back the dead —"hard is the grip of the ground." As we read this poem we feel his sorrow and his sympathy:—he makes us also admire the broken work and grieve for the glory of the past. Very probably a man with such fine feeling, such kindly feeling was in advance of his time; but that he *was*, and that he could

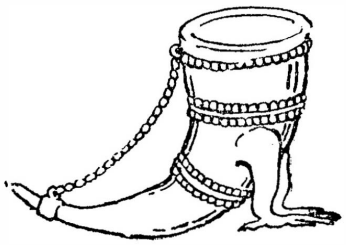
write and think in this way, is proof that the English people were capable of better things than fighting. Still, I must say that I cannot help imagining him to have been very much like a certain Viking whom his followers called the "Baby" for the simple reason that he objected to the Northern custom of throwing babies in the air and catching them as they fell upon the points of spears. The nickname which these men gave him was really a high honour, it marks him in the terrible history of those times as a brave man with a good heart.

The poem called *The Seafarer* is very much praised by various critics; but, inasmuch as scholars are still unable to decide what the poem means, I do not know that it is worth while quoting from. Even ten years ago people were very sure that *The Seafarer* was a dialogue between an old man and a young man about the joy and sorrow of a sea-faring life; and you will find that Professor Brooke has actually tried to arrange the poem according to this idea. But later English philology and German philology and much exact scholarship in England and in Germany opposed this explanation. The poem may be an allegory of human life. Its value is certainly in the descriptions of the sea and of hardships in time of storm. But until we can decide positively what this poem is really about, its actual rank as a literary creation cannot be fixed. Of other profane poetry I need only speak of *The Husband's Message* and of certain short compositions,—called *Riddles* and *Gnomic Poems.*

The Husband's Message shows the same side of human nature from a masculine point of view that *The Wife's Complaint* gives us from the woman's side. It is a letter in poetry from a husband to his wife far away asking her to come to him and assuring her of his trust and love. It is simple, tender and manly; and its interest lies very much in its portrayal of character. But it is not, perhaps, so interesting as is *The Wife's Complaint* even in regard to verse.

The *Riddles* are curious—chiefly curious. We may find reason to quote one or two. But first you should know the history of them. As I told you, it was the custom in the courts

of chiefs and kings to sing at banquets. Professional singers would sing epics like the story of Beowulf or they would recite the great deeds of the chief at whose table they were nourished. But besides professional singing there was much non-professional singing. Every warrior with a voice was expected to be able to sing some tune; and occasionally all the guests at a banquet would sing in turn—the harp being passed round the table from one to the other. It was during this time that the heavy drinking was done. But besides songs of battle and heroic deeds, there were other literary amusements — amusements of which the particular object was to test the intelligence and to exercise the ingenuity of each guest. Riddles served such a purpose well. Some poet or minstrel present would describe a common object in recondite language according to rules of poetry; then anybody present would be asked to guess what the object was. It might be a sword, it might be the sea, the wind, or a cloud, or a horse or a drinking cup. We have a number of these old riddles; and, apart from their value as poetry, they are interesting by reason of their cleverness. I imagine that you will find some amusement or pleasure in the following:—



The subject is the horn of a bull,—but unless you know the old English usage of the horn you will scarcely understand some of the allusions. The drinking cups in which the old English and the Northmen, too, drank their ale and mead were made of a bull's horn—the horn being supported by little feet, shaped much like the feet of a bird. At least this was one form, and the favourite one. The horn was bound and tipped with silver—in the case of a king or a great chief the metal would be gold. Small chains were sometimes attached by which the horn could be hung up. And I need not remind you that the horn was also used for war trumpets, as well as for hunting horns, or hunting trumpets. Even in the days when hunters made use of bugles of brass or silver, the old English phrase "to wind the horn" continued in poetry to the time of Tennyson.

A RIDDLE

I was an armed warrior; now a proud one,
A young hero, decks me with gold and silver,
And with crooked wire-bows. Men sometimes kiss me;
Sometimes I call to battle the willing comrades;
Now a steed doth bear me over the boundaries,
Now a sea-courser carries me, bright with jewels,
Over the floods. And now there fills my bosom
A maiden adorned with rings; or I may be robbed
Of my gems, and hard and headless lie; or hang
Prettily on the wall where warriors drink,
Trimmed with trappings. Sometimes as an ornament brave
Folk-warriors wear me on horseback; wind
From the bosom of a man must I, in gold-hues bright,
Swallow then. Sometimes to the wine
I invite with my voice valiant men;
Or it rescues the stolen from the robbers' grasp,
Drives away enemies. Ask what my name is.

When the horn was on the head of the bull it was, of course, used for fighting: therefore, the poet says or makes *it* say that it used to be a warrior. But now it is decked with silver and gold, and patterned with wire of precious metal, because it has been changed into a drinking cup. Of course it was the custom also for the good soldier to be decked with gold rings by his lord. The reference to the kiss might suggest the use of the cup to drink from; but you must remember that the English fighter kissed his lord and was kissed by him in token of sincere affection. The subject changes in the fourth line where the horn is represented as calling the warriors to battle—here the reference is to the use of the horn as a trumpet. In the next line it is represented as travelling over the sea, decked with jewels,—valuable horns whether trumpets or drinking cups, were carried wherever the chief went. In the seventh and eighth lines you have a phrase about the young girl, "filling my bosom"—a young girl decorated with jewels. There is a double meaning suggested. For an Englishman of that time to say that a young girl fills his bosom would simply

mean that he has taken unto himself a wife. "To sleep in his bosom" was a phrase which often occurred in early poetry and is still used. But the real meaning is that a young girl beautifully dressed, fills the cup with ale and mead for the warrior to drink. It was the custom at banquet that the noblest woman should fill the cups—but the duty especially devolved upon the daughter of the house. All through the old Northern poetry, Scandinavian as well as Teutonic, you will find many references to this custom. When the horn became cracked of course the gold ornaments would be removed—in that sense the cup may speak of itself as being at last "robbed of its gems." The tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth lines refer to the use of the horn as a trumpet. And the poem closes by telling you to guess what is meant.

Of the *Riddles* there are many. But this one example sufficiently illustrates the character of them all. Other departments of fragmentary pagan poetry we can better speak of later on. Let us now turn to the subject of Christian poetry.

OLD ENGLISH RELIGIOUS POETRY

THE TWO GREAT CHRISTIAN SINGERS

IF you can remember two names only in the history of English religious poetry during the 7th and 8th centuries it will not be necessary for you to remember any more. Indeed, I might almost say that it would be enough for you to remember only one—because somebody might prove to-morrow that the second name is mythical. Those two names are Cædmon[1] and Cynewulf,[2]—both of them Northumbrian singers. We have the best historical evidence for the actual existence of Cædmon; but the figure of Cynewulf continues, year by year, to grow more shadowy and ghostlike under the searchlight of the critical historians. A few years ago English critics of literature—at least some of them—appeared to be very confident about the reality of Cynewulf: they even attempted to write his biography. But in this present year I doubt very much whether his existence can be proved at all. There was somebody who wrote a number of very fine verses; and his name may have been Cynewulf,—but it certainly goes no further than this. It is very different in the matter of Cædmon. This is the story of him—the first great English poet of the Christian period.

In speaking of the *Riddles* I told you about the habit of singing at banquets and the passing round of the harp to every guest. If a man invited to a banquet could not sing, it was better for him not to stay at the drinking table. Now about the end of the 7th century there was a good deal of banqueting in Northumbria, at the settlement which the Danes called Whitby, and which still keeps its Danish name. There was one man who always got up from the drinking table and went away when the harp was passed round—in shame and regret that he

[1] Caedmon (fl. 670).

[2] Cynewulf (fl. 800).

could not sing. This man's name was Cædmon—he used to keep cattle for the people of a convent near by. But one day this Cædmon had, or thought he had, an inspiration from Heaven—and he began to sing religious songs. The verses which he composed were not to be ridiculed: good poets were surprised by them. When Cædmon was asked how he had learned to compose poetry and to sing, he said that in his sleep an angel had taught him and that on awakening he found himself able to do so without any trouble. In the neighbouring convent the news of this dream and of Cædmon's suddenly-acquired power soon spread; and the superior of the convent sent for him. In those days all the learning was in the convent and in the monastery; and when Cædmon sang before the Abbess she found his poetry so good that she was sure he had been inspired. She told him that it was his duty to become a monk. He did so. Then, in the convent, as he was no scholar himself, he was taught to learn by heart the stories of Bible history, and the incidents of the New Testament. He had a good head and he was soon able to learn all that was imparted to him. He turned it into verse—paraphrased the greater part of the Bible which then existed only in the learned tongues. You must remember that Cædmon was at no time a scholar; he was simply a rough common man with a natural gift for verse; and the merit of his compositions are altogether natural. He had a rich imagination, strong feeling, and great skill in the use of the strong words to express it. He had been born a pagan, had learned the older poetry, knew how to fight and may have seen some battles in his time. So that he had the experience of a warrior at least to help him in his poems. It helped him a great deal, for his descriptions of battles and of storms and of terrible situations are really fine. How fine they are you may guess from the fact that it is very probable that Milton found inspiration in them long centuries after. The comparison of Milton and of the text of Cædmon does not always even leave Milton with the advantage. All we can say is, Cædmon appears to be the stronger—though he had a very imperfect language at his command, and no scholarship at all.

It is commonly supposed that Cædmon was the author of the following religious poems or paraphrases:—

A Paraphrase of the Book of *Genesis*,
A Paraphrase of the Book of *Exodus*,
A Paraphrase of the Book of *Daniel*,
A Paraphrase of the Book of *Judith*, (this is less certain),
A Poem entitled *Christ and Satan*—and various shorter pieces.

It is quite possible that Cædmon may have paraphrased the whole Bible originally; but we do not know. And we have not even got the original text of the part that has been preserved. For the Danes soon afterwards destroyed all the old English learning in Northumbria: and Cædmon's poetry has been preserved for us only in a West Saxon Dialect, into which it must have been rendered before the monasteries of Northumbria had been destroyed.

This is all that is necessary to know of Cædmon's history. I said before that this Christian literature is not as Christian literature particularly interesting, but the pagan element in it is very interesting; and it was the old pagan poetry in the heart of Cædmon that may have inspired Milton. Let me try to explain *how and why*:—

When the English warriors first began to understand something about the history of the Bible and the traditions of Christ, it was not the didactic part of the Scripture that most impressed their fierce imaginations. It was the great stories of battle, the stories of heroism, the legends of the destruction of great cities and of great armies—this was what particularly impressed them as subject matter for strong poetry. So Cædmon is at his best when he writes of fighting and seafaring, and of the passions of strong men. He was allowed in his convent to write anything almost as he pleased—nobody objected to his describing the enemies of the Jews as Vikings from Scandinavia, or the Jews themselves as English warriors, and nobody objected to his use of old Northern poetry in describing the grim side of war. Here is a little illustration of the way in which Cædmon used Northern poetry in writing Bible history: it is an extract from the story of *Judith*.

Loud and high they shouted,
Warriors fierce in fighting.
. . . . . .
Then rejoiced the gaunt Wolf,
Rushing from the wood; and the Raven wan,
Slaughter-greedy fowl! Surely well they knew
That the war-thegns of the folk thought to win for them
Fill of feasting on the fated. On their track flew fast the Earn,
Hungry for his fodder, all his feathers dropping dew;
Sallow was his garment, and he sang a battle lay;
Horny-nebbed he was.

Of course this is not in the Bible at all—this description of the bird of prey rushing to the battle-field in order to feast on the dead is particularly characteristic of Norse poetry. But Cædmon had no doubt seen in the Bible, or been told of, such sentences as, "I shall give thy flesh to the fowls of the air": that, he thought, quite justified him in describing those fowls as the Northmen always described them.

But it is a much more curious thing to find him describing the Northmen themselves when he is actually writing about the story of Abraham and the King of Sodom, in his paraphrase of the *Genesis*. If you look at the Bible you will find the story of how Abraham refused to accept any booty from the King of Sodom;—but you will not find either thoughts or words like these:—

Go, and bear with thee
Home the gold enchased, and the girls embraceable,
Women of thy kingdom! For awhile thou needest not
Fear the fighting rush of the foes we hate—
Battle from the Northmen! For the birds of carrion,
Splashed with blood, are sitting on the shelving mountains,
Glutted to the gullet with the gory corpses.

Now you will understand better what I mean about the pagan poetry in these Christian paraphrases; the pagan poetry is the best of them; it is what makes them most valuable from a literary point of view. And this is true even when the subject is a description of nature, as in the following taken from the life of a Saint:—

Lord Eternal, all the river springs
Laud thee, high exalted; often lettest thou
Fall the pleasant waters, for rejoicing of the world,
Clear from the clean cliffs.

Here is a Christian prayer, but the pretty description of the clear waterfall is in the style of the old heathen poetry; and it serves to make the Christian prayer very much more beautiful.

The other great Anglo-Saxon Christian poet did not appear until about a century after Cædmon. He also was a Northumbrian and some people believed that he was in his youth a professional minstrel. We do not know. But, of the poems commonly attributed to him the important ones are chiefly lives of Saints, in all five long compositions.

The Legend or Life of St. Elene,
The Legend or Life of St. Guthlac,
The Legend or Life of St. Juliana,
The Legend or Life of St. Andreas,
Crist.

Besides these there are quite a number of fragments of Christian or half Christian poetry; and there is a later paraphrase of *Genesis.* We do not positively know *when* these were written originally or whether they were written by Cynewulf: so it would be better to speak only of those five compositions before mentioned. As for the four lives of Saints, you can see at a glance that only one of them treats of an Anglo-Saxon Saint—the poem about St. Guthlac, a famous English hermit. It chiefly treats of the Saint tempted by devils. *The Life of St. Elene* (Helen or Helene, mother of the Emperor Constantine) deals with the legends of the finding of the true cross. The story of *St. Juliana* is the story of a Roman martyr. The story of *St. Andreas* is the most interesting for the curious reason that it treats a great deal of seafaring life and explains to us many conditions of the ancient Viking existence. Otherwise I need not stop to tell you more about these poems: they are, all

of them, much inferior to the great poem of *Crist* which deserves more attention.

For, in this poem of Christ, the Northern imagination gives one magnificent example of its poetical power. The poem is divided into three parts:—

1.—*The Nativity or the Birth of Christ.*
2.—*The Ascension of Christ.*
3.—*The Day of Judgment.*

As I have said before, the old English poets were alway at their best in describing terrible things; and it was in describing the Day of Judgment that Cynewulf—or whoever wrote the *Crist*—displayed the qualities of a very great poet. Of course he had the Book of Revelation to help him, and the old Northern beliefs and descriptions concerning the Ragnarock, or the Twilight of the Gods. But even with these helps he did work of which the grim sublimity may well astonish us. First is described the darkening of the sun, the extinction of the moon, the falling of the stars from heaven, and the rising of the dead out of their graves, and the sound of the awful trumpet. (It is a curious fact that in the old *Gospel of St. John* and in the old Norse description of the Twilight of the Gods the sounding of the trumpet announcing the world's end should be described with nearly the same terms;—the Anglo-Saxon poet in his Christian description, seems to have been thinking of the Gjallarhorn sounded by Hindal to summon the Gods to battle.) Next we have a description of the universal darkness, the shaking of the land, the roaring of the sea. But all of a sudden the world is filled again with light—an awful light, red as blood. And this light is made, not by moon or sun, but by a vast cross, reaching from earth to heaven, with the figure of a phantom Christ nailed upon it. Phantom blood pours from its wounds, colouring all the cross crimson, but also making it luminous with a glow like the red light of a setting sun. And then, below this stupendous cross, the real Christ appears, the Judge. He speaks to the living, to the dead, and points to the figure of himself, his other self, raised above them on the sky-touching

cross. This imagination is entirely new — nobody had ever fancied such an awful scene before. There was indeed in Norse mythology the tremendous idea of Yggdrasil; but it is quite probable that this fancy did not help Cynewulf at all. Indeed some high authorities think that the myth of Yggdrasil was later than the poems of Cynewulf in origin. Enough to say that the poem of *Crist* is the only great Christian poem of the 8th century showing the average high order of original imagination. The rest of it is not nearly so good as *The Day of Judgment;* and even *The Day of Judgment* is feeble in part. But we should try to estimate the value of a poem by the best of it; and, bearing this in mind, we may say that *Crist* deserves great respect and praise.

We need not say anything more about the Christian poetry of the 7th and 8th centuries. There only remains to mention the *Gnomic Poems* and two battle songs. I have to mention the *Gnomic Poems* in this place because they have come to us in a semi-Christian form, and perhaps belong, in the present shape, to the Christian period—though we know that some of them had very much older origin. I am sorry to speak of them as gnomic poems—because "gnomic" is such a vague word. It means aphoristic; it means didactic; it means epigrammatic —any, in short, that you please. I can only explain it thus:— the word was originally used by the Greeks to designate a particular kind of didactic verse; and afterwards it came to be used in the present loose way. Short poems or verses which are proverbs, or moral axioms, or aphorisms, may all be classed together as "gnomic" poetry.

The moral or religious qualities of *Gnomic Poetry* need not be illustrated for you; but perhaps the best way to give you some idea of the variety of profane *Gnomic Poetry* will be to quote some modern examples. For instance I remember that on the North Atlantic the sailors had to learn a kind of verse—

July—stand by;
August—look out you must;
September—remember;
October—all over.

That is to say: there is danger during July, August and September; for no storms are likely to occur in October. This is one kind of *Gnomic Verse.* Another is furnished by almost any of the weather verses—such as—

Evening red and morning gray
Likes the traveller on his way;
Evening gray and morning red
Bring the rain upon his head.

So much real weather wisdom is locked up in verses and proverbs of this kind that the United States Government, some years ago, published a book containing all the English gnomic literature of this kind that could be collected together. And here is a little bit of folk-lore verse, belonging to the same category, which is known to every English peasant: it describes the effect of Spring weather upon age:—

March will search you;
April will try;
May will tell you;
Whether you're to live or die.

There are other things, too, belonging to such literature which are certainly very old—probably dating from the time of charms and spells, long before Christianity. Not a few of the nursery songs that English children sing probably represent fragments of incantations to ancient Gods. I might suggest, for example, those little verses about the hiccup—ending with the lines about the three drops of water—or the little songs in which the rain is ordered to go away. Finally, verses of a proverbial character must also be classed under this head.

Now the interest attaching to the old Anglo-Saxon *Gnomic Poetry* is chiefly of the folk-lore kind; but these verses also are historically interesting as showing us the mixture of Christian and pagan ideas. About the last thing that a nation gives up is its folk-lore superstitions; and the early missionaries made a compromise apparently with the peasant. They were left free to sing their charms and spells, providing that they substituted

the name of Christ, or of the Virgin, or of some saints of the church, for the names of Heathen Gods and destinies. But a number of the poems handed down to us, show us that substitution was not always carried out. For example:—

Wind in air is swiftest,
Thunder on its path the loudest. Mighty are the powers of Christ!
Wyrd is strongest!

Here you have a good example; the charm singer acknowledges the power of Christ; but he still thinks Wyrd or Destiny is stronger yet. Probably, in the original poem, as sung before the missionaries came, the name of Odin held the place here occupied by the name of Christ. A fair illustration of the didactic character of some of this verse is furnished in the following:—

Good shall with evil, youth shall with eld,
Life shall with death, light shall with darkness,
Army with army, one foe with another,
Wrong against wrong—strive o'er the land,
Fight out their feud; and the wise man shall ever
Think on the strife of the world.

This is the same thing as to say:—"Never can there be a time of perfect peace or happiness in this imperfect world. The struggle of evil and good, of ignorance and knowledge, of moral beauty and of moral ugliness can cease only when the world itself shall cease. And in the meantime, everyman able to think must think sadly about the misery of existence." But in this rude form of verse, even the simplest minds could learn these truths by heart, and learn to think about them better than if they had been expressed in philosophical language.

One curious thing found among *Gnomic Poems* is a rhyming alphabet. I think that you have seen some of the many rhyming alphabets which all English children learn—such as:—

A was an Archer, and shot at a frog;
B was a Butcher, and had a big dog, etc. . . .

The old Anglo-Saxon had almost exactly the same thing; but it was not written for children, but for men first learning

to read,—and there was some poetry in them. The Butcher did not have a big dog, nor did he figure in the composition, but "B" was a bull, "a mighty moor-stepper, a high-mooded creature."

I might here speak of famous "rhyming poems"—the oldest specimens of rhyme in any modern language. It really belongs to *Gnomic Poetry*,—for it is a paraphrase of some religious text. We are not quite sure what, so fragmentary the thing is. But it is not only remarkable as being the first English poem containing rhyme, but containing double rhyme or what we might call, if they were a little more skilfully made, Leonine rhyme. Leonine rhymes, you know, occur in the middle and at the end of the same line—for instance:—

Once upon a midnight *dreary*, while I pondered, weak and *weary*—

—that line from Poe's *Raven* is a Leonine line. The old Anglo-Saxon poet tried to make verse of that sort—very clumsily indeed—but he tried;—and his attempt is a land-mark in English poetry. Now there is an interesting story about how he got this idea. There was a Scandinavian poet from Norway, called Egill Skallagrímsson, who had greatly offended the powerful Norway chief known in history as Eric Bloody Axe. The chief settled in Northumbria, at the close of a series of fierce fights, and it so happened that when he was at the height of his power, some of his men caught Egill and brought him before Eric. Eric said that he would cut his head off next day. Then Egill was put into prison; but during the night he composed a new poem, in a new kind of verse—Leonine verse—lamenting his own fate, and appealing to the generosity of Eric Bloody Axe. Next morning, when brought before Eric for execution, the poet said that he hoped to be allowed to repeat a new poem before the king before being killed. Eric listened to the poem and forgave the man and that poem became famous under the title, *The Head Ransom*. It was composed in the 10th century, and it is believed that its author taught the English rhyming poets how to make double-rhymes.

You must remember that all this time the English were

having terrible fighting to do, with their further and fiercer kindred of the North, who were not yet Christianized and who threatened to take the whole country. In English history they have been for many years loosely spoken of as "Danes"; but they were really Norwegians, Swedes, Icelanders, and Danes; and they made a very great impression upon the character of the English race by mixing with them. For these men did not come merely to plunder and kill: they preferred to settle in the country. Wherever they landed they would send messengers to the English saying, "If you pay us and let us settle there, we shall fight by your side and marry your daughters. If you will not pay us—then come out to fight." Gradually the greater part of England along the coast was seized by them. They had great settlements in the interior, governed by their own particular laws. In these settlements they did not deal cruelly; but the settlements were a great source of danger to the country, for Norwegian, Swedish and Danish pirates were sure of sympathy with the men in those settlements, for a very simple reason. Nearly all the famous fighting comrades of the North were in some way kindred by marriage and united by tradition. Men in Iceland or Norway or Sweden—all had relatives in England with whom they kept up constant communication. The danger to the country was not from the strange blood—it was the best blood in the world;—the danger was from the uncultivated character of the Northmen. Studying only war and seamanship, and indifferent to all industries except a little agriculture, these invaders were decidedly enemies of learning and progress. At last in the year 1013 they conquered all England; and for about thirty years England was ruled by Scandinavian kings. During that time there was no English literature. The sea-robbers had destroyed all the seats of learning; as the English themselves had destroyed Roman civilization and Roman Christianity, so the Northmen very nearly destroyed English civilization and English Christianity. But, with a mighty effort, the English people at last burst their chains; there was no killing or burning to speak of—there was no hate between the rebels and their former masters, they were too akin in blood

for that, and the races had become welded together by intermarriage. But the English people dominated in this blending; and the English people insisted upon having an English king. But the crown had scarcely returned into English hands, when the Norman invasion in 1066 ended English rule and English literature for centuries.

You must not forget these facts in studying the history of the old Anglo-Saxon poetry. For the story of that poetry is closely connected with all these changes and conquests. The language itself was changed; the dialects were being infused with new tendencies—especially the tendency to drop inflexion. All this can be observed in the course of the older poetry. About the close of the 8th century the Danes began to destroy those centres from which the religious poetry had been issued. Northumbrian literature was the first to perish. And during the remainder of the time, before the great Danish invasion, when Ethelred became King of England, there were only two great poems composed of which mention need be made. Both are splendid battle songs. The first is a song of victory—the victory at Brunanburh, in 937, over the Danes and their allies. As this grand song has been superbly translated by Tennyson, I need not say more about it. The other battle song—sometimes called *The Battle of Maldon*, and sometimes *The Death of Byhrtnoth*—is a song of defeat; but it is not less noble in its way than the other. We have not the whole of it—only about 650 lines. It is a kind of epical narrative regarding a real historical fact; for we find the incidents of the poem chronicled in no less than four of the old monkish records of the time. The English hero, a local chief, or headman, finds his country suddenly invaded by a party of Norwegian Vikings. They send a messenger to him, with the usual alternative; "Buy off this spear-rush, if you are wise; or else, stand up and fight." Byhrtnoth, though an old man, sends back word that he will fight,—then he quickly gets his peasant warriors together and awaits the approach of the enemy. There is a river between and the Northmen find it hard to cross. Then happens what seems to me the most interesting incident of the poem and the

most characteristic. The Vikings call out across the river to the English: "You are very brave on your own side of the river, but you dare not let us cross." At this taunt old Byhrtnoth chivalrously, but very foolishly, orders his men to let the Northmen cross the river undisturbed. Then comes the hard "hand-play"—as the English poets call a battle; and Byhrtnoth and all his people are killed. But they died so grandly that this song was made about them. Another thing to notice about the song is that it contains no bad words about the enemy—except to call them heathens. They are not charged with cowardice or cruelty or deceit; in fact they are treated very respectfully—an early proof of the English proverb that a fight makes a good friend. This was the swan song of Old English poetry, Anglo-Saxon poetry. It belongs to the latter part of the 10th century. There was nothing more after it worth mentioning. Let us now turn to Anglo-Saxon prose.

OLD ENGLISH PROSE

ENGLISH prose began much later than English poetry; and there is a much greater quantity of it in preservation. Unfortunately it is not very interesting—being chiefly religious. Indeed the great mass of it consists of Sermons, or Homilies as they are more often called. This term is of Greek origin,—signifying an address delivered to an assembly; but it is used to-day only in reference to religious discourses. To say that all English prose literature is all composed of sermons would be wrong; but I have remarked upon the proportion of the sermons in order that you may more easily realize how very little original English prose of the Anglo-Saxon period exists.

In fact the student need only remember four or five names; Bæda (known in Church history as "the Venerable Bede"), King Alfred the Great, Ælfric, and Wulfstan. If you remember those four you know the names of all the important prose writers. But really only three out of the four directly concern us. Bæda is a very important literary person, but we have none of his English work—so that he belongs rather to Latin literature, except as an influence.

Bæda[1] was a Northumbrian abbot, a great lover of learning, an exact scholar, in so far as it was possible—exact in that time, and a very sympathetic person. He wrote an ecclesiastical history which is really a great treasure to historians. And he wrote many other things, but he wrote in Latin. We know that he made a translation of the *Gospel of St. John* into English; and there is a pretty story about how he died just after dictating the last verse of this translation. Unfortunately the translation has been lost. Bæda's relation to English literature is chiefly through his writings about it in Latin. It is from him that we have the story of Cædmon, and an account of Cædmon's poetry.

[1] Baeda or Bede, the 'Venerable' (637-735).

The most important figure in prose is, of course, King Alfred;[1] but King Alfred either wrote very little matter of an original kind, or else his original work has been lost. We know him as an English writer chiefly through translations which he made—translations out of Latin into English. Historically he is a delightful acquaintance—certainly one of the most lovable kings that ever existed. He was filled with anxiety about the education of his subjects; and he built schools for them. Any king might have done so much—Charlemagne did even more. But I think that no other king went into his own schools to teach boys, as King Alfred did,—and to teach them not in Latin, but in English. King Alfred's great ambition was to establish a purely English system of education, and to train men to write beautifully in their mother tongue. That was why he made these translations. They are four in number:—

The *Ecclesiastical History* of Bæda.
The *World History* of Orosius.
The *Consolations* of Bœthius.
The *Pastoral Rule* of Pope Gregory the Great.

These four books King Alfred certainly translated himself; and they have been well preserved for us. A word about their history. You must remember that they were the best books that King Alfred could get hold of in that half-barbarous age; and, considering all circumstances, he chose them very well.

Of course Bæda's (or Bede's) *History*[2] was very important in that time: it was the only good history of the English church, and it treated of contemporary events in which the English people were naturally interested. The *World History*[3] of Orosius would not be considered a good book now; but it was the only book which Alfred could then get hold of, in which the different countries of the Eastern Hemisphere were described and their geography attempted. Indeed it was as a geography that the King became interested in the work of Orosius. Orosius was a Spanish priest, a pupil of St. Augustine the Great, and

[1] Alfred or Ælfred, King of the West-Saxons (849-901).
[2] *Bœda's Ecclesiastical history* tr. *c* 900.
[3] *Orosius* tr. *c* 893.

he lived in the latter part of the 5th century. In the time of Orosius the long struggle between Christianity and Paganism had not yet ceased. Romans who believed still in the old religion, thought that the misfortune of the Empire had been caused by the neglect of the ancient gods. It was to confute this idea that Orosius wrote his book, which he called by a Latin name signifying "History as Opposed to Pagan Beliefs." Such a history could be scarcely impartial; but King Alfred wanted a geography, and there was a great deal of geography in Orosius. King Alfred, however, observed that Orosius did not seem to know much about the geography of Norway, Sweden, and all that part of Europe now classed as Northern Russia. He therefore got his friends who had travelled to describe that part of the world for him; and he wrote it down—and that is the only part of the book in which we can study King Alfred's own original style. The *Consolations*[1] of Bœthius was for hundreds of years greatly admired throughout Europe, and translated into most modern languages. After King Alfred, Chaucer translated it and after Chaucer, Queen Elizabeth translated it—so that it has been three times translated in England alone—first into Old English, then into Middle English, then into Tudor English. If to-day the book seems to have lost its literary value, that is partly because we have now a hundred better classical texts. Those texts were not available in King Alfred's day. Bœthius was a philosopher and grammarian of the 5th century, whose great talents won him favour with the Gothic King of Italy, Theodoric. But being slandered by some Roman politicians he was imprisoned and finally put to death upon a false charge. While in prison he wrote this book which is a dialogue between himself and an imaginary divinity of wisdom, who instructs him how to bear his sorrows patiently. King Alfred thought the book a good book for serious reading; and he translated it very well. As for the *Pastoral Rule*[2] of Pope Gregory, I need only say that it was written by Pope Gregory as a manual for the use of priests and bishops,—con-

[1] *Boethius De consolatione philosophiae* tr. *c* 888.
[2] *Gregory's Pastoral care* tr. *c* 897.

taining advice about all matters relating to the proper discharge of clerical duties. This book King Alfred translated particularly for the use of the English priests—many of whom were imperfectly educated, and could not easily read the same book in Latin.

So far English prose literature offers us nothing particular in the way of original work: nearly everything is translation. But I said that the student need remember only four or five names, and the fifth mention is not the name of an author but of a chronicle. It is supposed that King Alfred founded this *Chronicle;* — but we are not sure. At all events, from King Alfred's time we have a record of English history, kept by the monks and extending over a period of some 300 years. It came to an end only in the early part of the 12th century.

This is called *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* It was not kept at one monastery alone, but at least at four different monasteries. It is very much like the Japanese *Nihongi* in one respect—the extraordinary brevity and pithiness of its mentions. Great events as well as small are put down in a few lines. The style is not always like this — neither is it so always, in the Japanese record. But most of it is dry reading — of interest mostly to the historian alone. Nevertheless it does contain some bits of real literature. It contains, for example, that splendid war song about the victory of Athelstan. It contains also a wonderful personal account of William, the terrible Norman conqueror, and this account proves that the monkish writer was a man of truth and courage, not afraid to say what he thought about the conduct of the most awful of English kings. But this is all that we need say about English prose before the Norman Conquest; for the work of Ælfric[1] and of Wulfstan[2] consists almost entirely of sermons. However, I must add one mention about Ælfric: he made the first attempt at an English dictionary; and he attempted long before anybody else, to teach by a system closely resembling what is now called the system of Ollendorf.

[1] Ælfric (*d. c* 1020).
[2] Wulfstan, Archbishop of York (*d.* 1023).

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ENGLISH
DEATH OF THE OLDER LITERATURE
THE PERIOD OF SILENCE

AN Englishman of to-day, knowing no other language but his own, yet fairly educated in that, finds little mystery in the pages of a French, Spanish or Italian book. He can make out the meaning of a great many words; and, by a little patient work, with a dictionary, he can easily arrive at a vague understanding of the structure of sentences. After all, these Latin languages do not seem to him very different from English. But when he takes up a book printed in German, in Swedish or in Danish, he is perfectly helpless. He cannot understand a single sentence and the dictionary does not help him in the least. He thinks to himself that these languages must be extraordinarily different from English — and in this he is altogether wrong. But, as a matter of strict fact, English belongs to the Teutonic family of languages; and it is much more closely related to German, Danish, Swedish, and especially Dutch than it is to French or Italian. But an Englishman can learn to read French or Italian in half the time that it takes him to master one of the Northern tongues to which his own is closely allied.

This is a very curious thing; and the meaning of it is simply that English has been extraordinarily modified in some way by Latin influences. It is for the philologist only to tell you the history of these influences: I have only to remind you of the general fact. The two great influences which made English such a different tongue than other Northern tongues were French literature and the Latin literature. And that is why to the unscholarly eye English to-day looks so much more like French than it looks like either German or Dutch. The change began with the Norman Conquest.

The Norman Conquest took place in the year 1066. From that time until the year 1205, we may say, in a general way, that English literature was silent. The official language and the literary language of the country had been made French—for educated classes at least; and the language of law, of scholarship and of history was Latin. English had no opportunity for expression. As for Latin, its powers of influencing English may be guessed from the long period during which it was an official form of expression. Until the year 1730 all the law records in England were written in Latin. Up to the time of Matthew Arnold—that is to say, almost until our own day, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford and elsewhere was obliged to lecture in Latin. Of course the same kind of Latin influence was at work all through Europe, for an almost equal stretch of time. But in England the influence of Latin was immensely strengthened by the fact that a language derived from Latin had become the language of the cultivated classes. French and Latin each strengthened the moulding power of the other.

The first change in literary feeling might be guessed from the character of the first literature of the Conquerors. No greater contrast could be imagined than that between the Old English poetry—the poetry of *Beowulf*—and the poetry of the *Song of Roland*. And if we can guess something of a character of the people from the character of its literature, then indeed we may say that an equally strong contrast appears between the nature of the Norman—his intellectual nature—and that of the old Anglo-Saxon. And yet, you must remember that the real Normans were themselves originally Scandinavians. Intermarriage and French surroundings had changed them: that was all. No student of English literature should forget the splendid story of the first introduction of French literature into England—I mean the singing of the *Song of Roland* at the battle of Hastings. You will remember that the minstrel Taillefer (whose name means hew-iron) went to Duke William just before the battle and asked for permission, as the sole reward of his services, to strike the first blow of the battle. That of course meant the privilege of going alone to a glorious death.

The permission being given he rode alone toward the English ranks, throwing up his sword in the air to catch it again by the hilt as it fell, and singing the *Song of Roland*. Behind him the Norman lines caught up the song. He did manage to kill three men before being himself struck down. Whether the *Song of Roland*[1] that we have to-day is exactly the same song as that sung by Taillefer, we are not sure. Great critics believe that much of the existent *Song of Roland* was composed in England. But we may be quite sure that the song sung at the battle was very nearly the same thing and formed in the same way. It is a grand epic; but it is so unlike anything English that we must pause for a moment to explain the difference.

The *Song of Roland*, as for its structure, in nothing resembles English verse. It is composed in ten syllable lines with a pause after the 4th syllable of each line. There is no accent; there is no alliteration; and there is no rhyme. All the syllables have about the same value – as a Japanese verse. But there is something that takes the place of rhyme, something that we may call rhyme in the egg-shell, rhyme in the making. Its name in prosody is Assonance—a word that means "sounding together." In assonance the rule is only that *the vowels in the last word shall be the same in sound or nearly the same; the consonants have nothing to do with the matter at all.* To put the rule in the simplest possible way I might say, for example, that if the vowels in the last word of one line had been "U," then the last word in the assonant vowel should also be "U." What is more, there is no pairing of lines: a single series of vowel sounds may stand for 10, 20, 40 or 50 lines. To the unaccustomed eye and ear such poetry gives the impression of blank verse without accent. But, with a little study, the power of the thing comes out:—you begin to understand that this verse was composed for the purpose of singing to the harp; and that the choice of vowels was after all very well suited to the rude music of the time. Perhaps, though we do not know, the tone of the instrument used was changed according to the tone of assonance. There were no stanzas at all—no system-

[1] *Fragment of the Song of Roland c* 1400.

atic division of this tremendous poem into parts. But there were pauses at irregular intervals—marked by the word "*Aoi!*" —of which the real meaning is not known. Possibly this word was shouted.

Very simple but very strong in structure, the *Song of Roland* is equally simple and strong in sentiment and expression. It has been called "sober and stern"—and both adjectives are well used to describe it. But what surprises me is in the whole *Song of Roland* there is only one simile—and that may be a later interpolation. There is no metaphor at all; and you know that old Northern poetry, old English poetry was all metaphor. There was no ornament of any kind in the *Song of Roland*. It is the most stern and the most sober verse indeed in European literature. And there is no tenderness in the *Song of Roland*—nothing of love, nothing of home, nothing of the charm of nature as felt. The sternest Scandinavian poetry is not so stern as this. You may well ask, "How can there be a great poem without accent, without rhyme, without alliteration, without tender sentiment of any sort, without the slightest ornament, either of language or of fancy?" I should like to have the Japanese student ask himself these questions many times; for the answer teaches that certain poverty or alleged weakness of the Japanese language does not offer any obstacles at all to the creation of a great poem, if we have the great emotion to inspire it. The Normans had such emotion. It has been said that the great power of the *Song of Roland* is due to the expression of a very few ideas in a very grand way. But I do not think this is an explanation. It certainly does not explain the matter to me. I rather think that the *Song of Roland* impresses us as grand because of something which was never said, but only suggested—an enormous force of self-restraint, intellectual and moral. Of no other song can it so truly be said that it is a song of soldiers. The absence of ornament in itself is a splendid scorn—like that of the warrior who disdains everything but the necessary. And there is in the absence of sentiment an assurance that the sentiment is very much alive, but has been fettered and disciplined and kept out of sight in

the presence of duty. Discipline, restraint, resolve, and joy of battle — these are the feelings of the song; and indeed they offer material enough for the grandest of epics. But that grandest effect can be produced by the very simplest words—without any ornament to rhythm or alliteration. I may quote a few lines from the modernized text of the *Song of Roland.* After having described, or rather *mentioned,* the storms and lightning and earthquake and hail that visited France at the moment of Roland's death, the singer says thus:—

> Pas une ville dont les murs ne crèvent.
> A midi, il y a grandes ténèbres;
> Il ne fait clair que si le ciel se fend.
> Tous ceux qui voient ces prodiges en sont dans l'épouvante,
> Et plusieurs disent: "C'est la fin du monde,
> "C'est la consommation du siècle."
> Non, non: ils ne le savent pas, ils se trompent:
> C'est le grand deuil pour la mort de Roland!
> (lines 1430-1437)

That is to say: There is not one city of which the walls are not broken. At high noon there is a great darkness; and no light save when the sky splits itself (with lightning). All who behold these prodigies are filled with fear, and some say: "This is the end of the world—this is the end of the century!" No, no,—they do not know—they are mistaken: it is only the great mourning (of the land) for the death of Roland!

In the Norman the lines are very much shorter and more compact than is possible in any translation of it. Now a grander image than this scarcely occurred in epic poetry, though the language is not in the least artistic. What is a finer way of describing the loss of a great hero to his country than by suggesting that the earthquake and tempest and darkness represent the mourning of that country for the son who defended it so bravely? One more fact about the *Song of Roland* is well worth mentioning: it is entirely composed of very short sentences, about one line long. Not one of the Old English poems ever approached such simplicity of form. But not one of the

Old English poems—not even *Beowulf*—has the measured pause of the *Song of Roland.*

Just before the battle of Hastings, you know that there was another and very great battle between the last of the English kings and the Normans—the battle of Stamford Bridge. In that battle also there was a very grand feat of arms. Most of the Normans who went into battle that day knew that the battle was lost; but they fought splendidly about their king, till he was killed. Then they retreated. But one of them stood alone on the bridge to hold the English back. He did much more wonderful things than Horatius of Roman history, for he had no one to help him. With his single hand he killed more than forty of the best English warriors, and though his body was riddled with arrows he kept up the fight until the English army was afraid to attempt any further attack in front. And then he was killed treacherously by somebody who went under the bridge in a boat, and pushed a very long spear up through the planks. Nevertheless the memory of that Northman lives in history for all times. This was the last great illustration of the Northern courage—the old spirit of Odin. But we cannot say that there was any great purpose in it beyond that of obtaining a glorious death. The action of Taillefer in sacrificing himself before two armies in the sight of his lord, was noble in another way. He proposed to set the great example of unselfishness to his comrades, that they might all the better fight and win—you must remember that there was a great deal of superstition in those days about the result of the first blow struck Taillefer died not for his own glory only, nor to cover a retreat, but to teach a grand lesson. And there was something of the same difference of character in the Old English literature and the Norman literature that conquered it. The old literature was grand, strong, noble—but it wanted discipline, restraint. So did the English nation. They had all the qualities that make a nation except discipline. The Normans were able to give them that not only in legislation but in education and in literature; and we can guess very well from the *Song of Roland* what terribly practical people they were.

That practical character almost immediately shows itself in their work of education. What King Alfred had never been able to do and what King Athelstan had never been able to do, what all the religious teachers had not been able to do, the Normans did immediately. They established schools in every part of the country and they made English people go to school, and they made proficiency in certain studies the condition of success by it. Furthermore they encouraged Englishmen everywhere to send their sons to Paris for university training. Just as to-day a certain proportion of the best Japanese scholars go to Europe to finish their studies, so after the Norman Conquest the youth of England went to Paris and also in great numbers to Spain where the Arab learning was still being taught. By scholarship these young men could hope to obtain official positions from the Norman Conquerors - positions that would otherwise have been politically refused. So the Normans forced education upon the English people, but it was French and Latin education and the language of England remained French for about 150 years.

During those years there was indeed a good deal of literature produced in England—French and Latin literature. We may call this collectively the Anglo-Norman literature. As for the Latin literature, strictly speaking, we may dismiss it very briefly — with one important exception. Most of the Latin literature was religious or historical. The religious part of it has nothing to do with our subject; and the historical part of it very little. But, indirectly the Norman Latin historians influenced English literature by teaching the English historians how to produce something much better than mere dry record of fact. Men like William of Malmesbury, and William of Poitiers, and Henry of Huntingdon, besides many others, wrote histories in Latin which even to-day have considerable value as history. You will find their works translated in the Bohn's Library. And though the religious Latin literature need not even be mentioned by its works, it is worth while to remember that it helped to influence future English poetry in a very marked way. I refer especially to the Latin hymns of the Middle

Ages, which the Norman clergy introduced everywhere in England. The early Christian poets of the church had tried, with great success, not only to copy the best Greek and Latin poetical models, but to make their compositions even more melodious by the use of rhyme. It is impossible to doubt that the Latin hymns helped to develop rhyming in English poetry.

Now for that one exception of which I spoke a moment ago. It is a very important exception. While the Norman Latin historians were trying to make truthful history to the best of their ability, one man dared to produce an apocryphal history which he offered as a real discovery. This man was a Welsh priest called Geoffrey of Monmouth.[1] He must have been a man of exceptional genius; for he was able to influence the whole literature of Europe in after time up to the days of Tennyson and beyond. He said that he had found a Welsh history of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table; and that he had translated it into Latin under the title of *Historia Britonum*.[2] The other historians, greatly astonished, asked him to show them the Welsh original, or at least to tell them something definite about it. He never did either. Then they said that he was a great liar. Perhaps he was a liar, but only in the same way that Macpherson, the author of *Ossian*, was a liar. The lie would have been in any case an innocent one and Geoffrey, who afterwards became Bishop of St. Asaph, must have been a wonderful poet by nature. I do not mean that he wrote poetry but that he felt and saw things like a great poet. Some years ago it was made clear that he got his inspiration from the old Welsh book called the *Mabinogion*. But whoever reads the *Mabinogion* will at once see that it contains very little which Geoffrey could have drawn from—the stories there are altogether different. Of course you will find it said also that Geoffrey got something from two old Latin writers, respectively called Nennius and Gildas. But literary criticism shows us that he must have worked quite independently of all these stories. The probable truth is that he got

[1] Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100 ?-1154).
[2] *Historia Regum Britanniae.*

Welsh poets to tell him their legends (for he knew the Welsh language very well) and that he re-wrote what they told him, changing everything to suit the Norman feeling of the time. Macpherson, in Johnson's day, did very much the same thing. And in both cases the success was enormous—not because of the literary deceit practised, but because the men who practised it were by temperament and fancy great poets. In spite of all that the historians of the time could say in the way of protest, Geoffrey's book became immediately popular everywhere. The exact date at which it appeared is not known. But it must have been between the years 1130 and 1154 which was the year of Geoffrey's death. Two years later a translation of it had been made into French verse by another Geoffrey — Geoffrey Gaimar, whose work has been lost, but the great Anglo-Norman production which it inspired was *The Brut*,[1] of a poet called Wace of Guernsey,[2] who turned the whole thing into verse, adding much to what Geoffrey had originally given. And then there was a Welshman called Walter Mapes,[3] who obtained in some unknown way and wrote down the legends of *The Holy Grail*. (Grail is a corruption probably of the Latin word *cratera* meaning a small cup.) By the work of Geoffrey, of Wace and of Mapes, the whole Arthurian legend came into existence. At first it existed only in Latin and in French; but very soon it appeared in modern languages. One thing more about Geoffrey. What he wrote about King Arthur was only a part of his wonderful book. It was also he who first gave us that story of King Lear, which inspired what is perhaps the very greatest tragedy of Shakespeare, so that he must have been a very wonderful person.

Before going any further I must say something about the name "Brut" which Wace first gave to his rendering of the Arthurian legend, and which was afterwards adopted by the English poets. Of course this word is only a shortened form of "Brutus" in one sense. No doubt that was the meaning first attached to it. The original histories of Britain were

[1] *Le roman de Brut.*
[2] Robert Wace (fl. 1170).
[3] Walter Map *or* Mapes (fl 1200).

mostly full of myths; and one of the myths was that the British people, the original Celts, were all descended from a certain Brutus. But, although the coincidence appears to explain a great deal, it may have been only a coincidence. For in Welsh, the word "Brut" means history or chronicle. So it is very possible that some of the first writers of mythological British history confused the Welsh words with the name of "Brutus."

Another influence, more important than Latin perhaps, was the influence of French romances. After the Norman Conquest, the taste for French romances was introduced into England and there quickly extended. There were four great cycles of romances in medieval Europe; and the Normans introduced something of each cycle into England. But we shall have more occasion to speak of this subject in the next division of the lecture. At the present time I want to say only a final word, by way of introduction to the subject of the revival of English. English had slept for a hundred and fifty years also, when it awoke again in the utterance of the great poet Layamon. But it was not exactly the same English. We may say that there were altogether three great periods of English. The first was old Anglo-Saxon—and that lasted from the year 450 up to the time of the Conquest. For purposes of philologic study the period has been divided into three sub-periods:—

1. Old Anglo-Saxon.
2. Anglo-Saxon.
3. Late Anglo-Saxon.

The English that appeared after the Conquest was a little different from anything that had appeared before; and from the time of Layamon really begins the period of Middle English. But for the sake of convenience the next period—from 1205 to 1400—may be divided into three divisions as follows:—

I. Old English, or Early Middle English.
II. Middle English Proper.
III. Late Middle English.

But you must remember that in all these statements of

change, and statements of period, absolute exactness is quite impossible. Remember that everything grows,—that we cannot fix the exact moment of a budding or branching or ripening;—that there can be really no precise dates, therefore, for the ending of one kind of English and the beginning of another. The dates are only approximations. In the same way we can speak with approximate truth about the great hush of English literature for 150 years after the Conquest. But there was not really a dead silence, no more than there is absolute silence anywhere in the life of nature. Some voices still sang. But there are only one or two very short things of literary interest belonging to the English utterance of the period. One we may quote. It is not quite certain when it was written; but the best authorities concur in attributing it to this time. It is a poem about the grave and Longfellow has made the best translation of it. It is worth quoting, not as grim poetry, but as especially exhibiting the gloomy side of Anglo-Saxon feeling.

THE GRAVE

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

Thy house is not
Highly timbered,
It is unhigh and low;
When thou art therein,
The heel-ways are low,
The side-ways unhigh.

The roof is built
Thy breast full nigh,
So thou shalt in mould
Dwell full cold,
Dimly and dark.

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

Thus thou art laid,
And leavest thy friends;
Thou hast no friend,
Who will come to thee,
Who will ever see
How that house pleaseth thee;
Who will ever open
The door for thee,
And descend after thee;
For soon thou art loathsome
And hateful to see.

This is very horrible; but it is very powerful. And it is very English. The translator has preserved something of the alliteration, but you must remember that in the original the alliteration was irregular. Of course each line in the translation represents but one half line of Anglo-Saxon metre. Still, in some cases, this way of arranging the poem by half lines is certainly advantageous.

THE FIRST PERIOD OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

THE NEW TONGUE

I HAVE told that when English really revived again it was not the same English that it was before. The first great example of Midland English of the early period is the *Brut*[1] of Layamon. This is a vast poem of 32,000 lines all written in the old alliterated way—the same way as that poem on the grave which I just quoted. Layamon was a priest. From the French version of the Arthurian story, by Wace, he made his English epic. But he did not merely paraphrase, or imitate. He added a great deal; and he expanded a great deal; and there can be no question at all but that he improved upon Wace. In fact there was nothing better done on the subject of King Arthur and his Knights after or before Layamon, until the days of Malory;—and Malory wrote in prose.

But Layamon's English is not like the old Anglo-Saxon. One can read it without very great difficulty. The grammar has been changed very much under the influence, no doubt, of Latin and French, and there are Latin and French words in it. Not so many French words, however, as we should expect—only 80 in 32,000 lines. I mean, of course, 80 different words, each used repeatedly. But the change is evidently in progress;—we feel that English is preparing to absorb a great deal of French. The probable date of this poem, at least of the earlier manuscript,—for there are two manuscripts—is 1205. Within another 50 years the English language will have been both Latinized and Frenchified; and 50 years is a very short time. As I said before, dates must not be too implicitly trusted; but it is customary to reckon the first period of Middle English from the year 1205 to the year 1250: that is to say, during the half

[1] *Layamon's Brut, or Chronicle of Britain c* 1205, *c* 1275.

century that the English tongue was absorbing its rich store of Latin and French words.

It is quite useless for the student to try to remember the names of all the authors, and all the books produced during any particular period of English literature. To do so during the earlier period would be easy; but as literature grows, the task becomes much less easy. I do not say that it could not be done; there are memories capable of miracles. But I mean to say that even if you can do it, it can be of no use to you at first. It is all important not to overload the memory with the details at the beginning, but to make only a clear outline in memory of the literary movement as represented by its most important productions. Now during the period of which we are speaking there were only about half a dozen books of such importance that we need remembering them. Each of these books can be identified with a distinct literary change or tendency. Therefore try to remember them.

The next noteworthy book written after Layamon's *Brut* was called *The Ormulum*[1] or *Book of Orm*. Orm was probably a monk, very much interested in popularizing church literature. In his time the service books used at church by the people were in Latin. But all the people could not read Latin; so he thought of turning the whole thing into English verse for them. *The Ormulum* represents this effort. It contained a metrical version of the church service for every day in the year, together with a metrical commentary. It is not good poetry; it is not interesting at all as literature, in regard to sentiment or expression. But it is a very important book because of the fact that it shows a new attempt in poetry. The writer must have felt that the language was changing to such a degree that the old alliterative method was not suited to it. He dropped alliteration altogether, and tried to make a kind of unrhymed blank verse of the same length. He was not successful, but he shows a new tendency. Therefore his books represent a landmark in literature.

The next book of which the Latin *Poema Morale* is gener-

[1] *The Ormulum c* 1200.

ally rendered by *Moral Ode*[1] shows a very great advance upon *The Ormulum.* Its authorship is not quite certain. Its subject is the folly of youth as viewed by the experience of old age. It is a little heavy, but not exactly dull. However, the important thing about the book has nothing to do with its subject or its authorship; but only with the fact that it is written in rhymed couplets. The lines are very long and clumsy—14 and 15 syllables; but here we have, for the first time, a really successful attempt at the rhymed distitch. There are some rhymes in Layamon as well as alliteration—but so little that it seems to have got there almost by accident, like the chance rhyme in a Japanese poem. The rhymed couplet may better be said to date from the *Moral Ode.*

Very much more of a surprise does the next book offer us, *probably* dated about 1210. This is a version in verse of the Books of *Genesis* and *Exodus* — biblical paraphrases, but not biblical paraphrases like those of Cædmon. Nothing could be more difficult. These paraphrases are written in rhyme, but with rhymes alternating most artistically; and the measure and the form is the measure and the form of Scott's *Marmion* or Coleridge's *Christabel.* Not quite so artistic indeed. But here is the fact that English genius discovers the worth of this kind of octosyllabic verse even before the English language had taken a definite form. And for this reason no student should forget the name of the book, the *Moral Ode.*

But everybody knows that the rhyme of 10 syllables is particularly suited to English poetry, owing to the natural laws of the language—just as the line of 12 syllables has proved to be especially suited to the language of French poetry. But the English did not discover the 10 syllable line for some time. It first appears in a rhymed prayer to the Virgin Mary, called, the *Orison to the Virgin.* This was a great discovery indeed,—a splendid discovery. Nevertheless a long time elapsed before English poets generally recognized the value of this form. Before they did that, they experimented with lines of almost every length, but especially with lines of 14 or more syllables. It

[1] *A moral ode* (Versions) *a* 1200, *c* 1200, *c* 1259, *c* 1275.

was not until several hundred years after that the value of the iambic decasyllable became fully recognized. But you should remember the *Orison to the Virgin* as representing the first attempt at what we now call "heroics" in the English language. Among the books of this first Middle English period there is one which is not poetry as to form, but prose, and which nevertheless deserves our attention. It marks something altogether new in English prose and altogether new in English literature. It is a religious book. There are a few—only a few religious books in the world, outside of the Scriptures and hymns—which have been written with such sincerity of purpose and such tenderness of feeling that their emotional value must be recognized even by people who do not believe in any religion at all. Such a book is the famous *Little Flowers of Saint Francis* written in the Italian Middle Ages; and such is the book of which I am now going to speak, called the *Rule for Anchoresses*, or in Midland English, the *Ancren Riwle*.[1] I think you know the word "anchorite" as signifying a man-hermit; the word "anchoress" represents the feminine form of the term,—very rarely used. There was, during the first half of the 13th century, a community of religious women in England who were not nuns. They had a kind of convent and devoted their lives to works of benevolence and teaching; but they did not belong to any religious order, nor did they practise asceticism. They wanted a Rule of Life, nevertheless; and some priest or learned clerk wrote one poem for them. This is an admirable book and shows the author to have been far beyond his time in breadth of mind and breadth of religion. He taught these ladies that true religion does not consist in making one's body suffer—not in practising fasts and eschewing all comfort. On the contrary he declared that we should be glad for all the good things which heaven has given us and should know how to enjoy them without doing wrong. Also he speaks of outward forms of worship as being merely of secondary importance. All true religion, he says, must be of the heart, and if the heart be good and pure, there is no reason for injuring or starving the body.

[1] *Ancren riwle a* 1255.

It is very surprising to find such a book as this written at such a time; but what is more surprising is the wonderful warmth and simplicity of its emotion. Take, for example, the following little sentence from it describing the relation of the soul, as he conceived it, to God; there is nothing of religious gloom in this conception, but joy only:—

> The comfort is that our Lord, when he permits that we be tempted, plays with us as the mother with her young darling: she flies from it and hides herself and lets it sit alone and look about anxiously, and cry, 'Dame! Dame!'—and weep awhile, and then she leaps forth laughing with outspread arms and embraces and kisses it and wipes its eyes. Just so the Lord sometimes leaves us alone, and withdraws his comforts and his support—so that we find no sweetness in anything we do well nor any satisfaction of heart. And yet he loves us at the same time, our dear Father.

This is both human and pretty—and quite outside of simile—interests us as showing that the English mother of the Middle Ages playing with the child was very much like the English mother of to-day, and that again reminds us that the mother is the same in all countries, and in all ages. This little bit of mother love, which glows so in those quaint pages, is but one gleam of thousands which illuminate the book. All of it is written with a surprising tenderness and grace and sincerity; and we cannot but feel some wonder at the fact when we remember how cruel an age it was. No doubt there never was an age so cruel that plenty of human goodness could not be found in it. This book should be remembered chiefly because of its true place in emotional literature. It was too much in advance of the time to have a direct influence on Middle English prose. But hundreds of years afterwards in the age of the great preacher, that little book was found again and studied again, and inspired some of the very best of English sermons.

The English language appears to have been greatly changed by the time that this book appeared. Now the French and Latin words are very numerous, and we may turn to the next period of Middle English.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

THE second Middle English period—roughly dating from the middle of the 13th century to something more than the middle of the 14th, that is to say, from 1250 to about 1380—is very confusing to study. If you look at the various histories of English literature now accessible, you will find that none of the historians agree with each other either as to dates of production, literary values or literary characteristics. The chief reason is that the study of this part of English literature is comparatively recent. The Germans and the French anticipated English scholarship here; and the men of England who made the study great are of our own time, still alive and working hard — men like Skeat and men like Sweet. In another generation all the confusion will have become disentangled and everything simplified, then you will find this period just as easy to memorize as any other. But for the present I should advise you to try to remember only a few great names and a few large movements. In the last section of the lectures I quoted to you the names of the poets that mark the advance in the metrical development. In this section I shall speak only of—

1. Lyric poetry.
2. Metrical and alliterative romance.
3. The beginning of another change in the English language as exemplified by the work of Langland and Wyclif.

After that we come to Chaucer and then we come to the later Middle English period.

In the previous section we did not say anything about lyrical poetry—though lyrical poetry probably began to take light again a little earlier than 1250. But for the sake of clearness it is much better to begin at 1250 and to consider the

lyrical renovation altogether. The very first of the nine pieces quoted in the Oxford Anthology as belonging to this period is emblematic in an interesting way. It is the song of *Cuckoo*—therefore a song of spring, describing the budding of vegetation and the joy of animal life. And we might say that this is indeed the cuckoo song of the English poetical renovation—the first merry lyrical cry of this period of Middle English. For in the first period what lyrical there may have been was not at all of the same kind. Here is the *Cuckoo Song;* and as its date is 1250, we may say that it is 650 years old—yet we can read it very easily, in spite of the queer spelling:—

Sumer is icumen in,
  Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
  And springth the wude nu—
                Sing cuccu!

Awe bleteth after lomb,
  Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth,
  Murie sing cuccu!

Cuccu, cuccu, well singes thu, cuccu:
  Ne swike thu naver nu;
Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu,
  Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu!

Here there is scarcely a word which we do not know, except "verteth" about which the best authorities are still in doubt. It probably refers to a change in the horns of the male deer. "Awe" is recognizably our modern "ewe," a female sheep. "Cu" is cow, pronounced just as the Scotch pronounce it to-day. A pronunciation like that of Scotch appears also in the syllable "nu" for now. "Swike" for staff is now literary English; but the word still exists in dialect. However, I am not attempting anything philological; and I have quoted this only that you may notice how very readable this old English has become since the time of the Conquest. We could not have read a song of the time of Harold unless we had studied

Anglo-Saxon. But this we can read just about as easily as we can read a peasant ballad of to-day, which it resembles in form.

Several of the other eight lyrics of the period are religious and have not much claim to attention except for the excellence of their form. But there is one thing, a love song, certainly not written later than the end of the century, called *Alysoun* which is as pretty as anybody could wish, and of which the form is startlingly modern. The date ordinarily accepted is 1300. It will not be necessary to quote it to you with the extraordinary old spelling; for Ten Brink has given a modern rendering so close to the original that it is almost a literal translation. In the original form the only thing that might puzzle an unaccustomed reader is the use of certain words which look very much like German. For example: I is "ich"; and there is a German ending to many of the verbs. But see how pretty it is, though 600 years old: —

Between soft March and April showers,
  When sprays of bloom from branches spring,
And when the little bird 'mid flowers
  Doth song of sweetness loudly sing:
  To her with longing love I cling,
  Of all the world the fairest thing,
  Whose thrall I am, who bliss can bring,
      And give to me life's crown.
A gracious fate to me is sent;
Methinks it is by Heaven lent;
From women all, my heart is bent,
      To light on Alysoun.

Her sheeny locks are fair to see,
  Her lashes brown, her eyes of black;
With lovely mouth she smiles on me;
  Her waist is slim, of lissom make.
  Unless as mate she will me take,
  To be her own, my heart will break;
  Longer to live I will forsake,
      And dead I will fall down.
A gracious fate, etc.

All for thy sake I restless turn,
  And wakeful hours sigh through at night;
For thee, sweet lady, do I yearn;
  My cheeks wax wan in woeful plight.
  No man so wise that can aright
  Her goodness tell, her beauty bright;
  Her throat is than the swan's more white,
      The fairest maid in town.
A gracious fate, etc.

Weary as water in the weir,
  With wooing I am spent and worn;
Lest any reave me, much I fear;
  And leave me mateless and forlorn.
  A sharp, short pain is better borne,
  Than now and evermore to mourn.
  My love, O fair one, do not scorn,
      No longer on me frown!
A gracious fate to me is sent;
Methinks it is by Heaven lent;
From women all, my heart is bent,
      To light on Alysoun.

Notice the variations in the metre, the totally new tricks of line, the artistic use of a burden; and last, but not least, the passionate sincerity of the whole thing. It is very ordinary—the theme: a mere declaration of love by one who threatens to kill himself if this love be not returned. But it is in the utterance of the very common things, that genius best shows itself; and this man whose name we do not know, was a genius. I suppose that you have seen modern poems very like this—that the thought is not enough to impress you much. But remember that it was written 600 years ago; and nothing at all like it had been written in English before. Where, then, did the man get his lyric form from — the form of this very complicated stanza? He could not have invented it:—such things cannot be invented by anybody—they must grow. I think we have good reason to suppose on the authority of scholarly critics, that the author of *Alysoun* must have been familiar with

certain lyric forms of southern French poetry. There were not then any other compositions of this kind which he could have seen.

There are very few lyrics equal to *Alysoun*, but it is not the only lyric that shows Provençal influence. There were also some 9 or 10 battle songs of this period, written by Laurence Minot[1] —you will find one or two quoted in the anthology— which show also a study of southern French forms of verse. That is the main thing to remember about the briefer lyrical work of the time,—at least as to its place in English literature. In this lyrical work we have proved that the mastery of form is rapidly progressing.

Religious poetry has given a few things that require and deserve attention for other reasons. This religious poetry of which I speak, may be called lyrical; but it is not brief—the shortest specimen being 500 lines long. Nobody knows who wrote it. It includes three compositions[2] respectively entitled *Cleanness* (Chastity), *Patience* (Endurance) and *The Pearl.* The first-mentioned poem is a kind of poetical commentary upon the virtue of sexual restraint in all ages; but it is not at all fanatically religious. There is nothing puritanical about it;— it is rather in the nature of a contrast between lawful love and illegitimate love in the relation between men and women. Even so severe a critic as Professor Saintsbury says of one part of this poem that even the work of Milton on the same subject in *Paradise Lost* is coarse and common-place beside it. Now that is extraordinary praise for any poem of the Middle English period. But the man who wrote *Cleanness* was a natural poet and a man of very delicate genius. The poem of *Patience* is rather in the nature of a homily, and every line begins with a word "patience." All that we need say of it here is that it is excellent verse with occasional flashes of admirable sentiment. But the third of these poems is the masterpiece of this forgotten author. It is the story of a father's dream about his dead child.

[1] Laurence Minot (1300?-1352).

[2] *Early English alliterative poems in the west-midland dialect.* A. *Pearl.* B. *Cleanness.* C. *Patience.* 13 . . (E.E.T.S. 1864-69).

He called her the Pearl; and from this fact it is supposed that her real name was Margaret. The name Margaret is derived from a Persian word meaning "pearl," or "child of light." You know that this name in its French form, Marguerite, was afterwards given to the daisy,—the "pearl flower": and the author of the poem plays with the two meanings of the name, as jewel and blossom. But it is a sad and tender play. The father has lost his daughter—so he calls himself a jeweller who has lost a matchless pearl. Long and vainly he looks for it;—he wanders to the place where he dropped it,—which we must suppose to be the graveyard; and there he mourns with exceeding grief. At last exhausted by sorrow he sleeps; and in a dream there appears before him an exquisite girl, all radiant like an angel of light, who wears on her bosom the identical lost pearl. Then, in his dream, he calls out, "Are you not my pearl?" — and she answers mystically and sweetly, that she was, that she is not now, but that she will soon again be his pearl. And she passes to a palace of light, across a river which flows through his dream. Wishing to follow her he tries to cross the river—and suddenly awakes. From this admirable ending we may suppose that the river of the dream is the River of Death. The whole poem is really beautiful, both as to form and fancy. The form is worth talking about. All the poem is both alliterative and rhymed;—the two varieties of artistic construction being admirably blended together. Moreover it is all divided into regular stanzas, with a kind of modifiable burden at the end of each stanza—varying very much in the way that Rossetti modifies his refrains,—and this is quite a new thing—the stanzas are also grouped into divisions, such as we to-day call "Cantos." Therefore that poem marks a great advance in metrical construction.

We need not say more about the lyrical poetry, but turn to the subject of the great romances—which began, you remember, with the English work of Layamon. There are enough Middle English romances to fill a large library. Although a great number have been edited and published, a great many more remain in manuscript. The enormity of the work can

only be known by those scholars who have succeeded in the tremendous work of reading them all through. I told you that Layamon's poem represents about 32,000 lines. Now to form an idea of what a mass of verse the Middle English romances represent you must imagine about 50 immense books, with poems almost as long as the work of Layamon. The mere sight of one of these books almost frightens a modern reader; and he cannot help marvelling how the people of the 13th and 14th century had patience to read so vast a composition. But much of this romance is really good; and if it is not more appreciated to-day, and more known than it used to be—that is because very few of the texts have been republished in cheap and convenient reading form. Moreover a number of them ought to be translated into modern English in order to be fairly judged. About twenty or twenty-five of these great romances are in rhymed verse and about ten are in alliterative form. Besides, there are a number in which both forms of poetry are used.

A word here about this romance literature in general. Remember that it was being produced all through Europe at the same time it was produced in England—in Iceland and Norway and Denmark and Sweden—in Germany and France and Italy and Spain. It is an enormous branch of the literature of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless the most of it can be bulked into four vast groups—or cycles, as scholars call them. The first cycle includes all romances written about King Arthur and his Round Table. The second includes all romances upon the subject of Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers. The third cycle includes all romances written about the Eastern legend of King Alexander — Alexander the Great. (We may call this third division the Oriental cycle.) And the fourth cycle embraces all the romances on the subject of the story of the Siege of Troy.

Of these four cycles the cycle of the Arthurian legend is the especially English cycle. Celtic in origin, and evolved into literary form by Anglo-Norman genius, its importance to English literature is almost incalculable. We have already placed the history of its beginning in England. Spreading through-

out Europe—through France and Italy especially—it gave rise to a vast number of romances, songs and lyrical effusions in many languages. Coming back to England again, through French channels,—it came back prodigiously enriched—to be again and again translated, and to serve as a fountain of inspiration for the poets of succeeding ages.

The romance of Charlemagne probably arose in Northern France. It gave birth to a great number of minor romances attaching to Charlemagne as the central figure,—each of his Twelve Peers being the hero of a separate romance. Of the Charlemagne cycle, English literature has several fine examples in alliterative verse and in rhymed verse as well. I need scarcely say that Roland belongs to this cycle. However, the story of Charlemagne is just as mythical, from a historic point of view, as the story of King Arthur;—for example, the Emperor is represented as undertaking a Crusade; and you know that the Crusades were not of his time. In the same way, the story of Arthur is full of anachronisms. The mediæval romances are all, in this respect, "medley,"—using the term as Tennyson used it; and they are all the more interesting for that very reason.

The romance of Alexander is, as I have said, probably much coloured by Oriental influence. It belongs to a cycle which we may call the Oriental cycle. But the history of it, so far as is known, deserves especial consideration. You know that in the train of the real Alexander, there was a Greek philosopher and teacher, Callisthenes, — to whom Alexander was, at one time, much attached. He accompanied the Greek army upon all its expeditions. When Alexander began to adopt Persian customs, Callisthenes boldly protested, although Alexander was a very dangerous person to provoke. Still later, when Alexander demanded that he should be worshipped as a God, according to Eastern custom, Callisthenes again protested—declaring that such servile worship was unworthy of Greek freedmen. And Alexander became so angry that he caused the old man to be put to death. This Callisthenes wrote a history of Alexander's conquests; but the history has been

lost. Well, in the decline of Greek literature, there suddenly appeared a book, which pretended to be the very book that Callisthenes had written. It is known to scholars as the "Pseudo-Callisthenes"—or false Callisthenes. It is something of a wild romance, though there is real history as well to be found in it. It was translated into Latin, and this translation became the foundation, in part, of the Alexander romance of the Middle Ages, but not altogether. We have glimpses here of another Alexander — unknown to European writers; the fabulous and wonderful Iskandar of the Arabian story-teller. For at some very early time the legend of Alexander, spreading through the Arabian world, had there given rise to a story quite as marvellous as anything in *The Thousand and One Nights.* Indeed, I must tell you that the Arabian traditions speak of two Iskandars—one a pre-Adamite king and the other the Greek conqueror of India. Somebody who learned—probably during the Crusades—the legend of Iskandar, brought it to Europe; and there it became mixed up with the story of the false Callisthenes and so gave to the Alexander cycle that very strange colour which marks it as not of European fancy. As for the story, it is only a long story of adventures, intrigues and battles, ending with the poisoning of Alexander. The adventures are of the particularly Oriental features. Here we have, for the first time, the glorious story of the fountain of youth, which has since inspired thousands of poets; and here we have the story of a forest of trees whose flowers changed into beautiful girls—"flower-women" they are called. The legend of the "flower-women" is certainly Indian in origin; and from India the Arabs learned it. What is also probably Indian thought, though it must have entered into the story through an Arabian channel, is the legend of the desert haunted by monsters who could separate the upper part of their bodies from the lower part.

The cycle of romances relating to the siege of Troy was based upon two volumes of Low-Latin literature—one of which may have been written about the 3rd century and the other about the 12th. So that all this cycle, like the Alexander cycle, was founded upon a kind of literary forgery — somewhat re-

sembling the literary forgery of Geoffrey of Monmouth with his Welsh legends, or the literary forgeries of Macpherson in the 18th century with the prose poems of Ossian. Apparently, imaginative literature has much to be grateful for to falsifiers of this description, who happened also to be men of genius. For, in every case they helped to make some literary material accessible to the minds of their age — material which would not have been then prized in the original form. The Middle Ages could not have appreciated the real poetry of Homer, the Norman of Geoffrey's time would not have cared for the original Welsh poetry that Geoffrey loved; and the literary taste of the 18th century would not have tolerated the real Gælic poetry from which Macpherson drew his inspiration. Now, what Homer could not have given to mediæval imagination, two Low-Latin writers could give; and they helped prodigiously in the development of mediæval romance.

Their names (not their real names in all probability), were Dares and Dictys,—very easy to remember. One wrote a book which pretended to be an account of the Trojan War as written by a man who had fought upon the Trojan side. And the other wrote a book which pretended to be the work of a man who had fought on the Greek side. Both writers had probably read Virgil, and something of Homer; but their age was an age of literary degeneration — so they thought themselves able to tell the story of Troy over again better than it had been done before. In England there was a period at which people did exactly the same thing — the time of the Restoration, when authors of small ability actually set to work to rewrite Shakespeare's plays, imagining that they could improve upon him. But the indifferent work of Dares and Dictys really proved a very great gift to the Middle Ages, before the studies of classic Greek and classic Latin could have been fully revived. Out of those two books were formed a host of romantic stories, which inspired all Europe for generations. The best proof of their value is that both Chaucer and Shakespeare drew from them. Thus even the disintegration of great literature may help eventually towards the growth of a future new literature,—just as

the decomposition of old fallen trees and leaves helps to make a rich soil out of which a new forest will rise.

There are two reasons for which it is not necessary to dwell long here upon the character of English mediæval romances. One is that nearly all—though not quite all—of the Middle English romances were inspired by French models. They are little more than translations. The other is that to do the subject any justice would require a special series of lectures; and those lectures would have to be to some extent philological. It is much more important, at this part of our study, that the student should have a correct and generous idea about mediæval romances in general—and that we shall talk about presently. But something in regard to the English romances must be learned. As I have said before there were at least thirty of considerable importance in their way; and about twenty of the thirty were written in rhymed verse. Among these are such compositions as *Sir Tristrem, King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Arthur and Merlin, King Alisaunder, The Seven Sages, Sir Beves of Hamtoun, Guy of Warwick, Sir Isumbras, Richard Cœur de Lion,* and a number of shorter productions, each embracing the adventures of some one knight. Among the other romances which are not in this kind of verse are such compositions as *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, The Adventures of Arthur,* and the very curious *Pistill (*or *Epistill) of Susan.*

Now in the natural order of things, we might suppose that alliterative romances would prove to be the oldest, because alliteration was the primitive form of English composition. But such is not the case; the alliterative romances are later than the others;—and the reason is that in the latter part of the 14th century, and a little before it there was a strong reaction. The English poets made a tremendous effort to restore the old form of English poetry, in spite of French and Latin influence; and for a time they succeeded. You can easily remember this by recollecting that Langland wrote his *Vision* in alliterative, not in rhymed, verse; and he was the last who did anything great in this direction. After him came Chaucer; and Chaucer, who did so much to fix the English language, also proved that

there was nothing to be gained, but a great deal to be lost, by keeping to alliteration. For alliteration is really much more of a fetter upon expression than is rhyme. It is very much easier to make two lines rhyme effectively, than it is to shape them that there shall be in the first two identical sounds to correspond with one in the second. It is almost three times more difficult. And at last the English found this out and gave it up.

Now about the two classes of English romances, something remains to be said concerning the value of "the story." Unless you are at some future time extraordinarily favoured by circumstances as well as by inclination, you are not likely to think of reading them all. There are really very few people in the modern world who have read them all. The interest of them to us should chiefly be an interest in reference to their influence upon later literature. The first that I mentioned, *Sir Tristrem*,[1] is worth remembering by name, for this is the *Tristram* of Tennyson, the *Tristram* of Swinburne and of Matthew Arnold — a mediæval romance of the Arthurian cycle which has influenced literature in every country of Europe, and still supplies inspiration to poets.

It is not so in the case of *King Horn*[2] and *Havelok*[3]—though these were once very famous. But I may mention one thing, namely, that the adventures of Havelok serving in a kitchen for food and drink, may have supplied not a little of that material so admirably used by Tennyson in his idyll of *Gareth and Lynnette*. The Alexander Saga, if we may so call it, seems to have died away from memory a long time ago. Perhaps one reason is that the real Arabian stories helped to supplant it when modern poets wanted to ransack mediæval romances again for inspiration. Most of the others which I name to you have also little or no relation to the book which we now read —though William Morris used a few of them in making up his *Earthly Paradise*. But there are some which outside of any modern relation require mention for special reason. A student should at least remember such a title as that of *The Seven*

[1] *Sir Tristrem* c 1320 (ed. Sir W. Scott 1804, 1811; S.T.S. 1886).
[2] *King Horn* a 1300, 13 . . (in Ritson, Metrical romances II. 1802; E.E.T.S. 1866).
[3] *The lay of Havelok the Dane* c 1300 (E.E.T.S. 1868; Skeat 1902).

Sages;[1] because this romance is one of the earliest Oriental romances in the English language. We have now most of its history. It was first told in India where it figures in Sanscrit literature, then it passed through Arabian and Syrian versions, then into Low-Greek, then into Low-Latin, then into French, and so through all the languages of Europe. The story of *The Seven Sages*, even as to plan, immediately reveals its origin to a modern reader. A young Prince, who is being educated by seven wise men, has a wicked step-mother, who tries to ruin him by falsely accusing him of attempted adultery. He is brought up for trial, before the King his father. Then each of his seven wise teachers tells a story to the King, in which story there is contained some warning about the danger of trusting to unsupported ill-report. Everytime one of the teachers tells such a story, the wicked Queen answers it by another story, illustrating the ingratitude and treachery of which bad sons are capable. Finally the Prince tells a story; the evidence clears him from the charge and the Queen is sentenced to be burned alive. It makes no difference that the story is laid in Rome; it was first laid in India; and in Turkey it was laid in the Persian capital. The Turkish version, probably from the Arabic originally, has been lately translated and it is remarkably close to the English narrative.

The romance of *King Richard of the Lion Heart*,[2] on the other hand, is particularly English, deriving very little from other sources; and it is considered to be the very best of all the "fighting romances." Of course the subject is a splendid one —since the life of Richard I. was really the most romantic life possible to imagine. But the poet certainly made the most of his grand subject and he has furnished material to numbers of novelists and poets of modern times. The first to call attention to the excellence of this old romance in modern times was Sir Walter Scott;—he obtained from it much of the material used in his *Talisman*—which I have always thought to be the very best of his romances. In that book Scott gave a number of

[1] *The seven sages. The proces of the seuyn sages* 13 . . (Weber, Metrical romances III. 1810).

[2] *Richard Coeur de lion* 13 . . (Weber, Metrical romances II. 1810).

quotations from the original poem. It is scarcely worth while to say that romances like those of *Sir Perceval*[1] inspired much of Tennyson's work. I believe that I did not mention the title, *Amis and Amiloun*[2] (the English form of a better known French title *Amis et Amile*—which again is but another rendering of the Latin title *Amicus et Amelius.*) But this, which is perhaps, as a mere story, the most beautiful romance of the Middle Ages, does not appear to the best advantage in its English dress; and I want to make it the subject of a separate lecture at some other time.[3] The English poem did not have any particular influence upon native literature; the foreign versions have had considerably more.

Turning now to that class of romances composed in alliterative metre, there is something also to be said about the value of the story in them. The best of all is *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.*[4] You are familiar with the name of Gawayne from reading Tennyson; but Tennyson otherwise has nothing to do with the story of the romance in question — and it is rather a pity, for he might have made a magnificent modern idyll out of it. Perhaps the length of the story discouraged him. But it can be told very briefly in prose, and it is worth remembering. One day there rode into the great hall of King Arthur, a knight of gigantic stature, dressed all in green, and wearing no armour. And he cried out with a loud voice:— "Is there any one here brave enough to give me one blow, on condition that I shall afterwards give him another? I shall be willing to wait for one whole year before returning the blow." Everybody is stricken except King Arthur and Gawayne—not because of the apparent strength of the Green Knight, but because there is something uncanny about him. But at last, Gawayne, by permission of the King, cuts off the Green Knight's head with a single blow. The Green Knight quietly picks up his own head, and puts it on again, and says to Gawayne—

[1] *The romance of Sir Perceval of Galles a* 1400 (Thornton romance, Camden Soc. [1844).

[2] *Amis and Amiloun c* 1330 (Weber 1810; Kölbing 1884).

[3] See *On Art, Literature and Philosophy,* Ch. xxx. "The Most Beautiful Romance of the Middle Ages."

[4] *Sir Gawayne and the green knight, an alliterative romance-poem* 13 . . (E.E. T.S. 1864, 1869).

"That was a good blow: now you must come to me next year, and I shall return your courtesy." Then indeed everybody is frightened; for they see that the whole thing is a goblin trick, by which one of Arthur's knights is doomed to perish. However, the next year Gawayne bravely goes to the place appointed, and finds the Green Knight living in a splendid castle, and served by a remarkably beautiful wife. And the Knight says to Gawayne—"There is no hurry about the matter of the blow—we can settle that later on. For the present let us eat, drink, hunt and be merry." Gawayne is very handsomely treated. Next day the Green Knight makes this agreement with him: "I am going to hunt, but I like to hunt alone. If you wish to hunt, my horses will be at your service. But I want you to agree that whatever you catch or find that is good the half of it shall be given to me;—I, on the other hand, will give you half of anything good that I obtain." Then the Knight goes hunting; but Gawayne stays in the castle;—and the beautiful wife comes to him and makes love to him, quite shamelessly. But Gawayne is a virtuous knight; and he only allows her to kiss him once, being, as a gentleman, obliged to return the kiss. Presently the Green Knight comes back with plenty of game; he gives half to Gawayne, and asks him, "What have you to give me to-day?" Gawayne says, "Only this," and kisses him. The Green Knight returns the kiss and makes no remark.

Next day the same thing occurs; and the wife tempts Gawayne more than before. But he yields only so far that he has to give the Green Knight two kisses in the evening. Still the Green Knight does not seem to suspect anything.

The third day comes, and Gawayne is so much tempted by the wife, that he is almost on the point of losing his own honour. But, by a desperate effort he restrains himself; then the woman says: "Tomorrow my husband is going to give you the blow, and I am very much afraid that he will cut you in two. But because I love you very greatly, I am going to give you a magical girdle, which will keep you from being hurt. Let me put it round you." Gawayne ought not to have allowed her to put the girdle around him,—but he was really anxious not

to die. So he let her do as she proposed. When the Green Knight came home, Gawayne truthfully gave him three kisses; but, untruthfully, he did not give him the girdle—or at least half of it—according to the agreement.

And in the morning he has to go out to receive his blow. The Knight lifts up his sword to strike; and Gawayne winks and shrinks. "Ha! Are you a coward?" asks the Green Knight. "I was," answered Gawayne, "for a moment, but the fear is gone." "Very well," the Knight answers, and brings his sword on Gawayne's neck. Blood follows, but the wound is slight. "Now," the Green Knight says, "your trial is over. I could not have wounded you at all but for the fact that you told me one lie. I ordered my wife to tempt you, and you proved yourself a man of honour in regard to her. But you allowed yourself for a little time to be afraid of death—and that fear made you conceal the girdle and made you tell me a lie. Nevertheless, I see that you are a good man! Let us be friends!" So ends the story which, in the romance, is very beautifully told.

Perhaps this is the best of the romances for which a really English origin can be claimed. It belongs, of course, to the Arthurian cycle; and there are two other alliterative romances belonging to the same cycle which must be mentioned. *The Adventures of Arthur*[1] (commonly spelled *Awntyrs*) and the *Morte Arthure*.[2] These are in part derived from French originals—but only in part; the English poets adding much new matter. Both of these were used by Tennyson, as well as by many others before him. Slight mention only need be made of the great poem, entitled *The Destruction of Troy*[3]—a poem no less than 15,000 lines long. As I told you before, the material for this Trojan story was not derived directly from Homer, but from writers who belonged to the age of the decline of Greek literature. You need remember the title only in connection with the fact that this great alliterative poem chiefly represents the Trojan cycle in English romantic literature.

[1] *Arthur*? *a* 1400 (E.E.T.S. 1864).
[2] *Morte Arthure, or the death of Arthur*? *a* 1400 (E.E.T.S. 1865, revised 1871).
[3] *The gest hystoriale of the destruction of Troy: an alliterative romance translated from Guido de Colonna's Hystoria Troiana c* 1400 (E.E.T.S. 1869-74).

Now we come to some romances of the same group, which do not belong to any cycle at all, but are interesting in another way. One of these is called *William and the Werwolf*[1] — a story represented also in the romantic literature of many other nations. It appears to have come to England through a French channel; but it can be traced to an Italian authorship. The story is too complicated for repetition here; and it does not contain, as the story of the *Green Knight* does, some startling moral which would make it worth telling in the class. It is simply a story of wonderful adventures, many of which are magical. But the strangeness of the subject deserves some consideration. Perhaps you do not know what a werwolf is. The superstition of the werwolf was one of the most horrible beliefs current in the Middle Ages. It was then supposed that a man might have the power to change himself into, or the misfortune to be changed into, a wolf, in which shape he was obliged to devour other human beings. Generally speaking, the werwolf was a werwolf only by night;—in the day-time he was a man like other men, and engaged in ordinary occupations. The only way to find out whether a man was a werwolf or not was to skin him alive; then, if he were a werwolf, it would be found that his skin was really a wolfskin with the hair turned inside instead of outside. And so firmly at one time was this metamorphosis believed in, that many persons were burned alive or skinned alive, on suspicion of being werwolves. Now in the romance of which we are speaking, the poet imagines a new kind of werwolf,—a good werwolf, who in his animal shape, only endeavours to help the right and punish the wrong. This werwolf became a werwolf only through the jealousy and hatred of a wicked step-mother. After many terrible adventures, he recovers human form. It was only in the Middle Ages that such a romance could have been conceived—at least in Europe.

The other alliterative romance that I mentioned was *The Pistill* (or *Epistill*) *of Susan*.[2] The title might startle some of

[1] *The romance of William of Palerne: otherwise known as the romance of William and the Werwolf* c 1350 (Rox. Club 1832; E.E.T.S. 1867, 1881).

[2] *The Pistill of Susan* a 1400 (in D. Laing, Select remains of the ancient popular poetry of Scotland, 1822; Scott. allit. poems, S.T.S. 1897).

you, who remember that in the time when that romance was written, no such thing as a pistol had yet been invented, and the only other signification possible at first sight to attach to the queerly spelled name is "pistil"—the scientific name for a portion of a flower, and equally unknown in those days. But this title is really only a corruption of the words "The Epistle of Susanna." Here we have a romance written from a Bible story, or rather from a Bible text which once formed part of the English church-service. The story is in a part of *The Book of Daniel* which in modern times has been declared apocryphal, and therefore left out of the modern versions of the Bible. For that reason, it may be unfamiliar to some of you; and I may tell it. There was a beautiful married woman called Susanna, who one day went to take a bath in her own garden. While she was bathing, two wicked old men made their way to her by stealth and impudently told her that if she would not satisfy their wishes they would accuse her of adultery. She was not afraid, but loudly cried out for help; and when help came those two old rascals said that they had really only been trying to prevent wrong,—that they had seen her with a young man under a tree and had interrupted the converse of the two, and that Susanna had falsely accused them out of revenge. Now those old men were very respectable persons in the city—men of great power and authority; and what they said weighed much more in public opinion than what Susanna said. She was therefore charged with adultery and seemed about to be condemned, when a young man named Daniel unexpectedly assumed her defence. He was given the right to cross-question the two old men; and he separated them so that one could not hear what the other said. And to the first he said, "Under what kind of tree was it that you saw Susanna and the young man?" And the first old man said, under such a kind of tree. But the other old man answered, under another kind of tree. Thus they were both proved to be liars and Susanna was honourably freed from the charge against her. The story is told in the Bible merely to illustrate the wisdom of Daniel, who afterwards became a famous prophet. Now the English

romancer took this old story and made a really very powerful poem with it. He does not in this poem paraphrase the Bible story; — he does much more than that. He represents with great pathos and vividness what would be the natural emotions and fear of a good woman falsely accused of such a crime. And in doing this he has beautifully drawn the character of a good English woman of his own time and of a good English husband. It is chiefly as a fine study of true character that this romance takes a high place. Some good judges think that it was written by the same person who wrote the romance of the *Green Knight* and whose name may have been Huchoun[1] (which would be spelled to-day Hutcheon), but this is not at all certain.

You might ask whether there were no prose romances. Not exactly. English prose was very slow indeed in development after the Conquest; and a few books that represent it before the time of Chaucer, we shall speak of later on in a separate section. The art of writing romances in prose had yet been really developed nowhere but in Iceland where the English poetry revived. However, there grew up collections of short stories, both in verse and prose, which we must mention here, because it all represents so much romantic material. It is not necessary to say much about the short stories in verse; and the short stories in prose were in Latin. But notwithstanding this last fact, there is one collection of stories, made in England—probably about the time of Edward I.—which had an immense effect upon subsequent literature, even up to our own time;—the poet Rossetti, and the poet Swinburne, having both drawn upon it. This is the wonderful *Gesta Romanorum*[2] —which title might be rendered as "The Great Deeds of the Romans." However, that is not the meaning which the writer probably intended. The word "gesta," though originally signifying something very like the Japanese word *Shiwaza*, was so often given by professional minstrels as a title to their romances, that it eventually came to signify rather "romantic history." The French word "geste," you know, meant this in the Middle

[1] Huchoun *or* Huchown (fl. 14th cent.).
[2] *The Gesta Romanorum* c 1400 (Roxb. Club 1838; E.E.T.S. 1879).

Ages. So we might better translate the name of this work as meaning "Wonderful Stories about the Romans."

It is now translated into every Western language; and it will always be found good reading. Really it has nothing to do with the Romans, any more than with the man in the moon. Indeed it is very much more nearly related to the latter than to the former. The collection began in this way;—at a very early time in the history of the Church, clever preachers found out that the best way to interest their audience was to tell them good stories. Buddhist priests in Eastern countries had found out the very same thing thousands of years before; and in East and West, the preaching was managed in the same way,—the preachers always keeping in view the necessity of being interesting. In order to get stories, however, the Western monks and priests did not have so rich a literature of fiction to draw from as the Indian preachers had. There were no great collections of magical romances in Greek or Latin literature, such as existed in Sanscrit literature, and even the best of the Greek stories were not then accessible to Western learning. So the monks did the best they could, inventing a great deal, and borrowing right and left whatever material they could find. They read all the Latin histories obtainable, and the Latin chronicles of kings and dukes and barons, and also of councils. They searched also through the whole literature of hagiography, and the writings of the fathers of the Church. And out of all that they composed an extraordinary mass of fabulous stories—every story being so composed as to convey a mystical or didactic meaning. A general fact of their policy of authorship is worth mentioning especially. To the early Christian Church the Gods of the Greeks and Romans were not any time mere images of stone or wood or brass. Christianity never denied in those times the reality of the Heathen Gods. Quite the contrary. It taught that those Gods really existed; but that they were devils, wicked spirits—not beneficient divinities. And that accounts for the extraordinary hatred that the monks showed to the remains of Greek and Roman art—brutally destroying priceless statues, and casting

into the fire inestimable treasures of literature. The monks really thought that the statues broken or the books burned represented something supernaturally dangerous, magical and malevolent. And the authors of *The Gesta Romanorum* wrote their wonderful book according to this belief. There are plenty of extraordinary stories about devils and evil spirits; and many of those evil spirits have the names of Greek and Roman Gods, especially Roman. By transforming all classical mythology into demonology, the monks obtained a rich fund of imaginative materials to work on. And they worked really well. Of course many hundreds of writers may have helped to make the book. There is a great difference in method. Some stories are very horrible and horribly told, some are very tender and beautiful—as you may infer from the fact that Rossetti got the tale of his *Staff and Scrip* out of this work.

So much for *The Gesta Romanorum* which I hope you will try to read some day, as it is almost a necessary part of every student's reading. But I mention also another kind of work in the same direction that was done by the monks—or at least begun by them. In collecting materials of a romantic character for their sermons, they also found a variety of little fables or stories which could be used in another way—for popular teaching outside of the Church. With these little stories or fables they made verses, embodying some moral truths, which verses were to be learned by heart. For example, they would take a Latin fable or a Greek fable and turn it into a material allegory. For this object they especially preferred fables or stories about animals. And in this way, what is called the *Bestiary* in English, and the *Physiologus* in Latin, came into Western literature. The *Bestiary*[1] was a book of beast-fables, or stories about beasts—every animal mentioned being an emblem of something moral or divine. For example, the panther (then supposed to be a very gentle and fragrant creature) signified Christ; the whale signified Hell; the fabulous phœnix also sometimes signified Christ, at other times the doctrine of the resurrection. This work began very early; and we have fragments of it even

[1] *Bestiary c* 1220 (in O.E. Misc., E.E.T.S. 1872).

in Anglo-Saxon literature, long before the Conquest. With the revival of English it came into general favour again; and a number of Bestiaries were produced. We shall have to refer again to the Beast-Fable,—for it leads up to the subject of that greatest of all Beast-Fables, the mediæval story of *Reynard the Fox.*

It is here that something general must be said about the immense value of the literature of mediæval romance.

In order to imagine what mediæval literature meant to modern literature, — not only in England, but all through Europe—it is well to remember that the old Greek and Roman literature had very little of what we would call romance. In this respect classic literature in Europe was probably much poorer even than old Egyptian literature, or old Assyrian literature,—not to speak of the highly romantic literature of India and the farther East. Of course, much Greek and Roman literature has been lost; and we do not know everything that was written. But from the artistic principles which govern classic literature, we may be tolerably sure that romance had not yet been developed among classic peoples in the really classic age. You have heard of "early Greek novels"; but these really were not early novels at all—they appeared only in the time of the decline of Greek literature and then very sparingly. You have heard of *The Romance of the Golden Ass* and books of that sort, but such literature was developed only in the time when the Roman Empire was decaying and the language becoming corrupt. Notwithstanding exceptions, we may generally say that, in Europe, romantic literature was not a product of the classic ages at all. And yet the material existed for it. But great subjects usually took the form of drama or of epic in ancient poetry; and such branches of literature were regulated by severe conservatism. I am not learned enough even to try to explain why this was the case; but one thing is certain—that the thoughts of men during the classic ages were quite different from the thoughts of men in after ages. There was no real freedom in the lives of the old Greeks and of the old Romans; —the action of every individual was regulated by custom which

it was impossible to break;—the society was everything, the personality nothing. Now romantic literature really requires imaginative freedom of the most extended kind; and in any community where persons were not free to act or to think, romantic literature could scarcely have been evolved by any natural process.

Of course we know that in the Middle Ages also there was little or no religious freedom. But religious freedom and personal freedom had then become entirely different things. In the Middle Ages you would have been burned alive for publicly denying a doctrine of the Church; but the Church did not pretend to tell you how you should eat or drink or marry or travel or tell story, or fight or make friends. Except as to the matter of faith people had as much freedom as the feudal condition allowed of—and that was considerable. But the Greek or the Roman of early time had no such freedom. He could not go where he pleased, or choose a wife where he pleased, or embark in any business that he pleased, or act in any way outside of social convention. So, even to leave one's own city was to leave behind one all rights of citizenship, and all claim to kindly treatment. Entering a foreign land you were a person to be regarded with suspicion; and you could not move hand or foot without permission.

So that really the Middle Ages, ignorant as they were, and cruel as they were, and barbarous as they were in many ways, allowed greater freedom to human action and to human imagination. It was a kind of barbarian liberty — this liberty gained from the rude conquerors of the North. But it was a great assistance to the evolution of European literature. Men were still much too ignorant then to do any literary work comparable to the literary work of the Greeks—indeed we are not yet able to equal them. But men could attempt literary work in an entirely different way from the Greeks, with great liberty to imagine and to play with facts; and the result was the production of romance.

Now all the work of the Middle Ages in literature was a kind of gathering and storing up of romantic material for future

literary use. Out of the wild imaginations of the time were developed beauties of fancy and feeling never before known in Europe. Remember that the work was not well done. It could not have been well done;—all the European languages were still imperfect and the new European nations much too ignorant. But in their imperfect work there was the richest of ores from which the purest of literary gold could afterwards be extracted. And there were two veins of a specially rich material in the mass. One represents the sense of the supernatural; the other that of tenderness. In regard to both, we may say that they were of an entirely novel sort. There was great faith in the Greek and Roman time; but it was not at all of the same kind—the kind that created the sense of awe. And there was tenderness in the literature of the Greeks as well as passion, but it was not, and could not have been, of the same sort as the tenderness of the mediæval feeling, which regarded love in a totally different way.

And that is why, at every period in English literature, when men's imagination became barren, and when literature, in all its branches, began to grow dry and hard and threatened to crystallize into unchangeable shape, writers went back to the literature of the Middle Ages for new inspiration. In recent centuries the reaction showed itself first about the age of Dr. Johnson. The so-called romantic revival which then began was but one of the several to follow. The work of Wordsworth and his school and of Coleridge and even of Keats, represent another phase of the revival. Lastly the Pre-Raphaelites, with Rossetti and others, revived the spirit of the Middle Ages as it had never been revived before. Every time that learning goes back to that magical well of the Middle Ages, literature obtains strange refreshment—as if from the elixir of life. And to-day, when the English poets have almost ceased to sing,—and when English fiction is showing every sign of exhaustion,—it is a significant fact that the old romances are being reprinted, re-edited, and re-studied as they never were before. Even now, inspiration is being thus sought for; and very possibly it will be found.

So, that is the way, I imagine, in which we ought to think about mediæval romances. To admire them in themselves, in their original and wearisome form, is very hard indeed. It requires much patience and considerable scholarship. But when the patience and the scholarship analyses the mass of that old work and separates the gold from the rubbish, the result is always extraordinary. All the English poetry and the French poetry and the German poetry of the last one hundred years has been vitalized and changed by those very great influences which we were formerly taught to despise as the superstitions of an age of ignorance. The meaning of the romantic revival in every European country is the same. And almost certainly another revival will come, drawing its life from the very same sources.

THE LAST PERIOD OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

THE FIXATION OF STANDARD ENGLISH, COMMONLY CALLED THE KING'S ENGLISH

NOW these romances about which we have been talking, whether in rhyme or in alliterative verse, were not written according to any generally established form of English. They were written in different dialects — some in northern dialect, some in southern dialect, some in the dialect of the middle provinces. Gradually there grew up a struggle between these different dialects for the mastery;—and the strongest and richest dialect won. This was the Midland dialect. You must understand that three dialects even to this day exist in England — not to mention sub-dialects which exist in almost every shire. One of these three is the northern — represented in modern times by the language of Burns and commonly called Lowland Scotch. But the term Lowland Scotch is not good—because the dialect extends further south into Yorkshire, and becomes, in a modified form, the dialect of Tennyson's *Northern Farmer*. And there is a southern dialect too — weakly represented by some modern volumes of poetry written in it. But this southern dialect is so unimportant to literature that we need speak only of the two great divisions of English, Northern or Scotch and the King's English. Why the King's English? Simply because it was a form of English adopted at the King's court as a standard during the 14th century. Why was it adopted in preference to others? Why did it win? Because it was richer and stronger; it had absorbed a greater number of Latin and French words than the other dialect; and it had kept most of the strong Danish and Scandinavian words. So people found that they could write better prose and better poetry in Midland than in Northern English and that it was better adapted for school use.

Until 1362 English had not been taught in the schools so much as French; but after that English again became not only the language of instruction but the language in which ordinary cases might be tried in courts.

Now a few years ago philologists tried to insist upon a division of Midland dialect into East Midland and West Midland; but it seems that they must give up this division. There were differences, of course, between the speech of the Western and of the Eastern countries; but these differences have not proved to be so fundamental as could justify the establishment of separate dialects. They are only differences of sub-dialects; and the student will do well to pay no attention to them except so far as philology may be concerned. It used to be said that Wyclif and Langland wrote in West Midland and Chaucer in East Midland. But it will be quite sufficient for you to accept the simple fact that all of them wrote in Midland dialect and that dialect became the King's English.

There are a few names now to be memorized—the names of the men who really fixed the standard of Middle English, who laid the foundations of modern English. These were Chaucer, Gower, Langland, Wyclif and the quaint and delightful "Sir John Mandeville." Try to remember these five names and something of the work of each man. Three were poets; two were prose writers. And the prose writers are now for the first time quite as important as the poets—indeed even more so. For no writing influenced the English language so much as the Bible and Wyclif's translation of the Bible into Middle English had an immense influence upon the speech of the people. For this reason he is more important in the history of English literature even than Chaucer; and I shall begin with some remarks about his work.

Wyclif[1] was an Oxford student, who by reason of his great talents in the direction of logic and philosophy rose to high honour in Balliol College and eventually became Master or Director of that College. A trying time in politics gave him occasion to display his power upon a larger stage. The Pope

[1] John Wyclif (1324-1384).

had demanded tribute from the English Government; — and Parliament refused the tribute, and looked about for some scholar to represent its views in the controversy impending. Wyclif was the man thought to be the best man in the University for that purpose; and he represented the Government so well, that he covered himself and his University with honour. But Wyclif came for honour only as a means of helping himself to speak more powerfully at a later day against the Church of Rome for other than political reasons. He was a great and very daring Protestant. You must remember that this was long before Luther's time,—that it was a time when the religion of England was still Roman Catholic, and when a man ran the risk of being burned alive for publicly denying any doctrine of the Church. Now everything that Luther afterwards did in Germany, Wyclif did long before him in England. Like Luther he publicly attacked the sale of indulgences and the corruption of the religious orders;—like Luther he denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, and he denied also the right of the Pope to exercise temporal power. If they could have got him to Rome, they would have burned him. But in England he was protected by a powerful party of Nobles, headed by John of Gaunt. Probably this was not because John of Gaunt and his followers had not any great religious feeling on the subject: the hatred of the English nobility for the Church in that time was not a hatred of conviction but of politics. They wanted to push the religious orders out of the country and to seize upon their wealth. And Wyclif therefore seemed to them an instrument to be used and to be protected. But at last the opposition to Wyclif became too strong even for the nobility. After a long and glorious fight—for you must remember that he was a purely sincere man—he was forced out of the University and obliged to retire into private life. But he was not further annoyed. He was only checked in his purpose of religious reform. He had been born about 200 years too soon. What he wanted to do could not have been done until the time of Henry VIII, and even then it required all the obstinacy and force of the most obstinate and the most forceful

of English Kings to do it. So much for Wyclif's life: now about his work in literature.

We need speak here only of his translation of the Bible[1] — not from the Hebrew, but from the Latin. It appeared about 1380, and immediately began to influence the English language all over the country. Of course a perfect translation of the original text could not have been made in those days;—the translation containing many obvious errors just as the original Latin does, the Vulgate Version. But the Vulgate Version from a literary point of view is a grand work—full of sonorous words; and Wyclif made an admirable literary rendering. Nothing is more interesting for a person who loves quaint language than to read some of the more poetical parts of the Bible in Wyclif's version and to compare them with the modern text. I shall give you a short extract from the description of a horse in *The Book of Job* (xxxix).

WYCLIF	WYCLIF (*modernized*)	KING JAMES' VERSION
Whether thou schalt ȝyue strengthe to an hors, ether schal ȝyue neiyng aboute his necke? Whether thou schalt reyse hym as locustis? The glorie of hise nosethirlis *is* drede. He diggith erthe with the foot, he fulli ioieth booldli; he goith aȝens armed men. He dispisith ferdfulnesse, and he ȝyueth not stide to swerd. An arowe-caas schal sowne on hym; a spere and scheeld schal florische. He is hoot, and gnas-	Whether thou shalt give strength to an horse, either shall give neiyng about his neck? Whether thou shalt raise him as locusts? The glory of his nostrils *is* dreadful. He diggeth earth with the foot, he fully joyeth boldly; he goeth against armed men. He despiseth fearfulness, and he giveth not stide to sword. An arrow-case shall sound upon him; a spear and shield shall flourish. He is hot, and gnasheth and swal-	Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils *is* terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swal-

[1] *The Holy Bible, made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wyclif and his followers* 1382, 1388 (ed. J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden 1850).

tith, and swolewith the erthe; and he arettith not that the crie of the trumpe sowneth. Whanne he herith a clarioun, he seith, Joie! he smellith batel afer; the excityng of duykis, and the ȝellyng of the oost.

loweth the ground; and he aretteth not that the cry of the trump soundeth. When he heareth a clarion, he saieth, Joy! He smelleth battle afar, — the exciting of dukes, and the yelling of the host.

loweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

How much finer, you may say, is the King James' Version than Wyclif's! Yes,—but it took the united labour of hundreds of scholars working through hundreds of years, always improving, always bettering, to make the English of the modern version; and Wyclif was the pioneer. The interesting thing is that we can read him even now with pleasure and find beauty in his language. Of course he could not give us a line so splendid as that famous phrase about "the thunder of the captains, and the shouting." But after all what a very vivid picture is brought before us by his equivalent part;—"the exciting of the dukes, and the yelling of the host." Here you have the difference between the idea of battle formed by a man of the 14th century and the idea of a man about battle many hundreds of years later. Each tries to render a foreign text by a familiar image, by a picture;—and if the modern is so very much stronger, so also is the modern experience.

Langland,[1] like Wyclif, was a reformer. We do not know much about him. All that has been written about his life in literary fragments and histories of literature has been proved to be untrustworthy. We do not even know whether his first name was William, or something else. The best study about his work has been made by a French Professor of English Literature, M. Jusserand; and even that splendid work of investigation tells us nothing definite about the writer's personality. But from his poems we know that he must have been a good scholar; and his mastery of language is not inferior to

[1] William Langland (1330?-1400?).

that of Chaucer. We know also from his work that he was a very sincere and zealous Protestant—though not quite of the same degree as Wyclif. The great difference, however, in the utterance of the two men may have been due to difference in position and circumstances. Wyclif could dare a great deal; he was known as the first scholar in England; he was a Master in Oxford University; he was protected by powerful nobles; and he had the ear of the King. Langland was a comparatively obscure person; and he had to be very careful indeed as to what he wrote or said—for a simple charge of heresy might have brought him to the stake.

His great work, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*,[1] is an alliterative poem of great length, attacking existing evil in Church and State, under the form of an allegory. As I told you he had to be very careful not to make his allegory offensively clear in certain directions; and the consequence is that to-day no mortal man can understand the whole of that poem. Even Professor Saintsbury, who declared that Browning had no obscurity for him, is obliged to confess that he can make nothing out of part of Langland. But in the time of Langland himself—he lived with Wyclif and Chaucer—the allusions of *The Vision* were perfectly understood; and the composition had an immense success. Several editions were called for in the author's own lifetime—and that was before the time of printing. I do not think that you could possibly be interested in *The Vision* as a whole. It opens with a description of the country as seen from the Malvern Hills; and in the middle of the landscape the poet beholds the vision of a tower, a prison and many allegorical figures. The Church is represented under the figure of a beautiful lady; conscience under that of another; and there are figures called Meed or Merit, Reason, Fraud, etc. The whole thing reminds us now of the stage of a Miracle play upon which the virtue and vices take the roles of actors. After a wedding ceremony or at least the preparations for it and a court trial held before the King, the scene suddenly changes;

[1] *The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman.* A. text 1362; B. text 1377; C. text 1393 (ed. Skeat; E.E.T.S. 1867-85).

and we are introduced into another series of allegorical pictures having scarcely anything to do with the first. But here at least, there is something that we can understand and admire. There is, for example, a set of studies, taken from real life, representing the seven deadly sins — Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. Now these studies have been really made from the London life of the 14th century. The most famous is a description of a drunkard's drinking in a tavern; and that description shows that Langland could paint reality almost as well as Chaucer. If you want to read extracts from the best part of Langland, you had better look at Jusserand's work with the title of *L'Épopée Mystique.* But we need not delay further with Langland; suffice to say that his poem, through its popularity, helped to fix the standard of Middle English.

Another writer, with whose work we need not much trouble ourselves, though he must be mentioned, is John Gower. In the latter part of the 14th century there seemed to have been many Englishmen capable of doing what perhaps no Englishman could do to-day (except Mr. Swinburne)—namely, of writing poetry equally well in three languages. John Gower[1] was one of these. He wrote three vast compositions—one in Latin, one in French, and one in English; — and these were respectively called *Vox Clamantis, Speculum Meditantis,* and *Confessio Amantis*[2] or. *Lover's Confession,* by which Gower belongs to English literature in an important way—a vast poem of nearly 40,000 lines or, perhaps we had better say, a vast collection of poems.

A fact not often noted but very important to notice, is that Gower happened to have exactly the same idea as Chaucer, and even somewhat earlier; but he was much less successful in carrying it out, like Chaucer. There are differences in the plan, of course; but the general idea, the fundamental idea of both poets was to put together a great collection of romantic stories, uniting all by a single thread of narrative. Gower's

[1] John Gower (1325?-1408).
[2] *Confessio amantis* 1390 (R. Pauli 1857; Eng. Works, E.E.T.S. 1900).

thread of narrative was this:—a lover goes to the temple of the goddess Venus, and confesses his love for a certain girl to the priest of that temple. He tells the priest that he woos in vain; that he cannot win and does not know what to do. And then the priest, in order to console him, relates all the stories of unhappy lovers, recounted either by the classic writers or by the writers of romance. And when all the stories have been told, the goddess Venus comes and heals the heart of the unhappy lover with a magical balm. There is no doubt that Gower wrote good verse; but it is quite certain that he did not write good poetry. His work speedily fell into oblivion, and remained forgotten until the new interest in Middle English caused it to be reprinted about a year ago. But even now I am pretty sure that nobody will read it except for philological reasons. On the contrary Chaucer always kept public favour; and his reputation continued to grow through the centuries.

Now there is something wrong about the character of John Gower, which probably accounts for his failure in poetry. I told you long ago that no bad man ever could write good poetry; and I am afraid that we must believe Gower to have been something of a bad man. He used to be called a brave reformer, and an outspoken patriot—and all that sort of thing. But we know a little more about his private history; and he appears to have been a very insincere and disloyal person. His book of Latin poetry *Vox Clamantis*[1] ("The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness") was chiefly an attack upon the corruptions and follies of society in the days of King Richard II,—the King himself being attacked. This was the book that made for Gower a reputation as patriot; but we must now suppose that he wrote it merely for a cunning purpose. King Richard had been his friend, had kept him in high position, had made him rich gifts and had even encouraged him to write English poetry. It was then that he wrote his *Lover's Confession* (*Confessio Amantis*). But the moment that King Richard's authority became weak, John Gower deserted his King, went over to the side of the usurper, and abused his benefactor. Poetry re-

[1] *Vox clamantis* ? *c* 1382

quires a sincere character, and somehow Nature never allows a perfectly insincere man to produce a good poem. Gower could write perfect verse in three languages; — he could rise to high position in the State by his talent and by his cunning — he could even become the intimate friend of a proud and passionate king. But he could not write good poetry in any language—simply because his character unfitted him to utter truth. There is something repulsively cold and dead about all his work. The form may be praised;—and that form helped to fix Middle English, but after all the poem is a corpse and its beauty is only like that of a dead face.

It was very different with Chaucer—Geoffrey Chaucer[1] — the greatest poet of the 14th century, and one of the greatest in the history of English literature. The stories written about him now seem to have been mostly imaginary. We do not know much about his life; and what we do know depends almost altogether upon the entries made in Court Records, and in the accounts of the City of London. There we find mention of the fact that he had a pension, and gifts from successive Governments; and there is a record of salary paid him as an officer of customs — showing that he once held a good civil position. We also know that he was at one time a soldier in France, and that he was taken prisoner by the French, and ransomed. We know that he was employed on some Government missions in different parts of Europe. Finally we know that he was married and that he had a little son, whom he wrote about in a very beautiful way. But we do not know what his wife's name was, and nobody knows what became of his son; and you must not believe the stories about Chaucer's life which used to appear in literary histories. They are simply made of moonshine. We can only guess the real history of the man.

How so? From the records of which I have spoken in part —but much more from his work. Both his poetry and his prose teach us a good deal about his character. They show us that he must have been a sympathetic and kindly person; and the

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400).

financial records assure us that he must have been sincerely liked, — for in spite of all the changes of Governments that occurred in his time, he never lost good will in high places. Sometimes, indeed, when new Governments came to power, he was thrown out of his position. But that seems to have been only a momentary lot, the new king or the new party soon recognizing the merit of the old servant who never spoke unkindly about anybody. One thing more may be worth mentioning—that he was the son of a London wine-merchant, that he was employed, almost from boyhood, at the court of King Edward III. This shows that his family must have been greatly esteemed, in spite of being common people.

There is even a primer of Chaucer to-day, in which it is attempted to classify and analyse and group and chronicle his work almost as elaborately as has been done in the case of Shakespeare. But you may be sure that the primer itself was only a phenomenon of passing fashion in literature when the study of Middle English temporarily became the "rage." It is quite unnecessary and would be mere waste of time for you to study Chaucer after the fashion of an English classic—unless you are doing so in connection with a special branch of English philology. Enough to say that Chaucer's place in English literature has been established altogether by the *Canterbury Tales;* and that we need not dwell upon anything except these for the present. Of course it may be worth while to know that Chaucer was first influenced by French literature, when he translated *The Romaunt of the Rose;* [1]—that he was influenced by Italian literature when he rendered into English from Boccaccio the story of *Troilus and Criseyde;*[2]—that at last he turned altogether to English subjects and wrote free from the influence of foreign literatures of any kind. But it is not in the least necessary to know those things and there is nothing of Chaucer's work which need concern us here except his really English studies. So we shall speak of the *Canterbury Tales* [3] only. Like Gower, Chaucer wanted to write a great number

[1] *The romaunt of the rose a* 1366.
[2] *Troilus and Criseyde c* 1374.
[3] *Canterbury Tales c* 1386.

of romantic stories, together in one scheme; but his idea of the scheme was quite original and incomparably better than Gower's. In Chaucer's time, religious pilgrimages were very much in fashion, and the shrine of Canterbury especially attracted great numbers of pilgrims from all parts of the country. The pilgrims were not by any means the poorer classes only; even noblemen joined the pilgrim parties, with a numerous retinue, for it was an age of great faith. And Chaucer had observed that all classes of society were sometimes represented in a single procession of pilgrims. It occurred to him that the assembling and ordering of one of these pilgrimages would therefore admirably serve him as an incident upon which to base his personal narrative. There was an inn in London, where parties were often arranged for such pilgrimages; and Chaucer represents himself as having joined such a party at the inn. The landlord undertakes to act as guide and leader to the pilgrims; and in order that the time may be passed pleasantly, it is agreed that on the journey each of the pilgrims shall tell two good stories and that on the way back each shall tell two stories more. Such was the general plan.

The work opens with *The Prologue*, in which the gathering of the pilgrims at the Tabard Inn is recounted and each of the pilgrims described. There are about thirty in the party and these thirty represent almost every class of the English society of that time. There was a Knight, for example, who had been to the Crusades, and his son, a handsome Squire; these two represented the feudal chivalry of the 14th century. There was a Yeoman,—who attended upon the Knight, representing that sturdy class of feudal retainers, drawn from the peasantry, who afterwards won so many splendid victories by their terrible archery. There were monks of different orders also, and nuns and priests. There were tradespeople, sailors, a miller,—various people of the artisan class. The manufacturing class was represented by a city-dame who owned a large cloth factory; this person being the famous Wife of Bath. The gentry were also represented by a Franklin, that is to say, a free-holder, or landed proprietor, who acted both as ruler and

magistrate in his country parish, much as the English "country-squire" does to-day. A very motley gathering indeed; but certainly according to the time and drawn from life.

Now there is nothing in the *Canterbury Tales* more valuable and more interesting than this *Prologue*. And the more that we know about the English history of the period between 1300 and 1400, the more pleasure you will find in studying that *Prologue*. Every figure in it is drawn with the accuracy of a portrait, and with every detail of costume, and every eccentricity of action and every particularity of manner. All these people are intensely alive. From looking at Chaucer's word pictures, we know exactly how people ate, drank, dressed, spoke, and generally conducted themselves in that era. You see the Yeoman, for example, in his green coat and hood, with his leather belt about his waist and the sword hanging thereto —you see the bow in his hand, the arrows in his quiver. Anybody might show you that, but Chaucer takes care that you shall see something more—namely, how the character of the man is indicated by the care that he takes of his weapons. Chaucer tells you to look at the arrows in the arrow-case; they are feathered with peacock's feathers,—and he bids you observe that not a single feather is in the least frayed. That is proof that the archer knows his business: badly feathered or carelessly kept arrows indicated a bad marksman. Again we have the Wife of Bath described for us in her riding costume—booted and spurred and wearing an immense hat wide enough to protect her shoulders as well as her head from wind and sun. Every detail of her dress is told us. Now from this sketch we know that in Chaucer's time English women still rode in the same way as men—straddling the horse and wearing spurs. The custom of riding "side-saddle," as it is called, did not come into vogue until some time later. Another fact is interesting to observe,—namely, that the character of the gentleman, as understood in the 14th century, was at least as noble as the best ideas of our own time upon the same subject. The Knight, we are told, fought in a great many battles, travelled in a great many countries, won a great many prizes at tournaments, and

was highly esteemed as a warrior and leader; — but he had never been known to speak one unkind word to any man, of any rank, or even to speak evil of his enemies. This is very much the identical definition of a gentleman as given by Charles Kingsley: a person who minds his own business, and never speaks unkindly. Yet one more detail of *The Prologue* may be noticed—the extreme vividness with which the character of the Abbess is drawn for us. She represents the religious gentility of her time; and we are told to observe how nicely she eats and drinks. Always before drinking she wipes her lips very carefully so that she never leaves a stain upon the edge of the glass;—she cuts her meat finely, never putting a large piece of food into her mouth and never letting a crumb or a drop fall while she is eating. English children are still taught to behave at table like the Abbess of the *Canterbury Tales*. As I have said, every figure is alive; and the vulgar figures are drawn quite as vividly and as truthfully as the genteel ones. But they are also drawn very sympathetically. The most vulgar of the pilgrims is not less kindly treated than the Knight or the Franklin. Chaucer makes us laugh at them occasionally, but he also makes us like them for the most part, — and so proves himself a man above every kind of prejudice.

Before saying anything further about the *Canterbury Tales*, I want very much to impress upon your mind one fact about them—a fact which is not sufficiently insisted upon in most histories of English literature. I mean the fact that they were never finished at all. By this I do not mean merely to say that Chaucer could not carry out his original plan: everybody knows that. I mean to say that probably not even one of all stories in the *Canterbury Tales* was really finished, in the literary sense, at the time of Chaucer's death. *The Prologue* was probably quite finished—rewritten and improved and made as perfect as he could make it. But the rest of the work appears to have been only half finished or three-quarters finished—and in some cases the story does not appear even to have been fully planned. Remember that all this was before the age of printing. Chaucer was really published only long after his death.

As for the stories, there are altogether about 24, including fragments of stories. Between the stories, there are shorter prologues and bits of conversation,—accounts of disputes between members of the party, and of peace-making,—also, little narratives told by various persons concerning their own experience of life. Four of the stories are old-fashioned romances; a large number of the remainder are tales of a very light kind —such as the French would call, if written in prose, *nouvelles*, and if written in verse, *fabliaux*. These remind us of the Italian and French love-tales of a similar sort—tales of deceived husbands, tales of tricks played upon unfortunate lovers, and a few tales of a rather loose kind. Altogether, it would appear as if considerably less than one half of the original plan had been carried out. Many of Chaucer's pilgrims do not speak at all;—for example, none of the mechanics in the party tells a story. The work ends with the account of the ascent of the slope leading to Canterbury — the pilgrims are nearing their goal, but they never reach it, and vanish away into the night of the past. The effect of the whole thing is that of an exceedingly vivid dream in which voices are heard and faces are seen with astonishing distinctness,—a dream which we never forget, but which we cannot help regretting the incompleteness of;—we have been too soon and too suddenly awakened. Something prevented Chaucer from even half completing his undertaking; and what that something was we shall never know.

The best critics all agree in calling *The Prologne to the Tale of the Wife of Bath* the best thing in the *Canterbury Tales* —because it is the most accurate study of nature. The Wife of Bath, who is one of the pilgrims, is a woman who married five husbands, expects to marry one or two more. She is a good-hearted, merry, somewhat vulgar, and exceedingly talkative woman — that kind of woman who cannot help saying everything that she feels and telling everything that she knows, — and of course she thinks herself a little cleverer than she really is. Somebody in the party starts her to talking about her husband; and she then relates the whole story of her married

life. In some way or other, she says, she had always been able to master her husband and to rule the house. Sometimes she managed it by making the husband jealous, sometimes she managed it because the husband was old and she young and pretty enough to impose upon him through his affectionate side. There was but one husband whom she could not easily master: he treated her badly. In another case she got the better of her husband by provoking him to beat her, and then pretending to be dead. By this trick she succeeded in getting all the property into her hand. For all she did she justifies herself to the party by quoting text from the Bible in the most extraordinary way and with the most extraordinary comments. But of course she makes herself appear a worse woman than she really is. She is not bad at all; but she is vain enough to think that, by making herself appear bad, people would think her clever. Everybody, however, sees through her innocent disguise, and likes her all the same. She is a good creature and very original. Another fact worth noticing is that the romance which she tells is perhaps the best in the book. In the story of the knight who saved himself from death by answering the riddle, "What is the thing that women most desire in this world?," the answer is, "To have their own way;" —and that is indeed true of the Wife of Bath herself. It is worth remembering also that no original of this story is known. Where Chaucer got it from has not yet been discovered. The strange marriage scene in the romance where the withered old wife is suddenly transformed into a beautiful girl,—that scene is indeed the subject of several old English ballads. But the ballads are much later than Chaucer's work—so the mystery remains.

Chaucer is now made accessible to students in excellent scholarly editions which are cheap and which are furnished with glossaries and accent points. Probably the finest example of an edition for students is that of Skeat in one volume—abridged from the grand edition in four volumes. But it is less handy than the Macmillan edition of one volume—edited by four different scholars; and this Macmillan edition has the

great advantage of being furnished with particular accents to indicate the Middle English pronunciation of the final "e." Unless you know how to pronounce this "e" you cannot scan Chaucer, and cannot hear the quiet music of his verse. To read him for amusement is quite possible: it only requires a little patience. His importance to English literature must not be thought of as only philological. Even the poets of the Victorian period were greatly influenced by his charm—a charm which affected the later as well as the earlier romantic movement. And the plan which he followed has inspired almost as many 19th century poets as it did 15th century poets. Two noteworthy examples are afforded by Longfellow and by William Morris. Longfellow composed his delightful *Tales of a Wayside Inn* after the teaching of Chaucer, and William Morris built his vast poem—*The Earthly Paradise*—upon the same foundation.

One more name awaits our attention—a name of very importance in the history of English literature; not the literature of poetry but of prose. I mean *Sir John Mandeville.*

Sir John Mandeville[1] is still read by three classes of persons—by children, for amusement; by philologists, for the study of late Middle English; by men of letters, for the pure delight of the fancy and style of the book. If you read it when very young—before the love of fairy tales is dead within you—then you will like it very much. Later on, after you have learned a great deal about geography and other modern things, you may consider it childish. But that is a mistake of yours. When you become an old man, then, providing that you have some literary taste, you will be able to find a new pleasure—pleasure of quite a new kind—in *Sir John Mandeville.*

The book is, you know, a book of travel;—it really professes to be a kind of guide-book to the Holy Land. Its author was said to be an English knight who left his home in the first half of the century, about 1322, to travel to the Holy Land, and travelled much farther—even to the Border of China—and

[1] *The buke of John Maundeuill being the travels of Sir J. Mandeville knight 1322-56 c* 1400 (Roxburghe Club 1889).

came back at last after thirty years' absence. The book describes kingdoms that never existed, realms as shadowy and as charming as Horai;—potentates not less wonderful than the Merlin of the Arthurian legend: for example, the mystical Prester John. But that has nothing to do with the reason of the book's value. It is not a great book either because it describes what is, or because it describes what is not: it is a great book because it is a great romance. It is the very first example of a grand romantic style in English prose; — it is the first prose romance in English which we can still read. When I say "grand style," I refer rather to the emotional quality of the book than to any artistic devices of language. Indeed, there are no devices at all: the book is written in the simplest imaginable way—all in short sentences. It is the very ideal of a simple style. Nevertheless, it is a most romantic style, by reason of the charm that it has, and by the reason that it is not written according to any fixed rule of composition. How did Mandeville obtain such a style? Remember that he had no predecessors in prose to teach him—I mean no English writers. Of course the author of the *Ancren Riwle* had a style; I gave you a specimen of it. But that was very early English, almost Anglo-Saxon; and Mandeville could not have learned much from it: his style is utterly different. Undoubtedly his model was the Bible; but even the Bible he studied was probably not English. It seems to have been the Latin Vulgate. And remember that this book appeared in three different languages—in Latin, in French and last of all in English.

If you study the text of the Bible a little, you will observe that all the sentences are very short; and that a great many of them begin with the word "and." That is exactly the manner in which Sir John writes;—all his sentences are short; and a great number of them begin with "and" or with "for." This, of course, gives an effect of quaintness. And this quaintness joined with the delightful imagination of the book, with its love of wonder and mystery, and its sympathy with all good and beautiful things—produces a charm of a very extraordinary kind. As for the author—the real author—nothing is

known about him. It is quite possible that there never was any Sir John Mandeville, but the name is nothing and the work is everything.

English prose thus found a very considerable development in the 14th century. Nevertheless there are very few representing it;—Wyclif's Bible, Chaucer's prose tales and translations, together with his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*[1] (the astrolabe was an instrument formerly used for the same purpose as the modern sextant); — Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*: these are the principal. We might also mention a translation by John Trevisa[2] into English prose of Higden's *Polychronicon*[3]—a kind of general history, written by a monk. But Trevisa did not have the romantic imagination of the person called Sir John Mandeville, and he did not have the good education of Chaucer. So that his English is not of much value. It does not represent anything particular in style. But the Bible of Wyclif and the prose of Chaucer, and, above all, the prose of Mandeville, represent style — real style. If Chaucer had not been chiefly a translator, he would probably have written like Sir John. If Sir John had not written in the 14th century, Sir Thomas Malory would not have written, perhaps, in the 15th century. To sum up everything :—

I. Most of the form of modern English poetry were discovered and tested in English literature before the end of the 14th century.

II. English prose of two kinds was also developed during this period—the plain style and the romantic style, which gives the effect of poetry without verse.

[1] *A treatise on the Astrolabe c* 1931 (E E.T.S., Chaucer Soc. 1872).
[2] John de Trevisa (1326-1412).
[3] *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden* tr. 1387 (Rolls series 1865-86).

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

CHAUCER died in the year 1400; and his death may be said to mark the beginning of another era in literature as well as in literary history. But as the primers declare, the 100 years that followed the death of Chaucer were years of barrenness: Mr. Brooke says that the period was "the most barren" in all English literature. Other equally competent scholars do not agree with him at all. It seems to me that both Mr. Brooke and his critics are right;—the difference is due only to difference in point of view. Mr. Brooke thinks of the number of great books produced from 1400 to 1500; Mr. Saintsbury and others think rather of the great new movements in literature during that period—movements not indicated by the production of great books so much as by a new tendency in literary history. The latter point of view is certainly the best for the following reason.

No period in English literature is more important than this, if we consider the great happenings of the time. Here are facts to think of:

I. The invention of printing.
II. The beginning of the great Renaissance movement in Italy and the revival of Greek study.
III. The ending of the mediæval romance — a glorious ending in England; for it closed with the very greatest of all romances ever written — the book of Sir Thomas Malory.
IV. The production and the collection of ballads.
V. The beginning of English drama through the religious plays.

You see at a glance from these five heads what the 15th century really meant to English literature. We need not trouble

ourselves about the fact that few great books were then produced. Other things produced were so important that we can very easily overlook the dearth in original production, for the purpose of considering changes that influenced literature throughout the whole of Europe, not only for that time, but for all centuries following.

First of all let us talk about the invention of printing—about its signification. Never did any event occur at a more opportune time than this event, the date of which is 1454. Why? Because Mahomet II. captured Constantinople in 1453. All the Greek literature and Greek scholarship might then have been lost to us, had not printing been invented in the very next year. Then the Greek scholars driven out of their own country and scattered all over Europe were enabled to conserve their learning and their precious manuscripts by the art of typography.

I must here say something about the condition of literary production before the invention of printing in Western countries. You must understand that although it is loosely said that "printing was invented in 1454," there were printed books before that date;—and the common saying, to be quite correct, should be worded in this way: "Printing with movable type was invented in 1454."

These earlier printed books were made like many of the old Buddhist books were made in Japan — each page being printed from a single block of wood,—for which reason such books were called "block-books." Now block-books could be very beautiful: some Japanese block-books which I have seen are wonderful examples of art and more beautiful than anything made with movable type. But this way of making a book was very costly and very slow, because it took a long time to cut all the blocks. The value of movable type lay in the advantage which was offered of rapid production. But I think you know that the actual principle of block-printing has come back again; and that now nearly all of our books are printed from blocks — metal blocks — each page being represented by a single stereotype or electrotyped plate. However, the book is always first composed in type; then a cast is made

from the type; then a metal block or plate is made from the cast. The only great advantage which we now have over the early printers is in our improved machinery. For example, instead of composing type with the fingers, it is now composed with what are called type-setting machines.

Well, I have spoken of the early block-books. They were not, however, very early. Moreover there were very few of them; and they were only made when something cheap was wanted. No fine books were printed from blocks in Europe during the Middle Ages;—the art of block-printing was not developed as in China and Japan. But the art of caligraphy was very highly developed. Books were beautifully copied in writing of the most exquisite kind at a comparatively small cost. However, paper was very little used—it came into use only about the middle of the 14th century, and it was then rather dear. You see that the world of the Middle Ages had fallen back very greatly as regards industrial production from the time of the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks and the Romans used both paper and parchment for books; but parchment was used chiefly for record and law books, while the paper, or *charta*, as the Romans called it, was used for books of literature. The Romans and Greeks also had two forms of books. The literary form was almost exactly that of the Japanese *Makimono;* the other form, used for record and law books, was much like that of a book of to-day,—only that, as in Japanese books of a certain class, the sheet was written on one side only and folded like a Japanese sheet. Afterwards there were changes; but this was the general rule for centuries. Now with the destruction of Roman civilization, the art of making paper books and paper would seem to have been for a long time forgotten. Books were made of parchment of different quality. That, of course, caused quite an expense, in spite of cheapness of copying. But some of these books were often of extraordinary beauty. Occasionally all the leaves of the book would be sky-blue, and on that azure surface all the text would be written in raised letters of gold. Again the initial letters and heads of chapters used to be decorated with miniature

paintings of great beauty and the border of pages were also decorated. The art of making such decorated books was called "illumination." Some of these books to-day are worth enormous sums of money. Bindings were also of the costliest and the most beautiful kind,—our modern binders could scarcely equal them. So there were libraries full of beautiful books; but they were not accessible to the ordinary reader. And, nevertheless, when printing had been invented, the great book collectors were prejudiced against it. They thought that the printed books were vulgar and cheap; and one of the greatest of Italian librarians would not allow a single printed book to enter his library.

The first printing from movable type was executed, as you know, at the city of Mainz on the Rhine, in Germany, and the credit belongs to three German printers, two of whom are spoken of as Gutenberg and Fust, or Faust. But we do not really know which of the three first got the idea into practical shape; and we are not able to say exactly who invented printing. But it does not matter;—it is enough to know that the first printing was done by three German printers at Mainz. Within a few years afterwards, however, the city of Mainz was sacked during a year of war; and the printers were scattered in all directions. Some of them went to Italy; some of them went to Flanders. So the first countries to adopt printing were Germany, Italy and Belgium. The invention spread so rapidly that by the year 1500 nearly 5,000 different books had been printed in Italy alone. I need scarcely tell you that the Italians became the greatest of all printers: indeed the early Italian work can scarcely be equalled to-day. And the name of the great house of Aldus Manutius at Venice, called the Aldine Press, produced the most beautiful books that have ever been made in Europe.

Now the first English printer, William Caxton,[1] happened to be a merchant by profession, and not a scholar. This was a very lucky thing for English literature. If Caxton had been a great scholar, he would have tried to do what the Italian printers

[1] William Caxton (1422?-1491).

were doing and he never could have done half so well. The Italian printers were printing the whole of the old Greek and old Latin literature, — more especially the Greek literature. They were reviving scholarship—doing an inestimable service to mankind. But these Italians were themselves scholars; and in their printing offices they had Greek professors to help them — Greek men of learning who had been driven out of Constantinople by Mahomet II. Caxton could not have attempted such a work with equal success, and if he had attempted it probably many great English books would have been lost for us. But Caxton, with extraordinary good sense, turned his attention only to English literature; and he began to print the old romances and new romances and Chaucer, and the books of history and old poetry. He printed a very great number of good books; and it is probable that he saved a great number from being lost—either by fire or by some other accident.

He seems to have been born in 1422, and to have lived until about 1491 — though we are not sure about the second date. He began life as a merchant's apprentice; gradually rose to high position in the house and then was sent to the city of Bruges, in Flanders, where there was a great English company of merchants. He finally became governor of that company; and he learned the printing business abroad. Indeed his first books were not printed in England; and he only established his English printing house in 1476. That is the date from which the history proper of English printed literature begins. One more fact about Caxton. He was a very good translator from French—as he knew the language well; and his services to English literature as a translator were almost as great as his services in the publishing business! But his books were not beautiful books, like the Italians. They were printed rather in the German fashion, with heavy black-letter type—good, plain, readable, but rather ugly books—still to-day very great prices are paid for them.

Of what inestimable worth the invention of printing has been to intellectual progress, I need not speak; and this invention, remember, belongs to the 15th century. There were three

other great events in the same century—at least three events which had their beginning in that century—of vast importance not only to literature directly or indirectly, but also to politics, to history and to civilization at large. There were the Renaissance, the Discovery of America (in 1492), and the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation—Luther, remember, was born in 1483; and his great struggle had been preparing even before his birth.

Of these three events, the Renaissance has the most direct influence upon English literature. The Discovery of America signifying the expansion of the world to mankind, the enlargement of civilization, and many other things affected literature seriously only at a considerably later time. As for the Reformation—that too had a less direct influence than the Renaissance. It did not, indeed, show its best proofs before the period of Elizabeth. It signified, for literature, larger freedom of thought and feeling; but the change was not sudden. The first Protestants were quite as intolerant as the old Catholics in spirit and it required some time to soften that intolerance. Eventually literature gained much; but the progress was slow. I have already told you about Wyclif's work: he was really the first great English Protestant. But he was born too soon, and there was a reaction after him. So we may say that, out of the three great events above mentioned, it is the Renaissance with which we have principally to do in connection with the 15th century literature.

Perhaps the first great event of the Renaissance—a word meaning "Rebirth"—was the conveyance to Italy, in 1423, of 400 Greek manuscripts. Greek had been previously taught in the universities; but a vast number of the ancient authors were still inaccessible. That first importation of a Greek library might be called the first large event of the new movement. Presently, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Greek scholars flocked to Italy by hundreds; the universities were filled with Greek teachers; and the newly discovered art of printing came to help their labours.

I suppose you know the meaning of the term "rebirth" in

speaking of the great Italian revival of learning. Old Greece, as well as old Rome, had been practically buried and forgotten under the ruins of the ancient empire. Ages of barbarism, followed by ages of semi-barbarism, succeeded. But when men became civilized enough and intelligent enough to study and to understand the great works of antiquity—then, so to speak, ancient Greece was born again; her ancient Gods came back; her ancient learning was re-incarnated. That is the meaning of the word "Renaissance." It was not a thing that happens suddenly like an earthquake or an eruption;—it was produced by gradual processes accompanying the growth of intelligence and taste. And I need scarcely say that it was chiefly rendered possible by the weakening of the ecclesiastical tyranny in Italy. Once the taste of Greek literature, and the comprehension of Greek art, had been developed, search was everywhere made for Greek manuscripts, bronzes, marbles, gems,—for anything and everything relating to the buried past. The great glory of the Renaissance movement in Italy was under the reign of Lorenzo de'Medici, prince of Florence — great patron of arts and of letters. This period lasted from 1469 to 1492—the same year in which Columbus discovered America. Later came what is called the Catholic Reaction.

During the Renaissance the development of study, the cultivation of Greek learning, the evolution of art in every direction, could scarcely be exaggerated. Then came the time of the great painters and sculptors and jewel-smiths and architects —all of whom drew more or less from the inexhaustible sources of antique knowledge. And to all this, at first the Church offered little opposition; on the contrary it patronized the new artist and the new sculptor and the new learning. There were indeed fierce reformers who perceived the danger in the distance, like Savonarola, who preached against the new luxury and the new art with unexampled vehemence. For the time being, this attempted reaction failed. Savonarola, a sincere man, was a little too sincere for his time and his time was that of Pope Alexander VI.— certainly one of the wickedest men that ever lived. Alexander burned him—not for art's sake, but

for policy's sake. And the Renaissance went on, anticipating perhaps a conflict between the classical and the ecclesiastical conception of things, when one grand Italian conceived the idea of harmonizing Greek art and philosophy with Catholic doctrine. This man was one of the most delightful figures in Italian history. He is said to have been so handsome that he appeared in the eyes of women a veritable angel, and he was such a scholar that he could issue a challenge to all the universities to dispute with him in Latin upon 800 different subjects. The challenge, I believe, was never fully accepted. This scholar's name was Pico della Mirandola. He was as modest as he was learned; and if he issued that extraordinary challenge of which I have spoken it was only in obedience to university customs of the age which demanded of scholars some public exhibition of his power through the medium of Latin disputation. But Mirandola's theory and hopes were only delightful dreams; he desired to reconcile the impossible—impossible at least in that age—and he died without accomplishing anything. But he has left behind him a delightful memory, and some strange, beautiful and mystical books.

Now there are many stories, belonging to this age, of statues found so beautiful that mischief resulted to those who found them. Even to-day stories are still written about the fascination of Greek statues discovered during the Renaissance. The general type of all the stories is this: an image of Aphrodite, or Venus, is disinterred; and its loveliness bewitches those who look upon it. That superhuman beauty fills young men with bewilderment and sadness,—and they sickened and died. Finally some monk discovers that a statue is animated by an evil spirit—that is to say, by the goddess herself, who to monkish imagination was, of course, a devil. The statue is buried again; and the affliction of the youth passes away. This romantic idea is really an emblem of what actually took place in the history of the Renaissance. The unearthing of Greek statues and of Greek gems, the recovery of Greek literature, the archæological researches of scholars, did not result altogether in immediate fruit.

For a while some men turned only to the best things of Greek life and of Roman life—the things which are eternally beautiful and eternally grand—many others turned rather to the worst side of Greek life and Roman life—the things which are contrary to the sum of human model experience. A strange revival of Greek vices and of Roman cruelty made itself manifest;—and although this manifestation was partly a natural result of Italian social condition, not a result merely of classical study, the Church naturally looked on, and cried out, "Lo! all that Christianity was established to destroy, has come back amongst us!" The Renaissance was indeed the age of art; but it was also an age of moral monsters, the age of Borgias, the age of Malatestas. The reaction provoked by the Church, zealous to reform itself and to reform everything else after the horrible period of Alexander VI,—at last checked the Renaissance movement. As the mode of checking was in itself intolerant, stupid and often wicked, the result was not happy. Morals, instead of improving, would seem to have become even worse for a time. But the silencing of scholarship, and the temporary demoralization of the university could not last. The Renaissance movement once fairly started, could not be altogether killed even in Italy. Throughout Europe it spread; and all our great modern art and modern literature may be said to date from it. It was the awakening of the human mind to the sense of beauty after the long black dream of the Middle Ages.

That is the history of the Renaissance in epitome. The influence of Greek studies in England during the 15th century was not inconsiderable; and English students leaving Oxford or Cambridge used to go after that to Italian universities to finish up. Not a few English poets and scholars of the 15th century were graduates of Padua. Of course the effect upon English literature did not at first show themselves strongly;—the full force of the Renaissance did not show itself until the time of Elizabeth. But the study of Greek and of Greek art was preparing the nation for that grand era.

It was also during the 15th century especially that the English ballads appear to have come into existence. They

were not printed until long after, but our manuscripts of them date from this century. These narrative poems — usually in the form of the quatrain, though sometimes in other forms, and written in the common speech of the peasantry—may be said to represent the romance of the people. Great scholars have not yet determined whether epics originally grew out of ballads, or whether ballads do not represent the detritus or disintegration of romance. Probably there is truth in both theories. According to the evolutional law, it is certainly probable that the earliest epics were gradually built up with ballad matter for the material. But it is also very probable that a large number of ballads were composed upon the subject of already existing epics and romances — and the reason that it is very probable is that we possess many ballads upon subjects represented in romances of a much earlier time. However, it is not necessary to discuss the matter here. The importance of the popular ballad to English literature is the main consideration. In other lectures I have spoken at length about that. [1] The influence of ballads in English literature did not begin until the close of the 18th century; — then it lasted into the 19th, constantly growing, and was never stronger than it is today. So it is worth while remembering that the ballads date from the 15th century.

The next great event which I spoke of at the outset of this lecture was the ending of romance. It has been said that romance ended with the use of gun-powder in warfare; — I think you remember how the perfect knight Bayard, as he lay dying, with his back shattered by a cannon-ball, exclaimed: "There will be no more chivalry." But really neither gunpowder nor any other exterior matter ended romance; and in spite of Bayard's prediction, chivalry will always live in the character of any true gentleman. Romance died only after having exhausted itself. It died a natural and very happy death; and its last production in England—its last great production in the mediæval spirit (I am speaking of only mediæval romance) has been justly termed the greatest of all romances,

[1] *See* the author's Lectures *On Poetry*, Ch. II. & III.

of any age or country. It was written in prose and its title is *Morte d'Arthur*,[1] by Sir Thomas Malory.

We do not know anything about Sir Thomas Malory [2]—in spite of all that has been written on the subject by Sir Edward Strachey and others. He is, so far as personality goes, a mere ghost. But whoever the gentleman was who wrote the book in 1470, we may be sure that he was a gentleman and a scholar and a master of exquisite English prose. I told you that the first great prose romance was the *Travels* of that other shadowy gentleman Sir John Mandeville. To some degree the style of Malory will remind you of the style of Mandeville; but Malory is far stronger, much more musical, much more poetical, and, above all, much more modern than Sir John Mandeville. There is no book in English prose more delightful to read than this 15th century text; and we do not need any glossary or dictionary of Middle English to help us in reading. Even such unfamiliar words as "truller" are easily understood from the context. Nor is the charm of the book merely a charm of fine-sounding and beautiful English. The immense charm of the book is in the idea which it expresses — the idea of perfect knighthood, in the conduct of the warrior, the conduct of the retainer, the conduct of the leader, the conduct of the friend. There is not very much about the conduct of lover and husband; but it is sufficiently implied. And all those ideas of the West and the East—of Mediæval Europe and Old Japan—are in some respects very different indeed; nevertheless I cannot imagine that any Japanese student could read this book without pleasure. All that the old *Samurai* idea implied in this country, was expressed in England by the idea figured in this wonderful book. The English knight and the Japanese knight had not the same idea of duty as to detail; but the fundamental idea was certainly the same;—and if you read the volume, you will feel that the two were, after a fashion, ghostly brothers. The best cheap edition is in the Macmillan Globe Library — the edition of Strachey. It is one of the books that ought to be a

[1] *Le morte Darthur* tr. 1470-85 (Copland 1557; 1634; Southey 1817; Sommer 1889).
[2] Sir Thomas Malory (fl. 1470).

part of everybody's library; but I shall not occupy more time in speaking of it, except to say that we owe the book in its present state to the good sense of Caxton, the first English printer. His edition appeared in 1485—fifteen years after the production of the manuscript. With the apparition of this extraordinary book, English mediæval romance came to an end. It was something better than any romance which had preceeded it; and it was hopeless to attempt to surpass it, or even to equal it. Whenever one form of literary production has developed in its utmost, has produced its very best, its superlative expression —nothing more in the same direction can be done.

The other great event which remains to be noticed was the beginning of the drama. But this subject requires a special lecture and I am going to put it off until next term, when our study of 16th century literature properly begins. Indeed that is the most appropriate place in which to treat of the matter; for it was then that the foundations of the Elizabethan drama were laid—in the 16th century. Therefore, by attaching the history of dramatic beginning to the period immediately preceeding the Elizabethan age, the student can obtain a better general notion of the whole subject, than he could by considering it piecemeal. Instead, therefore, of talking here about the drama, I shall speak only of the principal English men of letters of the 15th century.

There were, in England proper, the immediate successors of Chaucer in poetry, together with about four prose writers, of whom only one, Malory, is really of first importance and we have already talked about him. The poetical successors of Chaucer were Lydgate, Occleve (or as the name is sometimes spelled Hoccleve), Hawes, Bokenham and Skelton. None of them were great; some of them were quite unimportant from a purely literary point of view. But they were the chief poets of their time and they did something rhetorically toward the further development of standard English, even though they did not do anything great in the direction of improving the poetry. Perhaps Lydgate[1] is the chief figure of the period in question.

[1] John Lydgate (1370?-1451?)

He was an ecclesiastic and is commonly known as the "Monk of Bury." Scarcely any English poet wrote so much poetry as Lydgate; his work was so prodigious that only a very little of it was ever published. Most of it still remains in manuscript; —if we had it all in print it would make a considerable library. Nor would the library be of a merely monotonous kind;—it would represent much variety, for Lydgate wrote romances, and history, and masques and religious poems, political poems and all kinds of poems—besides translating quantities of things into English verse. The reason that so little of his has been published is not only that he wrote too much, but that he lacked original genius—that he did nothing either very good or very bad, but a vast deal of middling work. In literature, as everywhere else, we have the struggle for survival of the fittest; and a middling work is doomed to oblivion in competition with higher works. Probably Lydgate will never be fully printed. His best book is little more than a translation, after Boccaccio—not directly from the Italian, but through a French medium. It is called *The Fall of Princes;*[1] and it is a kind of romance, in which the ghosts of famous princes who were unfortunate came to the poet, one by one, to tell their story,—very much as in Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women* the ghosts of famous beauties relate their sorrows. But Lydgate was a good scholar, even if not a good poet; and he did a great deal to maintain the taste for the things which Chaucer loved.

Occleve[2] was nothing but a very weak imitator of Chaucer. He tried to write stories like the *Canterbury Tales,* and he wrote them very badly—so far as verse goes. His best known book is a volume of wearisome verse about the history of Troy. He had no passion, no depth of feeling, no emotional power at any time, but one must remember him because of his great affection and reverence for the memory of Chaucer. In his book just mentioned, he had a picture of Chaucer which is supposed to be a real portrait, and we know some few things about Chaucer on the authority of Occleve—things not to be found

[1] *Bochas' Fall of princes* tr. 1430-40 (Caxton, W. de Worde; Roxb. Cl. 1818).
[2] Thomas Occleve *or* Hoccleve (1370?-1450?).

elsewhere. What has been said of Lydgate can also be said of Occleve; he was a scholar, but he was not a poet.

Bokenham[1] deserves only a slight mention: he represents the religious romance of the time. He tried to apply the poetical method of Chaucer to hagiographical subjects; and he wrote in verse many lives of saints[2] which are neither very bad nor very good. All these Chaucerians, as they were called, helped to keep up the tradition of Chaucer; but they could not improve upon him. However, they did help to continue that crystallizing process through which the literary language was passing. The case of Hawes[3] is a little different. He is very well known by a book entitled *The Pastime of Pleasure*,[4]—a dreamy volume of allegorical romance, or rather romances linked together after the Chaucerian manner. What is worth remembering about him, however, is not that he continued the tradition of Chaucer, but that he revived the method of Langland. You remember that Langland wrote *The Vision of Piers Plowman*—an allegorical poem so obscure that nobody now understands it. Hawes imitated Langland by using an allegorical figure in his poems, but he was not a great poet like Langland, and though not obscure, he is very dull indeed; still he is worth remembering; for it is very possible that he inspired the great Elizabethan poet, Edmund Spenser. Spenser's grand allegorical poem, *The Faerie Queene*, contains many things which suggest that he found the patience to study Hawes and the genius to improve upon him.

Lastly, Skelton[5] deserves mention. Skelton, at one time a married man, later on an ecclesiastic, had talent enough to become the favourite of Henry VIII. He lived beyond the 15th century by many years—indeed he appeared to have been a very old man when he died. There was not much romance about him; but he could write volume after volume of ringing, stinging, octosyllabic verse—the short sharp sort of verse in

[1] Osbern Bokenham *or* Bokenam (1393-1447?).
[2] *Lyvys of seyntys* 1447 (Roxb. Club 1835; 1883).
[3] Stephen Hawes (1475-1523?).
[4] *The pastime of pleasure* 1509 (1517) —Another ed. entitled *The historie of graunde Amoure and la bell Pucel, called The pastime of pleasure* 1554 (1555; Percy Soc. 1845).
[5] John Skelton (1460?-1529).

which Swift was so successful in an after century. He wrote not only satires, but diatribes—furious attacks upon State corruptions, upon political adversaries and even upon ministers. He incurred especially the wrath of the powerful Cardinal Wolsey, and had to take refuge in a monastery where he lived for many years. However, he had good friends and protectors; and he seems to have deserved them; for he was a sincere and brave man. Also, though he had no romance in him, he had a considerable amount of honest tenderness which sometimes appears in little verse which he wrote to please ladies or personal friends. We might call him one of the first, if not the first, English satirists. And he wrote, as to form, better verse than any of the others—moreover, verse which is brimful of life. To appreciate Skelton, however, one should study the history of the time, and that is too large a topic for inclusion in the present lecture.

So much for the 15th century poets of England proper. But there were greater, much greater poets in Scotland at the same time. The development of English literature in Scotland was slow, but when it came it was sudden and brilliant. And the first of the great Scotch poets was King James the First of Scotland.[1] His story is a very romantic one. Early in the 15th century, when James was a mere boy and was being sent to school in France, he was captured by English seamen and taken to England as a State prisoner—for there was war between the kingdoms at that time. In prison he was treated kindly, allowed books to read, musical instruments to play, a yard for gymnastic exercises, and a large garden in which he could walk about and dream as much as he pleased. For 17 years he so remained a prisoner. One morning, he saw in the garden, separated from him only by a fence, a young girl walking about, with whom he immediately fell in love. This young girl was Jane Beaufort, niece of Henry IV. But the prisoner did not know who she was—he only knew that he loved her very much. Bu he did not know how to find a chance to tell her so; and after a long time, he thought he would write her

[1] James I, King of Scotland (1394-1437).

a poem, suggesting his affection, and send it to her. He had read Chaucer; and he wrote the poem, an allegorical poem, after Chaucer's style—only in a particular form of verse, which is still called "Rhyme Royal," because he wrote in it. This poem which is really very beautiful and may be well compared with the best of Chaucer's work, he sent to the young lady, and his plan succeeded. James was able to ask her to become his wife, which she did; and then the pair were set free and went to Scotland. James was a good lover, a good poet, an excellent husband—but not a good king. He was too harsh with his subjects, and they murdered him at last. But his poem *The Kingis Quair*,[1] (Quhair), that is to say, "The King's Book," shows the beautiful side of his nature and can be ranked only second to the work of Chaucer, if not actually equal to it. A king is of course a little outside of the natural competition between poets; and though James ranks thus high, we group him only among the four great Scotch poets because of the fact that his work was done before he became king. Next to James in order, though not in merit, is good "Master Robert Henryson." Henryson[2] is a very ghostly person as to his life; by tradition we only know that he was a schoolmaster, and that he must have died before 1506. But his poetry is very remarkable as 15th or even 16th century work. I need mention only the three things by which he is best remembered—*The Testament of Cresseid*,[3] the ballad of *Robene and Makyne*, and the *Fables*. The first poem, which is all written in regular 9-lined stanzas, is founded upon the story out of which Shakespeare made the great drama *Troilus and Cressida*. But a great deal of the composition is Henryson's own invention. If we have read Shakespear's drama we may remember that Cressida was a type of the fickle wanton—a pretty frail woman who tries to please everybody, but who has not enough strength of character to be faithful to anybody. She really loves Troilus, and wants to be faithful to him; but when the two are separated

[1] *The kingis quair: together with a ballad of good counsel* 1423 (S.T.S. 1884, revised 1911).
[2] Robert Henryson (1425?-1506?).
[3] *The testament of Cresseid c* 1480.

by the chances of war, she yields to the flattery of her captors, and gives herself to Diomede. Henryson imagined this ending to the story:—Diomede gets tired of Cresseid and abandons her. In her anger, she abuses the gods; and they punish her by afflicting her with leprosy. Like a leper of the Middle Ages, she goes out to beg with her bell and "clapper," and she sees Troilus on the road. He does not know her—because her face is all destroyed by disease. But afterwards, when by means of a ring, he learns who she is, his grief is desperate. And he dies of sorrow. This story is very pathetically told; and the poem is much more easy to read than Chaucer. You can find it in *The Dunbar Anthology*. The ballad of *Robene and Makyne* is one of the earliest examples in English of what is called pastoral poetry,—that is to say, poetry written about peasant life in the country, or more strictly speaking, the life of shepherds, such as Theocritus and the Greek idyllists excelled in composing. It is also worth mentioning for the reason that the conception of the subject is quite different from that of the ordinary English pastoral. Robene is a shepherd. Makyne is a peasant girl, who loves him. But the love-making in this poem is done by the woman, not by the man. Makyne offers herself to Robene, and Robene refuses to accept her. So she goes away. But later on, Robene becomes sorry and goes after the girl to apologize and to give the affection before refused. Makyne ironically answers that the man "who would not when he could" thereafter cannot when he would. There is a great truth to life and a charming humour all through the competition. The element of humour and of truth to life may be found also in Henryson's *Fables*.[1] These fables are the old beast fables of the Middle Ages, or rather of Æsop as remodelled by mediæval fancy, to which Henryson gave entirely new life. Nothing more is known of Henryson's work which is quite equal to the three compositions above named.

Greatest of all the Scotch poets (if we consider the quantity as well as the quality of the work) was William Dunbar.[2]

[1] *The morall fabillis of Esope* c 1480 (1570; Maitland Cl. 1832).
[2] William Dunbar, (b. 1463 ?).

Something of Dunbar's life we know. He had a university education and a romantic life. After leaving the university, he became a wandering monk. Not for religious reasons, it would seem, but for purposes of travel. And he travelled all over England and France, begging his way. Then, rich in experience, he threw off the monk's dress, became a poet, a diplomat, a soldier. As a diplomat he became a friend and confidant of James IV. of Scotland, and a friend of his Queen—Margaret of England, whose wedding song he composed. At the great battle of Flodden, he seems to have been one of the brave men who died in the fighting circle round the King—the circle which all the power of the English knighthood could not break and which has been grandly described by Walter Scott in verse. That was in the year 1513. Before his death Dunbar had written about a hundred poems on a great variety of subjects; and these poems show him as a very great genius. He had the humour of Burns, as well as the humour of Chaucer, a great and cynical knowledge of life, and a wonderful command both of literary English and of dialect. Perhaps his most famous piece is that entitled *The Two Married Women and the Widow* [1]—a savage satire upon women of a certain class. Satire he enjoyed and he sometimes descended very low for an opportunity to display his power of it. One of his poems entitled *Flyting*[2] ("to flyte" in northern dialect means to abuse with foul language and scorn) is little more than a repetition in verse of a word quarrel between persons who display extraordinary knowledge of bad language in abusing each other. But all his work is not like this;—there are very tender and beautiful things in it; and the bulk of it is lyrical. Had Dunbar lived longer, instead of dying a glorious death in defence of his King at Flodden, he might have proved himself a greater poet than those commonly called the first really modern English poets—Wyatt and Surrey. Certainly he had a better ear, greater cleverness and greater knowledge of life than either of them.

[1] *The tua mariit wemen and the wedo* 1508.
[2] *The flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* 1508.

One more Scotch poet remains to be noticed, called Gawin Douglas or Bishop Douglas,[1] the first translator in English (at least the first good translator) of Virgil's *Æneid*.[2] Douglas belonged to the noble and kingly family of Douglas, so much admired by Sir Walter Scott. A curious fact about him is that his life was ruined by this relationship. His nephew married the widow of King James; and this marriage, a love marriage, gave the greatest possible offence to the politicians of the time. They persecuted Douglas simply to spite the Queen and her husband—annoyed him in every way, slandered him, threatened to kill him, put him into prison upon totally false charges; and the Queen tried to protect him in vain. He passed his life in trouble and died at the age of 48—completely broken down by his struggle against malice. Also in his poetry there is not anything quite so good as the work of Henryson and Dunbar —with the exceptions of the prologues in verse which he introduced into his translation of the *Æneid*. Nevertheless, compared with English poetry of the same period — the poetry written in England—even Douglas ranks higher than Occleve, Hawes, and that school of Chaucerian poetasters. It is curious that just at this time when poetry was failing in England proper, it should have taken new and splendid life in Scotland.

[1] Gawin *or* Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld (1475?-1522).
[2] *The xiii bukes of Eneados of the famose poete Virgill* tr. 1513 (1553, 1710, 1874).

THE LITERATURE OF THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE ELIZABETH (1500-1559)

ENGLISH DRAMA

INTRODUCTION OF NEW FORMS OF POETRY

THE two greatest events of literary importance immediately preceeding the accession of Elizabeth in 1559 were the full development of the drama and the development of modern lyrical poetry—the poetry of Tudor English, which is really but another name for modern English, the differences being very slight indeed. Before the middle of the 16th century, English had fairly assumed its present form. We shall speak of that later. At present let us consider the history of the drama.

The history of drama in England is very important to know; for it is identical with the history of modern drama throughout all Europe. We have here a curious evolutional process to study; and the study is very interesting, because it reveals the working of a general law. The law is the development of the drama out of religious rites and customs.

Social philosophy recognizes this law as the same in every country. You know, I suppose, that the grand Greek drama was developed out of religious ceremonies. But perhaps you have not thought about the fact that this was also the case with Indian drama, with Persian drama, with the drama in all countries possessing an original civilization. Coming to Japan, I suppose it is safe to say that the beginning of drama in this country also appears to have been shaped under the same circumstances.

Now after the antique civilization had perished in Europe, the drama for a very considerable time ceased to exist. All knowledge of the Greek art of drama ceased to exist. That drama should begin again, it was necessary that it should

evolve again; and it did so very slowly, just as it had done before out of religion.

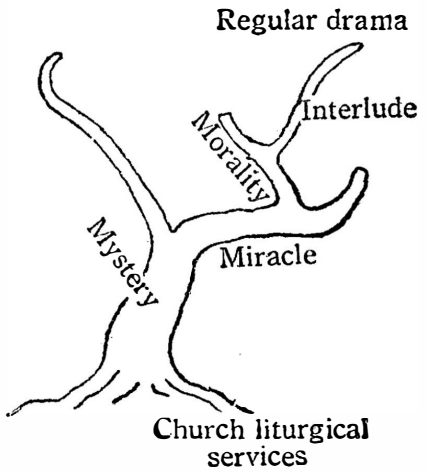
From the more modern forms of Christian church worship, you would scarcely find the source of dramatic beginnings. But if you give any attention to the older forms of church worship—those of the Oriental and Occidental or Greek Catholic or Roman Catholic churches—you will be struck at once by the dramatic character of certain liturgies. There are liturgies, for example, which are operatic in character—that is to say, dialogues representing an incident or song. In one curious service of the Roman Church, questions are sung in Latin and answered in Greek. But there are many other things to notice. In the churches of the East, older forms of Christianity, at a certain season, life-size representations of saints and other personages are arranged in groups, so as to illustrate some event in biblical history or the history of holy persons. Yet again there are processions in which costumed personages represent persons in the Scriptures. You find these especially in Italy and in Spain. Now in all this, you can see that there was material for the beginning of a religious drama.

Having the material, the Church began to work at religious drama in the early Middle Ages, gradually. Why? Simply because that was found to be the best way of teaching religion to people who could neither read nor write. Much had been taught by pictures or statues, but this was not enough. The pictures and statues could not move and act and explain themselves. So in order to teach the more difficult parts of doctrine —those parts treating of what are called mystery or miracle— acting was attempted. The actors at first were all priests; and the acting was done upon a stage attached to the outside of the church. Later on the stage was removed to the cemetery for the sake of affording more room to the spectators. You must not suppose that these performances of religious drama were very frequent at first. At first, they were only given upon particular holy festival days,—and then only for the sake of teaching the people the legend of the day—the particular sacred event being celebrated. There was then no thought of making

money by the performance. But later on these performances became so popular that they were taken part in by laymen and lay society as a business speculation. Still later great commercial companies took hold of this drama and produced it with magnificence. So it gradually passed out of the hands of the church people altogether; and of course it greatly changed character in the process. Instead of being acted at the side of the church or in the cemetery, the religious drama was acted upon great movable cars, which were pulled along the streets of the towns, just as in Japan on festival days, the pageants are drawn through the public ways—stopping here and there for a performance of music, dancing, or even occasionally a little acting.

The changes which took place were natural and greatly interesting to consider. The earliest religious dramas of the Church in which only priests acted, were called Mysteries—because they dealt with only the mysteries of religion; and the subjects were all taken from the Bible. But after a time the people wanted something more interesting to them than Bible stories: they wanted dramatic performances representing the lives of the saints, in whose history they had been interested from childhood. The dramas were composed illustrating the histories of saints and martyrs; and these were called Miracle plays. After a time, because the Miracle plays had allowed of representations from real life, a desire grew up for plays still more human and less religious — something more secular in character. The Church was still prejudiced against memories of Greek and Roman drama and every additional step made in that direction probably aroused clerical oppositions. Innovators had to proceed very cautiously. But they compromised with church feeling at last by producing a kind of play with a moral subject in which the characters, though representing facts of real life, represented also Virtues and Vices. They were not called by proper names of men and women but by the names of Vices and Virtues. This was the Morality play. Yet another advance was possible, but perhaps it would not have been soon made if the aristocracy and the court had not

taken it up. There were no theatres in that time, and the lords and the nobles who cared about acting preferred to have the acting done in their own houses than to go out into the street to look at Morality plays. So in the course of time there sprang up yet another kind of drama, much more free and almost altogether secular. This was called the Interlude; and the name still belongs to a class of short modern dramas of a comedy kind, which are played at theatres between the intervals of longer plays. But the original Interlude very much resembled the lighter *Nô* dramas of Japan. Indeed the resemblance is so strong in some cases that a mediæval Interlude, with slight modifications and change of name, might almost pass for a Japanese play. Another thing is good to remember that the patrons of the Interlude in England and of the *Nô* in Japan were the court and the nobility. From the Interlude to the drama pure and simple there was only a step to be made; and it was made about the middle of the 16th century, or a little later.



So much for the evolution of the drama. Now let us say something about the dramas themselves. We have seen that the first religious dramas consisted of Mystery plays; that the Miracle plays grew out of the Mystery plays; that the Morality plays grew out of the Miracle plays; finally that the Interlude grew out of the Morality play indirectly under the patronage of kings and aristocracy. What of the history of these different stages of the drama in England?

The first religious drama was brought to England by the Normans and was acted in the school about 1100. But the

school took fire on the very next night; — so the people imagined that Heaven was displeased, and some time elapsed before another effort was made. The next attempt in 1150 was more successful; and by the end of another century, in 1250, the religious drama had become very popular.

Yet another half century; and the production of religious drama had become an enormous business, carried on by vast corporations, and involving immense expenditure. In every part of the country Miracle plays and Morality plays were acted; but three cities especially became famous for producing them, and for manufacturing those splendid dresses and theatrical accessories required for the pageants. These three cities were York, Chester and Coventry. The plays produced in each of those three cities, or under the influence of the great guilds of those cities, came to be called after the name of their place of production. We have thus what is called the York Cycle, the Chester Cycle and the Coventry Cycle of plays. About 150 English Miracle plays have survived (the term Miracle plays is here used to include Interlude and Mystery plays as well); and if you like to read them you will do well to begin by reading Pollard's admirable little book *English Miracle Plays* published by the Oxford Press. Another interesting thing to tell you about the old production of these plays is the intimate relation which they came to have with the trade-guild. For instance, in the course of time, the carpenters came especially to monopolize the play of the Deluge—because they had to make Noah's Ark on the stage in the sight of the people. The blacksmiths in like manner got the monopoly of the play of the Crucifixion—because originally blacksmiths were selected to drive the nails at the Crucifixion scene. The great companies of goldsmiths made especially their own the Miracle play of *The Three Wise Men of the East*—because of the crowns of gold and splendid caskets that had to be produced upon the stage. So again the weavers produced certain plays; the butchers certain other plays; the masons other plays — they had been originally asked to build the tower of Babel. So at last the whole manufacturing and business world became in-

terested in these plays, and you may well wonder why they disappeared from existence so suddenly. Their annual production must have represented sums of millions, and they lasted up to the very day of Shakespeare. Shakespeare himself, as a boy, took part in a Morality play, but after Shakespeare and regular drama of his time, the religious drama vanished. How did it vanish so suddenly? Well, it had done its work and there was no more use for it. It could not compete against the regular drama. The first theatre in England was built for Shakespeare; and after, all the principal towns had their own theatres, where wonderful tragedies and comedies were being acted so as to stir the emotions of the people in a new and wonderful and terrible way. Popular interest in the Morality play died out. The religious drama ceased to be a fashion, because a new fashion and a larger fashion had come in.

But there was one exception worthy of notice — not in England, however,—to the disappearance of the old religious drama. The old Mystery play, which never changed its character and remained throughout centuries exactly the same according to the rules of hieratic conservatism, still actually exists. It exists in Switzerland, and is acted at Ober-Ammergau, where thousands of people go every year from all parts of Europe to see it. The village of Ober-Ammergau exists entirely by producing this play. The little children are brought up actors; and from their earliest years they are taught how to help in producing "the Passion Play" as it is generally called. Of course the great interest of looking at such a thing is the knowledge that we are really looking at the Middle Ages and that everything is done according to the traditions that have remained unchanged for centuries. I ought also to tell you that Mystery plays are not confined to Europe proper. There are Mystery plays acted in Persia also, and it is curious to know that they are produced to-day exactly as they were produced thousands of years ago. Everywhere religious conservatism acts in the same way, and we have to thank it for occasionally preserving such interesting relics of past time and custom.

Now you will understand why in the little diagram of the tree I have drawn I made the part representing the Mystery play reach well up into the region touching regular drama.

I have not yet said much about the subjects of these plays. It would take too much time to enumerate them all; and references are easy to make. However, I shall attempt a little summary :—

I. Mystery plays were taken both from the Old and the New Testaments; and the favourite subjects were the history of the life of Christ, the history of the Patriarchs (Noah, Abraham, etc.).

II. Miracle plays treated chiefly of the lives of the Saints —especially the Saints of the English calendar;—but this name was not distinctive in England. Both Mystery and Miracle plays were called Miracle plays. It was otherwise in France where the literature of religious drama was produced on a far larger scale.

III. In the Morality plays, the subjects were always didactic: we might say that these plays were parables dramatized. But in these the language was often very rough, very rude. At first all religious dramas had been written and acted in Latin, but after the plays had become popular, and English was used, the colloquial came into strange use occasionally. One play of this class,—and one of the very best,—has a very curious history. For it is a Buddhist story, which travelled from India westwards in some extraordinary way to England, and became naturalized there. The name of this play is *Everyman*,[1] and the story is a parable of life. Everyman surrounded by happiness, wealth, honour, friends and flatterers, is suddenly called by Death. He asks in turn Love, Friendship, Riches, etc., to accompany him upon the black journey—but they all flee away and leave him. Only Truth and Virtue will go with him. The end of the English play has been modified a little to admit of Christian doctrinal ideas; but the substance of the play remains the same as that of the parable or rather birth story told

[1] *Everyman* c 1520 (in Eng. miracle plays, ed. Pollard 1890).

in India by the Buddha thousands of years ago. You can find the Indian story in the new translation of the *Jatakas*, and now published by the Oxford Press.

IV. Of the Interludes there is little to say, except that they are to a great extent comical,—and the best of them, as I said before, strangely resemble some of the old Japanese plays. English Interludes are not many in number. They contain comical representations of various forms of human weakness occasionally—such as cowardice, boasting, avarice, etc., but they have the great merit of being drawn from life in all cases.

The first English real drama is of a comical character that proves it to have been suggested if not developed by the Interlude. Yet there was one notable difference in imagination, and another notable difference in construction. The Interlude differed from the Morality play in having characters drawn from real life; but even in the Interlude there had been one abstraction—a Vice or a Virtue. Now in the first true English drama the Vice entirely disappeared;—there are no abstractions at all; but instead of the abstractions of comical characters, real characters are introduced. Instead of an abstraction of Mischief, for example, we have a man called Matthewe Merygreeke, who represents the quality of mischievousness in his actions and words. In short the abstraction has been transformed into reality. So much for the difference in imagination. As for differences in construction, we have a play regularly divided in scenes and acts—much longer, much more elaborate than the Interlude. The name of this first play was *Ralph Roister Doister*.[1] It is what you would call to-day "a roaring farce"—a noisy rough comedy such as would please a rough audience. But the man who wrote it was a scholar and it was witty. The writer's name was Nicolas Udall [2]—a schoolmaster and a university graduate. The question is whether he invented his plan. If he invented it, he must have been a wonderful person; but the probability is that he did not invent it. He got it from reading the Latin comedies of Plautus which are constructed

[1] *Ralph Roister Doister, a comedy a* 1553 (Arber 1868).
[2] Nicolas Udall (1505-1556).

upon almost exactly the same lines. And Plautus seems to have been again followed by the writers of the next English play *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.[1] (I suppose you know that in old colloquial English "gaffer" means grandfather and "gammer" means grandmother—terms used in the country much as the Japanese terms *Ojiisan* and *Obaasan* are used in referring to old people). The comedy is about an old woman who lost her needle while trying to mend a pair of breeches,—that is to say, short trousers reaching to the knees. This also was a rough play, a boisterous farce; but it was written by John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells;[2] and it was acted at Cambridge University. But Still did not write when he was a bishop—he probably wrote it when he was a student; and there was a very funny story about the matter. Becoming a bishop he found himself forced by religious reasons to deliver an address against the performance of comedies in universities—notwithstanding the fact that he had himself been the first to introduce comedies into universities. So we see that a man's opinions may come to be very much changed by time and position. So far, please observe that we are only speaking of comedy. The first English drama—real drama—was comedy. Tragedy came a little later; and when it came it was modelled after Latin tragedy, just as the comedy was modelled after Latin comedy. The time of Greek study in this direction had not yet come and the grandeur of the Greek work was unknown. But we shall speak of that later on. For the present we can dismiss the subject of the drama before Elizabeth's time with one more reference to *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* contains one thing in the second act which is much more famous than the play. I mean the best drinking song in the English language. Although commonly attributed to John Still—even by the Oxford Anthology—it is probable that the song is much older. And it is so very famous that I had better quote it entirely; for you will not find it in the more handy anthologies.

[1] *Gammer Gurton. A ryght pithy, pleasaunt and merrie comedie: intytuled Gammer Gurtons nedle . . made by Mr. S. Mr of Art* 1575 (Dodsley, Old plays, 1744).
[2] John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells (1543?-1608).

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.
(Chorus) Back and side go bare, go bare;
Both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead;
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I wold;
I am so wrapp'd and thoroughly lapp'd
Of jolly good ale and old.
(Chorus) Back and side go bare, go bare, &c.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek:
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl
Even as a maltworm should,
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old."
(Chorus) Back and side go bare, go bare, &c.

Now let them drink till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do;
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to;
And all poor souls that have scour'd bowls
Or have them lustily troll'd,
God save the lives of them and their wives,
Whether they be young or old.

(Chorus) Back and side go bare, go bare;
Both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

This is the text in *Gammer Gurton's Needle;* but there is an older text—longer and still more vigorous. Notice the fine effect of the double rhyme. Merely to read this song can give you no idea of its strong quality:—one should hear it sung to appreciate it. It is still sung to-day and there are certain beer-halls in London at which you can hear that very song thundered out by a company of perhaps several hundred persons—all chanting the chorus together. So we have an example of a song that has lived, scarcely changed, through three or four hundred years.

The other great event of the time just befere Elizabeth was, as I told you, the introduction of new forms of poetry—the poetry of modern English cast in new moulds. But I might as well call this event the great beginning of the Italian influence, the true Renaissance influence upon English literature. There are several names connected with this event, but you need only remember the names of the greatest—the pioneers. These were two noble friends: Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Very romantic and sad is the history of both. But their influence upon English literature was very great. They laid the foundations for the whole vast fabric of Elizabethan lyrical poetry.

Sir Thomas Wyatt[1] was the son of a country gentleman of distinction. He was sent to Cambridge to be educated at the age of only 12 years. It was the fashion in that time to send people to universities when they were mere boys; and of course university education was not then what it is now;—for no modern boy could do anything in the university at the age of twelve. But Wyatt seems to have done very well at the University; and he was still a boy when he graduated with credit. His family then got him into the court of Henry VIII, to whom he became first the page, then the friend, then the trusty states-

[1] Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542).

man—all in rapid succession. But the friendship of Henry VIII. was dangerous. As he advanced in life the King's originally generous character became greatly changed; he grew suspicious, and from suspiciousness he became cruel, and from cruelty he became tyrannical. If he had lived ten years longer, he would probably have exterminated the English nobility. As it was, the favourites of the King quickly lost their heads. You might become a minister to-day, be put in prison tomorrow and have your head cut off on the following day. And in that time the unscrupulous, the treacherous, the insincere and self-seeking men, of whom numbers always swarmed in the shadow of the court, were able to do very much harm; — by a word, by a whisper, even by a wicked smile, they might destroy the future of the most gifted person in England. Wyatt was constantly getting into prison, where his enemies managed to put him upon frivolous charges. But every time he managed to exculpate himself; and then the King would send him away upon a diplomatic mission. While he was away another plot would be contrived and he would come back only to be thrown into prison again. That was the life which one of the cleverest men of the age was obliged to live. He died in 1542, while returning from a mission; and it was commonly supposed that his early death alone saved him from worse things. He was not yet forty years old. In view of what I have just told you, this little poem which he wrote ought to interest you: it is a kind of complaint, in which he expresses all the bitterness of his position.

PATIENCE

Patience! Though I have not
  The thing that I require,
I must, of force, God wot!
  Forbear my most desire!
    For no ways can I find
    To sail against the wind!

Patience! Do what they will
  To work me woe or spite;

I shall content me still
  To think, both day and night!
    To think and hold my peace;
    Since there is no redress!

Patience, withouten blame!
  For I offended nought!
I know, they know the same;
  Though they have changed their thought,
    Was ever thought so moved,
    To hate that it hath loved!

Patience of all my harm!
  For Fortune is my foe!
Patience must be the charm
  To heal me of my woe!
    Patience without offence
    Is a painful Patience!

We may suppose that the third stanza especially refers to the sudden and unexplained anger of the King, who after treating him almost as a brother, began to consider him an enemy. There are several other suggestions of his sorrow scattered through his lyrics. A great deal of the poetry appears to have been written as a medicine or discipline against sorrow. But we shall return to this subject again. I must first tell you about Wyatt's friend Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.[1] Howard was a much younger man than Wyatt; and he seems to have been to Wyatt very much in the relation of pupil to master—I should almost say, younger brother to elder brother. But they were too far removed from each other in rank to be thus spoken of. Wyatt was a knight and a gentleman, but Howard was of the very noblest blood in England—in fact he ranked close to the King. He was a cousin, moreover, of Anne Boleyn, the unfortunate Queen; and he was the bosom friend of Henry's illegitimate son, the Earl of Richmond, a young man of about his own age, who seems to have been very amiable and generous. All these relationships were not sources of strength, however; they were sources of extreme danger. Young Howard

[1] Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517?-1547).

had enemies, and many a time found himself in serious danger. At such times the young son of Henry VIII. would go to his father and plead for his friend,—and as Henry loved and trusted his son, the pleading was always successful. Unfortunately the Earl of Richmond fell sick and died in the flower of his youth. Howard was then lost. The discovery of the Queen's adultery filled the King's mind with hatred and suspicion of all her relations. Henry Howard was her cousin. He was arrested, charged with treason and executed without any proof against him. He was not yet 30 years old. Perhaps you have seen the famous portrait of him in court costume—a splendid youth, with a thoughtful, frank, and very handsome face fringed by a golden beard.

These two unfortunate men will always be famous in English literature because of what they did for English poetry,—and did, as you have seen, under circumstances of great pain and distress. They introduced Italian forms of verse—many forms—into English poetry; but the facts by which you ought to remember them especially are these:—

Wyatt introduced the Sonnet into English literature.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, first introduced the ten-syllable blank verse, afterwards used for Shakespeare's plays. That is why they are such famous literary persons. They were not, either of them, very great poets; but they were great literary forces. Let us now say a word about the Sonnet, which Wyatt introduced.

I think you know that the Sonnet is the noblest form of the short poetry in Western literature, — it does not matter whether the literature be English, Italian, French or German. It is complicated, though not so complicated as some other forms and its value does not depend upon its complexity. Stating the matter as simply as possible I will say that more can be done in a great and serious way, within the framework of the Sonnet than within any other poetical form of equal length. The length, you know, is fourteen lines. All the greatest poets of all countries have used this form—Dante and Petrarch in Italy, Shakespeare and Milton in England; and the

names of the great French poets who have used this form are too many to quote. It was from Italy that Wyatt imported it into England.

As I have said, the Sonnet consists of 14 lines. The first eight lines represent two quatrains; and this division of the Sonnet is called the Octave—because of the number of the lines in it. The last six lines represent two triplets or tercets—that is to say, to join the stanzas of three lines each, and this part is called the Sestet. Now the arrangement of the rhymes ought to be about this:—

a b e a — a b e a — c d e — c d e.

There are a number of rules; but we need not consider them now. The form of which I have spoken is the old Italian form, considered the most perfect. The French form is somewhat differently arranged as to the lines. Now Wyatt, as I said, was not a great poet; and the English of the 16th century was not nearly so perfect an instrument for poetry as the Italian of even the 15th century. Wyatt found that he could not manage the Sonnet in English, keeping strictly to the Italian rules. He changed the rules a little, and made the form easier; and Shakespeare did the same thing. It was not until the time of Milton that the pure Italian form of the Sonnet was grandly managed in English verse. And even Milton sometimes made changes which would not be permitted to-day,—for example:—

a b b a — a b b a — c d — c d — c d.

The substitution of distichs for tercets, that is to say, of three couplets of two lines each, instead of two stanzas of three lines each, enabled Milton to do with fewer rhymes. To-day all conform to the Italian form. The Sonnets of Rossetti are of the pure kind.

Wyatt's Sonnets are really very bad: that makes no difference. He made the first attempt,—eventually followed by all the great English poets. In lyrics he did much better; and some of his forms are very pretty, and still in use. You will find in the Oxford Anthology, for example, the whole of his

beautiful lute poem—in which the lover tells his sorrow to the instrument;

> My lute, awake! perform the last
> Labour that thou and I shall waste;
> And end that I have now begun:
> For when this song is sung and past,
> My lute! be still, for I have done.

The whole poem has a charm that is strangely modern—not at all like the ordinary production during the period from 1500 to 1542—the date of Wyatt's death. Where Wyatt's influence was not good was his attempt to introduce twelve-syllable and fourteen-syllable verse. Neither of these are suited to English poetry—because of the construction of the language. It is different in French;—the Alexandrine is a form particularly natural to French poetry, because of the construction of French. We have altogether nearly a hundred poems by Wyatt—I believe the exact number is 96. Most of them are love poems; but that was the fashion of the day. The stories about Wyatt's romantic loves are probably founded upon nothing. We are not so sure in the case of Surrey. There is a very curious story about Surrey's Geraldine. He travelled in the days when the great magician Cornelius Agrippa was alive; and it is said that Agrippa showed him the image of the girl in a magical glass. Of course the magical romance is only romance; but there is good reason to suppose that Surrey felt, even after his marriage, a chivalrous admiration for the young Irish girl to whom so many of his love poems were addressed. Surrey had a better ear for poetry than Wyatt; but, though his verse is not bad, it is not great. It was his influence as an innovator that was great; and this influence was exerted by his translation of the *Aeneid*[1] into blank verse—ten-syllable blank verse.

Of course he did not invent the blank verse;—he found it in Italy. Early in the 15th century the Italians had begun to write in blank verse. And the reason is interesting. When the great revival of Greek and Latin studies began, Italian

[1] *Certain bokes (II and IV) of Virgiles Aeneis* tr. *a* 1547 (Apud Ricardum Tottel 1557; Roxb. Club 1814).

scholars were greatly impressed by the fact that Greek and Latin poetry was rhymeless, and nevertheless, much more perfect than modern poetry. Gradually Italian scholars came to think of rhyme as a vulgar thing,—a barbaric thing. Scholars at least ought not to use it. And blank verse came to be an Italian fashion. Surrey brought it from Italy; Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists adopted it for their plays;—then Milton gave it classical perfection;—then Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning—how many other I need not say. And all the blank verse glory of English literature may be said to date from Surrey.

I have nothing by Surrey which is striking enough to quote to you; but we have talked so much about Henry VIII. that I may quote a few of the King's stanzas. Henry liked poetry —though he was not very clever at it. He liked wrestling, shooting and throwing heavy weights much better—in fact all kinds of athletic exercises. And that is the subject of his poem. By the way Henry prided himself upon his skill at wrestling; and this pride once had serious political consequence. When he met King Francis I. of France, he first hugged him affectionately and then wanted to wrestle with him. Francis mildly observed that wrestling was not a pastime exactly suited to the dignity of kings. But one day Henry pushed the matter so far that Francis gave him a chance to wrestle and that wrestle did not last very long. Henry was a very powerful man, heavy and muscular;—Francis was very slender and lightly built; but he was also very active and skilful in bodily exercise,—and with the greatest ease he gave Henry such a fall that the ground shook. The English King never forgave that fall; the memory of it rankled even in his political plans. But let us read Henry's poem, because it adopted the Italian form introduced by his courtiers Wyatt and Surrey:—

Pastime with good company
  I love, and shall until I die!
Grudge who lust; but none deny!
  So God be pleased, thus live will I!
    For my pastance,

Hunt, sing, and dance!
My heart is set.
All goodly sport
For my comfort,
Who shall me let?

Youth must have some dalliance!
Of good, or ill, some pastance!
Company, methinks, then best,
All thoughts and fancies to digest!
For Idleness
Is chief mistress
Of vices all!
Then who can say,
But mirth and play
Is best of all!

Company with honesty
Is virtue, vices to flee!
Company is good, and ill;
But every man hath his free will!
The best ensue!
The worst eschew!
My mind shall be
Virtue to use,
Vice to refuse!
Thus shall I use me!

Henry's poetry is not very fine; but it gives us some interesting glimpses of his character—his belief in the worth of physical exercise and his desire that men should be free to do as he pleased so long as they took care to do all that the King wills.

We have now seen the important events in literature before Elizabeth — the greatest at least. During the following reign,—Mary,—there was very little literature of importance. Though not exact, it is very serviceable and approximately correct to speak of Elizabethan literature as beginning from 1558—the date of Elizabeth's accession. A word now about Elizabethan literature in general,

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

THE Elizabethan age was the greatest age of English literature and its best work has never been equalled — perhaps never again will be equalled. But we must remember that this literary greatness appeared only in particular departments of production. Those departments were only two,—lyrical poetry and drama. It is because of the extraordinary perfection attained especially by drama that the age is justly considered so great. When I say drama, however, you must remember that Elizabethan drama means blank verse poetry. The Elizabethan age was not an age of great prose. But in poetry there never has been another age like it; and as that poetry happened to be cast into the noblest and highest form of literature—great drama—there is no later poetry that can justly compare with it. We may speak of Tennyson's verse and Rossetti's verse as better than Shakespeare's verse in exquisiteness of workmanship. But only in workmanship. In thought and passion and power all the poets of the 19th century were but little children compared with Shakespeare. In Shakespeare English poetry as well as English drama rose to the greatest eminence ever attained. So much for an introductory observation as to the great poetry; but the subject of Elizabethan lyrical poetry is scarcely less wonderful.

The lyrical outburst represents a conditional thing closely approximating what we might call a national enthusiasm. For the first and the last time everybody in England took to writing poetry—that is to say, everybody who could write at all. There never was a time in England when everybody could write; and in the 16th century the spread of education was very limited. In Japan I believe that almost everybody can write, and write poetry of some kind. There was not any time in English literature when the same condition prevailed in Eng-

land; but the Elizabethan era really witnessed such a fashion and delight in the writing as might remind you of Oriental conditions in the past. There was also one time during the Renaissance in Italy when all uneducated people took to writing poetry. In either case you must try to think of the phenomenon as a fashion,—a polite fashion. It became just as much of a fashion to write poetry as it was a fashion to wear clothes of particular shape and colour. And as fashions are most observed by the upper classes, this literary fashion both in Italy and England was especially aristocratic. The Queen herself wrote poetry, and suggested subjects and rewarded poets. Her ministers and her courtiers obeyed her example and tried to rival each other in shaping beautiful verse. The gentry, as a matter of course, also followed the example; and after the gentry, all educated people. The universities made themselves particularly busy with poetry; and the ability to compose it was considered almost indispensable in the case of any well-trained and well-read person.

Becoming a fashion, however, poetry was not written for the purpose of making money or of making a reputation—it was not even written for publication. People did not even think of printing their poems: they only wrote them, and had them beautifully copied;—and they would send copies to their friends and acquaintances. In this regard they did very much as Japanese scholars have been doing for hundreds of years; they displayed their poetry upon particular occasions only, to grace those occasions, to give pleasure to friends, to leave souvenirs with those from whom they had to part, or to record the memory of some happy event. And then, as now in this country, poems were composed upon almost every imaginable topic. But love poetry predominated,—because it was the fashion, a fashion borrowed from Italy. Do not forget that, when you are reading the beautiful but often passionately extravagant lyrics of the time. You must not think of them too seriously;—you must not suppose that they were really intended to express the emotions of their writers under particular circumstances. Of course some poems were of the sincere

emotional kind. But most of them were written in a particular tone of the intense feeling only in imitation of Italian work. If you remember that, you will be able to admire them the more. Though not often rising to the level of greatness, they kept generally well to the line of exquisiteness. They were dainty, pretty, delicate,—often charming as a bird-song is.

Elizabethan Drama

We must consider the subject of drama first, in treating of Elizabethan literature — because it is the highest form of Elizabethan literature. But we need now only consider the beginnings of it. In the preceding lecture you saw how drama had been developed, from the Interlude, out of religious drama. But you remember also how I pointed out to you that the early English drama had been comedy—not tragedy. Tragedy is a much higher form of drama than comedy — it is indeed the highest of all forms of literary art. There is also a noble form of comedy; and there is a noble mingling of tragedy with comedy to which a very lofty place may be assigned. But the greatest drama must always be tragedy; and tragedy was not developed in England until after comedy had found shape. The higher the literary art the later to develop.

Now just as the English writers of the early comedy studied Latin authors for construction, so did the English writers of early tragedy study Latin authors. Only much later were Greek authors studied for the same purpose. And the result might have been unfortunate but for the genius of the English race. The Latin writers did not produce great tragedy. Tragedy never succeeded in Rome. Comedy did succeed — though it was never equal to the Greek comedy: there was no Roman Aristophanes, for example. But the Roman people could not care about tragedy. Why? For this very interesting reason, —that the public amusements had brutalized the public mind. In the great amphitheatres there were spectacles to be seen

for nothing which infinitely surpass in horror and in pathos any imaginary tragedy. For example, you might go there to see men, women and children eaten alive by lions and tigers; —you might see a thousand men kill each other in the course of a single morning;—you might see gladiatorial exhibitions conducted upon a scale almost equal to that of a real battle;—you could even see a naval fight—for the theatre was sometimes flooded and whole fleets were then floated upon it, and a real battle took place. Moreover, when tragedies were acted with success at all, it would be at the amphitheatre that they were acted, because the tragedy became horribly real there. When the story of the death of Hercules was represented for the Romans, the slave who personated Hercules was really burned alive;—and all the sights which Greek tragedy forbade to be represented, were represented in actuality by the Romans. You could easily understand that, when the sight of blood, the sight of torture, the sight of slaughter and of cruelty became matters of everyday amusement, the people could not care for the literary art of tragedy. That is the reason why great tragedy never became a part of Roman literature.

But there were some Latin tragedies of an inferior kind. The most famous writer of these Latin tragedies was a philosopher called Seneca. There were two Senecas, — father and son. The father Marcus Annæus Seneca appears to have been born about the year 61 B.C. in Spain,—whence he went to Rome to try his fortune. He was a lawyer and a rhetorician; and he succeeded tolerably well in Rome. He wrote many books, in the nature of treatises, and they are all worthless. He was not a great thinker nor a great writer. But he had one son Lucius Annæus Seneca, who became a very great man. This was the Seneca who wrote tragedies. He became the tutor of the young Emperor Nero; and he amassed an enormous fortune—probably in ways that cannot be called honest. But he was a good teacher and perhaps not more dishonest than other men in the same walk of life. He was a flatterer—that was the fashion; he took care to make himself rich — that was the fashion. But what he taught and wrote about morals, about

law, and about literature, was very sound indeed. Whatever wrong he may have done he expiated bitterly, for his treacherous pupil Nero eventually caused him to be put to death, partly to get rid of him, chiefly in order to seize his property However, he lived by his books in a high place; and it is the judgement of many scholars that there is perhaps no other Latin writer who wrote such excellent books as the books of Seneca on the subject of morals. Indeed Seneca's moral teaching was so good that in the time of the Middle Ages the Christian Church believed that he must have been a Christian; of course Seneca was not a Christian; and his morality was of the Stoic school with something of the Platonic teaching in it,—simplified and admirably applied to the conduct of everyday life. But its teachings accorded so well with all the best of human moral experience, that he was treated by the enemies of classic literature with the very greatest consideration. Perhaps that was the reason why so much attention was given to his plays at an early time. Unfortunately the plays are not to be compared for a moment with the books on ethics. Seneca was the great master of ethics;—he was only a very clumsy pupil in the art of tragedy.

This much about Seneca is very important to remember. He never intended his plays for the stage. He wrote ten tragedies,—imitations of Greek tragedies, with Roman modifications, mostly in anapæstic verse; — and he seems to have written them merely as exercises in the arts of rhetoric and prosody, with the intention perhaps also of reading them to his friends. As one of them, entitled *Octavia*, is a satire upon the Emperor Nero, it is quite evident that the manuscript could have been read only in private; and the same thing is probably true of several others. Another thing to remember — for Seneca's name is of immense importance in the study of any European literature—is that Seneca chose for his drama, not the gentle and comic, and very human tragedies of the Greek, but the terrible dramas, the horrible stories of vengeance and despair: *Medea*, which is a tale of jealousy and revenge; *Thystes*, the most awful of all Greek tragedies, and which treats of the eat-

ing of human flesh; *Agamemnon,* a story of adultery, murder and matricide. Such were the particular subjects which Seneca selected. It is very necessary to remember this; for the fact indirectly affected English literature and drama for a long time. Seneca liked strong and bloody incidents for the moral purpose of his drama: the more violent the facts—the more they shocked the imagination, the better, he thought, they would serve for ethical illustration. And his verse was really fine. So far as form is concerned, it would be very difficult indeed to criticize Seneca. The faults of his dramas are faults of another kind than form. They are not true to human nature nor to human life; they are artificial; obviously didactic; they want the real fire of genius to make them alive. But the verse is often grand and is always correct; and the whole structure of these Latin dramas is the very perfection of artificial excellence. Now comes the point of these remarks—the whole drama of France, the drama of Italy, the drama of Spain was actually shaped for 300 years by the study of Seneca. The Renaissance did not go to the Greek tragedians immediately: it went to Seneca. In other countries Seneca's influence weakened with the passing of time; but classical French drama is all based upon Senecan tragedy, — and that tragedy is not yet dead. Such authors as Corneille, Racine, Boileau, these represent Senecan tragedy to a surpassing degree. The plays of Racine, you know, are still acted in France, according to the old rules.

It would have seemed that the dramas of Seneca were likely to influence all the drama of England. But the English national feeling acted after a fashion quite different from that of the national feeling among the Latin race. There was a kind of independent conservation in English character which prevented Senecan drama from working out its destiny through English channels. Four times there was an attempt to introduce this kind of drama into England; and four times the English public rejected it. Otherwise English drama would certainly have become as monotonous, correct, cold and stiff as the French drama of the classic school.

But the first English tragedy *Gorboduc*[1] was a Senecan drama. Several other dramas of the same school were produced either just before Elizabeth's accession, or a little later; and the public refused to care about them. It is not worth while even to mention the name of them. They are dead and forgotten. But when the company of university students, commonly called "the University Wits," took hold of Seneca and studied him, they found that there was some good to be got out of him without following his methods at all. All of them studied Seneca. But what they liked of Seneca, was the terrible part of him—the awful situation, the ghost, the horror, all that is generally called in dramatic language "blood and thunder."

The "blood and thunder" they took for material, but they chose to write their dramas in a more natural way, and leave out all the classical machinery, and to keep as close as they could to truth and human nature.

The first great English drama was the work of these university students. We need mention only six of the "Wits";—Marlowe, Lyly, Peele, Greene, Nashe and Lodge. Marlowe, Greene and Nashe were Cambridge students. Lyly, Peele and Lodge were Oxford men. The greatest poet and the dramatist among these was certainly Christopher Marlowe. But the name of Lyly is scarcely less important in English literature—not only because he prepared the way for Shakespeare after a fashion very different from that of Marlowe, but because he also affected nearly the whole prose of the Elizabethan age by the invention of a new style and a new art of expression. The other men named are much less important. Let us first speak of the work of Marlowe and of Lyly.

Marlowe[2] did not produce many plays—though his work represents a good-sized volume—about half of which is either poetry or poetical translation from classic authors. And all his plays are not good—some of them are failures. You must remember that he was a pioneer—the quasi-inventor of a new sort of tragedy, and that he could not help making mistakes

[1] *The tragedie of Gorboduc. Sett forth as shewed before the Quenes Maiestie* 1561 (1565). Another ed., entitled *The tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex* 1570.

[2] Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593).

occasionally. For instance, his plays of *Edward II*[1] and of *Dido*[2] — the first dealing with facts of English history, the second modelled upon the Virgilian legend Dido — are really very poor. But his tragedies of *Tamburlaine*, *Dr. Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*, are really much greater than anything else before them, and have not lost, even to this day, their interest as drama and as poetry. The best of all is *The Jew of Malta* — it is the study of a supremely wicked career of successful crime, discovered and defeated only by happy chance. It is not true to human nature as Shakespeare's plays are; and the villain of the piece is not altogether real. He reminds us rather of a caricature of badness—he is an exaggeration of the possible. But the figure, even as an exaggeration, has great strength; and the action of the play, though furiously rapid, compels our praise. Moreover, there is an attraction in finely sounding verse. Marlowe wrote his plays in blank verse—a kind of verse introduced into England by Surrey and afterwards adopted by Shakespeare. And he managed this blank verse magnificently. There are passages in *Dr. Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta* and even in *Tamburlaine* which are almost worthy of being mistaken for Shakespeare. I need scarcely tell you that *Tamburlaine*[3] is an imaginary study of the life of the great Tartar conqueror, Timouri Beg, also called Tamburlaine in former times. The fault of this composition is the excess of blood and tragedy in it. The story of *Dr. Faustus*[4] is, of course, the mediæval legend of Faust, which Gœthe was afterwards to make such grand use of. But the part which Marlowe especially used is the part which Gœthe put into the second division of *Faust*. Finally *The Jew of Malta*[5] is only the expansion into violent tragedy of an old Italian story.

Marlowe prepared the way for Shakespeare; and in the earliest work of Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, there are resemblances to the work of Marlowe. Of course there can be

[1] *The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the second a* 1593 (1594).
[2] *The tragedie of Dido queene of Carthage* (with Thomas Nashe) *a* 1593 (1594).
[3] *Tamburlaine the great* (2 parts) 1586-87 (1590).
[4] *The tragical history of Doctor Faustus c* 1590 (1616).
[5] *The famous tragedy of the rich Jew of Malta c* 1592 (1633).

no comparison as to merit: Shakespeare's worst is as much above Marlowe's best in drama as Mount Fuji is above Kudanzaka. But the suggestion of the one is to be found in the other. Marlowe has great talent and good ideas; but he was only a beginner; and the defects of his plays are very largely in construction. One great characteristic in all of Marlowe is the unnatural rapidity of the action. A few lines are made to represent what an experienced playwright would require many pages to express. The play is not only too much hurried: the hurry in it is like a panic. For all that we must not forget that Marlowe probably helped Shakespeare in various ways. Another direction in which he certainly inspired Shakespeare, and in which he came much closer to Shakespeare, was in his poetry. Besides the poetry of his plays, Marlowe produced a great deal of splendid poetry in the shape of translations from the Latin, or imitations of the Greek. He translated much of Martial, a good deal of Juvenal; and he composed in *Hero and Leander*[1] a poem which for splendid sensuousness can be equalled only by Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. If you do not find more of Marlowe's poetry in the English anthology, it is chiefly because the poetry is too voluptuous for use in schools and colleges—not because it is second-rate poetry at all. It is poetry of the very highest class, but it intimates in so bold a manner the voluptuous side of the Roman poets that it offends modern English taste. It would not offend modern French taste;—the neglect of it in England is a mere matter of prudery. Had it not been written, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* would probably not have been written. I need scarcely remind you that you will not find these poems of Shakespeare's in modern anthologies for the very same reason.

Marlowe was scarcely thirty years old when he died. He appears to have been rather too fond of merry living and to have frequently got into trouble. The students of that day, like the French students of Villon's time, were often reckless livers. Marlowe at last got into a quarrel about a woman, and

[1] *Hero and Leander* (finished by G. Chapman) *a* 1593 (1598).

the man he quarrelled with, Francis Archer, stabbed him in the eye with a dagger, the blade penetrating the brain and killing him instantly. After Marlowe's death, many bad things were said about him; but it would be foolish to believe them all, and the best opinion of our time is on Marlowe's side. He was imprudent and sometimes guilty of follies; but he was probably in no sense a bad man,—and it is interesting to know that the person who most calumniated him was afterwards hung for a serious crime. Young men who wrote plays in the middle of the 16th century had to do so at their own risk; there was a great deal of religious prejudice against new drama; and it is not unlikely that many of the stories circulated about Marlowe and his friends were inspired by that prejudice. The charges made against Marlowe were also made against Greene and Peele, and it has now been found that most of them are untrue, or at least unsupported by reasonable evidence.

In the case of Lyly[1] everything was different. Lyly, unlike his fellow students, was a man of society, — with friends at court and powerful supporters. No charges of a false kind were ever made against him. Most of his plays were written to be acted by children, at the court of Queen Elizabeth. They were plays of a totally different kind from those of Marlowe's. They resemble masques much more than plays; and their subjects were taken mostly from Greek myths and from Fairyland. Such titles as *Endymion*[2] (*Endimion* as he spelled it), *Sapho and Phao*,[3] *The Maid's Metamorphosis*[4] and *The Woman in the Moon*[5] (which is a curious transformation of the myth of Pandora), are enough to show that we have entered into a totally new world of dramatic art. Lyly was a good Greek scholar and no inferior poet. There is nothing tragic in his work; it is all the most delicate comedy—beautiful, sentimental comedy; and it is very important to remember this: for, if Marlowe paved the way for Shakespearian tragedy, it was Lyly who paved the way for Shakespearian melo-drama. These charm-

[1] John Lyly (1554?-1606).
[2] *Endimion, the man in the moone* (anon.) 1591.
[3] *Sapho and Phao* (anon.) 1584.
[4] *The maydes metamorphosis* (attrib. to Lyly) 1600 (Bullen, Old plays I, 1882).
[5] *The woman in the moone* 1597.

ing lighter comedies of Shakespeare—such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*—owed very much to Lyly. Undoubtedly Shakespeare also owed something to Peele. Peele[1] was the author of about half a dozen plays, of which the best is founded upon the story of King David and Beth Sheba, which Peele writes *Bethsabe.*[2] Some passages in this play read almost exactly like Shakespeare, and like Shakespeare in his glory. The whole play is not great; but some of the poetry is. Of the plays by Lodge,[3] who like Lyly was an admirable poet, need be mentioned only the pleasant comedy of *Campaspe.*[4] And of Greene[5] we need only mention the best—also a comedy: *The Story of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay.*[6] Neither Lodge nor Greene, however, influenced English drama to such an extent as Marlowe and Lyly. But the work of all of the six University Wits ought to be considered as a single force; it was the combination of the efforts of all that created English drama of the really English kind,—and developed it to the point at which it was taken up and perfected by Shakespeare.

Elizabethan Prose

EUPHUISM

We have not yet done with Lyly. Lyly was not only a great dramatist and great poet: he was also the founder of the Romance of Manners and Morals. Unfortunately he was also the founder of a detestable style, which obtained the most astonishing success, and fantastically coloured all the prose of Elizabeth's age. This style was called euphuism, after the name of the book which Lyly wrote, *Euphues.*[7] The word "euphues"

[1] George Peele (1558-1597).
[2] *The love of King David and fair Bethsabe* 1599.
[3] Thomas Lodge (1558?-1625).
[4] *Campaspe* (anon.) 1584. Another issue, entitled *A moste excellent comedie of Alexander, Campaspe, and Diogenes* 1584.
[5] Robert Greene (1560?-1592).
[6] *The honorable historie of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay* c 1590 (1630; 1878).
[7] *Euphues, the anatomy of wyt* 1579 (Arber 1868). *Euphues and his England* 1580 (Arber 1868).

is borrowed from Greek; and it signifies "well-grown"—this is to say, graceful, comely. Euphues was supposed to be a handsome and very moral young Greek, who travelled through Europe for the purpose of studying different kinds of governments and social conditions—visiting England on his journey, which country he described as being the best country in the world, governed by a queen more beautiful than Venus and more chaste than an angel (Queen Elizabeth), a country where all the women were bewilderingly beautiful and all the men astonishingly good and brave. Enormous was the success of this book.

In the book there is nothing ridiculous—except style. It is a good book though a dull book. As to style it is very queer indeed. Having all of you studied Macaulay, you are doubtless familiar with what is meant by antithetical prose—a prose style in which antitheses are used both for ornament and expression, in other words a style in which everything is effected by the contrast of opposites. You may remember sentences in Macaulay of this kind, but Macaulay was a perfect master of antithesis; he used it often but not too often; and he never used it ineffectively or merely for the sake of ornament. Indeed, he used it chiefly in masterly imitation of the Latin writers. Lyly used it fantastically, extravagantly, absurdly,—and this was not all. He used alliteration also; and he stuffed every sentence with grotesque similes, borrowed from the symbolical zoology of the Middle Ages. You remember what I told you about the books that were called Bestiary—books full of imaginary stories about real or imaginary animals, every story having its particular moral or religious purpose. So the peculiarities of English euphuism were three:—the anthithesis, alliteration, and bestiary simile,—all three being extravagantly used. But no account of the style could enable you to understand what it was like. Only quotation can do that;—and here is a quotation from *Euphues.*

> The foul toad hath a fair stone in his head, the fine gold is found in the filthy earth, the sweet kernel lieth in the hard shell. Virtue is harboured in the heart of him that most men esteem

> misshapen. . . . Do we not commonly see that in painted pots is hidden the deadliest poison? that in the greenest grass is the greatest serpent? in the clearest water the ugliest toad? Doth not experience teach us that in the most curious sepulchre are enclosed rotten bones? That the cypress tree beareth a fair leaf but no fruit? That the ostrich carrieth fair feathers, but rank flesh?

For reading, all this sounds pretty enough; and the imagination is constantly amused by a succession of strange images. But, of course, such a style is very artificial; everything is sacrificed to form; and nearly all the similes are nonsensically wrong. It is not true that the toad has a stone in his head or that a fine gold is found in the filthy earth or that sweet kernels are enclosed in hard shells invariably, or that virtue is harboured especially in ugly bodies, or that deadly poison is kept in beautifully painted pots. Out of thousands and thousands of similes nearly all are absolute misstatements of facts. People did not care at first about the nonsense of the style; the Bestiary books had prepared them for it—they thought only of the beautiful sound—the alliteration, the antithesis; and so euphuism rapidly became a fashion. That word still exists in English as a term of literary criticism. When a man fills his sentences with antitheses and needless similes, he is accused of "euphuism."

The dramatist Greene also indulged in euphuism—imitated Lyly: here is a specimen from Greene:—

> The greener the leaves be the more bitter is the sap. The salamander is most warm when it lies farthest from the fire; and women are most heart-hollow when they are most lip-whole; the strongest oak has his sap and his worms. The ravens will grieve in the fairest ash.

And a long, long line of writers—including the famous Sir Philip Sidney—imitated this style. But there were men even in Elizabeth's day who treated it with contempt; and one of these men happened to be Shakespeare. When Shakespeare wanted to make some character supremely ridiculous, he would cause that character to talk euphuism on the stage. The best example of Shakespeare's satire on euphuism is to be found in

the First Part of his great play *Henry IV*[1]—Act II, Scene IV. It is when the Prince of Wales and Falstaff are amusing themselves in the tavern, and Falstaff pretends to be the King—the Prince's father, and to be talking morality to the son. He talks euphuism, and the imitation is admirable:—

> Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. . . . There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woes also.

In spite of Shakespeare's satire euphuism prevailed in fashionable circles for a time. Its influence was not all bad — we must regard it as a new attempt in the direction of romantic English prose; and experience always has value. Now the question comes, where did Lyly get this style? Certainly not from his university training; and in other departments of literature he showed perfectly good taste. The fact is that euphuism represents the very first strong influence upon English of Spanish literature. Euphuism was invented really in Spain; and its inventor was a bishop named Antonio de Guevara who published a book written in this style about the year 1545—that is to say, about twenty-five or thirty years before Lyly. (Remember that there are no less than five Guevaras in Spanish literature. It is better, therefore, to memorize the name Antonio and the date.) Bishop Guevara wrote a book called *The Golden Book of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius;* and he also wrote a volume of didactic letters all of which purported to be translation from the Latin and the Greek. They were literary forgeries—nothing more;—and they were exposed as forgeries by the scholars of the time. But nevertheless people were pleased with Guevara's book. In order to make the text look as if it had really been translated from Latin, the Bishop had used the

[1] *The first part of Henry the fourth* 1596.

Latin antithetical form of sentences to excess; and in order to make the book seem very moral, he had stuffed it with similes taken from the *Natural History* of Pliny and other writers. That was the beginning of the style which in England came to be known as euphuism. From Spain indeed, England learned very little that is good for literary ends. Euphuism was her first literary lesson in Spanish; her second was quite as bad or worse,—and is called in English by the name of Gongorism.

Gongorism is a style that took its name from a Spanish writer Luis de Gongora, who lived in the first half of the 17th century. Originally he was a very good poet and prose writer; but later in life, perhaps to attract attention, he adopted a very eccentric style of expression,—much as Browning did in our own time, and at last he became quite unintelligible. But he also became astonishingly fashionable; and the fashion of him rapidly spread all over Spain and even found its way into other countries. There seems to be for vulgar people a very great attraction in the unintelligible—and even for people who are not altogether vulgar. Browning is an excellent example of the kind. When he wrote clearly the people cared little about him;—when he wrote unintelligibly, Browning Societies were established everywhere for the purpose of discovering some imaginary philosophy supposed to be hidden behind the enigma of his style. Browning is a very, very great poet, in spite of his faults—one of the greatest lyrical poets and psychological poets that ever lived, but his faults are more admired than his fine qualities. The case of Gongora was almost exactly the same: he was also by nature a good poet; but it was his faults that made him fashionable. These eccentricities consisted in the habit of extraordinary inversion—inversion of the natural order of words in a sentence,—and also in the habit of never calling things by their right names. Instead of naming the sky, the sea, the mistress, the prince, he would use fantastic similes and round-about phrases to suggest these objects or persons—so that every line of his poetry became a riddle. You have to guess what he meant. And anybody who to-day writes in the same obscure way is accused of Gongorism. Gongorism

only slightly affected Lyly, but it affected his followers much more, and developed in England an absurd kind of prose which Shakespeare ridiculed in one of his plays. When euphuism became all the rage, Lyly was imitated by many writers. I need only mention the names of Greene, Rich,[1] Dickenson,[2] and Lodge. Two of these were of the University Wits beforementioned; and their imitations are the best. But we need only here consider Lodge. Lodge, who was a soldier and a traveller, as well as an exquisite poet, put some of his experiences of strange countries and strange happenings into a romance called *Rosalynde* or *Euphues Golden Legacie;* [3]—and it was from this romance that Shakespeare got his play of *As You Like It.* The name of Lodge in connection with euphuism is important for this reason. For, in his particular case, Shakespeare borrowed very much:—that is to say, that the greatest dramatic genius this world had ever known, considered Lodge as able to furnish him with the best part of what is probably his most beautiful comedy.

What are we to call these romances of euphuism? They are not the same as the romances of the Middle Ages, of course; —but what makes the new mode? It is not merely that the subject is new; it is also, and much more, that the thought is new and the emotion new. I think that we may call them Moral Romances, but the mediæval romances were also, in a certain sense, moral romances. Then what was the difference? The difference was this—that in the romance of Lyly and his school the morality of the romance is entirely dissociated from religion. This is social morality,—not religious morality. And the fact marks a great advance in literary freedom.

This advance becomes still more marked in a new form of romance that presently made its appearance—the Pastoral Romance. The pastoral romance also came into English literature through Spanish channels. The English writer of it was the famous Sir Philip Sidney, [4]—poet, courtier, soldier,—one of

[1] Barnabe Rich (1540?-1617).
[2] John Dickenson (fl. 1594).
[3] *Rosalynde. Euphues golden legacie* 1590.
[4] Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586).

the noblest figures of the Elizabethan age. I think you will remember that he was killed in battle at Zutphen in Flanders; and that the last words which he spoke were the words of a brave and unselfish man. As he was lying, fatally wounded on the battle-field and tortured by thirst—that terrible thirst which always follows upon great loss of blood — a drink of water was brought to him. But he had seen lying near him an English soldier wounded as badly as himself; and he said: "Give the water to him, he needs it more than I." This was the man who introduced the pastoral romance into English literature. His book was called *Arcadia;*[1] and it was written only to amuse his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The idea of the book he got from the Spanish author Montemayor, who had written a romance of the same kind entitled *Diana Enamorada* (Diana in Love). Montemayor was also a soldier and was killed in a duel in Italy while still very young. His book did not appear until after his death. It was then recognized that Montemayor had got his idea from an Italian writer Sannazaro, who had written a romance called *Arcadia.* The peculiarity in the work of both Spaniard and Italian is not that the scenes are laid in the country of Arcadia in both cases, but that both men used their own personal experience for the making of the romance. This was quite a new thing in modern literature.

But I must tell you here why the romance is called pastoral, and why the scenes are laid in Arcadia.

In the southern part of ancient Greece, bordering the country of the Spartans, Laconia, the original Arcadia was situated. It was north of Laconia and thus in the centre of the Peloponnesus; and the whole country there is a country of high mountains and deep valleys. The inhabitants have been compared to the Swiss, and their country has often been called the Switzerland of Greece—for good reason. The Arcadians were an agricultural people, though a race of mountaineers;—they were exceedingly strong and active, so that they furnished excellent soldiers to all the Greek armies, and the Spartans

[1] *The countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* a 1586 (1590, 1598, 1621, 1629; Sommer 1891; Feuillerat 1912-22).

hired many Arcadians to fight for them. They were also a very simple people in their habits—so simple that they were often considered stupid, and the term Arcadian was sometimes used contemptuously. But the Greek poets understood them better and praised their simplicity and honesty. They were also a very brave people: and never lost their independence. They successfully resisted all the powers of the Spartans to subdue their country; and it was not until all Greece became a Roman province that the Arcadians ceased to have their own republic, their own laws and their own customs.

The customs of Arcadia have made memories capable of influencing all western poetry for a thousand years and more. I have said that the people were agricultural; but it would have been better to have called them pastoral, for they were a nation of shepherds as well as of farmers. Much of the country was too mountainous for cultivation; but it could feed sheep and goats. Agriculture, properly speaking, was carried on only in the valleys, as in Switzerland. The amusements of the people were chiefly rural; they loved music and dancing and religious festivals;—and there were wrestling matches for the young men and races for the boys and girls. One curious custom deserves mentioning. At a certain festival of the country-god Pan all the children of the district had a kissing match. The umpires were the old men of place; and children, each in turn, came and kissed the old men. Whoever gave the most graceful kiss received a prize. This fact, well authenticated by Greek writers, proves that the Arcadians could not have been a rough people. There must have been a good deal of refinement among them; and it was this refinement, coupled with their sturdy character and simple ways, that especially impressed in after days the Idyllic School of Greek poets,—Theocritus and others. Their descriptions of pastoral life and Arcadian simplicity and joy, influenced in turn the Roman poets—especially Virgil. Later on, after the disappearance of both Greek and Roman civilizations, the study of Virgil brought into modern literature the poetry of Arcadia. In England, in France, in Italy, in Spain, in Germany, a taste for pastoral

poetry and pastoral romance—that is to say, for poetry and romance relating to simple country life, especially relating to shepherds — came into vogue; a vogue that expired only in the 18th century. I think you know that even the Kings and Queens of France before the Revolution actually performed pastoral plays — dressing themselves to represent shepherds and shepherdesses. But this later pastoral mania which is reflected all through the poetry of Pope and his artificial school was mere humbug. It was artificial, false, even ludicrous. At first, however, the taste for things pastoral was sincere and represented a particular phase of a love of nature.

To-day we mean by pastoral romance any romance treating of simple incidents of country life, or of life as influenced romantically by country surroundings. By pastoral poetry we mean, in the general sense, poetry about the happy and simple conditions of country existence, while, in the special sense, we mean poetry imitating the idyllic character of the verse of Virgil or Theocritus in the treatment of light subjects.

You now know what is meant by pastoral romance, and that this was first introduced into England by Sir Philip Sidney. But Sir Philip Sidney's pastoral romance is not true pastoral romance—it is only an attempt in that direction. He called it *Arcadia;* but the scenes are laid in an imaginary country and the conditions are not Greek, but of Sir Philip's own time. There are knights and ladies and adventures of the wildest kind; but there are neither shepherds nor Arcadians. The book resembles much more those Spanish compilations called Caballerias, that is to say, Knightly Stories, — than anything really pastoral. Nevertheless the book is a landmark in literary evolution. Like the novels of Lyly and Lodge it presents us with a moral ideal entirely dissociated from religion; and it had very much to do with the future development of the English novel. One of the characters of the romance is called Pamela; and it was this character which gave Richardson, in the 18th century, the notion of his great story *Pamela*—the first true English novel. Richardson took not only the name, but even parts of his text from *Arcadia.*

One more noteworthy story of Spanish influence remains to be noticed in English prose—the creation of what is called the Picaroon or Picaresque Romance. Some say "novel," but the true novel was still a long way off. The difference between the novel and the romance is essentially that the novel pictured *realities* of contemporary life; the romance represents only imaginary incidents and combinations.

The word Picaroon is a corruption of the Spanish word *picaron*—which again is derived from the Spanish word *pícaro*—which again comes from the Spanish word *picar*, meaning "to prick," "to goad." A picaro is a person who pricks—the idea is exactly that conveyed by the English word "sharper." A "sharper" is not exactly a thief;—he is a man who makes his way by trickery, by deceiving and duping others, by clever cunning and unscrupulousness. Behind the word "picaro" and the word "sharper" there is alike the suggestion of something to be avoided, as we would avoid a thorny plant, or anything that is likely to hurt us if we get too close to it. Yet one more bit of explanation. The English word *picaroon*, as I told you, is not from the Spanish *picaro*, but from the Spanish *picaron*. What is the difference? Spanish adjectives have what we call augmentative forms: a peculiar method of declension increases their force or diminishes it. By one termination the adjective expresses the diminutive, by another termination it expresses the augmentative. For example the Spanish word for girl is "muchacha." "Muchachita" means a very little girl. But "muchachona" means a great big girl. Those are feminine forms of diminutive and augmentative. The Spanish word for boy is "muchacho." "Muchachito" means a very little boy. But "muchachon" means a great big hulk boy. Now suppose we translate the word *picaro* by sharper or rascal. *Picarito* would mean a little rascal; and *picaron* a great rascal. That is the Spanish word which has been made into the English word *picaroon*. Therefore a picaroon romance simply means a romance about a very great rascal—a romance of crime. It is curious that the new moral romance and the romance of rascality should have been developed in England about the same time.

The Spanish author who first invented this style of romance (so far as it is possible for any human being to invent anything) was Diego de Mendoza, a very wonderful character. He was a knight, a great captain, a great statesman, a man of tremendous energy, and a very keen observer of human life. As a diplomat he was in high favour with Charles V. of Spain, but when Philip II. came to the throne, the great frankness and honesty of Mendoza displeased him and the old man was banished from the court. He was then 64 years of age, but still stronger than most young men, and active enough for any military duties. He wrote many things, both in his old age and in his youth; and the best of them is not the work by which he is chiefly remembered. That work was written in his youth. It was called *Lazarillo de Tormes*—that is to say *Little Lazarus of the Town of Tormes.*

Before telling you who Lazarus was, a few words about the social condition of Spain in the early 16th century will be necessary. You know that Spain after hundreds of years of constant fighting against the Moors had developed immense military power;—that this military power, both aggressive and fanatic, found an outlet in the discovery of America for its energies;—that within a few generations the whole of North and South America and West Indies, as well as the earlier conquests of absorbed Portugal, had become Spanish;—that enormous quantities of gold were being poured into Spain from all parts of the world; in short, that Spain had suddenly become the most powerful of countries, the dominator of European politics. Her prosperity lasted for only one hundred and fifty years. It was wrecked by the attempts of Philip II. to establish the Inquisition all over Europe. But during those 150 years Spain was the greatest of countries; and the chances of making fortunes in Spain, or in the Spanish colonies, were chances such as had never been offered before and probably never will be offered again. Nevertheless, a sudden influx of wealth into a poor country is very apt to corrupt public morals. Gold weakened the moral power of Spain instead of strengthening it. The temptations to make money easily by dishonest means

were almost too great to be resisted. Think of the chances! A common soldier, unable to read and write, might suddenly make himself the master of a new country and become a viceroy, practically a king. The man, who yesterday was the lowest servant in the house of a small nobleman, might to-morrow rise to fortune and fame and power, and become the patron of his former master. Almost anything was possible for cleverness and courage. But there are two kinds of cleverness; and wherever money can be made too easily by dishonourable means, one kind of this cleverness invariably develops. Everybody could not become a soldier or a statesman; but anybody with a fair share of cunning and few moral scruples, might manage to play upon successful soldiers or wealthy statesmen. And there arose in Spain the famous class of Picaros—sharpers who lived entirely by playing upon the rich and the distinguished. One of these lives is illustrated in the story of *Little Lazarus.* The occupation of Little Lazarus is that of guiding a blind man, an occupation in these days usually given to intelligent dogs. It was the lowest position that the poorest boy could be given. But Little Lazarus, being gifted with great cunning, watches his opportunity to study life and to study character, and studies the ways of deceiving the charitable and the hospitable. He soon rises to higher things. He becomes a clerk, a page, a squire, a soldier, a successful adventurer—all by unscrupulous use of opportunity. He obtains the wealth easily and loses it easily—is rich one day and poor the next—gets into prison and gets into palace—changes his name time after time, and makes himself a terror to his fellow creatures under every name. But he wins, as a rule, and his career illustrates the fact that in corrupt society an utter scoundrel has a much better chance of succeeding than a gentleman—providing only that the scoundrel be not a fool. He must be a mixture of fox and wolf. The picaro was both. A book like this could not fail to succeed in Spain of 1560 or thereabouts. By that time everybody knew what the picaro was, and how true the book was. Mendoza had many imitators within the next few years. Even a better book than his *Lazarillo de Tormes*

was the *Guzman de Alfarache* of Mateo Aleman. Aleman's work is indeed the greatest of all picaro books; but it is better than Mendoza only in the fact that it describes conditions of a later time, and consequently a larger national experience with the picaro. After Aleman came a celebrated writer called Espinel, who wrote a book about an adventurer named Escudero Marcos de Obregon. The word Escudero means esquire, or rather squire; and the story is of an attendant upon a person of rank, who used his opportunities to enrich himself by tricking others. It is still the picaro, but the picaro in a somewhat different rôle. This also is a good book of its kind; and there were many of the kind. There was even a story about a female of this class—a picara or picarita, entitled *La Picara Justina.* It is an immoral book and a curious fact is that it was written by a bishop,—showing how much works of the sort were in vogue at the time. But the two great books were those of Mendoza and of Aleman. Each of these influenced the whole world of literature. The former introduced into England the novel of adventure, the latter introduced the same thing into France. And it was in France that picaroon literature ultimately obtained its highest perfection. For the greatest of all picaroon stories is the wonderful story of *Gil Blas* by Le Sage.

The Englishman who first wrote a picaroon novel was the dramatist Nashe.[1] Inspired by Mendoza's book, he conceived the idea of making an English book upon the same line, and he did this successfully in the adventure entitled *Jack Wilton,* or *The Unfortunate Traveller.*[2] This book is not a mere imitation of Mendoza; it is really clever—so clever that Shakespeare two years afterwards took parts of his great plays *Henry IV* and *V*[3] from it. It was not Shakespeare who invented the character of Sir John Falstaff;—it was Nashe and Nashe seems to have drawn upon real experience for his personage. Reading the book Shakespeare must have recognized that this figure was drawn from life; and he took it and drew it even still better than Nashe. But Nashe is important in another way

[1] Thomas Nashe (1567-1601).
[2] *The unfortunate traveller, or the life of Jack Wilton* 1594.
[3] *The life of Henry the fifth* 1599.

also. Nashe became the forefather of a long line of English novelists—real novelists. The picaro romance, as time went on, gradually changed into the novel of adventure, and the novel of adventure at last became the novel of everyday life. Though Nashe is only a small figure in one sense, the greatest of all English novelists Fielding really descends from him. Fielding's *Tom Jones* is only the highest possible artistic development of the germs contained in *Jack Wilton.* After *Jack Wilton,* among many other books, appeared *The English Rogue,*[1] by Richard Head,[2] also a picaroon novel of much merit; then came Defoe with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders,* the last of the picaroon novels worth mentioning. Then came at last Smollet and Fielding, the greatest writers of real novel that the English nation produced. The line of development is quite plain.

You may ask, what then of Richardson, so commonly called the father of the English novel? Richardson derives from Sir Philip Sidney and the Elizabethan moral romance; — while Fielding and Smollet derived from Nashe, and the English picaroon romance, through Defoe. You will see how small and clumsy beginnings may have magnificent endings. The *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney is not much more than a curiosity in literature, and is written in an intolerable style. But it suggested Richardson's *Pamela.* The picaroon romance, whether Spanish or English, is a very low form of romance, as originally conceived; but it pointed out to succeeding writers the right way to make a great novel, and indirectly it inspired the greatest English novel ever written — Fielding's masterpiece *Tom Jones.*

To sum up, then, the history of Elizabethan prose chiefly represents the influence of Spanish literature upon English literature. Directly that influence was altogether bad as far as literary form is concerned. It introduced the most fantastic and most tortured forms of literary expression ever known. But indirectly it had precious results. It introduced new ideas,

[1] *The English rogue described in the life of Meriton Latroon* 1665; Part II by F. Kirkman 1671; Parts III and IV by Head and Kirkman 1671 (1874).

[2] Richard Head (1637?-1686?).

in a very undeveloped shape, which, becoming developed by English genius (and also by French genius), brought into existence the highest form of prose literature outside of drama.

The Lyric Poetry

When introducing the subject of Elizabethan literature I told you that most of the great poetry written in this epoch was written as a fashion, as a delight,—not for publication. People wrote poetry as birds sing; and they kept this poetry in manuscript. Later on, when they began to publish, — or at least when others began to publish for them, their names did not appear in many cases. A great deal of the Elizabethan lyric poetry is anonymous. Remember also that great quantities of it have not yet been published. The bulk of it has been published only within our own time, through the labours of such scholars as Mr. Arber[1] and Mr. Bullen.[2] The result has been a great surprise to all who had not made special research in the same direction. Nobody suspected 30 or 40 years ago what riches of songs were lying in manuscript in the British Museum or the great library of Oxford University.

I do not think that I could hope to interest you much in Elizabethan lyric poetry verse—that is to say, as regards its intrinsic beauty and charm. One reason is that the greater part of it is love poetry of a passionate kind which has long passed out of fashion and which was imitated from the most passionate kind of the Italian Renaissance. The two qualities which most distinguish it are amorous exultation and melody. The fact of melody depends so much upon accent that it is a subject for critical study chiefly. And the passionate part of it cannot appeal to us much now, unless we can historically place ourselves in the mental atmosphere of "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." That is not difficult perhaps for English students to do, but it would be very difficult for us to do in

[1] *British anthologies* (1899-1901) ed. by Edward Arber (1836-1912).
[2] *Lyrics from the dramatists of the Elizabethan age* (1896); *Lyrics from the song-books of the Elizabethan age* (1896). Ed. by Arthur Henry Bullen (1857-1920).

this country, having behind us a world of entirely opposite tradition and feeling. But it is impossible to treat this great subject with indifference; and the historical part of it ought at least to be studied a little. I have told you that a great deal of the work is anonymous; but you should know that among what is not anonymous we find contributions by almost every great man or woman of the age — Queen Elizabeth herself, Shakespeare and all the great dramatists, Sir Walter Ralegh [1] and a host of noblemen—besides which almost every profession is represented. It is impossible to illustrate the relation of this lyrical poetry to the life of the time better than by quoting examples of the most striking kind. This I shall presently do—but, first I want to say something about the lyrical movement as a whole.

Specialists divide the study of Elizabethan lyrical poetry into three chief periods with many minor sub-periods. We have what is called the Early Elizabethan, the Later Elizabethan, and the Jacobian, that is to say, the poetry written during the reign of King James I, though continuing the traditions of the preceding reign. But we are not specialists; and it is better for us to think about all these periods as one. Elizabethan poetry, we may say, lasted well into the reign of James I, and even beyond it. The interest for the student of literary history is chiefly in the fact that there were two distinct literary impulses. One was purely Italian and romantic in origin and spirit. The other was classical and very strange, though not difficult to understand. I have already said enough about the Italian side of the subject; if you want to know a little more you would do well to study the subject in special treatises, and also to read Rossetti's translation of the old Italian poets, *Dante and his Circle*. For the present I want to call your attention only to the classical feeling which began in the time of the University Wits.

When English scholars seriously began to study Greek and Roman poetry with all the enthusiasm of Renaissance feeling, they could not but see that it was much better poetry than

[1] Sir Walter Ralegh (1552?-1618).

anything modern. And they were struck by the fact that it had no rhyme. Why should not English poets also try to write lyrical poetry without rhyme? You see, English scholars had not yet learned how very inferior was the English language to the Greek and Latin, both as regards flexibility and sonority. They tried hard to write lyrics, like the Latins and like the Greeks, in classic measure, and failed. But, even when they failed, they could not suspect that the fault was in the English language. Very modestly they thought that it was their own fault, their own incapacity; and they wrote treatises urging future scholars to try to do what they had failed in doing. Even to-day, expanded and enriched as the English language has become, we cannot do lyrical work in it like that of the Greeks and the Romans—though some wonderful things have been done. The best modern attempts are those of Tennyson and Swinburne. (Kingsley made the best attempt in blank verse; but that is not lyric poetry.) Do you remember the wonderful little song in Tennyson's *Princess* entitled "Tears, idle tears"? The peculiar thing about that little song is that, when you hear it read, you *think* that it is rhymed verse; and yet there are no rhymes in it at all. Greek and Roman poetry does this for us—it gives us all the effect of rhymes without using rhyme. Swinburne's best example is an imitation of the Greek poetess Sappho, beginning with the words "All the night long sleep came not upon my eyelids." But it is very interesting to know that the first attempts to make lyric without rhymes were in the Elizabethan age, and that the most successful effort was that of Dr. Thomas Campion.[1] If we except Shakespeare and a few other extraordinary names, Campion might be called the greatest of the Elizabethan lyric poets. But his greatness is principally due to his wonderful mastery of rhyme. Is it not strange that this great master of rhyme should have written a book to prove that no rhyme ought to be used in English poetry?

This is Campion's best attempt at unrhymed lyric — but there are many others:—

[1] Thomas Campion (1567?-1619).

LAURA

Rose-cheek'd *Laura*, come;
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concent divinely framèd:
Heaven is music, and thy beauty's
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them;
Only beauty purely loving
Knows no discord;

But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renew'd by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in them-
selves eternal.

This is very far away from Tennyson's "Tears, idle tears" —very far away from Swinburne's glorious attempt in classic measure. But you must remember that Campion, the Elizabethan, had no forerunners in attempts of this kind. Nobody else had ever tried to write English lyrics in Latin and Greek forms of blank verse. It is not to be wondered at that they failed;—rather we may be surprised that they did so well. For perhaps fifty years they preached their doctrine and made their experiments; but luckily for English literature they did not waste too much time in this hopeless direction. They only talked about such things and did them when they had nothing better to do; and most of the time they were using rhyme in the most beautiful way. I need say nothing more about the matter,—only remember that it was in Elizabeth's time that this idea was first suggested and first imperfectly put into practice.

In giving examples of Elizabethan lyrics, it is difficult to attempt anything chronologically. But I may begin with a

quotation or two from the University Wits; for they began to sing very early. Lyly, the author of *Euphues*, was one of the very earliest. For his play, entitled *Alexander and Campaspe*,[1] he made a charming little song. It is now put in almost every anthology. Perhaps you remember the Greek story on which the play is founded—how Alexander ordered a great painter to paint the portrait of his concubine Campaspe, and how the painter fell in love with her, and Alexander, instead of becoming angry, was generous enough to present Campaspe to the painter. This is the little song:—

Cupid and my Campaspe play'd
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lips, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes—
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love! has she done this for thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

Gracious playing with mythological illusions—is it not? The reference to the mother's doves and sparrows needs explanation perhaps. The dove is sacred to Venus; and the painter often represented her as riding in an aerial car drawn by doves. But the Latin poets often described her as being drawn by sparrows; and in Rome the sparrows were especially considered her birds. You know that in Greek art Cupid was sometimes represented as blind—symbol of the fact that love makes the lover blind to everything else.

Lodge was even greater than Lyly in this kind of erotic verse. One of his lyrics has been called the most sugary thing

[1] *A moste excellent comedie of Alxeander, Campaspe, and Diogenes* 1584.—Another issue, entitled *Campaspe* (anon.) 1584.

in the English language; and I think it is. At all events it is the best piece by which he can be fittingly represented in a short lecture. It is a song composed for a play of his, already mentioned to you, *Rosalynde*, which inspired Shakespeare's *As You Like It.*

ROSALYNDE'S MADRIGAL

Love in my bosom like a bee
Doth suck his sweet:
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feet.
Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
His bed amidst my tender breast;
My kisses are his daily feast,
And yet he robs me of my rest:
Ah! wanton, will ye?

(You must remember that it is a young girl, secretly in love, who sings this song. She pictures for us the God of Love in his baby form — a little child with wings, who sometimes caresses her in a baby way, but will not let her sleep at night; and she speaks to him, just as an elder sister would scold a mischievous child. "Wanton" only meant mischievous in those days; and the last line of the verse signifies: "Ah, you mischievous little child, will you not keep quiet?")

And if I sleep, then percheth he
With pretty flight,
And makes his pillow of my knee
The livelong night.
Strike I my lute, he tunes the string;
He music plays if so I sing;
He lends me every lovely thing,
Yet cruel he my heart doth sting:
Whist, wanton, still ye!

("Whist" is a word still in use — but only in Ireland. In Lodge's time it was as much English as Irish; but it is a sign of Irish extraction to be heard using it to-day. It means simply "Hush!" "Still ye" means "be still,"—"keep quiet!")

Else I with roses every day
Will whip you hence,
And bind you, when you long to play,
For your offence.
I'll shut mine eyes to keep you in;
I'll make you fast it for your sin;
I'll count your power not worth a pin.
—Alas! what hereby shall I win
If he gainsay me?

(The allusions in the 5th, 6th and 7th lines are worth noting. She has already told us that the little god of love enters into her eyes; and the words "I'll shut mine eyes to keep you in" means that she will imprison him by keeping her eyes shut. But there is also a suggestion here that, in order to keep herself from loving, the speaker will not look at the person loved. "I'll make you fast it" is only an old-fashioned way of saying "I'll punish you by not giving you anything to eat." "I'll count your power not worth a pin" signifies really "Don't think that I am afraid of you; you may be a god, but I don't care even the value of a pin for your divine power.")

What if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod?
He will repay me with annoy,
Because a god.
Then sit thou safely on my knee;
Then let thy bower my bosom be;
Lurk in mine eyes, I like of thee;
O Cupid, so thou pity me,
Spare not, but play thee!

(The beauty of this composition, remember, is not only in this gracious picture of a young girl playing with the mischievous baby-god: it is rather in the perfectly natural suggestion of the young person's struggle with her own feelings. Maiden-wise she would fight against the affection that overpowers her,—but she finds that she cannot. She must yield;—therefore she feels afraid, and appeals to the god, saying: "If you will only have pity on me, I will no longer oppose you.")

Lodge and Lyly have really no equals, at least no superiors,

until the time of Campion: if we except Shakespeare. Of Campion I may now say something. Like Robert Bridges of our own time he was three things—a fashionable physician, a good musician, and a scholarly poet. By a scholarly poet I mean a master of Greek and Latin poetry as well as of English. He wrote Latin verse admirably; and as to his English poetry, in all the five books[1] which he published, there is scarcely anything that is not good. So much cannot be said of most poets. However, we cannot be sure that Campion wrote all of these poems. We only know that he composed the music for them and some of them may have been written by his friends. It is the custom to credit the poems unsigned to the editor of the collection in which they are found. We have at least so many of Campion's signed poems that his style is well known; and the best pieces attributed to him are undoubtedly his. Two or three examples will suffice. Here is one about a lover, who in his despair at being rejected, tells the woman of his choice that she will be responsible for his death. The subject is tiresomely old—thousands of years old; but it would be hard to say that it was ever better treated than in this—at least so far as modern poetry is concerned.

When thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finish'd love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
When thou has told these honours done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me!

(When you must at last go to your lone home in the world of the dead, all the ghosts of all the beautiful women of the past

[1] *Two books of ayres; being songs without accompanyments* 1610; *The third and fourth books of ayres* 1612; *Songs of mourning* 1613.

will gather about you to admire you:—Helen of Troy, and white Iope and thousands more; and they will ask you to tell them the story of all your loves, the story of all the men that you made unhappy:—and you will tell them, in that sweet voice of yours, which will make music in the world of ghosts. You will tell them of great feasts that were held in honour of you and masques and dances, and tournaments and how often you were crowned by conquering knights as the Queen of Beauty. And when you have told them all that, do not forget to tell them that you murdered me.)

You know who Helen is: — but who is meant by white Iope? You will not find the name in the classical dictionary. Yet this is the most beautiful expression in the whole poem. Perhaps Iope may be she who was turned into a white cow to save her from the jealousy of Hera. But the fact is that nobody seems to know. Campion must have been inspired here by a verse from the Latin poet Propertius, who seems to have been born about 51 years before the Christian era. Propertius was a very good poet; but he is one of the most obscure of all the Latin poets, for he delighted in references to Greek mythology that very few of his contemporaries knew anything about. He too describes a beautiful woman in the world of the dead, and said to her:—

Vobiscum est Iope, vobiscum candida Tyro.

(With you is Iope, with you white Tyro.)

"White Tyro" was a maiden beloved by the god of the sea, who made for her a water palace; but we do not know for certain who Iope was. Campion could not have used the beautiful adjective "white" with the name of Tyro, like the Roman poet did; for Tyro does not sound beautifully in English. But by transferring the adjective to the beautiful name Iope, he produced a surprising effect. And really it does not matter we do not know any more than Campion did about the story of Iope;—for the poem brings before us the vision of a charming ghost, and that is all that is necessary.

Much more passionate Campion often is; but he can some-

times write about more serious things. No poet of the Elizabethan age has written prettier lines about a good wife—indeed the subject was seldom touched by Elizabethan poets at all. Here is Campion's composition:—

What is it all that men possess, among themselves conversing?
Wealth or fame or some such boast, scarce worthy the rehearsing.
Women only are men's good, with them in love conversing.

If weary, they prepare us rest; if sick, their hand attends us;
When with grief our hearts are prest, their comfort best befriends us;
Sweet or sour, they willing go to share what fortune sends us.

What pretty babes with pain they bear, our name and form presenting!
What we get how wise they keep, by sparing wants preventing!
Sorting all their household cares to our observed contenting!

All this, of whose large use I sing, in two words is expressed:
Good Wife is the good I praise, if by good men possessed;
Bad with bad in ill suit well, but good with good live blessed.

It is difficult to think that the author of the above quiet poem also wrote, not only the following, but scores of the same kind:—

If thou long'st so much to learn, sweet boy, what 'tis to love,
Do but fix thy thoughts on me and thou shalt quickly prove:
Little suit at first shall win
Way to thy abashed desire,
But then will I hedge thee in,
Salamander-like, with fire.

With thee dance I will, and sing, and thy fond dalliance bear;
We the grovy hills will climb and play the wantons there;
Other whiles we'll gather flowers,
Lying dallying on the grass;
And thus our delightful hours,
Full of waking dreams, shall pass.

When thy joys were thus at height, my love should turn from thee,
Old acquaintance then should grow as strange, as strange might be:
Twenty rivals thou shouldst find,
Breaking their hearts for me,

While to all I'll prove more kind
And more forward than to thee.

Thus thy silly youth, enraged, would soon my love defy,
But, alas, poor soul, too late! clipt wings can never fly.
Those sweet hours which we had past,
Called to thy mind, thy heart would burn;
And couldst thou fly ne'er so fast,
They would make thee straight return.

Many of Campion's compositions represent the woman experienced in love thus addressing the inexperienced youth,—mocking him and boasting of her power over him. Nor is Campion, though the best, the only one; hundreds of poets took up the same idea. It is full of sensuous charm; but it was new then—and we cannot help wondering where the English suddenly got this new fashion from. It represents something not in English character at all—something much more Italian or French. In Italy, even at the present day, there are popular songs of the same kind to be heard in the streets. One of them inspired Rossetti with his charming *Italian Street-Song.* Undoubtedly the Renaissance brought this fashion into English poetry; but it reached England chiefly through the Greek and Latin Italian studies. Observe, for example, the immense number of Elizabethan poems on the subject of "Venus and Adonis"—which Shakespeare himself treated at such length and in so daring a way. Now if you apply the mythological story to real life, the result becomes something like the songs of Campion. It is always, in mythology, a subject which is less questionable: we do not think much about the story except as a singular mythological tradition. But when the tempting Venus is suddenly changed to a wanton English girl, and Adonis is transformed into a modest boy, loving without even knowing why, the result startles. It would not startle us in French and Italian literature; the older races are much more frank about these things, and consider them only from the point of art. But such poetry is really foreign to English feeling; and when we find hundreds and hundreds of such compositions, all produced in this age of songs, we are surprised at

the immense changes in taste that have occurred within so short a period.

As a matter of fact there was an actual revival of paganism, the beautiful paganism of Rome and Greece. Occasionally a faint note of Christian poetry is heard; but there can be no question that the dominant feeling of the time was Pagan —so far as literature is concerned. The old gods were revived and worshipped and invoked and celebrated in a thousand poems. There were hymns to Venus, to Diana, to Pan, to Mercury, to all the gods of Olympus, sometimes under their Greek names, though more commonly under their Latin names. There were imitations, too, of all the Greek erotic poets and of the Latin poets of the same class, — especially Catullus and Horace. One requires, indeed, a slight knowledge of mythology to understand the lyric poetry which teems with allusions not only to Greek divinities, but to the rites and sacrifices of pagan times. It was especially an age of hymns: Ben Jonson, for example, wrote hymns to nearly all the great gods; and some of these, like the following, to the moon, are of immortal beauty:—

HYMN TO DIANA

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
  Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
  State in wonted manner keep:
    Hesperus entreats thy light,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
  Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
  Heaven to clear when day did close:
    Bless us then with wishèd sight,
    Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
  And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart

Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night—
Goddess excellently bright.

Diana was the Roman name of Artemis,—the maiden goddess, particularly invoked by young girls as the protector of feminine chastity. Now this goddess had several forms and attributes: she was also the goddess of the moon; and she was likewise invoked by hunters; in art she was represented commonly as a tall maiden, with her robe tucked up for running, a bow in her hand and a quiver of arrows on her back. As Artemis, she was the maiden huntress; as Cynthia, Luna or Diana, she was the moon, the goddess of maidens, and the goddess of faithful vows. It is by the mingling together of her most famous attributes in this hymn that the hymn obtains its singular music and beauty. There are Greek hymns to the moon much more beautiful—but nothing in English. Observe the reference to the eclipse in the second stanza: that alone contains a slight obscurity. "Envious shade" means the shadow of the eclipse; and the following verb "clear" means "illuminate." It was not only in poetry that this neo-paganism appeared: if it had been, the volume of such work must have been far less. The feeling extended through all upper society, and manifested itself in theatricals, in masques and ball-costumes, in astonishing pageants, where living persons assumed the character of gods and goddesses, fauns and satyrs, nymphs and dryads and those charming monsters, half animal, half human, of Greek mythology. No expense was spared for these amusements. Rich men actually sold their lands and castles in order to dress magnificently. At no other time in English history was such splendour of apparel to be seen, and at no other time was such luxury displayed. And yet it was not a vicious luxury—there was no moral corruption, such as that which afterwards appeared under the Restoration. The impulse was purely æsthetic—a new joy of life, a new comprehension of beauty, a new sense of liberty and strength. Sensuous much of the lyrical work certainly was—much of the

luxury also, but sensuous is not sensual. It was a healthy sensuousness, giving indulgence to æsthetic feeling and intellectual liberty, not breaking down any moral values. At no time were people more loyal, more upright, more daring, throughout the whole course of English history. They played at paganism, because it was beautiful; but they do not play at vice, and they went to church on Sundays, because they thought that too was a good custom. Unless you understand this, it would be very difficult to understand the Renaissance in England. Of course the new fashion could not reach far down to the popular understanding. The common people were not educated enough to find pleasure in mythological allusion and in Italian ideas. What they enjoyed, however, was larger freedom. With the Renaissance freedom there also came in a higher sense of justice, a new fashion of generosity;—the upper classes began to treat the lower with a consideration previously unknown. The tone of the time was Humanity.

There is another minor tone running through Elizabethan poetry also particularly of the Italian Renaissance—half melancholy, half passionate. I need hardly say that there are two ways of looking at life. One is the serious and resigned manner, which tells us: "All things quickly pass away, therefore it is foolish to become attached too much to the pleasures of life." The other way, the old Greek and Roman way was this: "It is true that everything beautiful and lovable quickly passes away; that is just the reason why we should attach ourselves as much as possible to pleasure while they last. Very beautiful the world is; and we are here to enjoy it and he who refuses to enjoy the divine gift of life, dies a fool."

This latter view of things greatly obtained in Italy with the revival of Greek literature; and the greatest of those Italian princes who patronized the new learning, Lorenzo de' Medici, himself wrote Italian songs in the Greek manner, celebrating the joys of youth, and preaching the necessity of seeking happiness while happiness could be enjoyed. Now we find this also expressed in many Elizabethan poems: one of the prettiest is the following:—

EIDOLA

Are they shadows that we see?
And can shadows pleasure give?
Pleasures only shadows be,
Cast by bodies we conceive,
And are made the things we deem
In those figures which they seem.

But these pleasures vanish fast
Which by shadows are exprest.
Pleasures are not if they last;
In their passage is their best:
Glory is most bright and gay
In a flesh, and so away.

Feed apace then, greedy eyes
On the wonder you behold:
Take it sudden as it flies,
Though you take it not to hold:
When your eyes have done their part,
Thought must length it in the heart.

Paraphrase:—

"Is it true that all things we see are only shadows? And yet how can shadows give such pleasure? Let us grant that pleasures are only shadows, cast by beautiful things or beautiful bodies which we cannot understand—and so become what we think them to be, according to their appearance. Let us grant that they are only shadows; and that shadows vanish. Whatever pleasures belong to shadows must disappear very quickly. Everybody knows that if any pleasure were to last more than a certain length of time, it would become a pain rather than a pleasure. It is in the very fact of their being transitory that pleasures are pleasures. Think of the splendour of sunlight, for example:—it is beautiful to us because of its going and coming. Look at a strong light for more than a moment, and your eyes become tired. Therefore, O my eager eyes, gaze quickly, as much as you can, at the beauty before you. Accept the delight of that beauty as it passes by. What difference does it make that you cannot always have it before you? After your eyes have seen the beautiful, your heart re-

members; and that which has passed away from the vision of sense will never pass away from the vision of remembrance."

After the Elizabethan era, the healthy feeling in the joy of life degenerated; the true neo-paganism of the Renaissance became changed into a stupid and lifeless mythological fashion —to dive away into the tiresome effusion of Pope and of his school. Nobody of that school could have written so charming a poem as *Eidola.* But in our own time there has been something of a revival; and the most striking expression of that revival, I think, is to be found in the work of William Cory, the author of *Ionica.* Cory was long headmaster in one of the great English public schools; and he anonymously produced a delightful little volume of poems written in the Greek spirit, though with occasional touches of English melancholy. In that little book you will find a poem called *Mimnermus in Church*, which is strangely like *Eidola.* It is perhaps the most striking utterance of the same feeling in our own time. "This world," the poet sings, "is quite good enough for me: why should I refuse to enjoy it for the sake of some imagined evil, of which there is no proof at all? You say, 'All beautiful things must die':—

But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die."

There was, however, some serious moral poetry in this lyrical period. There was not much of it; but there were examples of great strength and charm.

The following must have sounded, across the revelry of the Elizabethan age, like the tolling of a funeral bell—but it is taken from a play, where poetry of this kind mostly found expression:—

DEATH THE LEVELLER

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;
  Death lays his icy hand on kings:

Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to Fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!
Upon Death's purple altar now,
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb:
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

—J. Shirley.

Shakespeare himself could not have done much better than this; and it reminds us of his very famous song on a similar subject — the song which Tennyson, when dying, wanted to have read to him over and over again:

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

I need not quote the whole of this dirge from *Cymbeline*, [1] but you will do well to look at it when you have time, because it is one of the finest things in Elizabethan lyrics. There were serious lyrics too, you will see: — the very greatest could be

[1] *The tragedie of Cymbeline* 1611.

serious and imposing;—indeed seriousness was sometimes used only to make a sharp contrast, by opposition, with the expression of merriment. In the artistic use of seriousness Shakespeare easily excells all—need I remind you of the wonderful song in *As You Like It*[1]?

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

What a tremendous irony is here, made by the use of the merry burden! But that was Shakespeare's way of using the serious. As a general rule the moral lyric and the meditative or reflective form of the same poetry came chiefly during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. By that time the grand enthusiasm was dying down; the Puritan gloom was soon to succeed the age of laughter and pomp and joy. It is about the middle of the period that the love poetry is at its best. The best is not always the best because of mere prettiness, or "conceit," as critics sometimes termed it. Intense earnestness, grave sincerity, occasionally makes a beauty of another kind. The

[1] *As you like it* 1600.

following, for instance, is not good merely as poetry, it is good because of the sort of Shakespearian fire that burns through it. Who wrote it we do not know:—it was found in the collection made by John Dowland[1] as early as 1597.

Dear, if you change, I'll never choose again;
Sweet, if you shrink, I'll never think of love;
Fair, if you fail, I'll judge all beauty vain;
Wise, if too weak, more wits I'll never prove.
Dear, sweet, fair, wise! change, shrink, nor be not weak;
And, on my faith, my faith shall never break.

Earth with her flowers shall sooner heaven adorn;
Heaven her bright star through earth's dim globe shall move;
Fire heat shall lose, and frosts of flames be born;
Air, made to shine, as black as hell shall prove:
Earth, heaven, fire, air, the world transformed shall view,
Ere I prove false to faith or strange to you.

A most difficult and complicated form of verse, with its repetitions and antitheses; but how natural the thought that speaks through the fetters of form! Already verse had become capable of extraordinary things; and there are many extraordinary things in the forms of the Elizabethan lyric; for example, we have two poems made to compliment each other after a fashion never attempted before, and never imitated afterwards in English. I am not going to quote it because it is merely ingenious: I shall only speak of the way in which it is composed. Firstly we have a composition of exactly 36 lines divided into 6 stanzas. Then we have another composition of 36 lines also divided into 6 stanzas. Now the closing words of the lines of the first composition run on regularly from 1 to 36. But the lines of the second composition end with the very same words arranged in inverse order by stanzas,—not from 36 to 1, but in this way:—

6	5	4	3	2	1
12	11	10	9	8	7

[1] *The first book of songs or airs* 1597, ed. by John Douland *or* Dowland (1563?-1626?).

and so on to the end of the composition, the last stanza running of course—36, 35, 34, 33, 32, 31.

You must go to the early times of Victor Hugo and the French romantic movement to discover anything resembling this ingenuity in the use of what we call "bouts-rimés," end-rhymes.

The subject of the Elizabethan lyric is so interesting that I regret to leave it here. Unfortunately we have no time to do it justice. The chief things to remember, besides the fact of its extraordinary richness and excellence, are:—

I. It represented a neo-pagan sentiment on the subject of youth, love and joy.

II. It was chiefly shaped by Italian influence, but also to some extent by English interest in classic literature,—especially the Greek.

III. It contains the first noteworthy attempts to write lyrical poetry in English without the use of rhymes, in imitation of the Greek and Roman erotic poets.

EDMUND SPENSER

Although the age of Elizabeth was the supreme age of English poetry there was but one great poet who produced anything in the shape of epic. Elizabeth's age was not an age of epic poetry, it was an age of lyrical and dramatic poetry. Nevertheless Spenser[1] offers one very great exception; and we must give very particular attention to him, because of the immense influence which he exerted upon subsequent English poetry. Without understanding the place of Spenser you could not well understand the story of the romantic movement in the latter part of the 18th and far into the 19th century.

As for Spenser himself, very little is known. He seems to have been born in 1552 (though the date is still disputed); and although of good family he was so poor that his education was

[1] Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599).

obtained chiefly through charitable assistance. He studied at Cambridge where he proved a good scholar—though not good enough to obtain a fellowship. At Cambridge, however, he made aristocratic friends, one of whom afterwards introduced him to the great Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's favourite; and Leicester got him some position under Government. He travelled in Europe a little and was afterwards sent to Ireland, where the Queen gifted him with a castle and 3,000 acres of land. Unfortunately Ireland was in a stormy condition;—a rebellion followed and Spenser's castle was burned, one of his children being burned alive. The rest of the family escaped to England in a condition of destitution. Spenser died soon after—some say, of hunger; but this is very improbable. So much as is known of his life and work assures us that he was a noble gentleman, generous and frank and very fond of all that was beautiful in nature and in art. But otherwise his figure is a little mystic—quite as vapoury, in fact, as the figure of Chaucer.

Though living and writing two hundred years apart, there is much for comparison between the two great poets. Like Chaucer, Spenser formed a gigantic plan, which he was never able to finish. Like Chaucer he knew the court and the nobility—a fact which did not save him from knowing also the sorrows of official life. Like Chaucer he obtained, with great difficulty, a pension, after having done much in the Government service. But there is one very sharp distinction between the two men. Chaucer studied life as he saw it; and Spenser did not. Spenser was altogether romantic, imaginative, subjective: there was nothing of realism in his work. He never could be said to have had a purely English period like Chaucer. You may remember that Chaucer is said to have had a French period, Italian period, English period—which means only that at one time he studied French models, at another Italian, at last turned to the life of his own country as he saw it. Spenser's literary existence, on the other hand, was almost altogether under Italian influence, especially that of Ariosto.

I need not speak at any length regarding his minor poems

—except to remind you that in his *Shepheardes Calender*,[1] imitated chiefly from Theocritus and Virgil, as studied by the Italians, he anticipated something of what James Thomson afterwards gave to the 18th century—a new love of nature. Also, I should remind you that Spenser's *Epithalamion*[2] (poems written to celebrate a marriage) are among the best in English literature. But the great fame of Spenser rests upon his unfinished work—just as in the case of Chaucer with *Canterbury Tales*. *The Faerie Queene*[3] was scarcely more than half finished.

Half finished though it remains, its bulk is nevertheless enormous. In the one-volume Macmillan edition, where it is printed in double column and in very small letters, it occupied no less than 436 pages. The whole work would have probably represented about a thousand such pages, that is to say, considerably more than 2,000 pages of an ordinary 12mo textbook printed in ordinary type. If printed in large type, the completed work would make a volume almost as great as Webster's *Dictionary*. Perhaps we have reason to be glad the thing was never finished. Even to-day very few persons read it;—it requires great patience to read it; and even the most patient will read it only for purely literary reasons. Our ways of thinking and feeling have so much changed that we cannot find pleasure in the composition which so much delighted the court of Elizabeth. We can enjoy the lyrics; but Spenser is too much!

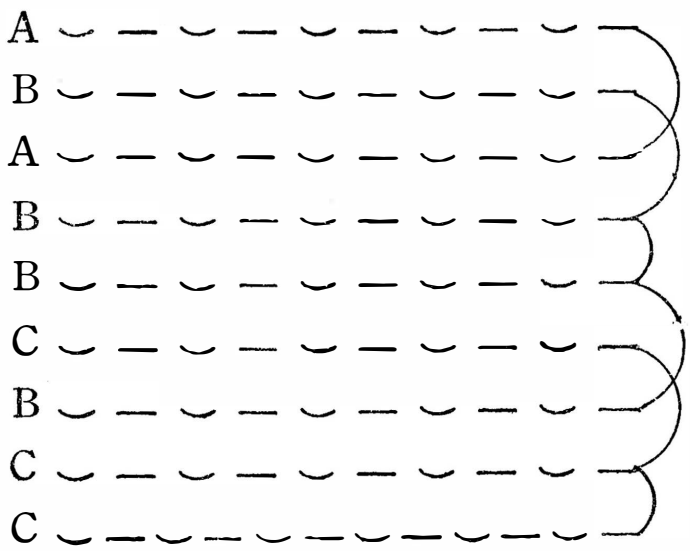
So in reminding you of the importance of Spenser, I am not asking you to read him. I do not know that it would do you any good to attempt it. To read extracts from him is indeed necessary; but that is a matter of study, not of amusement. The importance of Spenser is almost entirely an importance of form. We shall speak of that presently. A word first about the plan of the poem. It was a very noble plan as originally conceived. *The Faerie Queene* was to consist of 12 books, each book divided into 12 cantos; so that there would have been altogether 144 cantos. Each of the 12 books was to tell the adventures of one knight; and these 12 knights

[1] *The shepheardes calender* 1579.
[2] *Epithalamion* 1595.
[3] *The faerie queene* 1590-96.

were to represent the incarnation of the 12 virtues of Aristotle and the enemies of these 12 knights were to represent the 12 vices opposed to these 12 virtues. The Faerie Queene herself "Gloriana" was to represent Queen Elizabeth; and at the end of the poem Gloriana was to have married King Arthur, the incarnation of pure knightliness. This was a great scheme, but Spenser only finished the first 6 books and a few stanzas of the 7th. The Queene, after whom the poem is named, never appeared in the poem at all. The thing breaks off suddenly. So in the case of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the pilgrims never reach Canterbury and never come back from there. We see in Chaucer's work the long procession climbing the hill to the holy city—then darkness and eternal oblivion blot everything out. In Spenser we see another kind of procession—not of living figures, but of old romantic ideals,—heroic and impossible figures, like the figures of some great masque. All of the poem is indeed an enormous masque. But before the masque has much more than half passed before us, it is night, and "the rest is silence."

Now as to the value of the poem, I have said already that the value is only of form. Spenser made the smoothest and the most perfect verse that had yet been written when he produced *The Faerie Queene*. There is no more smooth verse in English even to-day. It flows on softly, softly, like a river of oil, rather than of water. And we are amazed, puzzled by the extraordinary art of it. But this art itself depends much upon the fact that Spenser *invented* his own form. It used to be said that he simply copied Ariosto, or some other Italian poets. But later criticism has very positively proved that this is not true. The Italian forms are all different. The Spenserian stanza was really invented by Spenser; and his invention of it gives him extraordinary importance. Hundreds of poets afterwards adopted that form. I think you know that Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* and Byron's *Childe Harold* and Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*—to mention only three—are written in this measure. It is a measure suitable only to certain dreamy, meditative kinds of work, but it is unsurpassed within those limits of fit-

ness. Now observe the form of it. It is a 9-lined stanza. The first 8 lines are in heroic measure—5 feet to a line of iambic verse. The 9th line has 6 feet; it corresponds to what the French call Alexandrine. And the rhymes go this way:—



I do not know why some persons have called this stanza complicated. It is not complicated at all. There are only two changes in the alternation of the rhyme, one in the middle and one at the end. Indeed the proof of its not being complicated is given by the vast number of poems that have since been written in it. It is very easy to write, but it is not easy to write as smoothly as Spenser wrote it. Perhaps only Thomson can be said to have equalled him occasionally. Byron in *Childe Harold* does not compare with Spenser; he is rough and gritty when placed beside him. Of course the stanza cannot have the value of the sonnet; for the sonnet has 5 lines more. But next to the sonnet, perhaps more can be expressed in the Spenserian stanza than in any other form of stanza. Being slow in its music it is not suited for a great variety of subjects —neither is the sonnet. But within its own proper field it has scarcely a rival. Now you will understand the worth of Spenser. When we think of his influence on Thomson, Burns (*The Cotter's Saturday Night* is in Spenserian stanza), Shelley, Byron, and his followers, we can understand his creative importance.

TRANSLATORS

Before turning to the great drama there is yet one other field in Elizabethan literature calling for mention; that of English translators. It might have been expected that Renaissance influence in England would have stimulated translations very much; and this was the fact. Only a few examples need be quoted. Florio's English translation of Montaigne's *Essayes* [1] from the French laid the foundation of the English essay. (As you might guess from the name, the translator was of Italian origin, but was naturalized as an Englishman). North's *Plutarch*[2] was the first good English translation of Plutarch's *Lives* made into English; and it needs to be remembered, since Shakespeare used it for his classic plays—*Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Cæsar, Coriolanus,* etc. Later on there were translations in multitude from the Greek and the Latin. The Greek romances of Heliodorus, *The Golden Asse* of Apuleius, the *Natural Historie* of Pliny, the histories of Livy and Tacitus, and the Greek histories of Herodotus and of Thucydides. None of these were so good as the work of North, nor quite as good as French work in the same line; but they were quite good enough to stimulate English literature in that time and give fresh ideas about writing of histories, fiction, and the essay. Nor must one very curious translation be forgotten — that of *Rabelais,*[3] done by Sir Thomas Urquhart. Urquhart was a Scotchman, and his work might not have been quite so well done, had he been an Englishman. A curious thing about the Scotchmen of the later 16th and early 17th century was the mixture of their work of rough and even obscene colloquialism with the terms of learning. The scholars were pedantic and precise enough; but they remained very much coarser than their English brethren. Probably the roughness and coarseness of Scotch life accounts for this. The fact serves Urquhart admirably. I think that you

[1] *Montaigne's Essayes, or morall, politike and millitarie discourses* tr. 1603 (1632) by John Florio (1553 ?-1625).

[2] *Plutarch's Lives of the noble Grecians and Romanes* tr. 1579 (1595, 1603, 1612, 1657, 1676, 1895) by Sir Thomas North (1535 ?-1601 ?).

[3] *The first (second) book of the works of Mr. Francis Rabelais* 1653 (1664); *The third book* (1693, 1694). Tr. by Sir Thomas Urquhart *or* Urchard (1611-1660).

know that Rabelais — the wonderful monk who wrote in the most ferociously satirical way about monks and priests and miracles and the Church in general—was a very difficult author to translate. His romance *Pantagruel* is written in a way of which no example exists in English literature with perhaps the exception of Sterne, who imitated Rabelais in *Tristram Shandy.* If you look at *Tristram Shandy* you will find certain passages where a thing is not called by one name only, but a whole litany of names. All mediæval students and clerks used to write that way—it was an indication of learning. Moreover the mediæval clerk, in speaking of such a thing as a chair, as a bed, for example, would not use simply all the French words that could be used to indicate the object; he would also use classical words, borrowed from multitudes of authors, and mix the whole thing up into a wonderful mess of language. To translate such stuff requires an absolute knowledge of the conditions under which it was written, and some scholarship as well. But this is not the only difficulty with Rabelais. He is very fond of dirty words, or terms expressing dirty things. He was not in the worst sense immoral; he was simply dirty—the dirtiest writer that ever lived. You must remember that he was anxious to ridicule what he thought was wrong, both in education and in religion; and a good way to attack them was to ridicule them by the use of filthy words. That is what Rabelais did. And when he wanted to speak of dung, for example, he would not only say "dung," but he would use all the French words and terms by which it could be named among rich or poor, and all the names it could be called in medicine, and the names referring to it in the Greek or Latin authors. Urquhart undertook to translate all this; and he actually did. He knew all the dirty words and dirty witticisms used in all classes of society in Scotland and in England and he also knew the classic authors very well. He made such a translation of Rabelais as could not have been made in any subsequent age. Of course he used many Scotch terms—but they are not any more obscure than the English. His translation is very easy to read; and it is assuredly a literary wonder. The English

language of to-day could not furnish the terms for such a translation of Rabelais;—the age of Elizabeth could. We may say that the book ranks among the most remarkable of all translations. After you have done laughing at the ridiculous pages, you cannot help admiring and wondering at the extraordinary ingenuity of the man. Some years ago Urquhart's translation could be purchased cheaply; it was reprinted in the Bohn's Library in two volumes — though among what were called "extra volumes." To-day this edition is very rare and the new re-print, just announced, is priced at several pounds.

On the whole it may be said that translations from the Greek had more influence on English literature in Elizabeth's time than translations from Latin, so far as new ideas were concerned. The Greek translations were full of novelty; the Latin were already familiar. But so far as form goes, the Latin poets were imitated much more than the Greek. Greek study was a fashion—Queen Elizabeth herself was a proficient Greek scholar. But the English language was not yet ripe enough for experiment with Greek form; and the poets Martial, and Horace, and Catullus, were preferred as models to the later lighter singers of Greek literature.

SHAKESPEARE

Without any long preparation, sudden, unexpected, the enormous figure of Shakespeare[1] suddenly appears in English literature at the beginning of the 17th century. Nothing before him intellectually approached him; — nothing since his time has even faintly approached his work. He represents the highest intellect of modern times; and even the Greek civilization produced no work, yet known to us, which would indicate a mind of equal range and power. To say that there was never a Greek mind equal to that of Shakespeare would be rash; for we know that the average of Greek intellect was very much

[1] William Shakespeare (1564-1616).

higher than that of the average of modern England. But Greek life was under such extraordinary constraint, religious and traditional, that no Greek ever enjoyed the liberty to use his mind in the way that Shakespeare did. Even if a Greek wanted to write plays like those of Shakespeare's he would not have been allowed to do so. So it is quite possible, though not certain, that Shakespeare was the most highly organized human being of whom we have any record within the historical range of nearly seven thousand years.

The most extraordinary thing to note about him at the outset is this,—that he was not an educated man. The University Wits who came before him were trained scholars: Shakespeare had only a very imperfect schooling at a country school, which he must have left very early in boyhood. He was married, we know, at 18, and he had long before that time left school. So this extraordinary being, without any advantages of study and training, accomplished more and higher intellectual work than any other man of ancient or modern times. Certainly what he did was in a special direction. But it was just that direction which required the very highest gifts of mind and heart.

We do not know much about Shakespeare; and you must not believe the books that are called by such titles as *The Life of Shakespeare.* They are mostly conjectural and fictitious narratives. Indeed, so little is known about Shakespeare, that it is not quite certain who wrote the plays that go by his name. We believe that they were written by Shakespeare because the bulk of evidence justified us in that belief; and the advocates of the theory that Bacon wrote them, instead of proving their theory, only strengthened that evidence. But to put the facts as plainly and briefly as possible, all that can be said is this: William Shakespeare was born in 1564—for we have the church register to prove the fact of his having been christened in the month of April of that year. What the actual date of his birth was, nobody knows. We know that he was married at 18 to a woman 8 years older than himself. We know that he had to leave his native town and go to London to earn his living; and

we have good reason to suppose that he began his relation to the theatre as a servant-boy, whose duty it was to hold the horses of people who came to see the play. After that we know scarcely anything about his personal life. Most of his plays were published after his death; and the dates of many remain uncertain. Again we know that he must have died at a comparatively early age. But every thing is misty and cloudy in regard to him—historically speaking. Not so from the literary point of view. The study of literature is a psychological study; and as the greatest psychologists of modern times have brought all their powers to bear upon the mystery of Shakespeare, we are able to know something about it. His work proves that he—or at least the man who wrote those plays—must have possessed a most extraordinary nervous system, immense energy, astonishing perception, large sympathy—all the higher qualities of mind in an almost unparalleled degree. We know that he must have been ignorant of his own power—must have done his work rapidly and instinctively—without dreaming that he was doing anything more than his everyday duty to himself and to the public. Finally we know that he must have been a man of great strength, and that he exhausted that strength by overwork, so that he died at an age when other men are in the prime of life. And that is about all. Of the work thus done about 300 years ago, we have a considerable body of poetry, and 37 plays—not to speak of the apocryphal. The poetry consists of a collection of *Sonnets*,[1] two long narrative compositions (*Venus and Adonis*[2] and *The Rape of Lucrece*[3]), miscellanies in verse of considerable variety, ranging from short lyrics to compositions which are rather difficult to class, being at once lyrical and meditative, like *The Passionate Pilgrim*.[4] Only a word about the poetry. The *Sonnets*, allowing for their form, are the best of all English sonnets; the passionate narratives are also the best of their kind in English; and the lyrical poems have never been surpassed. In whatever

[1] *Sonnets c* 1600.
[2] *Venus and Adonis* 1592.
[3] *Lucrece* 1593 (1594; *The rape of Lucrece* 1616).
[4] *The passionate pilgrime* 1599.

direction Shakespeare turned his mind, he did things which nobody else could have done.

But our business now is with the plays of which there are 37. To do justice to the subject will require a special course of lectures that would take not less than a year to deliver. In this present course of lectures, our consideration of the subject must be very brief. I must try to tell you in the shortest way possible, how Shakespeare is great, why he is great, and what are those particular qualities of mind and heart by which he surpasses all other mortal men.

The first distinction to be noticed between the work of Shakespeare and all other dramatical work is *life*. In Shakespeare the characters *live* with an intensity far surpassing that of any other figures in any other drama. We see them, feel them, hear them—love them or hate them—laugh at them or weep with them,—just as if they were real people. Real people they are; there is no question about that. They are real as any flesh and blood ever was. The second thing to notice as a distinction between Shakespeare's characters and all other dramatists' characters is that they are intensely *individual*. Not only are they alive, they are individually alive, personally alive. That is to say, they are not types. No type-character can be completely alive. To the same degree that a picture or a statue represents a type, it represents also a general, not a special, personality. We have every reason to like a good type drawn, to admire the picture that cleverly presents us with the figures of peasants or soldiers, officials, or priests, which we can all understand. But still, do not forget that no type picture can be really alive. It is very much like somebody whom you know;—but it is different—not quite the same. If it were quite the same you would not laugh at it, it would almost frighten you—you would be too much astonished at this realization of your memory, you would be afraid that the thing was going to speak and walk — to take individual animation. Now all Shakespeare's figures are not type, but startling realities of this very kind; and there are several hundreds of them.

Thirty-seven plays with from 10 to 20 characters in a play,

and each of these characters a completely distinct creation—try to imagine what this means. Remember that all modern plays, except a very, very few, the work of great men of genius, are not plays containing really living characters at all; the characters are only types, ideas, imaginations, more or less different from actual life. In Shakespeare there is no character of this sort. You cannot know this by reading Shakespeare even two or three times;—you cannot know it at all while you are young;—and one of the best criticisms ever made on Shakespeare was that of Professor Huxley:—"No man can fully understand Shakespeare until he becomes old." It took the world nearly 300 years to discover this extraordinary fact about Shakespeare,—the fact of his creative power, a power so much like that attributed to Gods, that he has been justly called the "divine."

A third thing to recollect about Shakespeare's work is that he never used exactly the same kind of character twice. Everyone of his personages is a special creation. No one of his women is like any other, — though some are more different from the rest and some less different. The character of Viola in *Twelfth Night*[1] and the character of Imogen seems a little alike to superficial observation; but a closer study will soon show you that they are entirely different—that the only resemblance between them happens to be in those passages where the timidity of girlhood, and its gentleness, happens to be brought out as natural facts. So the voice of one child and the voice of another may sound very much alike to the ear of the stranger for a moment; but he soon learns to recognize the difference in timbre. We see this versatility of Shakespeare best shown when he is dealing with the same fashion under two different sets of circumstances. For example — take the case of the jealousy of Othello. It is not the kind of jealousy that makes us despise the man or dislike him; it is a perfectly natural jealousy, of which he is made unwittingly the victim; and he has our sincere sympathy from first to last. But consider the case of the King's jealousy in *The Winter's Tale*[2]—

[1] *Twelfe night, or what you will* 1601.
[2] *The winters tale* 1611.

there is a jealousy which forces us to hate the man from the outset. It is the jealousy of a naturally malevolent and suspicious nature—capable of astonishing cruelty and astonishing emotional revulsion. We see the man at one moment playing with his child, petting the boy, caressing him passionately; yet in another moment, at the suspicion that the child may not be his own, we see the possibility of an atrocious murder. He does not kill; but we feel that he is capable of more than killing—that he is a being whose friendship is even more dangerous than his enmity. We dread him and detest him, yet it is the same passion, fundamentally speaking, as the jealousy of Othello, whom we should love and trust under any circumstances. The difference is made by the difference of brains in which the passion works havoc.

Another illustration of Shakespeare's versatility may be seen in the very least of his characters,—the clowns, ruffians, servants, watchmen, who figure in the play. Such characters being very subordinate, and appearing on the stage, for the most part only at a very brief interval, one might expect that Shakespeare will here be content with mere types. But not at all. The least of these figures is just as distinctly alive as any of the superior personages. There are even figures who come on the stage for a moment only, speak only a few words and disappear—yet these are as original as the great characters of Shakespeare's tragedies. How do we know it? Does it not seem nonsensical to say that a personage whom we see for a moment only, and whose voice we hear only like the voice of somebody passing in the street, can be made to appear to us a completely finished dramatic character?

The explanation is this: Shakespeare can make any character reveal itself *by the utterance of a single phrase.* Try to think of some experience relating to this in your own life. I think most of us have had such experience. We meet a great people casually and form no particular idea about them;—and we talk to this acquaintance simply as an acquaintance—as to persons who are neither enemies nor friends—until a day comes when one or another of them makes an observation that startles

us, that sets us to thinking. That one observation has changed our relation to the person that makes it; and the change may be either for good or for bad. We may thenceforward learn to like him very much or to dislike him. Why? Simply because those few spoken words were a revelation to us of the person's real character. When Shakespeare puts a figure on the stage for a short time only he makes that figure speak in just such a way. The half-spoken words or phrases uttered by the person immediately enables us to understand all about his moral composition. Now one of the reasons why no man can fully understand Shakespeare before becoming old is that nearly all Shakespeare's sentences are of this sort—every thing said by his personages is a revelation of character. All the 37 plays are built up out of sentences of this kind, and it is not until a man begins to get old that he can have had experience enough in this world to read all the experience uttered by Shakespeare's characters. To know the mere meaning of words is not to read Shakespeare. Always the meaning is incomparably deeper than the words. A child may read Shakespeare for the pleasure of the story; but only an old man, of great intellectual training and immense knowledge of life, can read all the human nature that is in Shakespeare. It is not the story of the play that has made any one of the plays immortal—though the story is always good. It is not in the construction of the play—though that is always good. It is not the poetical art of the language —though that is extraordinary. It is the psychological meaning of everything said or done, as expressing the facts of life.

And yet, though Shakespeare cannot be fully understood by the young, he wrote his plays, most of them, while he was a young man himself! What is the miracle of this astonishing fact that the work of a young man, without education, can only be understood as its best by old men of experience and great learning? Well, there you have the difference between genius and the ordinary mind. The ordinary mind arrives at knowledge only by study and much experience. The genius arrives at the same knowledge directly, intuitively, without study, by ways and means of which most people cannot even

imagine the nature. It is this kind of genius in Shakespeare that makes his work seem like the recollections of hundreds of former lives. He could not have met all these hundreds of characters which he reflected in his drama;—his own personal experience never could have counted for the variety. The work is therefore intuitive work;—but what is intuition? We might call it intellectual instinct, of course. But what is intellectual instinct? Any kind of instinct is now scientifically defined as "organic memory." (The term is Spencer's). Organic memory means the inheritance of particular mental tendencies and capacities. The intuition of Shakespeare is, then, a sort of intellectual organic memory. There have been in this world other men possessing the same faculty to some degree; but so far as we know, there never has lived within modern times any man who possessed the gift in the way that Shakespeare possessed it. Above other minds the mind of Shakespeare towers as a great tree towers above the grass that grows beneath it.

Let us now speak about the dramatic work of Shakespeare as briefly as we can. I want to tell you that I am quite sure that it is no use for you to bother your heads in the least with dates of plays or with the special history of plays, or with any of the dry stuff which is written about the special study of Shakespeare. Not now at least. The most necessary thing for you to do first, is to read the plays for the mere pleasure of reading and to learn to love them. But you cannot learn to love them if you begin by reading them as people read school texts—looking for the meaning of every word, using glossaries and dictionaries and Shakespearian grammars. Beginning to read Shakespeare, do *not* study. That is the wrong way to begin. Do not try to understand everything at first—don't trouble yourselves about the difficulties, but pass them off. Skip everything that you cannot quickly understand; and you will still be able to follow the action of the play and to get at a correct general idea of its intention. Then the charm will take hold of you and when the charm comes you will want to know more. After you have read all Shakespeare without

grammars or dictionaries, without trying to understand details at all, then you will have become prepared to make a study of those plays which most interest you, and have most pleased the world for such a long time. I don't think that it makes such difference where you begin: — your own literary liking should be a good guide. But I may furnish some help by grouping the plays according to the highest literary standard.

Shakespeare's plays consist of tragedies and comedies as well as of some drama which is neither tragedy nor comedy, but a combination of the two. For Shakespeare broke down all convention, composed according to no rules of classic art, constructed everything in the way that seemed to him most effective. You must understand too that the word comedy as Shakespeare uses it has a very wide meaning. We are apt to think of comedy as involving the idea of the amusing, the merry—but some of Shakespeare's comedies are very terrible, terrible as tragedies. *Measure for Measure*[1] is a good example. There is only this distinctive difference in the case of Shakespeare—his comedies *do not end* with death and his tragedies invariably *do*. I need not tell you that this is not at all according to the Greek standard of drama.

There are other things, though, to be observed—that the Greeks placed tragedy far above comedy, and that Shakespeare's tragedies harmonize with the Greek idea to this extent. His great tragedies are much superior to his great comedies. And four of his tragedies are the greatest of all tragedies in any language. These four are *Othello*,[2] *Hamlet*,[3] *Macbeth*[4] and *King Lear*.[5]

Ought the reading of Shakespeare to begin with these? I should say that it depends very much upon the character and capacity of the reader. Some of us do not like what is terrible and fearful—some of us prefer to find pleasure in what is beautiful, gentle, amusing, happy. Of course all the four tragedies

[1] *Measure for measure* 1603.
[2] *The tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice* 1604 (also 1622).
[3] *The tragedie of Hamlet, prince of Denmarke* (1603, 1604).
[4] *The tragedie of Macbeth* 1605.
[5] *The tragedie of king Lear* 1605; *The true chronicle historie of the life and death of king Lear and his three daughters* (1608).

of Shakespeare *must* be read: there is no question about that. The question is, what one should we begin with? And it is so important for the student to be pleased at the beginning, that I could not advise him to read one of the tragedies first unless he be sure that he likes tragedy. In that case what tragedy should we read—what is the greatest? It is *King Lear*, a horrible story certainly; but all these stories are horrible. However, as the story of *King Lear* would be especially offensive to Japanese filial sentiment, perhaps the reading of *Macbeth* would be a better choice.

BEN JONSON

THE DECLINE OF ELIZABETHAN DRAMA—THE CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE

Even in Shakespeare's lifetime the drama, in other hands, began to decline; we must count this decline especially from Jonson.[1] Jonson altogether represents, not progress, but reaction towards a much lower form of dramatic composition. And nothing could better show how little Shakespeare's greatness had been comprehended, than the attitude of Jonson towards the drama.

In the first place, a few words about Jonson. Ben Jonson was, like Shakespeare, of humble birth; but he came of somewhat lower stock. Shakespeare had gentle blood by the mother's side. Jonson had not. He was the son of a bricklayer,—not very much of an occupation, so far as respectability reckons occupations. But his people were thrifty; and Jonson received a very good education, — even university training. He became a thoroughly good classic scholar—a remarkable scholar considering the time. Afterwards poverty compelled him to adopt some occupation in the lower ranks of life; for he would not work at his father's trade; and he had little influence to obtain a position under Government. For a while

[1] Ben Jonson (1573?-1637).

he was a soldier and is said to have been a good one. Then he came back to London, began to write for the stage, got into a quarrel with another man and killed him, had a great deal of trouble in consequence, but finally settled down independently as playwright. He was nine years younger than Shakespeare; and outlived Shakespeare by twenty-one years. His contemporaries thought him a much greater scholar than Shakespeare, which he probably was—and a much better dramatist, which he certainly was not. He does not appear to have been at all a man of business; for he made scarcely any money by his work, and died in a condition of great poverty. His life was quite as unsuccessful as that of Shakespeare had been successful.

It is interesting here to observe that Ben Jonson of the Elizabethan age and the great Samuel Johnson of the 18th century resemble one another in a great variety of ways. Both were sturdy Englishmen,—rough, blunt, almost brutal in manner, but really kind-hearted and extremely rigid upholders of moral ideas. Both were big, corpulent, clumsy, ugly men disfigured by smallpox. Both, in spite of their habit of bullying all who differed from them in opinion, were much admired and loved in the world of letters, collecting around them men of talent and of wit; and both of them held the position of the "literary king." The headquarters of the first great Jonson as well as of the last was a London tavern. Both were classic scholars, and had no sympathy with romantic feeling of any description. Both stuttered when they became excited; and both made themselves feared as exponents of moral opinion. One would almost say that the Jonson of Elizabeth's time was reborn in the Johnson of the 18th century. But for the present I want you only to remember one thing,—Ben Jonson was the first literary king and Samuel Johnson was the last.

The great demerit of Jonson is chiefly due to the fact that he wrote for a moral purpose—or, at least, with a moral purpose; but this was largely owing to his want of romantic feeling and higher imagination. He believed that a play should be either didactic or satiric or both together. He constructed

everything with a view to ridiculing vice or praising virtue; and he brought no small scholarship to the task. He chiefly studied, as models, the Latin authors, and particularly Plautus. He cultivated a strictly classic style, of immense strength, and hard correctness, which has been very truly called "an iron style." Of classic strength, he obtained supreme mastery—but not of classic beauty or classic tenderness. He had no creative imagination for large things; and the only compositions in which he shows us some charming delicacy and kindly playfulness, are the little songs that he wrote for his *Masques*.[1] His plays may make us laugh a good deal; but they do not touch our emotions in the higher zones of feeling. They are artificial; and the characters in them are never really human. Ben Jonson's plays, although written for a moral purpose, are now only read: they are never acted, and never again will be acted. But the plays of Shakespeare which were not written for a moral purpose now keep the stage in every country of Europe.

But, having spoken thus of Jonson, remember that he seems small only by comparison with Shakespeare. Had there been no Shakespeare, Jonson would have been the greatest literary figure of the Elizabethan age. As it was, he exerted the greatest literary influence—not only in drama, but also in prose, as we shall have occasion to see at a later day. Shakespeare could not be appreciated in that time. But Jonson was very widely appreciated, in France as well as in England. Jonson represented the classic spirit in every way; and he may be said to have laid the foundations of that English classicism which, in the 18th century, was to reach its highest expression in the work of Pope. What is more, although Jonson's plays are not now to be acted, nor to be studied as masterpieces of human thought, they must be read: it is a necessary part of the student's literary education to read the best of them. You cannot read them all, without effort; but that is not necessary. It is necessary only to read the best of them; and you cannot avoid doing that, — for references to Jonson's plays abound throughout all the later English literature into our own time.

[1] *Masques* various dates.

And Jonson is worth reading for his style — which is a very great style in its own way. Finally you will find his best plays very amusing, and you will enjoy the reading of them. They are not plays which the student would like to read over and over again every year while he lives (that is the way Shakespeare's plays appeal to us); but they are worth reading more than once,—at least those which I am going to mention.

I do not think that I need give you a list of the whole of Jonson's plays; there is no particular reason for that, as in Shakespeare's case. I shall only state that he wrote 18 true plays, and no less than 40 masques. This represents almost as great, or greater volume of work than Shakespeare's; but the greatness is only in the volume. Dramatists of the Elizabethan era were very prolific: one man is known to have worked at no less than 220 dramatic compositions! But quantity does not count for much in the history of literature; and we need not be surprised to find that the work of Jonson is extremely unequal. Like Shakespeare he attempted Roman subjects; and like Shakespeare he worked in a great variety of directions. But his tragedies are of rather inferior quality; and his strong point was undoubtedly comedy—comedy of a decidedly coarse kind. However, its coarseness does not rob Jonson's comedy of our esteem: it has great qualities. His three best comedies, which are also his three best plays, are *The Alchemist*,[1] *Volpone, or the Foxe*,[2] and *Epiccene: or the Silent Woman*.[3] Also I should advise you to read *Every Man in His Humor*,[4] because of the famous character of Bobadil and the excellent satirical studies of contemporary manners. But the three plays first mentioned are the all-important ones: these it is a duty to read,—for they express Jonson's talent at its highest. Of the three, good judges consider *The Alchemist* to be the best. The subject is a very old one in literature;—I have read a French translation of a Chinese novel on the very same topic. The alchemist is a trickster who pretends to have discovered the Philosopher's

[1] *The alchemist* 1610 (1616).
[2] *Volpone, or the foxe* 1605 (1607, 1616).
[3] *Epicoene: or the silent woman* 1609 (1620).
[4] *Every man in his humor* 1598 (1011. 1616).

Stone,—that is the secret of changing base metal into gold by chemistry. He humbugs a great many people out of money by making them advance him certain sums in order to carry on the experiments by which they are to be enriched, according to his fake promises. Jonson, in this play, chiefly gives his attention to the characters of the dupes,—the people who are deceived; and there is a variety of these, so that many different kinds of human passions are exhibited. The important personage, Sir Epicure Mammon, has become a byword. The play of *The Foxe* is of quite another kind,—representing an old miser whose chief delight is to gratify the passions of a misanthrope. During his career as a money-maker, he has learned that people generally pretend to be very loving and kind in order to get what they want; and he hates everybody who has approached him for purposes of self-interest. Finally he determines to be revenged upon them all; and he gets a clever servant to help him in putting them to shame by exposing their hypocrisy. The servant, however, is a first-class villain, who takes advantage of his master's malice to get possession of the Foxe's property. Thus we have a picture of malice destroying itself. Parts of this play are extremely amusing—though the amusement is of the cruel kind. The play of *The Silent Woman* is almost in the nature of farce. Here we have an eccentric, selfish, nervous old man, who cannot bear to have any noise in his house, and wants his servants to be dumb. He is told that he can have for wife a young girl who never speaks unless it is absolutely necessary—silent as a ghost. He is delighted and marries her. Immediately after the marriage, she fills the house with guests and musicians;—the guests drink and roar; the musicians beat drums and play on trumpets. The old man becomes almost crazy; he would rebuke his bride. But the silent girl suddenly turns out to be a terrible virago, a scold, a shrew of the worst kind. Really the bride is not a woman at all, but a boy dressed up in woman's clothes, and taught to play his part in a trick upon the old man, who wants to get a divorce immediately. The story of the different ways in which he tries to get the divorce and the tricks that are played upon him by

lawyers and the perjuries that are uttered in court on his behalf, form the amusing part of the play. When he finds out that the girl is really a boy, he is happy again; but he is not allowed to find this out until he has parted with a considerable sum of money.

Such are the subjects of Jonson's three best comedies, subjects very different indeed from such as Shakespeare would have chosen. And now let us consider the difference in treatment.

One of the first things that will strike you on beginning a play of Ben Jonson, is the vulgarity of the atmosphere into which you have entered. There is something unhealthy, close, mephitic about it. The very best of the plays, *The Alchemist*, opens with a shower of filthy words. Shakespeare himself uses nasty language sometimes; but he puts it only into the mouth of very nasty people; and there is incomparably more of this nasty language in Jonson because nearly all of Jonson's people are nasty. The next thing that you will notice is the total want of sympathy. Jonson's characters do not arouse your liking: they make you laugh, but not happily; they interest you only as you might be interested by a quarrel in the street between people about whom you do not care. The reason of both facts is not difficult to explain. Jonson's world is the world of a cynic: he does not see human nature as it really is; he sees it only from the standpoint of the man who despises it, scorns it at its worst, and suspects it at its best. In this respect, he falls, not only below Shakespeare, but even below Molière. Molière's Misanthrope is a character which has many fine qualities; and we can even feel real symathy with Shakespeare's much rougher figure of Timon. But Jonson's misanthropes and all his bad characters are utterly bad, superlatively contemptible: they have not a single redeeming quality. And this is untrue to life. There is no man so ill-natured in reality that he does not know how to make himself pleasant at times; and there is no man so perfectly wicked as to be devoid of all social virtues. Shakespeare saw this, and saw it better than any other man who ever wrote a play. Jonson did not

see it at all; and even if he could have seen it he probably would not have cared. His object was not to represent life as a whole, but to mock at vices and follies. So that although his characters have a certain amount of vitality, they live only as caricatures live. When you see a caricature, you know whom it is intended to represent; but you are never under the impression that you are looking at the figure of a real being. You are looking at a distortion and a partial exaggeration of what is contemptible or strange or funny. All of Jonson's figures are more or less of caricatures. And therefore his self-fancied mission as a moral teacher was of very short duration. His plays would not now be tolerated upon the stage.

So much for his dramas of social life: what shall we say of his Roman plays? Compared with Shakespeare, Jonson was a very good scholar,—holding honourable degrees both from Oxford and Cambridge. Shakespeare was almost uneducated, and Jonson, unable to see the deeper genius of Shakespeare, considered that such plays as *Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra*, or *Coriolanus* showed Shakespeare's want of education. He said to himself, "Shakespeare took all this from Plutarch: he does not know Greek nor Latin; and he makes his Romans and Greeks talk and act like Englishmen. Besides, his plays are historically wrong. I shall write some really Roman plays —something historical, something scholarly." Then he wrote the two dramas of *Catiline*[1] and *Sejanus*.[2] Undoubtedly these plays are historically correct: there is no serious anachronism in this; they are very scholarly; and the characters do speak and act more like Romans than do Shakespeare's characters. Jonson's own generation believed these dramas to be very much finer than Shakespeare's Roman plays. And what Jonson thought about Shakespeare's Greeks and Romans was quite true: they do speak and act like Englishmen. But that is just their extraordinary merit,—their astonishing life. That is what makes them so great. They represented faithfully the nature that Shakespeare knew as a part of universal human nature;

[1] *Catiline his conspiracy* 1611.
[2] *Sejanus his fall* 1603 (1605, 1616).

and we do not care one cent whether they are true to history or true to classic comprehension: it is quite sufficient that they are more true to human nature than any figures in any drama not written by Shakespeare. This Jonson could not see; but who to-day reads either *Catiline* or *Sejanus* except in the course of the study of the English literary evolution? The plays are good, scholarly, correct; they are also artificial, dreary, unsympathetic, and, in our time, perfectly unactable. On the other hand, Shakespeare's Roman plays are still acted upon every stage—although we know to-day even much better than Jonson did that there is nothing Roman about them except the names.

I doubt whether you could read Jonson's *Masques*. With the exception of Milton's better work in the same direction, they are the best masques in the English language. But the charm of these things depended a great deal upon scenery and music: they were written to be acted at court; they were produced at great expense; and no less artist than the great architect Inigo Jones[1] helped to design the costumes and the scenery of them. Read only, they seem very tiresome; you may wonder how Jonson could have had the patience to write forty of them; — you will wonder how an audience of princes and nobility could have had the patience to listen to them. They have become difficult to read chiefly because their subjects have become threadbare and commonplace to the scholar of to-day. The fashion has changed. Even Professor Saintsbury has confessed that it is very difficult to read them. But if you care to pick out the jewels from this mass of minor dramatic stuff, you will find such jewels in the beautiful little songs which are scattered through the *Masques*—written to be sung to the best music of the time, and the proof of the value of these is that many of them are still sung. Only the other day I received by mail a new collection of music, containing a number of Jonson's old songs. All the sense of beauty that the man had was in the lyrical direction. In the drama he shows no sense of beauty—though he shows wonderful qualities of strength and precision.

[1] Inigo Jones (1573-1652).

There is little more to be said about Jonson here—though we shall have to speak of him again both as poet and as prose-writer. There are two very important things to remember about him, which you should be able to answer about at an examination. The first is that the drama begins its decline under his influence. But the second fact is that he was the greatest classic influence of his age—exerting a power over literary taste well into the 18th century. I might add that you should bear in mind likewise his being Poet Laureate and the first of the literary kings.

After Jonson

BRIEF HISTORICAL MEMENTO

The chronology of what we call the Elizabethan drama is so complicated, that unless we make a little memento of dates and facts in this place, it will not be easy for you to understand exactly what is meant by the Elizabethan age and by the successive schools of Elizabethan drama. The reason for this is that different schools overlap each other—that is, before one ends, another begins. Sometimes we have two schools existing together over a period of years. Therefore when we talk about the successors of Shakespeare, the successors of Jonson, etc., you must understand the word rather in the sense of followers or imitators than in the sense of chronological sequence. Some literary critics have attempted to meet the difficulty by dividing the dramatic period into Elizabethan literature proper, Jacobean literature (*i.e.* of the reign of James I) and Caroline literature (*i.e.* of the reign of Charles I). (The Latin for James is Jacobus; the Latin for Charles is Carolus.) But this elaborate division is very difficult to establish and it can be of no use to the student in a *general* summary of English literature. I shall treat the whole period of drama between Queen Elizabeth and the Restoration as one movement and shall call that movement Elizabethan, although it really includes the reigns of three sovereigns and the dictatorship of Cromwell.

We might indeed make a division—a very general division —of the period into three schools of production. In such a division the first class would be represented by the University Wits 1585—1596; the second period would be represented by Shakespeare and Jonson, and other workers in the new drama up to the reign of Charles I; and the last period, representing the decline of the drama, would date from the accession of Charles to the closing of the theatres by the Puritan parliament in 1642. But let us here make a few memoranda of dates.

Elizabeth begins her reign in 1558,—dies in 1603.
James succeeds in 1603,—dies in 1625.
Charles I—1625,—decapitated 1649.
Commonwealth—1649,—Restoration 1660.

We have nothing to do with the Restoration here, and very little with the Commonwealth. You need only remember that the forces of Elizabethan drama continued through nearly all this period. But the major power of the movement dates from 1580 to 1640; and during that time no less than 2,000 plays were written and acted. Many of these have been lost. To the first half of the 17th century may be ascribed more than 1,000 plays. It would be useless to attempt anything like an enumeration even of the names of authors and titles of dramas. All that we can do is to select the greatest names, and to consider them briefly in their relation to the general tendency. Now you will understand exactly what I am trying to do, to simplify the complexities of this part of literary history. Remember that I am calling Elizabethan drama everything produced between the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558 and the closing of the theatres by the Puritans in 1642. But please to keep in mind that this period really includes the reign of King James and the reign of King Charles I. It is not in any way wrong to make this simplification, because most of the great dramatists who produced in the time of Queen Elizabeth also produced in the time of King James and many of them even in the time of King Charles. Shakespeare himself outlived Elizabeth, and Jonson wrote for the court of her successor.

The General Tendency After Jonson

From Jonson the decline of the drama proceeded very rapidly, with occasional variations in a higher direction. The movement is like that of a descending stream, in which we notice a bright upward leaping of wave and spray at times;—as it might be compared to the descending road of a mountain slope, winding downwards, but occasionally rising slightly as it winds, and then again descending sharply. The decline was in more directions than one: it was both moral and artistic. Not only did the drama constantly tend to become more and more artificial, unnatural; it also tended to become more and more immoral, ignoble, horrible. Tragedy sank down into sloughs of blood: we never had any such bloody drama as in the latter part of the period. Crimes of all kinds, both natural and unnatural, figured upon the stage after a manner that would not have been tolerated in Shakespeare's day. Comedy became nastier and nastier—became obscene, became vicious. And, after all, it is not to be wondered at that the Puritan Government should have closed the theatres. The theatres had really become shamefully demoralized when the Puritans closed them. But they had not then reached their worst in comedy; they had reached it only in tragedy. Comedy continued to degenerate even after the theatres were opened again; and the drama of the Restoration period was to become the worst known in modern times.

So we have to remember this general fact that the whole tendency is downward after Shakespeare:—a decline quite as rapid as the astonishing rise which preceded it. But there was a great deal of fine drama nevertheless produced. It was impossible that everything should become bad at once. Indeed immediately after Jonson we must put the names of two men, Beaumont[1] and Fletcher,[2] who have given us work sometimes surpassing Jonson and showing an attempt to return to Shakespearian traditions. Beaumont and Fletcher produced an enor-

[1] Francis Beaumont (1584-1616).
[2] John Fletcher (1579-1625).

mous number of plays—plays of extraordinary variety, tragedy, comedy, romantic plays, fairy plays, moral plays. They may be said to have attempted almost everything. But, although they sometimes do work which tempts comparison with Shakespeare's, at other times we find them deliberately seeking to gratify prurient tastes. They try to be indecent, even when there is no reason whatever for so being,—even when the indecent is untrue to real life. Something of the same may be found in John Marston,[1] George Chapman,[2] and Thomas Dekker[3]—all of them dramatists of great ability. Better than any of these was, in this respect, Thomas Middleton.[4] Compared with Shakespeare, even Middleton is open to the charge of indecency; but he is yet much less to blame than Beaumont and Fletcher; and in tragedy he is great. The tragedy of *The Changeling*[4] is, in parts, almost worthy of Shakespeare.

Thomas Heywood[5] is the man who is said to have written no less than 220 plays. Most of these have been lost; and perhaps the loss is not serious; for he has done a great deal of poor work; and no man could write 220 plays, and keep his production at a high level. Nevertheless, Heywood must have been a man of great talent; for he has done some things, in spite of this tremendous over-production, which are admirable, such as *A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse.*[6] Tragedy, as Middleton and Dekker produced it, had become bloody, very brutal, compared with Shakespeare; but tragedy did not reach its lowest depths of horror until it fell into the hands of Webster and Tourneur.

John Webster[7] was, however, a man of extraordinary genius; and his plays are still much read and studied, though they cannot be acted. The best of them, *The White Divel,*[8]

[1] John Marston (1575?-1634).
[2] George Chapman (1559?-1634).
[3] Thomas Dekker (1570?-1641?).
[4] Thomas Middleton (1580-1627) and W. Rowley *The changeling* 1623 (1653).
[5] Thomas Heywood (1575?-1650).
[6] *A woman kilde with kindnesse* 1607 (Shaks. Soc. 1850).
[7] John Webster (1575?-1625?).
[8] *The white divel; or, the tragedy of Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano, with the life and death of Vittoria Corombona the famous Venetian Curtizan* 1612.

is even now frequently quoted from, because of certain magnificent and passionate passages which largely atone for the general cruelty of the piece. Webster called this play also by the name of the heroine, *Vittoria Corombona.* You will find the real story which inspired him, in Symonds' history of the Italian Renaissance.

Webster spells the name incorrectly; but his tragedy is founded upon facts quite as terrible as the tragedy itself. This is one of the great plays by minor dramatists which I think a student will do well to read. Another Italian play by Webster, *The Dutchesse of Malfy*,[1] has passages of remarkable splendour and power—though it ends after an unnaturally horrible manner. In violent tragedy Webster was very great—so great that I think, after Shakespeare, nobody except Middleton can be compared with him. Not so with Cyril Tourneur.[2] Tourneur represents the very lowest depth to which violent tragedy fell after Shakespeare. Such plays as *The Atheist's Tragedie*[3] and *The Revengers Tragœdie*[4] are only horrible and disgusting as images of life. You must not be deceived by the fact that Swinburne has written a sonnet in praise of Tourneur: Swinburne admires the form chiefly; and all these dramatists were great masters of form. But, although it is said that the Japanese stage represents forms of tragedy such as no English audience of to-day could bear to see, I am quite sure that no Japanese audience could bear to see such a play as *The Revengers Tragœdie* in a Japanese setting. They would see that it was as unnatural as horrible; and they would refuse to assist at its performance.

Here I might say that the second great period of Elizabethan drama ends. Under Charles I, the third period of the drama gives us three great names, among which we find leaders of a return toward higher forms of tragedy and comedy. These three names are Massinger, Ford, and Shirley. There can be

[1] *The tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy* 1623.
[2] Cyril Tourneur (1575 ?-1626).
[3] *The atheist's tragedie* 1611.
[4] *The revengers tragoedie* (anon.) 1607.

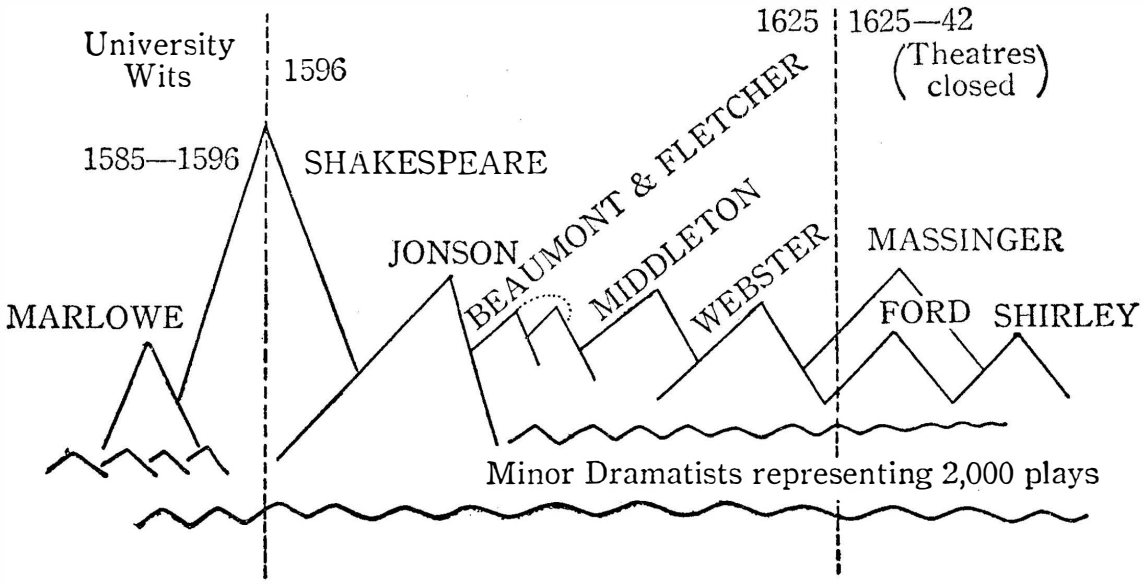
no question about the greatness of Massinger.[1] Massinger, after Ben Jonson, is the dramatist of all others whom you would best enjoy reading; and I am not even sure but that you would like him better than Jonson. Massinger, too, is still read a good deal; and a cheap popular edition of his entire plays has been very successful. In a general way it may be said that his best tragedy is *The Virgin Martir*,[2] and his best comedy is *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*;[3] but I think that you would like many others of his plays. Ford[4] is the least natural of the three: he introduces the subject of incest into his plays, and much of the disgustingly horrible; but he had very great talent: and he especially deserves mention because he worked with Massinger at several great plays. Of his many tragedies *'Tis Pity Shees a Whore*[5] is perhaps the best; but no modern English audience would suffer such a play to be acted now. Shirley,[6] who also wrote both tragedy and comedy, rather represents like Massinger an attempt to return to the better traditions of the theatre. His best tragedy *The Traytor*,[7] and his best comedy *The Lady of Pleasure*,[8] are fine plays of their kind, and much more free from nastiness than the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher or many others of the preceding period. We may close the whole period of Elizabethan drama with the name of Shirley.

Of what value to the student is really the whole mass of this minor drama? I might say that I firmly believe it is of very little value to him. I would not deny the great merit of such a play as Middleton's *Changeling*,—or Massinger's *Duke of Millaine*,[9] or, here and there, some one specimen of work by the strongest heads of the time, such as Webster and Heywood. But, considering the fact that Shakespeare alone represents the study of a life-time, I cannot persuade myself that the work of the little people who followed after him can be of much im-

[1] Philip Massinger (1583-1640).
[2] Massinger and T. Dekker *The virgin martir, a tragedie* 1622 (1631, 1661, 1870).
[3] *A new way to pay old debts, a comoedie* 1625 (1633).
[4] John Ford (1586-1639?).
[5] *'Tis pity shees a whore* 1633.
[6] James Shirley (1596-1666).
[7] *The traytor* 1631 (1635).
[8] *The lady of pleasure* 1626-35.
[9] *The duke of Millaine, a tragoedie* 1623.

portance in the regular course of study. You are almost obliged to read something of Webster, and of one or two others, because it has become the fashion lately to refer to them. Nevertheless, I believe that the fashion will pass. At the beginning of the century, nobody read these plays: people read Shakespeare and Jonson; — people did not read Dekker and Marston and Heywood and Webster. Even their names had almost become forgotton. Then, after the revival of interest in them, through the labours especially of Charles Lamb, there came about what we call an Elizabethan mania, a rage of interest in everything belonging to the Elizabethan age. Then new editions of hundreds of all plays were published; many appearing only within the last few years. Many have been published directly from manuscript. But even now there is a sign that the public are getting tired of their new "fad," and that before very long some of these old dramatists will be out of print again. Now if they die a second time, you may be pretty sure that they will never again be resurrected. I think that at least three-fourths of them will die the second time. Only something of the best work is likely to survive in such masses of selection as "The Muses' Library" represents. We have selections from almost all the leading dramatists of importance in new editions; and even these selections only make something in the neighbourhood of 25 volumes of about 500 pages each. My experience has been that it is very difficult to read through even a small part of these plays. You become tired of the monotony, tired of the nastiness, tired of the violence and the coarseness. The professional playwright must study the old plays; but I do not think that the student ought to waste much time upon them. He would do much better to give that time to the rereading of some plays by Shakespeare.

Now let us try to illustrate the general movement of Elizabethan drama. Professor Dowden suggests that Elizabethan drama may best be compared to mountain ranges; and I shall try to make a rough diagram after the Professor's suggestion.



The very rough outline should serve to illustrate one great fact, one surprising fact in the course of Elizabethan drama—the extraordinary rapidity of the rise as compared with the rate of the decline. It is actually in the time of the University Wits that Shakespeare suddenly lifted the drama to the grandest heights to which it has ever reached in literary history.

Bacon

Francis Bacon[1] more properly belongs to the 17th than to the 16th century; for most of his English work was done after the 16th century. But his life was very long; and as he began to write before the 17th century (the first edition of his *Essayes*[2] appearing in 1597), we may as well consider him here. In many ways he belongs to the Elizabethan age, and reflects its splendour. You are very familiar, no doubt, with the outlines of his life: I shall not deal with that. I am only going to speak of his style.

First of all, it is worth remembering that Bacon did not like to write in English. In this respect his conservatism reminds us of an earlier age—the age of Scholastic Philosophy, when everybody not only wrote but spoke in Latin, and when

[1] Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1626).
[2] *Essayes* 1597, 1612, 1625.

university studies were carried on almost altogether through the medium of Latin. Bacon felt that the times had changed; that it was no longer the fashion to write in Latin; and that he would be sure of a much larger audience if he wrote in English. Some of his work—only a small part of it—was written in English. The scientific and philosophical part of the work was written in Latin; because it was still the fashion to use Latin for those subjects. The fashion is not yet entirely dead. European men of science, desirous of communicating their discoveries or ideas to the learned men of all countries at once, still occasionally write treatises in Latin.

You have all read something of Bacon's *Essayes;* and I think that you must have found the reading difficult. It is difficult even to a modern English student. There are several reasons for this difficulty. One is that the author, even when writing in English, shows the habit of classical compression. Although ornamental, in a particular and severe way, the style of those essays is wonderfully condensed. Occasionally a thought is put into two lines which would require at least ten lines to explain by more ordinary methods. Often Bacon suggests a truth rather than expresses it. He had studied the compactness and the precision of the Roman writers most thoroughly; and he tried to do the very same thing in English that they had done in Latin. Another reason for the difficulty is the extraordinary care that Bacon took to render impossible any misapprehension of his meaning when he wished that meaning to be definite. You know that he was a consummate lawyer, a very cunning lawyer; and that he had most carefully studied all legal forms of expression. The supreme necessity of legal technical writing is to be careful about statements, about possible interpretations. One mistake of the most trifling character in drawing up a document or a contract may have the most serious consequences. Constant study of law is apt to give a peculiar quality to the style of the student: there is something at once formal and very hard about it, though also very forcible. So you will find Bacon's style to be classic in regard to finish and compactness, yet at the same time

strangely hard and formal in other respects. In spite of all the praise that has been lavished upon the style of Bacon's essays, I must venture to say that I think they are very bad models for Japanese students to analyse. They are extremely wonderful, I am willing to grant; but they are wonderful only in a very artificial way. The greatest value of the *Essayes* is in their thought, not in their style; and the consideration of the style in this connection ought to interest us chiefly as an influence in literary history, not as anything to be admired without reserve.

Nobody imitated Bacon. He represents a style by himself. In order that any one should have been able to imitate him it would have been necessary that the imitator should have been of like character and like training—that is to say, a deep, cold, keen intellect of immense power, trained by the study of law. And perhaps it is rather fortunate that Bacon did not have imitators. The style, though wonderful as to construction, is not at all commendable as a model. It is a little better in *Of the Advancement of Learning*[1] than in the *Essayes* but only in the first volume; in the second volume it becomes worse and worse. When Bacon had written two volumes in English—or, as we should now more correctly call them, two "books"—he suddenly changed his mind, and rewrote the entire work in Latin; making nine books. It is in the introduction to the first volume written in English, that the style is at its best. But this "best" represents something not really according to the genius of the English language. It is a wonderful imitation in English of the style of Cicero in Latin. Cicero, you know, was the greatest of the Roman lawyers; and it is probable that he particularly attracted Bacon for this very reason. The minds of the two men, though separated by hundreds of years, were really very much alike. Cicero is one of the most accomplished of Latin writers; but he is also one of the most difficult to read; and every student obliged to study Cicero in a course of Latin, knows how provoking and how extraordinary his style is. Cicero wanted exactly what Bacon wanted;—warm imagina-

[1] *Of the advancement of learning* 1605.

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[1] *Of the advancement of learning* 1605.

tion and generous feeling. Both are cold; both are elegant; and both are dry.

But although Bacon had no imitators, his style had a certain influence. I think we might call this influence the first which was to help to shape English classicism, — that is the classic form as distinguished from the romantic form in English literature. After Bacon there was Burton,[1] who tried to be classic without much success; but who, being more imaginative and sympathetic than Bacon, produced a most interesting book *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.[2] Then came a far greater man, Sir Thomas Browne[3]—quite as much of a scholar as Bacon was, probably even more learned, but by nature a true poet—a great poet in prose. Sir Thomas Browne belongs to the 17th century — his book *Religio Medici*[4] appearing in 1642; but I want to mention him here, because he descends from Bacon as a stylist. No Englishman of any age has written more magnificent prose in a classic style than Sir Thomas Browne: it is still an education to read him as well as a delight. Now Sir Thomas Browne was able to do perfectly well what Bacon had tried to do, and could not,—to make a grand classic style in English. No doubt he had seen Bacon's work, and felt that he could far surpass it. Then came the great prose-writers of the 18th century who imitated Browne so far as they were able,—and among them the great Dr. Johnson. The fashion of classic prose lingered on up to the age of Macaulay. So we may say that Bacon is linked, through all the development of classic prose, with the 18th century writers, and even slightly with Macaulay—who shows some traces of the old classic feeling. This is the importance which Bacon takes in English literature. Otherwise he is interesting only as a thinker and philosopher. We may now turn to the chief features of the literature of the latter part of the 17th century.

[1] Robert Burton (1577-1640).
[2] *The anatomy of melancholy* 1621 (1624, 1628, 1638, 1651, 1676).
[3] Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682).
[4] *Religio medici* 1642 (1656).

THE LITERATURE OF THE RESTORATION AND OF THE LATTER PART OF THE 17TH CENTURY

PRELIMINARY REMARKS—DECADENCE AND CORRUPTION OF LITERATURE

YOU will have observed that I say "the latter part" of the 17th century. As I told you before, the spirit and genius of the age of Elizabeth really lasted up to the period of the Restoration; and the Restoration (of Charles II) occurred in 1660, that is, in the latter part of the century. This is the easiest way of remembering and of grouping English literature for the present. Of course there was what is called Caroline literature, that is, the literature of the time of King Charles I, strictly called Early Caroline; then there was also Jacobean literature by which is meant the literature of the reign of King James. Other subdivisions have also been suggested and named; but it would only confuse the memory for you to attempt such classification at the present. The real fact is that Caroline literature, and Jacobean literature, and all the other literature produced between the time of Elizabeth and the time of the Restoration, was Elizabethan in feeling; even the great Milton must be regarded as half Elizabethan. The Elizabethan quality, however, was not the same through all these periods. There was a slow general decline. After that first wonderful outburst of songs which we have been considering, the voices of the singers gradually became weaker and weaker, hoarser and hoarser, and finally ended in something very much like discordant croaking after the Restoration. I do not want to say that there were no exceptions; for there were a great many exceptions. But this was the general fact. The drama began to decline, you will remember, even from the time of Ben Jonson. Then the lyric poetry began to decline. But the department

of English prose did not decline. This is the main thing to remember, as for exceptions. Everything declined except English prose. That improved all through the rest of the 17th century, and all through the 18th century, and even into the 19th century. But when I say prose, I do not mean either prose drama, or prose fiction,—I do not mean any particular field of literary art at all, but only style. The improvements in style sometimes appeared in works of fiction, sometimes in essays, sometimes in sermons, sometimes in philosophy. No particular department of prose literature could be said to improve particularly; but all prose style began to show those classic tendencies, all those tendencies to simplification, which were to blossom at last in the classic essay or in the popular romance of the 18th century.

So we start out with this fact to keep in mind,—that there was a general decadence in everything except prose style towards the end of the 17th century, and even for a very considerable time before it. If we take a general survey of the field of poetry, we shall be able to find three groups of poets—lyric poets, representing three distinct stages of the decline. In such poets as Herrick, Carew, Suckling, Donne, Cowley, Waller, and Denham, we find a great mixture of good and bad with a remarkable tendency to sensualism—a tendency that appears at its worst in the work of Carew and Donne.

The work of Herrick,[1] even in its sensualism, belongs, however, rather to the Elizabethan school than to the later one; but the work of Carew[2] and of several others marks a new departure in the direction of coarseness: the grace of fancy disappears; the erotic element becomes more reckless. It has been well said that writers like Carew and Suckling prepared the way for writers like Rochester. There were not wanting men who saw that poetry was becoming degraded both in form and in fancy; and there were not wanting pious men who attempted to turn the flow of poetry backward towards the nobler regions from which it had been steadily descending; such were

[1] Robert Herrick (1591-1674).
[2] Thomas Carew (1595 ?-1639).

Randolph, Cartwright, Herbert, Stanley, Quarles, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Marvell. Quarles[1] is a name still familiar; because his book called *Emblemes*[2] still remains a curiosity in literature, and is popular with religious people even to-day: it consists of extraordinary symbolic or mystical pictures with little verses attached to each. It is very likely that Quarles may have influenced the great poet and mystic of the 18th century, — Blake. But even when these men succeeded in restoring the moral tone of poetry, they could not restore the form. That was getting worse and worse. Herbert,[3] for example, of whom I spoke to you in a former lecture, actually began to write verse in the shape of crosses and doves, and other religious symbols. And, at last, came the dreadful group of wicked poets: Rochester, Sedley, Mulgrave, Dorset, and others. I say "wicked," because these men put the wickedness of their own lives and thoughts into such poetry as never appeared in England before or since. By "wicked" I do not mean irreligious, nor do I even mean sensual; for a man may be both sensual and irreligious without being wicked. I should define wickedness as that conduct or sentiment which is directly contrary to all human moral and social experience, —which is contrary to that which makes the foundations of society and the sense of honour. These men did not only mock at faith in religion, but at faith in virtue, in truth, in decency; —they mocked at woman as woman, as wife and mother; they denied the existence of virtue, beauty, honesty;—they befouled everything, and then became silent, and English poetry also became silent. Poetry is founded upon feeling, upon ideas, upon the sense of beauty and of tenderness. When you destroy all ideas, all feeling, poetry becomes impossible. This was what these men did. They became impotent;—and the song that had begun so magnificently in the reign of Elizabeth died away in this horrible howl of debauchery. We shall learn more of the reason when we come to speak of the Restoration drama. At present, enough to say that lyric poetry in the

[1] Francis Quarles (1592-1644).
[2] *Emblemes* 1635 (1718, 1818).
[3] George Herbert (1593-1633).

latter part of the century might be represented by three descending undulations; thus:—

each undulation representing one of the three groups above mentioned, but all sinking downward.

Yet there is something to note here besides the decadence. In this period of falling and decaying the seeds were sown of a new poetry,—the artificial poetry that was to dominate the 18th century under the leadership of Pope. You know that this form of verse is called usually the heroic couplet—a line of ten syllables, with five beats, or emphases, to the line. The first to make this line at all popular was the poet Edmund Waller[1] whose name belongs to the first of the three groups of poets above mentioned. Edmund Waller was not a great poet, but he was a good versifier; and sound critics quickly perceived that he had introduced a form of correct verse with which great things might be done. Three other poets of the same group followed him. These were Cowley, Davenant and Sir John Denham. All of them used the heroic couplet with more or less grace. But the name of Sir John Denham[2] is the best known; and four lines from his address to the River Thames in his poem of *Coopers-Hill*[3] are very famous even to-day. When you read them, you at once begin to think of Pope and the 18th century classic school:—

> O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream,
> My great example, as it is my theme,—
> Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,—
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full!

Please remember especially the names of Waller, Denham, and Cowley—because of their relation to the future poetry of the 18th century.

[1] Edmund Waller (1606-1687).
[2] Sir John Denham (1615-1669).
[3] *Coopers-Hill* 1642 (1669, 1702).

So much for lyric verse, and miscellaneous brief poetry. But it is very curious that the same period of poetical decline should have produced in epic poetry the greatest figure of all English literature. For Milton is the greatest English epic poet. And it is also strange that the same period should have produced that very great poet and man of letters, Dryden, who was the second of the old English "literary kings"—Ben Jonson being the first. I suppose that you are tolerably familiar with the lives of these two great men; and I shall not say much about the biography of either. You should remember that Milton was born very early in the 17th century—in 1608; dying in 1674:—while Dryden, born in 1631, died in 1700—so that his death exactly marks the beginning of the 18th century. A word about Milton first.

MILTON

You know that he went to Cambridge University,—where on account of his personal beauty he was called "The Lady"; you know that he was very religious, and in sympathy with the Puritan movement; you know that he travelled in Italy, and there studied with great masters; you know that he had curious troubles in his married life, and that he was too passionate and too sensitive to be a good husband and father, though he was the very prince of poets. The character of the man was not at all amiable; but there are some fine things about it—courage, love of truth, sense of duty in all matters that his nerves could bear; together with faultless taste in matters of literary art. These make him a most interesting personality, though not perhaps a lovable one. And you know that he wasted 20 years of his life in furious political writings — writing on the Puritan side and, I am sorry to say, very badly, because of the passion that was in him—until he actually became blind from overwork. His blindness, and all his misfortunes were of his own making. But had it not been for this

misfortune of blindness, we should perhaps never have had the great epic of *Paradise Lost.*[1]

Now in speaking of *Paradise Lost* I should be very sorry to have you think that I wish you to admire the poem in point of sentiment or argument. I think,—as the great English scientist Professor Maudsley had the courage to say that the English people will some day be thoroughly ashamed of the theology of this poem—that they will look back to it as we look back to the time of Northern ancestors who were cannibals. The theology is horrible, the moral tone is gloomy and harsh. But that is not the way to consider this really grand monument of English verse. Detest the subject as much as you please; — dislike as much as you please the ideas expressed about marriage and about woman and about responsibility; you cannot but wonder at the workmanship. Stated in the shortest possible way, this epic is an attempt to apply to biblical story and church-legend the artistic laws of Greek epic as embodied in Homer, and of Latin epic as embodied in Virgil, and the attempt is successful. It is an amazing success. Milton was too profound a scholar not to perceive that English verse could never repeat the echoes of Greek and Roman verse; but he made a blank verse that could at least repeat the dignity, the majesty, and the rolling beauty of the antique epic in a slightly different way. Otherwise the whole effect and arrangement is antique. And there is yet another thing to notice about this wonderful verse. Almost any kind of blank verses may become monotonous in spite of being perfectly correct. It is possible to be a great deal too correct. When you try to read aloud blank verse that is too correct—so that every line sounds exactly like the line before it, rising and falling in exactly the same way—you soon become tired: you become tired of Pope's verse, because of the regularity of the sound—just as you become tired of the beating of a drum. This is the great difficulty of rhymed couplets; but blank verse may be made just as monotonous and tiresome as the rhymed couplet, and still be perfectly correct. Now you cannot read Milton so as to

[1] *Paradise lost* 1667.

make him sound monotonously. He had the magical art of slightly varying the "quantity" of the line so that no two successive lines rise and fall in exactly the same manner. Do not think that this is a small thing to accomplish. It is almost the most difficult thing to do in all poetry. Tennyson has been able to do it sometimes; but he could not do it as Milton did. Even Swinburne, a still greater master of technical verse than Tennyson, could not do it as Milton did. Swinburne is often very monotonous; Milton never. Therefore we have a right to say that Milton's blank verse is by far the most perfect verse in the English language.

Mere perfection of form, however, does not make the greatest poetry. There must be more than this. There must be beauty of fancy; there must be a sense—an exquisite sense of word-values; there must be true scholarship—at least in the highest and most solemn form of poetry. Milton has all this; and it is an education to study him—an education in all the values attaching to verses—whether of force, colour, hardness, sonority, or anything else. I have often told you that Tennyson is to-day the most important English poet to study, because of the influence which he has had upon the whole English language. In Tennyson's case the influence was due chiefly to the astonishing way in which he revived forgotten Anglo-Saxon, Danish, or Scandinavian words — that is to say, the way in which he gave new life to the old Northern elements of the English tongue. The influence of Milton has been of a totally different kind. Milton did not so much enrich English by working with words as by working with Latin and Greek, especially Latin. To use a technical literary term, Milton was the greatest of all English "Latinizers"—that is to say, of men who make Latin words, idioms, or turns of expression into English ones. He transported out of the soil of a dead language hundreds of germs which, planted in English ground, have taken root and grown and blossomed, and become an immortal part of English speech. I must confess that all of these seeds have not grown; some withered and died in the ground: I mean that some of Milton's Latinisms have already become obsolete. That is

what makes him so very difficult to Japanese students. Unless you have studied Latin very extensively, you will often find it almost impossible to imagine what Milton means without help. Many words which he uses quite accurately from the standpoint of scholarship, have not at all the same meaning now that they had when he wrote them. But in spite of this he enriched the language immensely; and he will be studied for hundreds of years to come with profit by the classic student. I shall not speak of his many poems in detail; you know the titles of *Paradise Regain'd*,[1] *Samson Agonistes*,[2] *Comus*,[3] etc., etc. *Samson* is a great imitation of Greek tragedy in English verse. *Comus* is the best of all the English masques. The shorter poems, *Il Penseroso*[4] etc., are in almost every anthology; and each one still remains the best of its kind. *Lycidas*[5] has been the supreme English model of elegy in the classic manner for generations: I suppose you remember that Matthew Arnold among many modern poets has made the most successful imitation of it. The *Nativity Ode*[6] is the most wonderful of all English odes; and the sonnet entitled *At a Solemn Music* has been pronounced by Professor Gosse the most perfect verse in the language. This surely is glory supreme. Almost everything that Milton attempted to do he did better than anybody else; and his work even to-day has no rival. But the scope of that work is severely limited to classic form. There is nothing romantic about Milton. He is the greatest epic poet, the greatest writer of elegy, the greatest master of ode, the greatest author of the masque, the greatest imitator of Greek tragedy; but he is not the greatest poet in everything because he did not attempt everything. He attempted only the severest and most difficult forms in the highest art of poetry. And there he remains.

Perhaps you will ask, "Is Milton a greater poet than Shakespeare?" I should answer both No and Yes. In one sense—

[1] *Paradise regain'd* 1671.
[2] *Samson Agonistes* 1671.
[3] *A maske presented at Ludlow castle* 1634.
[4] *Il penseroso* 1632.
[5] *Lycidas* 1637.
[6] *On the morning of Christs nativity* 1629.

and the deepest sense—no poet is greater than Shakespeare. Milton wrote the most perfect sonnets in the English language; and Shakespeare's sonnets are much less perfect as to form;—yet there is more poetry, more real emotional poetry in one of Shakespeare's sonnets than in ten of Milton's. You must remember that also Shakespeare is the greatest figure in all modern literature; he never sacrificed anything to form. He could afford to be very careless about form and still be the greatest of all poets. And what is more, I am going to say, frankly, that I think the study of Milton cannot, at the present time, be of any value to the average Japanese student. The study of Milton depends for good results upon an extensive knowledge of Latin and of old classical literature, as well as upon an absolutely perfect knowledge of English. Therefore I think that to study Milton would be for most of you waste of time. On the contrary you cannot study Shakespeare too much—nobody can study Shakespeare too much. That is the great difference in the deeper essentials of poetry. The great poet, whose place in literature does not depend upon form, can be studied to advantage in all countries and at all times. But the poet whose place is chiefly assured by the architecture of his verse, can only be studied with profit in his own tongue. I therefore think that I am right in always putting the emotion, the sentiment, and the thought before the form. Any poetry which does not remain poetry when literally translated into any other language—and I mean translated into prose—is not the greatest poetry,—is not in most cases even great poetry. Milton remains great even when translated into prose; but he then takes a very much lower place than he occupies in English, and all his faults are brought out. But take such great poets as Gœthe or Heine—when you translate their best work into prose it is still grand poetry, poetry of the highest class. That is the test. Now a few weeks ago I was reading with great surprise some new French translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. As I have told you, Shakespeare's form is not perfect: it has many faults; but as translated into perfect French these sonnets show no faults at all—on the contrary they seem even

more wonderful than they seem in English. Milton would not bear that test; and I should put Milton incomparably below Shakespeare.

But you will remember that the other day I spoke of Milton's relation to Elizabethan poetry. Now you will also have noticed that I called him the most perfect of all English classic poets—using "classic" in the relation of the term to Greek and Latin culture. Do not think that there is any contradiction here. Although so very classic, Milton was Elizabethan to a very considerable extent. He was not so as to form, but as to tone, feeling. The great quality characterizing Elizabethan poetry was its pagan spirit—a spirit delighting in the images and the names of the old gods of Greece and Rome. Milton surpassed all the Elizabethans in his exquisite use of the pagan mythology which had become the fashion. I know that he did so in such a way as not to appear himself indifferent to religious beliefs; but he could be just as fond of the old pagan beauty as any of the singers who preceded him. You must not think, because he represented the gods as fallen angels or devils in his *Paradise Lost*, that he really disliked them. Elsewhere in his briefer poems, in his odes and sonnets—perhaps most of all in the wonderful *Lycidas*, he seems almost as much of a pagan as Theocritus himself. Unlike the Elizabethan singers he did not love songs—he was too serious for that; but he had a very warm sense of beauty, an artistic sensualism or sensuousness, which glows through the pages even of his *Paradise Lost*, and which was altogether the reverse of Puritanism. So, when you hear Milton referred to as the last of the Elizabethan poets, you will understand that the critic is speaking only of his tone, not of his form.

Such a poet could not be understood in an age of poetical decay. He was almost unread in his lifetime. It was not until well into the 18th century that men began to understand what a wonderful artist he had been, and to study his poetry seriously. Some attempts have since been made to imitate it; but none have been successful.

DRYDEN

Now let us speak of Dryden.[1] First of all, let me ask you to dismiss from your minds altogether the common idea that Dryden was a poet in the same way that Milton was a poet. I am not sure whether we ought even to call him especially a poet—notwithstanding the fact that he was made Poet Laureate. Of course you have seen a volume containing about 650 pages of small print, called *The Poetical Works of Dryden;* but in the higher sense of poetry how much of these hundreds of pages are real poetry? I think not more than 25 or 30. The great mass of that book is made up of prologues, or versified introductions to plays; another large part consists of stories remodelled from Chaucer—that is to say, translations of Chaucer's Middle English into Modern English; and most of the remainder consists of satires,—which certainly do not belong to the higher regions of poetry. Then you have several political poems, very famous in their day, but now scarcely interesting. Lastly you have a few, a very few, exquisite bits of verse, and the wonderful ode on *St. Cecilia's Day*,[2] — perhaps the only other ode of the age at all comparable with some of Milton's work. Throw out of the volume these few beautiful pieces now printed in all the anthologies, and the whole of what is left will not be found above second or third class verse. This volume, huge as it is, represents only about a tenth of the whole volume of verse that Dryden wrote,—because he wrote an immense number of plays in verse,—mostly in rhymed verse, of rather indifferent quality. Also he wrote dramas in blank verse. We cannot speak of his dramas here—except to say that the whole of them would fill a great many very large volumes. To put the matter very simply, he wrote too much verse to be a great poet. He rose to the heights of poetry only during a few moments of his long life. I should not advise you to think of him so much as a poet, but as a man of letters in the widest sense of the word. He was a dramatist, a satirist, a writer of prose, a Poet Laure-

[1] John Dryden (1631-1700).
[2] *A song for St. Cecilia's day* 1687.

ate, and at last a "literary king." Like most of the literary kings, he accomplished more by personal influence than by the intrinsic value of his productions.

A few words about the man himself ought to convince anybody that he never could have become a very great poet. The noblest poetry requires much sincerity of feeling and of purpose; and Dryden was something of a knave. He was a graduate of Cambridge, and a good scholar; but, almost from the time that he first took to literature as a profession, he showed by his conduct that he chiefly considered it a means to make money. Under the Government of the Puritans, he was a Puritan, and when Cromwell died he wrote a poem upon his death, lamenting for him as for a demi-god. Then came the Restoration and Dryden wrote a poem celebrating royalty, and the return of the king. King Charles set a fashion of moral corruption; so Dryden wrote immoral poems. Then came King James II, a Roman Catholic Ruler; Dryden at once became a Roman Catholic, and sent his children to a Roman Catholic school. It is not to be expected that such a man could be a very sincere poet.

It is a noteworthy fact that the greatest thing which he wrote, the second of the two odes on Saint Cecilia's Day (you may remember it better under the name of *Alexander's Feast*)[1] was the one piece which he wrote believing that he could not get any money for it. He complained that it was a case of hard work and no pay. Yet he did get pay for it afterwards. However, he wrote it under the belief that he was performing a labour of love, and, perhaps for that very reason it is a noble and beautiful composition. The rest of his poetry does not come up to this level; and the most famous of it are the four satires entitled *Absalom and Achitophel* (in two parts),[2] *The Medal*,[3] and *Mac Flecknoe*.[4] The first three are political satires —chiefly directed at the Earl of Shaftesbury; while the fourth

[1] *Alexander's feast; or the power of musique. An ode in honour of St. Cecilia's day* 1697.
[2] *Absalon and Achitophel* 1681.
[3] *The medal* 1682.
[4] *Mac Flecknoe, or a satyr upon the true-blew-protestant poet, T(homas) S(hadwell)* 1682.

is an attack upon a rival poet, Shadwell. The substance of these satires cannot interest us much now, because of their political character. But we may say of them that, with the possible exception of Pope's *Satires*, they remain the best work of their kind. Such poems as *The Hind and the Panther,*[1] a defence of the Church of Rome—cannot attract the reader of to-day as they attracted the readers of the 17th century. The best of Dryden's work has become too old-fashioned to please (excepting always the Odes) simply because he did not depend upon the deeper and nobler elements of poetry for his success. Satire is not noble literature, and allegory, which Milton could make sublime, Dryden could not. There remains besides the work mentioned an immense mass of verse, both dramatic and narrative. On the stage Dryden was represented by no less than 28 plays in verse; then you must remember his great translation of *Virgil;* his fables and stories in verse; his reconstruction of Chaucer's stories in verse; his Epistles, Elegies, Prologues, in verse. The bulk of his work is immense; but it very seldom rises to the eternal snowline that separates sublime poetry from all that is not sublime. Perhaps the best criticism upon him is that of the contemporary French critic M. Jusserand, who declares that he had so much talent that it almost resembled genius.

It is therefore chiefly as to form that Dryden is important; and as respects form, he was the greatest poet, between Milton and Pope. But he did not invent anything. He was not an original innovator. What he did was simply to improve upon rules that had already been established. He must really be considered as the great founder of the classic poetry in heroic couplets—I mean that he founded the great school of artificial verse upon which Pope and the 18th century poets afterwards built some additional structures or stories.

Here, it is necessary that I should be very clear in explaining the evolution of this poetical manifestation. Remember that I told you that Milton was the greatest English classic poet, and still so remains. That is true; — do not forget it.

[1] *The hind and the panther, a poem* 1687.

But nobody in the 17th century really understood Milton; — he was too fine, too supremely perfect for that age. So there were two classic schools—or, rather, two classic ideals. The first was Milton's and he had no following in his time. The second was Dryden's, which was not much of an improvement upon the classicism of Ben Jonson; but it was much easier to follow; and everybody followed it for about 150 years. But do not think that Dryden invented it; he did not. He only used his great influence and talent in order to further it.

The real founders of this classic form, the inventors, were, as I told you before, Waller, Cowley, Davenant, and Denham, —especially Waller. It might be claimed that Waller did not invent the heroic couplet, because Chaucer had used it in the *Canterbury Tales.* But the language in which Chaucer wrote, Middle English,—had ceased to exist: his language was scarcely intelligible to the 17th century. Waller was really the first to introduce this measure successfully into Modern English. So we may trace out the history of the Augustan or Classical School of artificial English poetry by the help of this little diagram:—

Chaucer
\
Waller
|
Cowley, Davenant, Denham
|
DRYDEN
|
POPE and his School.

I have put the names of Dryden and of Pope in capitals, to remind you of the fact that they were the real chiefs, the true leaders of English classicism — that is, perhaps, to say pseudo-classicism; for the supreme classical feeling only found pure expression in Milton; and Milton had no following until late in the next century.

I think that you will now see Dryden's historical impor-

tance in English literature. He polished and perfected the heroic couplet, and left it all ready for Pope to use. Pope improved upon it a little, but only a little. The greater part of Dryden's work is in this tiresome measure. But he was a better poet than Pope to this extent,—that he could write in a great many different measures, whereas Pope did almost nothing worth mentioning outside of heroics. Dryden had more mastery of different forms; and he could write very fair blank verse. He was the first to lay down a kind of general rule,—that heroic couplets should be used for serious poetry of almost every kind, and that dramas should be written in blank verse. But he made this rule only with great hesitation; in his old age and after he himself had written a great number of plays in rhymed verse. His rule was long followed. After him it became the fashion to write all kinds of poetry in rhymed heroics, and to write plays in blank verse. You need only remember that he made the rule, and that it was long obeyed. As for the rule itself, it was, from one point of view, nonsensical; and it cramped literary expression for more than a century. It gave us the most wearisome, the most monotonous, the most artificial, the most unsatisfying, the most mechanical, the most insincere poetry ever produced in the history of English literature. And yet the student of literature must not complain too much. We have reason to be really grateful to Dryden.

Why?

Because Dryden was able to do that which Milton could not do—could not do owing to his very superiority. Dryden was able to reform English prose.

Reform it in what manner?

Only in respect to correct form. Only in respect to the discipline of verse. Not in any other way. But reform in this one way had been very much needed.

All the English poetry of the age of Elizabeth, beautiful as it is, varied as it is, nevertheless shows defects of form which never appeared after the 17th century. The English ear had not yet been perfectly trained. Men had been singing as the birds sing,—out of their hearts, without much thought about

the possibilities of perfecting their song. And because they sang so well and so sweetly, they had been perfectly satisfied with their work, and the rest of the world had been equally well satisfied. Now there is one bad thing about carelessness in workmanship,—namely that it leads to still greater carelessness. So long as there happens to be no severe standard of form, by which all work can be critically judged, people will not take proper pains to improve their language. However unjust and malicious criticism may sometimes be, it has always this value, that it forces people to take pains. When there was no criticism, English poets, who began at first to sing very well because they were passionately sincere, became less sincere as the emotion of the age exhausted itself and at last they got to be so careless that they wrote poetry in the form by doves and crosses as I told you before. In this time of the general poetical decay Milton and Dryden established new standards, and made criticism possible. But the public could not understand Milton; he was too great a scholar for them. On the other hand they could understand Dryden, who gave them simple rules, which they could learn how to obey. Dryden established criticism and established discipline.

It seems to us rather sad to-day that generations of English poets should have wasted their talent and their time in writing tiresome heroic couplets—in writing that sort of poetry which you may best judge of from such a work as Pope's translation of *Homer*. But that is not the way that we must look at the facts. You must think of the English nation as going to school under Dryden and under Pope until they could learn to compose decently correct verse. You must think of them as training themselves in the mastery of form. But perhaps you will say that it was surely waste of time to write only in one form for 150 years. The truth is that it was not waste of time, any more than are the tiresome exercises in prosody which the schoolboy has to make before his graduation. When you learn to master only one kind of verse perfectly well, then you can attempt the mastery of other kinds; but not before. When the training is done,—when the mind has become accustomed to

find pleasure in exactitude and obedience to rule,—then everything is possible; but not before. When the English had learned to make rhymed heroic verse nearly as good as the Alexandrines of the French poets, they naturally rebelled against the classic school; and English poetry became romantic again. But when it became romantic again, it remained correct, restrained, polished, perfect. It had been at school for 150 years; it had graduated with honours. Such verses as those of Shelley, or Wordsworth, or Keats—not to speak of the still finer work of the Victorian poets—never could have been written unless poetry had been under the classical discipline of the tiresome Dryden and the monotonous Pope. All preliminary study is monotonous and tiresome, but the result is of the greatest possible service. You cannot make progress in any kind of study without first enduring a great deal of monotony.

One more thing must be mentioned about Dryden's place in poetry: we may call him the father of English satire. I do not like satire; I cannot believe that any art of which the object is to inflict pain, of which the purpose is to gratify malice, can be considered a really fine art. I do not understand why such great critics as Professor Gosse and Professor Saintsbury speak of the delight which they find in the malignant skill of a Dryden or a Pope attacking his enemies. I can only suppose that it must be the same kind of pleasure that men feel in shooting birds or in hunting foxes—the pleasure of the hunter; and I think that all hunting is cruel and bad. Having expressed this opinion, however, I must go back to the fact that Dryden's satires are the best of their kind in English verse. Pope and his followers practised satire very extensively;—the 18th century was a cruel age—at least up to the time of the Romantic Movement. While the classical school lasted, satire also lasted, and it was developed into an atrocious weapon of offence as well as of defence. When the matter happens to be purely personal we cannot, I think, morally admire it; but when the verse serves only to paint some particular kind of vice or weakness, then indeed it may be said to possess a certain didactic value. For instance, Pope's satire upon "Atticus"

is simply cruel and mean if we think of it in connection with Addison; but when we think of it only as a picture of a certain weak and contemptibly wicked variety of human envy, then it seems a matchless bit of work. Well, all this school of satire dates from Dryden; but Dryden was not the first English satirist. He never invented anything. Samuel Butler[1] was before him; you will remember something about his poem, *Hudibras*,[2] — that long composition made to ridicule the Puritans and written in short jerky verse of eight syllables. As early as the time of Henry VIII there had been satire. And, if we go back to the period of Middle English, we must regard much of the allegorical poetry of *Piers Plowman* as satire. But what Dryden did was to make satire in heroic couplets a fashionable weapon of attack and of defence. In previous times satire had mostly been put into popular language and popular forms of verse—because it had then been directed chiefly against general abuses, not against individuals. Now things were changed. As the literary class began to grow large, and to come into contact with other classes, it was found that every poet and dramatist must expect to fight. Everybody wore swords; but the literary men were no longer so skilful in the use of steel that they could hope to take care of themselves in the old-fashioned way. They invented a weapon of words more terrible than a sword. We might say of the classic satirist as has been said in the Bible of a divine personage, that "Out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword." With romanticism, and later humanitarianism, satire almost died. Modern poets try to be kindly to each other, and to the world in general. Yet the art is not quite dead. Even Tennyson was once made the subject of a satire by the elder Bulwer-Lytton; and you will remember that he replied in so terrible a fashion that Bulwer was silenced for the rest of his life, and made ridiculous throughout the whole English-speaking world. But see how different the morals of our epoch. Tennyson would never suffer the cruel verses which he wrote to be printed in any edi-

[1] Samuel Butler (1612-1680).
[2] *Hudibras* part i 1663, part ii 1664, part iii 1678.

tion of his works. In the 17th or 18th century men gloried in being able to give pain; in the 19th century I am glad to say that they are ashamed of it.

And now we shall take up the subject of the drama of the later 17th century,—the atrocious drama of the Restoration.

Restoration Drama

A PERIOD OF MORAL DECAY—CONDITION OF THE COURT AND SOCIETY—THE TWO SCHOOLS OF DRAMA

Before anything else, it is necessary to say something about the history of this period. When Charles II was restored in 1660 the entire nation had become tired of the Puritan military Government. Perhaps the Puritan army was the best army that ever existed in Europe. It was composed entirely of men trained to consider duty to God,—as they understood the word God,—the supreme law of conduct. These men never drank, never quarrelled, never swore, never stole, never disobeyed orders. I suppose you know that they never lost a battle:—as Macaulay says, they were never beaten. They won, and still keep, the admiration of the world for their soldierly quality. But they were only human after all; and their extraordinary virtues were off-set by extraordinary faults. They were terrible fanatics. They demanded that everybody should conform to their ideal of conduct. They considered all pleasure sinful; —therefore they closed the theatres, put some of the actors into prison, and publicly whipped others. They closed all houses of amusement. They even abolished public holidays. They forbade people to enjoy themselves upon Christmas-day; they forbade also the spring-festivities, and cut down the May-poles about which the people had been accustomed to dance. They blamed persons who dressed well or in bright colours. They made holes in pictures and hammered beautiful statues to pieces. It would be hard to tell you all that they did to make the English people miserable. Enough to say that while the

soldiery represented the supreme power, England became, for every day in the year, what England still is upon a Sunday in the great cities. There is nothing so dismal and so joyless, as a Sunday in London—when all the shops are closed, and all the places of amusement as well. Of course you will say that the Parliament first made these Puritan laws. Yes; but the soldiery dissolved that Parliament, and then turned themselves into an armed police that watched everything, and that regulated everything,—even the intercourse of the sexes. No man could do what he pleased in those times;—everybody did what he was obliged to do. And when the terrible army had been disbanded, and the King restored, almost everybody was delighted. The English people felt free again. And like little boys released from school, they made a great noise and indulged in a great deal of fun for the time being.

Unfortunately this comparison cannot be carried very far. The public rejoicing at the new liberty was, indeed, boyish enough at first; but very soon it became vicious—became a general debauchee. That some excess is sure to follow a long period of over-severe repression, is an old political axiom. But the extraordinarily bad character of the excesses of the Restoration period cannot be entirely explained by the period of Puritan tyranny. It required a bad King, a wicked Court, and a corrupt nobility to make England as immoral as she became in the Restoration days. Charles II set the fashion of being immoral; that he was not cruel as well is about the only thing that can be said to his credit. And when the King set the fashion, immorality became fashionable. It also became cruel; and at last it became cowardly. When a Government becomes at once corrupt and cruel and cowardly, patriotism is paralized. Think of Charles II selling himself to the King of France, and undertaking to become a Catholic, on payment of so many thousand pounds a year. This is what the King actually did. But Louis XIV knew Charles too well to suppose that English politics could be best regulated by bribery in money. He understood that the best way to govern the English King was to send him a French woman, beautiful enough and clever enough

to control him and to keep him subject to the will of France. You can imagine what was likely to become of England under such conditions. England was miserably beaten both by land and sea. For the first and the last time in history, an enemy's fleet boldly sailed up the river to London, and destroyed the English ships in the port. The Dutch admiral De Ruyter who did this brave feat was able to sail down the river again and escape without any trouble at all. If such a Government had continued very long the English nation would probably have ceased to exist. Considering all these things you will be able to understand why the drama of the Restoration period is the worst drama ever produced by any European people. It was the drama that particularly reflected the fact that immorality had become fashionable. But there were two kinds of Restoration drama. We shall speak later on of the classical drama of the time. The wickedness of the hour was principally shown in comedy. Indeed there were only two sorts of plays possible at this epoch. In Shakespeare's time there had been three. There was tragedy; there was comedy; and there was the romantic drama — perhaps the most beautiful of all kinds of dramatic composition. But romantic drama can flourish only in a time when men's minds are generous and tender and animated by noble ideas. The romantic drama vanished in the foul atmosphere of the Restoration. Nothing delicate and beautiful could live there. But some kind of tragedy and some kind of comedy might very well continue to please persons of that age. Bloody tragedy, or sensual tragedy has a morbid attraction for certain minds; and any comedy capable of ridiculing all that is good might very well please minds that have become altogether bad.

Let us take the worst side of the subject first,—Restoration comedy. Four names especially deserve to be remembered in this connection, — remembered as more or less infamous. These four are Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Congreve. Everything bad in the morals of the time has been fully represented by the work of these four men. They were men of great talent; but that talent was abused and prostituted as no

English talent ever had been before. Besides these four principals, there were several minor dramatists whose names cannot be passed over—Etheredge (Sir George), Shadwell (the Mac Flecknoe of Dryden's satire); Mrs. Afra (or Aphra) Behn, the first woman who made a living by writing for the stage, and the Duke of Buckingham, famous as the author of that witty *Rehearsal*,—which inspired Sheridan at a later day. Observe that all this production represents comedy. We shall speak of tragedy later on.

First, a few words about the bad character of the drama represented by these names,—the whole of Restoration comedy. I should never tell you that a work of art is immoral because it happens to be sensual,—because it happens to make an appeal to sexual emotion. Very probably religious critics would condemn any work of art for this reason; but that would be a very narrow way of judging things. Restoration comedy was not bad for this reason, but for very different reasons. I should qualify as immoral only that spirit which is contrary to human moral experience,—to the experience that holds society together, that makes the marriage relation a sacred thing, that teaches men to be good and kind to each other,—that insists upon gentleness and courtesy to women, and affectionate regard to children. Any spirit that attacks this teaching is essentially wicked because it is essentially destructive of civilized feeling. Now Restoration comedy differs from all other English drama in the fact that it exhibits this spirit. It was not merely sensual: it was coldly vicious,—vicious without passion, —like some old man who, after a lifetime of debauch, preserves only the inclination for indulgence without the power to gratify it. Then, as there is always a tendency for cold vice to become cruel, Restoration comedy was cruel,—brutally cruel. Finally, for the same reason that an essentially bad man cannot understand goodness or kindness, and imagines that either is explainable by some cunning and selfish motive, so Restoration comedy represented all that is good as a fit subject for mockery. So for a number of years the English drama represented the utter decay and corruption of all social morality. For a long

time no one had the courage to oppose it,—partly because the Court patronized this kind of drama, and also because it was almost as much as a man's life was worth in those days to make a protest on behalf of sound morals. If you did that you would be called a Puritan, a conspirator, a schemer endeavouring to appeal to religious prejudice for a political purpose; and it would have been wonderful if you were not beaten upon the street by hired bullies, or did not have your nose slit open by young men of the ruffian companies then called "Pinkers." These used to catch somebody whom they did not like in the streets at night, and prod him with their swords — so as to cover all his body with little wounds about an inch deep. It required some skill to torture people in this way without killing them; and the "Pinkers" were very skilful at inflicting the greatest possible amount of pain without committing murder. But at last a great preacher did have the courage to attack the drama in a sensible way, — Jeremy Collier.[1] The Church of England had been very cowardly about the matter, because of its relation to the Government. But Jeremy Collier was a Nonconformist, and independent of all political or selfish motives. He published his opinion of Restoration comedy in a little pamphlet, full of good sense; and it was impossible to answer his arguments, either from the standpoint of art or from the standpoint of morals. The wittiest men of the time tried to answer him and failed. He simply crushed them. And he was able to do so, not because he was a very great writer, or even a good logician. He was able to do so merely because he had right and reason upon his side, and courage to say what he thought. He drove Congreve from the stage. He reformed the theatre; for the good sense of the public presently came to his assistance. But the disease made too much progress before the cure came. Jeremy Collier put an end to Restoration comedy; but he could not do so without killing English comedy for all time. In the 18th century Sheridan indeed wrote some two or three good comedies—but that was the last expiring flicker of the art. With Restoration comedy all English comedy

[1] Jeremy Collier (1650-1726).

really died; and even to-day there is no sign of its revival. Other forms of light drama have appeared; but the true comedy now appears upon the English stage only as translated from foreign authors.

Having spoken of the general character of this drama, let us now note something regarding the authors of it, and their best work. Of the four names first cited, two are names of men educated in Ireland; the other two were English, but considerably under French influence. William Wycherley,[1] for example, was an Oxford man; but he spent many years in France; and he got his ideas about comedy chiefly from Molière. His two best plays are *The Plain-Dealer*,[2] and *The Country-Wife*,[3]—and the first mentioned is a very close imitation of the *Misanthrope* of Molière. But Molière is not responsible for the brutal coarseness of Wycherley's imitation. There is no coarseness in Molière. On the whole, the principal character in this play of his, Alceste, is a very amiable person—one whom you cannot help liking in spite of his eccentricities. Wycherley's Plain-Dealer, on the contrary, is a vulgar ruffian, who uses language of the most detestable and unrestrained description. Comparing the two plays, you will be able to understand the French critic who said that an Englishman cannot cease to be moral without becoming something of a beast. To be gracefully immoral is not in his nature. But it is true that Wycherley had very great talent, and that he was able at times to imitate in English very successfully the brilliancy of French wit.

The other Englishman of most note in this group was William Congreve.[4] So far as literary perfection is concerned, Congreve was supremely clever. His chief fault—outside of grossness—was that he sacrificed story to form: he was so very careful about style, that one feels the work a little unnatural, —especially in the conversational passages. Of course work is always faulty from a literary point of view when it betrays the effort that it costs. Congreve was educated partly in Ireland,

[1] William Wycherley (1640-1716).
[2] *The plain-dealer* 1676.
[3] *The country-wife* 1675.
[4] William Congreve (1670-1729).

partly in France: he also attempted to reproduce the effects of French wit in English; and he probably succeeded as well as any man could have done in such an age. *Love for Love*,[1] and *The Way of the World*,[2] are said to be his best plays. Altogether he did not write many; he spent a great deal of time over each one; and he left off writing when Collier attacked him.

Sir John Vanbrugh,[3] third of the four, had the coarseness of Wycherley without the brilliancy of Congreve. It is hard to say which was the worst of the four, morally speaking; but perhaps it will not be unjust to say that Vanbrugh is the most offensive. On the other hand he probably represents the brilliant and brutal society of the time more faithfully than any of the rest; because he knew it better. He was a man of court, and acquainted with the notables of the time. But he did what the others did not often attempt,—namely, made pictures of middle-class life. Three of his plays, *The Relapse*,[4] *The Provok'd Wife*[5] and *The Confederacy*,[6] will give one a better idea of the social conditions of that era than can be obtained from perhaps any other Restoration drama. But it was not a pretty picture that he drew; and I do not think that you would find any pleasure in it.

This cannot be said of the work of the fourth writer, George Farquhar,[7] an Irish military officer. Farquhar was a good man, though he lived in bad times—kind-hearted, generous, and, strange to say, somewhat romantic. There are some interesting stories about him. Being very poor he wanted to marry both a rich and beautiful wife: he said that beauty was the first thing, but that beauty required certain expenses in order to set it off. Then a girl who was an admirer of the young officer, represented herself to him as being very rich. She was pretty; but, as for money, she did not have a penny in the world. He married her, expecting to become a very rich man, and gave up his commission in the army for her sake.

[1] *Love for love* 1695.
[2] *The way of the world* 1700.
[3] Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726).
[4] *The relapse, or virtue in danger* 1697.
[5] *The provok'd wife* 1697.
[6] *The confederacy* (anon.) 1705.
[7] George Farquhar (1678-1707).

After the marriage she coolly told him that she was quite poor, and that she had pretended to be rich only in order to get him. Of course you know that by English law he could not divorce her. However, he acted like a man,—forgave her the deception that she had practised inasmuch as he understood that she really loved him; and then he bravely took to writing plays for a living. He thought himself obliged to write in the tone of the time, which was a wicked tone; but he could not really manage to be wicked, even in words, and his plays are much less offensive than the comedies of the other three men. They are also much more interesting to the modern reader. Two of them are said to be drawn from experience in his own life, — *The Recruiting Officer*[1] and *The Beaux Stratagem*.[2] About the second of these plays, we are not sure of the personal element; but only a military man of the time could have written *The Recruiting Officer*. It contains a little song which is still sung, and constantly referred to, "Over the hills and far away."

I think that only Farquhar could give you any great pleasure in the reading,—any amusement. The other three could not amuse you; and they would certainly disgust you very frequently.

Now, of the minor group, only two are worth dwelling upon in this place, — Sir George Etheredge and the Duke of Buckingham. Both produced satirical comedies of very considerable merit. If you want to know anything about the extraordinary life of Sir George Etheredge,[3] you cannot do better than to read a delightful essay upon him in Professor Gosse's *Seventeenth Century Studies*. Here it will be necessary to speak only of one of his plays, *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*.[4] You know that the word *fop* means a man who is extravagantly anxious about being well-dressed. Add to this word the contemptuous diminutive suffix "ling"; then you will see the comic force of the name. This is a wonderful picture of 17th century life, in the worst times of the Restoration. Ether-

[1] *The recruiting officer* 1706.
[2] *The beaux stratagem* 1706-07.
[3] Sir George Etheredge (1634-1691).
[4] *The man of mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter* 1676.

edge was a friend of the scoundrelly Rochester, and of the other rakes of the Restoration; and one of the characters in this play is said to represent Rochester. All the characters are real, and you can recognize the truth of them in spite of the satire. The name of Sir Fopling Flutter has become an English byword. All Restoration comedy has its bad side; but you would be much amused by that little play. I do not think that you would be amused by the Duke of Buckingham's[1] *Rehearsal*,[2] because it requires an immense amount of previous reading to understand what this satirical comedy really is. But you should remember its name: for it had a great influence in changing the character of English drama at the time that it appeared. It helped to kill the heroic drama,—the heavy pompous tragedy in rhymed verse which Dryden and others had been writing in imitation of the French. It was intended to be and proved a very effective satire upon the kind of drama referred to. But the way in which this was composed is perhaps one of the most curious things in the history of English literature. This was the way the thing was done. First of all, a plot was imagined. Then the Duke selected from the heroic tragedies the most ridiculous, pompous, extravagant lines that he could find; and by a skilful use of many hundreds of such lines he made his comedy. You can imagine how people laughed at it. When you begin to read it, you imagine you are reading something serious: then you suddenly find something utterly absurd, and you are tempted to exclaim, "How could a man be such a fool as to write that!" But if the Duke of Buckingham heard you he would have answered, "My dear friend, I did not write that. It was the great poet Dryden, or the great dramatist Davenant, who wrote it." That was where the fun came in. Nothing could be more absurd; and yet all the absurdities were taken from the serious passages of popular tragedies. So that the play was a great criticism as well as a great satire. It is about the only comedy of the period that has a great importance for these very reasons.

[1] George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham (1628-1687).
[2] *The rehearsal* 1672.

We shall next turn to the history of the serious drama of the Restoration.

Other Dramas of the Latter Part of the 17th Century

THE HEROIC PLAYS

The interest of the latter part of the 17th century in drama is not at all confined to the subject of that disreputable comedy which we have been considering. There was also the tragedy, — and the tragedy of two very distinct kinds. These kinds may be roughly classed as the heroic plays and the emotional tragedy, or true tragedy. The latter represents a revival of Elizabethan tragedy or methods; the former was made by French influence in a most curious way. We shall consider the heroic plays first.

I think that I told you, in speaking of the development of the Elizabethan age, that enormous romances began to be written after the appearance of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia.* They were written in France and afterwards both imitated and translated in England. They were enormous productions, published in five, ten, and twelve great volumes each, and represented in print between 5,000 and 7,000 pages of ordinary type. No one, to-day, would think of reading a novel as big as Webster's big dictionary. But in those times, these huge publications were all the fashion. Charles I. amused himself in his prison by reading one of them; they were popular with all classes and went through many editions. They were written in a very artificial style—a kind of French Euphuism—for the French writers had also felt the influence of those Spanish writers, about whom I told you last year.

Now all that is necessary to tell you about this queer literature is that its most celebrated authors were Madeleine de Scudéry, La Calprenède, and Marine Le Roy, Seigneur de Gomberville. Here is a list of the most famous only of their productions:—

Almahide *Ibrahim* *Artamène ou Le Grand Cyrus*	Scudéry.
Cléopâtra *Pharamond* *Cassandre*	Calprenède.
Polexandre *Alcidiane* *Cytherie* *Caritie*	Gomberville.

All these were translated into English, imitated in English, and at last satirized in English. A curious fact is that the cleverest work of the kind done in English was written only as a satire, but the satire was a better romance than the real romance. It was the work of an anonymous writer who signed his initials T.D. and was called Zelinda.

Now these romances had a very great effect upon drama, both in France and in England. You will notice the subjects are all far away from modern writers; some are classical, some Oriental, none French or English. There was no attempt to picture real life in them, but only to please the imagination with a series of adventures. Such material is just what dramatists want, or wanted at least in those times. To-day we know too much about far-away countries to write imaginative nonsense about the conditions there; but in the 17th century things were different. Now those of you who studied the great French dramatists will have noticed the subjects of their tragedies are very much like the subject of the romance—in fact many of the subjects were suggested by or adopted from those romances. But such great poets as Boileau, Racine, and Corneille were not much concerned about actual presentation of life. They were most concerned about form. When they chose those subjects their whole dream was to produce in French the majesty and the music and the limpid clearness of Latin verse. Of course the French language cannot reproduce all the effects of Latin verse; and to make up for this the French dramatists

used rhyme. Their rhymed Alexandrine corresponds to the heroic couplet in English. Besides, as I told you last year, they adopted as a model the Senecan drama,—which is not capable of serving as a medium for the presentation of actual life. The English had tried the same thing several times and failed. But the French made at least a popular success of their classic drama. Try to read it, and I think that you will find that it is extremely tiresome. It is terribly monotonous to the modern ear. Yet the people who could find delight in it were persons of extraordinary cultivation. Why did they delight in it? Because they were able to understand the immense difficulty of the words, and to admire the prodigious skill with which the verse had been manipulated. It was the pleasure of scholarship, listening to scholarship. In the old Greek theatres there must have been much of the same kind of pleasure. Imagine what kind of audience found pleasure in listening to the historian Herodotus reading to them the whole of his *History* in one day, or think of the quality of mind that could delight in the theatre only when some great poets were reciting their compositions. This was indeed the pleasure that made French drama delightful to the generation of cultivated Frenchmen.

And there was great fascination in the French drama to the English scholar. Dryden was such a scholar. Dryden thought that Racine and Corneille had been able to imitate Latin qualities in their verse after a fashion which no Englishman had been capable of. Delighted, bewitched, especially by Corneille, he began to study the French method, and to make imitations of it. Other Englishmen who attempted the Senecan form of drama had used blank verse; but Dryden thought that the French succeeded with the rhyme; and he used the heroic couplet in imitation of them. I suppose that you know that the heroic verse is the kind of verse chiefly used by Pope. Dryden began to write heroic plays in 1664, and he continued to write them for 14 years. After 14 years of experiment, he felt that he had made a mistake. In 1678 he returned to blank verse, and publicly acknowledged his literary error. Thus, for the third and last time the classic form of drama proved a

failure in England; for when Dryden gave it up and declared that Shakespeare was really the model dramatist for Englishmen, all the other playwrights followed Dryden's example. Altogether Dryden wrote 27 dramas, besides helping to compose many others. Most of these, exclusive of comedies, are heroic plays in imitation of the French masters. It is useless to mention them all: the best were:—

The Indian-Queen,[1]
The Indian Emperour,[2]
The Conquest of Granada,[3]
Don Sebastian,[4]
and *Aureng-Zebe,*[5] *a Tragedy.*

He got his subjects largely from the French romances, and the whole of his *Conquest of Granada* is taken from *Almahide* of Scudéry. Nobody reads these plays now. But when Dryden returned to blank verse and to the study of Shakespeare, he did some fine work in tragedy. Unfortunately he imitated Shakespeare a little too much. The best of his tragical work is *All for Love, or the World Well Lost* [6]—and this is nothing more than Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* written over again. But it is very well written; and, though far inferior to Shakespeare's work, it is full of beauties of its own, and can be read with great pleasure.

So ended the heroic play in England. It was cruelly, but justly and splendidly satirized by George Villers, Duke of Buckingham, in his comedy of *The Rehearsal.* That satire certainly helped to kill it. But what principally accounts for its death is the fact that the whole system of classical French drama was essentially contrary to English genius. You will never get an English public, even to-day, to care about form in itself. But it is otherwise with the French public. At the present moment a masterpiece of mere form is still sure of obtaining

[1] *The Indian-queen, a tragedy* 1665.
[2] *The Indian emperour, or the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards (a tragedy)* 1665.
[3] *The conquest of Granada by the Spaniards. In two parts* 1670, 1672.
[4] *Don Sebastian, king of Portugal: a tragedy* 1690.
[5] *Aureng-zebe, a tragedy* 1676.
[6] *All for love, or the world well lost, a tragedy* 1678.

appreciation in France. But I fear that it must be confessed that, although the French language is finer language, and the French people incomparably more artistic than the English, in this case the English were right and the French wrong.

OTHER TRAGEDIES

Besides Dryden there are only three names of tragedians belonging to this period worth mentioning. Those three were: —Otway, Lee and Southerne. Otway[1] is a strange and pathetic figure in the infamous age of the Restoration. He was a student of Oxford. When he took to writing plays for a living he showed that the corruption of the time had affected neither his intelligence nor his heart. He did indeed write some indecent things; but he also wrote some touching and tender things and he was able to make the public weep at a time when all emotion was ridiculed. He was the only dramatist of the Restoration who showed real tenderness; and his plays are still admired and read. The best of them *Venice Preserv'd*[2] is almost worthy in parts of being compared with the work of Shakespeare. His most popular tragedy in his own time was *The Orphan*[3]— a terrible picture of the misery and crime consequent upon jealousy of two brothers, both of whom are in love with the same girl. We can read the play to-day; but no English audience could bear to see it played, it is too piteous. Now the tenderness of which this man was capable did him more harm than good. He was very susceptible to beauty; and he fell foolishly in love with a beautiful but wicked actress, Mrs. Barry,[4] who was the idol of those days. She cared only for money, and would in no case have been inclined to like a man such as Otway; but she was the mistress of the wickedest man in the world at that time—the Earl of Rochester.[5] Rochester, knowing of Otway's admiration for the woman, caused him

[1] Thomas Otway (1652-1685).
[2] *Venice preserv'd; or a plot discover'd; a tragedy* 1682.
[3] *The orphan; or the unhappy marriage; a tragedy* 1680.
[4] Mrs Elizabeth Barry (1658-1713).
[5] John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647-1680).

to be attacked and beaten; and he was actually driven out of England by the mouth of this nobleman. When Rochester died, Otway came back again as much in love as ever with Mrs. Barry. She only mocked him. Gradually his talent deserted him; his courage faltered, and finding the struggle of life more and more difficult, he at last became incapable of making money. He was put into prison for debt, and at last when a gentleman gave him some money to buy bread, he fell dead from starvation before he could lift the food to his lips. He was then 34 years of age. This reminds me to tell you about the old-fashioned cruel law of imprisonment for debt. Formerly if you owed and could not pay, you were put in prison and left to starve until you could pay. You might ask people passing by for money or food, but you could not do it in prison. Otway was legally starved to death. As he was the finest dramatist of the time in tragedy, it is worth while to remember those facts about his unfortunate life.

Nathaniel Lee[1]—the dramatist N. Lee was almost as unfortunate as Thomas Otway. He died at the age of 39, and died of want and misery. He had great talent; but it was not the kind of talent that could please people very much in that corrupt time. His best play is *The Rival Queens*[2]—a tragedy of which the thought was taken from *Cassandre* of La Calprenède. All the tragedians of the time borrowed from those vast romances.

Southerne[3]—was very different from either of the other men. Like Lee he was a university man. But he was also a man of business with a very strong head. He did not starve like Otway, nor go mad like Lee, nor even make a single public failure. He wrote only to make money: he knew the public, and he gave them exactly what they wanted. He was, next to Shakespeare, the most remarkable case of dramatists who made a fortune by writing dramas. But it was not because of their merit; many of them cannot be called either bad or good; some of them are decidedly poor. But one of his tragedies *The Fatal*

[1] Nathaniel Lee (1653-1692).
[2] *The rival queens, or the death of Alexander the Great* 1677.
[3] Thomas Southerne (1660-1746).

Marriage[1] gives him a place of importance in the dramatic history of his time. This play has been acted upon the stage within our own day.

Here we may leave the subject of drama—only remarking that at this point of English literary history great tragedy may be said to have died. Comedy will make its appearance once again when we come to the 18th century: then even comedy died and the English stage may be said to have reached its most sterile period.

Restoration Prose and that of the Close of the 17th Century

The best prose of the period that we have been considering was in an unfamiliar direction. Most of it was theological and therefore cannot greatly interest us in itself. It was the great age of the English pulpit,—that is the greatest English period of sermons and of religious discourses. Does not this seem a contradiction? Here we have the spectacle of the worst modern corruption that ever existed in England; and yet we find that it was also the greatest time of preaching and religious instructions. Really, however, the matter is very easily explained. The Church of England alone did not produce very many of these great theological writers; many of them were nonconformists—representing the old Puritan stock which did not fail to preserve its stern morality even under the reign of Charles II. These men preached very boldly, earnestly, and with all the learning at their command; and they tried to make their sermons beautiful in order to attract people. And people were attracted in great numbers—even people who did not believe in religion at all, and who did not care about doctrines or documents. And the reason is that there was no other place of amusement, except the churches to which respectable people with moral feeling could go. They could not go to the theatre,

[1] *The fatal marriage, or the innocent adultery. A play. Acted at the Theatre Royal by their Majesties servants* 1694.

while the comedies of the Restoration were being played; and they could not take their wives and children to such places. There were no public libraries; and the public gardens were not places to which a father could take his daughter or a husband his wife. Only in the church he could feel safe; and only in the churches could they listen to anything resembling pure literature. This is the explanation of the mystery referred to. I need not say much about the names of the books or the preachers of the time: it will be enough to remember the general fact of the golden age of the English pulpit, and to recollect that the books of these great preachers are still read. Perhaps the greatest was Tillotson;[1] but there were many others. Also there was one Bishop of the English Church worth mentioning, — not so much because he wrote good sermons, but he wrote a very curious book to prove that people were living in the moon. This man was a great mathematician as well as a charming writer. To-day we know there is no life on the moon; but we are pretty nearly sure that at least one of the planets is inhabited; and many of the arguments used by Bishop Wilkins[2] are interesting to-day as applicable to the theory of a civilization in Mars.

However, two great books must here be considered, having nothing to do with the pulpit orator. It is a curious fact that the two best writers of the age were so utterly opposed to each other in all respects that we might call them antipodal individualities. One was the greatest of English atheists; the other the most religious Puritan. One was not only a profound scholar, but possessed a logical faculty and a force of intelligence even greater than those of Lord Bacon;—the other was a man of the people without education, without training — once a soldier, but certainly a tinker by trade and probably a gypsy; for in those days nearly all the travelling tinkers were gypsies. In spite of this prodigious difference, it would be hard to say which of the two deserve the highest place in the history of English prose. Certainly the influence of the poor

[1] John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury (1630-1694).
[2] John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester (1614-1672).

man (the former) has been the greatest; but the solid merits of the philosopher and atheist have been affecting the language of our greatest modern philosopher, and these merits are likely to be more and more appreciated in the future because they helped to create the splendid English style of the late Professor Huxley.

The atheist was, of course, Hobbes; and the poor tinker John Bunyan. I shall first speak of Hobbes.[1] The principal work of Hobbes is represented by the book entitled *The Leviathan.*[2] Hobbes was a thorough materialist writing in an age when men knew much less about matter than do now. If he lived to-day he would probably have been one of the first who recognized that there is an infinite mystery even in a pebble. But he wrote according to his light, and in the electric brightness of his keen mind no theories of any sort were suffered to exist. His logic is like a powerful acid, devouring everything opposed to it. He did not believe in Gods, or ghosts or dogmas, or doubts or shadows of any kind; he dealt only with certainties and he treated ethics and emotion entirely from a utilitarian point of view. He consumed all idealism, all poetry, in the furnace fire of his rational analysis. He was really a dreadful person; and you cannot help being angry while reading some of his pages—because he tells you and proves to you that you love for purely selfish reasons, that you are honourable only for selfish reasons, that friendship is all selfishness, that religion is selfishness, that even a mother's love is selfishness. But he does not make mistakes of facts, and never mistakes of argument; only his personal character helped to make disagreeable an argument which in other hands is not disagreeable at all. He did not recognize sufficiently that we must make a distinction between noble selfishness and selfishness which is not noble. He was altogether an iconoclast, but he was also a very great philosopher and a most admirable master of English. There is no style in English so strong, so terse, so hard, and so cold as the style of Hobbes. The best of Hobbes,

[1] Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679).

[2] *Leviathan, or the matter, forme, and power of a commonwealth ecclesiasticall and civill* 1651.

considered as argument, is in his philosophy on human nature. This was long thought to have been derived from Descartes; but it is now known that it was not: some of it may have had a French source, but a great deal of it is independent thinking. Hobbes wrote a great deal during his long life of 92 years; and the whole of his work represents not less than 60 volumes. But a great deal of this appears in two languages; for Hobbes was accustomed to write his books first in Latin and afterwards in English. Excluding the Latin we still have nearly ten volumes of the best "bull-dog English" that ever was written. But you must not suppose that his English style was modelled on Latin; on the contrary it is a very curious thing that the style of Hobbes was closely modelled upon the Greek of Thucydides. Hobbes had translated this Greek historian[1] at an early age; and there is no Greek writer more terse, more economic, more clear. However, remember that Hobbes obtained his effect not by imitating Thucydides in many syllable words, but only in finding and using every simple and strong English word that could take the place of a Greek one. The Anglo-Saxon element greatly dominated in the style of Hobbes.

He wrote also upon mathematics, about which he knew very little; and this part of his labour is of no value scientifically. But all his work in English has the value of a perfectly original style. And his philosophy, after the religious prejudice that it aroused has now passed away, is no longer much studied. That is only because the best of it has been embodied and developed and carried further in the successive work of Locke, Hume, and, in our own time, of Herbert Spencer. Spencer has especially developed the analysis of all intellectual processes into elements of simple sensation.

John Bunyan was, as I have already told you, a tinker by trade. He afterwards became a soldier and served abroad. Still later he became a preacher—a Puritan preacher, and the most popular preacher of his time. He was born in 1628 and died in 1688. Contemporaries describe him as a tall, bony man with a red moustache and of a rather fierce appearance, but he was

[1] *Thucydides' Eight bookes of the Peloponesian warre* tr. 1629.

certainly one of the kindest of men. However, he had extraordinary courage and obstinacy and he was not afraid in the most dangerous time of church and political abuses. As a consequence he gave much trouble and passed many years in a prison. While in prison he wrote a book which made him famous and that has become a religious classic. This is *The Pilgrim's Progress.*[1] It is an allegory of the passage of the Christian soul to true light, describing all the temptations, troubles, and triumphs of it in the form of adventures. There is something in the book that reminds us of the old-fashioned religious plays; for as in the Mysteries, the vices and virtues are personified; they constitute the characters of the romance. Perhaps you would find the reading of the book scarcely more interesting than the reading of Miracle play. But that depends very much upon the way that you teach yourself to feel about it. In order to become really interested in the work, you must first understand the social condition of the period and try to sympathize with the brave, simple man without education endeavouring to teach moral truth under the guise of a fable. If you can do that you will like it. But in any case I do not see how the students of English literature can escape the duty of reading it. It has given to the English language a great number of household words, familiar phrases, picturesque similes, which are now scattered through the texts of thousands of well-known authors. Such names as "Vanity-Fair," "The Slough of Despond," "Giant Despair" have become everywhere as familiar as the names of the characters of our fairy tales and nursery rhymes. The reason is that the book immediately after its print obtained the greatest success of any book published in England. Only the English Bible could claim a greater number of readers. Since then many millions of copies have been sold. The work has been translated into all languages of Europe and it has been illustrated by hundreds of artists. Perhaps you will remember that it was the appearance of one edition illustrated by John Martin which furnished Macaulay an opportunity to write his admirable essay on Bunyan. Macau-

[1] *The pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come* 1678, 1684.

lay did not like the pictures, but in this I think he was wrong. Macaulay was not an authority upon art, though he was the greatest authority upon many other things. He had very little imagination of the emotional Bunyan; and Martin's pictures were made to appeal to the sense of terror and mystery. They were really very great, and now command a very high price. He also made the best pictures to illustrate Milton. Besides *The Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan wrote *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman,*[1] *The Holy War*[2] and some other things. None of them equals in merit *The Pilgrim's Progress.* But next to that *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* may be estimated. The English is perfectly simple, limpid, musical, and the construction of the narrative is always the work of a great but unconscious artist. Of course Bunyan disliked men and nature, as he saw them in the course of his wandering life, and he saw with the keenest of eyesight. The places that he paints in words for us are all or nearly all English scenes; and the conversations which enliven his narratives vividly repeat the language of his century. Indeed it is now said that these conversational terms had a great deal of influence at a later day upon a great number of English novelists. Sometimes a great feeling uttered with absolute sincerity seems enough to produce artistic results.

Assuredly it was so in the case of John Bunyan who did not care about literature, who knew nothing of real art, who was a common man of the people. In spite of every disadvantage, he became, without desiring it, a really great force in the history of English prose.

To speak of the various essayists in this connection is scarcely worth our while. There were a number of essayists of fair merit; but very few take the first rank. For example, Sir William Temple,[3] once inordinately praised, is now no longer read. He was a man who wrote very pretentiously upon all subjects which he did not understand. No essayist of this time compares with Sir Thomas Browne. Perhaps Dr. Thomas

[1] *The life and death of Mr. Badman* 1680.
[2] *The holy war made by Shaddai upon Diabolus* 1682.
[3] Sir William Temple (1628-1699).

Burnet[1] came nearest; but he belongs chiefly to theological literature — though his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*[2] is partly romantic—romantic as imagination. But we cannot deal with the subject of prose without referring to a kind of fashion which appeared in the literature of the time—the diary.

The Great Diaries

No great thing comes suddenly into existence in the world of letters. It would not be correct to imagine that the diary was suddenly invented in the 17th century. Small diaries had appeared before. Besides, the Romans and the Greeks kept diaries, and every English scholar after the beginning of classic study must have known something about the ancient diaries. The English word "diary" is only the adoption of the Latin word "diarium" which signifies among other things a daily book, a book in which a record is kept of the events of every day. The difference between a diary and a chronicle is that the diary records only the personal experiences of the writer. All that we can say about the diaries of the 17th century is that in them the art of diary keeping was first brought to great perfection in England. But only two names are necessary to remember — John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. Perhaps John Evelyn's *Diary*[3] is the greatest diary by any one man; for he kept it continuously through a period of 64 years. It occupies, in the edited form, three great volumes. But Evelyn himself is a more interesting fact than even his excellent diary. Evelyn was perhaps the most learned man in the world at the time that he lived,—certainly he was the most learned Englishman. He was born in 1620 and died in 1706. Being rich he could devote the whole of his whole life to study, and he did nothing but study and write through the greater part of a century. To give you some idea of what his abilities were, let me tell you

[1] Thomas Burnet (1636?-1715).
[2] *Telluris theoria sacra* 1681-89; *The theory of the earth* 1684-90.
[3] *Diary* 1641—1705-6 (1818, 1850-52, 1879).

that he wrote equally well upon the subjects of horticulture, arboriculture, gardening (in the picturesque English), architecture, engraving and painting, on navigation, commerce and agricultural industries. On each of these subjects he wrote, not an essay, but an enormous book. 27 immense books were published in his lifetime; but these represent only a small part of his work.

One book, about English botany, which took him 40 years to write, is still preserved in manuscript; but it has never been published, it was too expensive to publish. In this respect, it reminds us of that giant, Humboldt, much of whose work also remains unpublished and that a man may know too much for his generation. These facts about Evelyn are simply curious; however, they have nothing to do with his place in English literature. In English literature he is represented only by his *Diary*—a remarkable monument of dignified, clear, and beautiful English; a masterpiece of smooth, scholarly prose which reminds us very much of the best English literature of later centuries. Historically it has an immense value also; but that does not concern us here.

Pepys was a secretary in the navy and remained in Government service all his life, which lasted from 1633 to 1703. It was a strange period for a man like Pepys to live in; for he seemed to have been a man of feeling of an emotional kind. The man who showed emotion in those days found it very hard to keep position in Government service. Brutality was the fashion, the conversation was cynical, and anybody who could not mix in society, taking its tone and adopting its manner, must have been looked upon with suspicion. Pepys was afraid, and he must have been very careful in his acting, but he saw and heard every day astonishing things and thought they ought to be written down, for everybody was afraid to write them. Pepys wrote them in a cypher of his own. In that way he was sure of being able to keep his diary secretly. After his death his library passed into Government hands and the *Diary*[1] re-

[1] *Memoirs. Comprising his diary from 1659 to 1669, and a selection from his private correspondence* 16 . . (1825, 1871, 1875-79, 1893-99).

mained with it for many years before anybody divined what it was. At last somebody became interested, studied the cypher, mastered it and discovered the great value of it. The *Diary* of Pepys covers 9 years and gives us such a picture of the life of the Restoration period as no history could give; for Pepys tells us everything about the dim theatres, the quarrels, the scandals, the town-gossip of the time; and he writes so clearly that we can see and hear all that he records. His style is not literary, it has not very much to be recommended, except the clearness and plain language; but it shows an amiable character behind the candle. Evelyn's *Diary* was written as carefully as Gibbon's *History of Rome.* Pepys' *Diary* is written as one would write a letter to a friend in a great hurry.

But these two diaries did much to establish a new form of literary record;—hundreds of later diaries were modelled after them. This kind of literature will probably never die. It is still written, as was evidenced by the diary of Marie Bashkirtseff which a few years ago was translated into so many languages. A great example of modern diaries is Amiel's *Journal,* which has also been much translated and has become the classical model of a diary of personal emotions and thoughts. We will here close the lecture of the 17th century. Of the last period under discussion—the period of the Restoration—the student has but few names to memorize. You ought to memorize the names of four—the greatest writers of comedy—and the name of one great writer of tragedy, Otway. In prose you should be able to remember Hobbes and Bunyan. And you should remember the appearance of great diaries. In poetry, of course, Dryden is the great figure. Otherwise there is not much which it is necessary to keep fixed in the mind for general examination. We shall now turn to the 18th century.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

GENERAL REMARKS

THE CLASSIC AGE (1700-1750)

THE 18th century is one of the most important, not only in English literature, but in the literature of Europe. It was not only a "Classic Age" in England: it was a classic age also upon the Continent. It laid the solid foundations for the whole of our 19th century literature. And it must occupy a very considerable part of these lectures on the general history of English literature. We shall probably devote the whole of this year to the 18th century. Therefore, to begin with, it is necessary to make the course of this study appear as plain and simple as possible. In almost every history of English literature you will find that the literary periods of the 18th century have been differently arranged. Every professor has his own way of dividing up the literature of the 18th century. You will find also that even the popular names given to this period are not the same. The 18th century has been called "the Augustan Age," "the Age of Pope," "the Classic Age," and "the Age of Queen Anne." All of these definitions are loosely made and unless correctly defined as to time and duration, such titles can only serve to bewilder the students. It is quite true that no period of English literature can be said to begin exactly, or to end exactly, either with a century or with a reign. But I should advise you to leave fine distinctions for specialists, and not to trouble yourselves about how much of the 18th century work should be called Queen Anne literature, and how much of it called the literature of the Age of King George. I am going to make the division as simple as possible, even though it may not be absolutely exact.

Let me begin, then, by simply saying that the whole of

18th century literature may be roughly divided into two parts. The history of the first part lasts from the beginning of the century to a little beyond the middle of it; and the greatest figure of this first half of the century was Pope. The second period of 18th century literature includes the remainder of the century; and the greatest figure belonging to it was Dr. Johnson. If you only remember that, you will know quite enough about the two chief facts of the chronology.

The first half of the century was really, however, a classic age. We may quite correctly give it that name. Why? Because it was the age of critical Latin studies and of the application to English literature of those principles established by Greek and Latin authors which are called "classic rules," Moreover it was the age in which French classic influence became supreme in England. I mean by this that it was the age in which the Greek and Latin studies made by the great French critics and poets were particularly studied in England, and resulted in changing and fixing English forms of poetry and prose. It has been called the Augustan Age for this reason, that the age of the Roman Emperor Augustus was the time in which Latin literature reached its highest perfection. I think, however, the term "classic age" best describes the first half of the 18th century. To speak of this period as the period of Queen Anne is really wrong,—because Queen Anne ascended the throne in 1702, and her reign only lasted until 1714. Now Alexander Pope did not die until 1744, thirty years later; and his influence continued to dominate literary circles even after his death. So let us call the first half of 18th century literary history "the Classic Period."

But let us be first quite clear as to the meaning of the word "classic," used so extensively to-day both as an adjective and as a noun. What does it mean? The word comes from the Latin "classicus"—originally meaning rank, order, or degree. Later on the word came to mean among the Romans not merely "rank" in a general sense, but the highest rank, and therefore the best of anything. So a book of poetry, or of prose, which represented the highest form of literature came to be called by

the Romans themselves a classic book; that is to say, a book of the highest class in literature.

With the general introduction of Latin studies into Western countries after the Renaissance the Roman word was adopted, in its literary meaning, into every European language. A classic author came to mean any Greek or Roman author of the best periods of Greek and Roman literature, as distinguished from later Greek or Byzantine authors, and the later Latin authors, who wrote in the corrupt Latin of the Middle Ages. "The Classics" came to mean the whole body of first class Greek and Latin authors. And in every university in Europe the term "classical studies" still means the study of the Greek and Latin texts.

But you will very properly ask, why, then, are English and French and German books called classics? Why do we say that a book by Goldsmith, or a poem by Pope, is a classic? Why do we call the great French dramas of Corneille and Racine classics? Why do we call Gœthe's *Faust*, or La Motte Fouqué's *Undine*, a classic? In all these cases the word "classic" only means "of the first rank,"—the best production of the English or French or German literature of that time.

But in speaking of the first half of the 18th century, "the Age of Pope," as "the Classic Age," what do we mean? We do not mean the same thing. The 18th century classic age means the age in which English literature was constructed and governed upon the same principles as those established by the old Greek and Roman writers—more especially by Aristotle. This influence was not direct. French critics and poets, particularly Boileau, first followed and advocated the classic laws; and English again followed French. So in speaking of the Age of Pope as the Classic Age we mean the age in which Greek and Roman teaching shaped the whole course of English literature through French.

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The great age of Elizabeth has often been compared to the splendid sunrise; and as it was especially the age of romantic feeling, we often hear such expressions as "the Sun of Romanticism." For then, indeed, romantic feeling made all the field of literature flowery and warm, like the light of the great sun.

Now what happened afterwards reminds me of a story. Once there was a King who discovered that the sun had spots upon his face. So he asked his Wise Men, his Astrologers, and Magicians whether they could take away the spots from the face of the sun. They answered that they could do it very easily, and the King told them to go to work. Accordingly they climbed up to the sun and began to rub and scrub the face of him as you would rub and scrub a plate. They thought they could thus polish the sun—make him brighter. But the more they rubbed and scrubbed, the more the spots appeared; and the sun moreover began to get dim. Then the King got very angry; and he told his servants to take those Wise Men, and bake them alive. So they were put into ovens, and baked, even as traitors are burnt.

But after a little while there went to the King other Wise Men who said that they could make the sun all right again. They had a wonderful medicine, and with this they wanted to rub the face of the sun. The King warned them that he would not forgive any mistake; but allowed them to begin their work. They began to rub the face of the sun with the medicine, and the sun became very, very dim, and gave only half as much light as before; and the world became very cold. Then the King told his servants to take those Wise Men and boil them alive. So they were put into pots and boiled even as arch-traitors are boiled.

And always after that, the King sat in his chair before a great fire, rubbing his knees which were cold, and muttering to himself: "Some were baked, some were boiled!"

The moral of this story is that of the old English proverb, "Let well enough alone," but it seems to illustrate in a partial way the history of the struggle between romantic and classical feelings. There were many spots on the sun of Elizabethan

poetry,—many faults,—many obscurities; but it was glorious poetry, full of fire and sincerity. The later 17th century could only see the faults, it could not feel the generous warmth and beauty that had been. It attempted to improve, and it succeeded only in making poor imitations from which the true fire was almost absent. The 18th century, the Classic Age, went still further with the attempt to improve; and the result was that all romantic feeling, all the essence of true poetry, vanished from the English-speaking world. In the poetry of the 18th century there is only one form—with, of course, some rare exceptions. No age was more barren of real poetic feeling than the period we are going to discuss. Some critics indeed have boldly said that the 18th century was the age of prose, and that it had no real poetry. These called the work of Pope and his school prose. But this is playing with the word; for the words prose, prosy, and prosaic, are all used in the sense of commonplace, uninteresting, dull. We cannot deny that in so far as form was concerned the poetry of the 18th century has never been surpassed in its own limitation—that is to say, in English literature. But those limitations were very narrow indeed. The first thing for the students to remember clearly about the poetry of the Classic Age is that only one form of poetry was much used. In the previous ages hundreds of forms had been used—indeed almost every form of verse now known to English literature. But the school of Pope attempted no serious work except in one form; that was the heroic couplet. The word couplet implies rhyme;—in this measure every two successive lines rhymed together. The measure is what we call iambic pentameter. You know that the Greek word pentameter signifies measure by five,—pentameter is therefore a verse consisting of five feet. And an iambus is a foot consisting of one short syllable followed by one long syllable, therefore the measure would be thus expressed:—

|| ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — |

Or we might write it this way:—

|| do $\overline{\text{do}}$ | do $\overline{\text{do}}$ | do $\overline{\text{do}}$ | do $\overline{\text{do}}$ | do $\overline{\text{do}}$ |

It is as monotonous as the beating of a drum in the street, —as the beating of the little drum that the toy-sellers in Tokyo beat to call the attention of the little children. But, for more than fifty years, this was the classic measure of English poetry; nothing else was considered so dignified, so divine, so worthy of the true scholar and the poet. To have written in any other measure would have been to resist the fashion. And the fashion became tyrannic: even into the 19th century it lingered. Even Byron wrote in this form at times; and we may say that it was not until about the time of the youth of Tennyson that heroic couplet was altogether abandoned. So hard it is to fight any kind of fashion. Crabbe wrote altogether in this form, and quite a number of men whose names appeared in the early literature of the following century.

You may ask, how such a thing was possible? It would not have been possible but for the supreme genius of one man. A great fashion in literature can only be set by some very great accomplishment. The accomplishment was effected by Pope. When the world saw the astonishing way in which Pope was able to use this single form of verse they readily imagined that the wonder of the thing belonged to the verse quite as much as to the man. Because Pope had been able to say more with fewer words than any other man had been able to do in any kind of verse, people said, "This indeed must be the most perfect form of verse." And the difficulty which other men found in trying to imitate Pope did not change public opinion in the least. A generation,—indeed two generations were to pass before the great mistake was fully perceived. Pope was a man with a very special and very limited kind of genius. By perpetually working in only one form of verse he became so perfect in it that no one has ever been able to approach him. I doubt whether the greatest masters of Victorian poetry could make a single page of heroic couplet quite equal to the best work of Pope.

The prose of the century also became fixed in one style, —though in a less degree than the poetry. The poetry became

rigid, frozen—cold, sparkling, motionless like ice. The prose became, to a great extent, what we would call "wooden." Every sentence was turned out with the same precision that a plank is turned out by a carpenter. Of course the plank may be very beautiful, very smooth, very precious, but it is only wood. 18th century prose was much more a thing for form than of life. During the first 50 years, the style of the essay, as fixed by Addison, Steele, Shaftesbury, and others—but especially by Addison and Steele,—became the typical fashion of English writing. People did not abandon the notion of Addison's style as the best possible, until very recently. Even yet pages of these authors have to be studied in English schools; —but at the beginning of the century they were studied to the exclusion of much more valuable texts. What was the reason of these changes?

The popular opinion was that Pope had discovered the secret of making English verse as perfect as Greek or Latin verse; and that Addison had discovered how to write English as well as the masters of antiquity wrote Greek or Latin. Probably these authors themselves thought this; for none of them were sufficiently great scholars to recognize that the language of the antiquity were much more perfect and flexible than English or even French. But undoubtedly the aim of these men had been to try to do what the public really believed that they had done. They were not the first to try this. In the course of these lectures you will remember that the English people had tried to do the same thing since the 14th century. The 19th century has realized that it never can be done. But the 18th century really made the greatest attempt known to English literature in this direction.

None of the men who made this effort went directly to the best classic authors for their guidance,—except perhaps Addison, who must at least have studied some Latin authors very closely. The teaching of the ancients about literature was learned in England through the French masters. The ultimate authority was the *Poetics* of Aristotle, but the Greek text had been studied in France, scarcely at all in England. Pope learned

his rules almost entirely from Boileau. He tried to hide this fact; but it is now known that there is scarcely a single poem in all Pope's work which cannot be traced to the study of Boileau up to the time when Pope had passed middle age.

What had English literature to gain by all this, and what to lose? What it lost, though only for a time, was the spirit of poetry and the freedom of imagination and sentiment. What it gained was very considerable; but the results show themselves only to-day in their fully developed value.

The great gain was in workmanship. The Elizabethans had not been at all careful about their measures. A line might be a foot or even three feet too long; accents might be entirely wrong; and yet nobody complained. To be quite perfect was not even imagined possible. And you must remember that irregularity is quite natural to the Northern languages, which, being much younger than the Southern languages, are much less easily manipulated. The ruggedness and stiffness of the English tongue appears through the whole chain of centuries behind the 18th till we get back to the primitive forms of Anglo-Saxon. Nearly all English poetry, and most English prose, showed the imperfection of the language up to the time of the 18th century. Then by tremendous labour, precision was at last obtained. It was found possible to write English verse in a certain measure with absolute correctness, and to imitate with considerable success certain resonant qualities of the Latin prose—rhythm. The attempt to be perfect was very much like the work of a boy who learns to write an elegant hand by constant practice every day. In order to succeed he must abandon play and many kinds of enjoyment; and he does this cheerfully because he knows that a good hand will afterwards be of service to him in obtaining some commercial position. You can think of the Classic Age as the time when England gave up her real pleasure of poetry, and set to work steadily practising the simple art of learning to write correctly! Observe the difference to be noticed in the literature of dull periods before and after the 18th century! In the dull period immediately preceding the age of Pope there was scarcely any perfectly

correct verse produced. At the present time,—that is to say, at the end of the 19th century, and the beginning of the 20th, we have another dull period,—a time in which no great poet is doing anything of importance. But an immense amount of poetry, or verse at least, is now being written; and all that verse is remarkably correct. We have learned, of course, that mere correctness does not make poetry; nevertheless, correctness is of supreme value to poetical expressions. The fact is that since the death of Pope the best of English poetry has always been correct, and inferior poetry has been put into tolerably good verse. Before Pope, with the exception of Milton, it would be hard to mention a master of precision in prosody. Now they are common. I could easily mention a dozen names of modern verse-writers who cannot write poetry, but who could teach all the secrets of verse form to advanced students in a literary course. The whole subject reminds me of another modern development—the musical development which has taken place in Europe during the 19th century and which has extended even to America. Formerly Italian opera, Italian music, in which melody supremely dominated, was believed to be the best of all possible music. To-day, I need scarcely tell you, German music in which harmony is everything and melody subsidiary has supplanted it. Now this means more than a simple change of fashion. It really means a higher development of the musical sense. In the same way the poets and even the prose-writers of the 19th century have developed beyond their predecessors to the possession of what we are accustomed to call "the Correct Ear." For this development, beyond all doubt we must thank the monotonous and artificial writers of the age of Pope. Their theory as to the real functions of literary art was all wrong; and in the first half of the 19th century "the Romantic Sun" appeared again brighter than ever. We are still in a romantic age. But if it had not been for that mistaken theory of the classic writers the art of poetry and prose to-day could not possibly be what it has become.

Eighteenth Century Poets of the Classic Age

ALEXANDER POPE

It has been said very truly of Pope[1] that, in order to discover any poetry in him, we must read him by *lines*,—that is to say, one line at a time. If you do that occasionally, I think that you will recognize some of his extraordinary merits; but they are merits only of form. You will not find emotional poetry in Pope. You will not find poetical variety in Pope. You will not find any tenderness, any deep originality, any lovable quality. The vast body of his work consists entirely of satire—even much of it that appears under different titles to those of the avowed *Satires*. For example, the so-called *Imitations of Horace*,[2] and several of the *Epistles* are among the wickedest of the satire. Wit must be acknowledged; but can we call wicked wit poetry? And wicked wit represents the larger part of Pope's work outside of his translations of *Homer*.[3] Much of this is horrible and painful reading. No man to-day, in any country of Europe, could write as Pope wrote without being put promptly into prison. We know that the whole age was coarse, and that Pope was fighting with men quite as venomous as himself, though less skilful in spitting out the venom. But imagine the age in which a poet could describe the Father of all the Gods sitting in a water-closet, and using the prayers of stupid poets in the same way that the water-closet paper is commonly used! I refer to the scene compiled between lines 83 and 102 in the Second Book of *The Dunciad*. And in the same Book the same picture in the lines 157—190 is even more filthy. Yet this does not represent Pope's worst malignity. How wicked he could be is perhaps best shown in the monstrous line written about a woman whom he once pretended to worship:—

> Perplexed by her love, and poisoned by her hate.

[1] Alexander Pope (1688-1744).
[2] *Satires and epistles of Horace imitated* 1732-38.
[3] *Homer's Iliad* tr. 1715-20. *Homer's Odyssey* tr. 1725-26.

When we see things like this we understand the great difficulty which the most generous critics have had in making an impartial judgment of Pope. He offends every delicate sense at once; and it is very hard not to hate him.

And yet there is a great deal to be said on the good side for Pope. To understand the reason of what he produced we must try to understand something about his life. I am not going to trouble you much with biographical details: I shall mention only what is absolutely necessary in order to illustrate his character. He was born, as you know, in 1688, in the family of a Roman Catholic London merchant. The family were rich —or at least very well off. The child was terribly weak and deformed in extraordinary ways. His body was all crooked; he could never in his life walk without difficulty; and he never could wear clothes like other people. Even as a man his stature was less than four feet; and his legs were so thin that it was necessary for him to wear three pairs of padded stockings—otherwise his legs would have looked like chickens' legs. Internally also his health was very bad;—the least indiscretion in eating or drinking made him terribly sick. It was utterly impossible for him to marry and equally impossible for him to enjoy any of the common pleasures of life. Thus he was doomed from the beginning to an existence of solitude and misery.

And what made this misery dreadful in this case was that he had a most extraordinary delicate nervous system. The least unkind word almost threw him into fits; and he could never forgive a verbal injury because he could never forget the pain that it caused him.

That was the physical man. Another grave misfortune for him was the fact of his being a Roman Catholic. He could not be educated. The English laws of that time did not allow the son of a Roman Catholic to enter great educational establishments; and Catholic teachers were not tolerated. Such an education as Pope could be given had to be given secretly in his own home by a priest. For a very short time he attended some schools for little boys,—small schools of the kind with

which the Government did not much concern itself. But anything like a good education was legally denied to the boy. Moreover the priest was not able to teach him much. So Pope taught himself. As a child he taught himself to write by copying the letters out of printed books; and, even to the end of his life, the results of this self-teaching were visible in the great beauty and clearness of his handwriting. He taught himself Latin, French, and Italian by translation—working patiently over a text, with dictionary and grammar, until he could get at its meaning. Still later he taught himself something of Greek in the same way. The way was bad; and Pope never attained to a really good knowledge of these languages. We know that he could read French very well; but we also know that he could not speak it,—because he accented French words in the English way. Nevertheless the knowledge thus obtained enabled Pope to become a classic poet in his own tongue. And this means an astonishing power of memory and of application.

Deformed, sickly, depending for education upon books, the only pleasure left for him in this world was reading; and he read and studied, even as a child, so furiously that he almost killed himself. At 12 years of age he was able to compose dramatic poems; at 20 years of age he was the greatest master of verse in England; at 22 he was beginning to influence all Europe. This was astonishing genius—but do not forget that the genius was of a very narrow order, directing itself entirely to form.

It was by translating Homer that he first made himself really rich. But, as I said before, his knowledge of Greek was not at all great; and Homer, to be correctly translated, taxes the best resources of modern scholarship. Pope's *Homer* is not a translation of Homer. It is only a paraphrase and a paraphrase in which the real spirit of Homer does not appear at all. Pope replaced the Greek feeling by the English feeling of his own artificial age. You will never learn anything about Homer by reading Pope. But the early 18th century would not have cared for a correct translation of Homer in verse;—much less would it have been able to appreciate a beautiful prose version

like that of Butcher, Myers, Leaf and Lang. It wanted a Homer in the fashion of the 18th century; and it was grateful to Pope for the gift. His *Homer* is not worth studying for classic reasons in the ancient sense; but it is worth reading for classic reason in the 18th century meaning of the word. It is a grand example of that form of verse which I told you about the other day.

After becoming quite independent financially, Pope's great quarrels began. Isolation had made him abnormally suspicious; he suspected his best friends, and lived in a condition of perpetual irritation and doubt. It has been said that he practised extraordinary stratagem even in asking for a cup of tea, and that, had he been a gardener, he would have practised diplomacy in the matter of cabbages.

Partly this was due to the cruel attacks that had been made upon him in various quarters, satirists ridiculing his weakness, his horrible deformity, and all things in regard to which he was most sensitive. Then the terrible little dwarf gathered himself together and answered his enemies in a most poisonous and most merciless, most abominable satire ever written. He destroyed them; but the cost to himself, to his reputation, to his honour, to his manhood, was very great. Nevertheless Pope had good qualities of heart, which he did not often show to the outer world. To his parents he is known to have been the most loving of sons; and to the weak and unfortunate he often showed much kindness. One-eighth part of his income was invariably expended in charitable ways. The most dishonourable thing which he ever did,—accepting a large sum of money on condition of suppressing a satire—was done for the sake of a woman whom he reverenced as a sister, and to whom he left all his property when he died. In order to understand why Pope seems to be so savagely vindictive we must remember that he was living in an age of social cruelty and jealousy. Knowing this we can find many excuses for him. And besides, one cannot help admiring the courage and force of this weak little manikin, when we remember that he actually conquered and crushed all opposition, in spite of every disad-

vantage—making himself so much feared that when, in his old age, he paid a visit to the chief theatre of the time, the actors became frightened at his presence, and could not properly perform their parts. What a triumph of mind over body does not Pope's personal history afford us?

Details of the appearance of his different works,—details of their character, I should judge to be unnecessary to this lecture; for I suppose you know already the names of his principal pieces and the history of not a few. His place in English literature does not, in any way, depend upon his subjects; but upon the perfection of his verse simply considered as verse,—and only this need we now dwell upon. As has been already said the best way to read Pope is to read a few lines at a time, and to study each line by itself. It matters very little where you read. If you want examples of Pope's ugly side, open any page of the *Satires;* if you want examples of his splendid side, examine any of the couplets in *The Rape of the Lock,*[1] or in the *Essay on Man.*[2] The wonder is not in anything that Pope says, but in the way that he says it. Let us take, for example, a few lines here and there from the *Essay on Man.* First let us look at the wonderful lines 61—66 in the First Epistle of the *Essay on Man.*

> When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains
> His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains:
> When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the clod,
> Is now a victim, and now Ægypt's God:
> Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend
> His actions', passions', being's, use and end.

Now this is only a commonplace to say that man cannot understand why he must live in this world and obey laws, any more than the horse can understand why a man drives him now in one direction and now in another, or than the ox can understand why he is made to work at one time, and is treated with religious honours at another. But no other man ever expressed this commonplace so well in the English language.

[1] *The rape of the lock* 1712-14.
[2] *An essay on man* 1732-34.

Notice the extraordinary and ingenius economy in the use of the possessives in the last line read. Or take such a couplet as this (lines 43—44 of the Third Epistle) :—

> Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
> The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.

How much is signified by those few words. You might expand the same idea over three pages; but you could not make it any stronger. And here is another example of *multum in parvo* :—

> For Forms of Government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administer'd is best:
> For Modes of Faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.
>
> (Epistle III. Lines 303-306).

Or,—

> Order is Heav'n's first law; and this confest,
> Some are, and must be, greater than the rest.
>
> (Epistle IV. Lines 49-50).

Things of this kind pass into household saying; each of them sets thinking the mind that hears it for the first time, and it is not likely to become forgotten. Scores and scores of lines from the *Essay on Man* are known by heart to even the uneducated class—you will hear common working men in England quoting Pope as they labour in the streets. Very probably these could not tell you anything definite about Pope or his work; but they can quote many of his best lines as their fathers did before them. Does this mean poetry? Not at all!

The *Essay on Man* is not poetry. It is supremely perfect proverbial literature put into rhyme—that is all. But the literature of proverbs, being a storehouse of moral experience, has really a great value; and when Pope put old proverbs and old platitudes into the best verse possible, he greatly enriched the English proverbial literature. Excepting Shakespeare no English author is so much quoted from wherever the English language is spoken as Pope. But it is as a speaker of proverbs that he is quoted from—please to remember that.

Could he write poetry in the highest sense? I do not think that he could; and I do not think that any great critic of present time would venture to say that he could. But he could write pretty verse, delicate verse, dainty verse,—even picturesque verse, when he was in good humour. Great verse or emotional verse he never did write. But notice the grace of the lines in which he tells us jocosely what becomes of the souls of women when they die.

> For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
> To their first Elements their Souls retire:
> The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
> Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
> Soft yielding minds to Water glide away,
> And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea.
> The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
> In search of mischief still on Earth to roam.
> The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
> And sport and flutter in the fields of Air.
>
> (*The Rape of the Lock.* Canto I. Lines 57-66.)

Whatever poetry this may be, it does not lack grace: it is a charming bit of ironical fun.

Or in a subject of greater seriousness,—nature realistically felt—let us see how Pope can paint with words. Take these few lines describing a river—the River Loddon—reflecting in its still surface the images of the trees, hills, and clouds. This little piece you will find in the poem entitled *Windsor-Forest.*[1]

> Oft in her glass the musing shepherd spies
> The *headlong* mountains and the *downward* skies,
> The wat'ry landscape of the *pendant* woods,
> And *absent* trees that *tremble* in the floods;
> In the clear azure *gleam* the flocks are seen,
> And *floating* forest *paint* the waves with green.

I have italicized certain words here just to call your attention to a peculiar feature of Pope's art. None of these italicized words are at all remarkable in themselves;—they are not beautiful words; they are not even poetical. But the way that Pope

[1] *Windsor-Forest* 1704-10.

uses them makes them beautiful. Who else would have thought of describing the image of a mountain upside down in the water as "headlong"—the word we commonly use to express either falling or rushing head downwards. As for "downward" or "downwards,"—that is just the word we should have expected a commonplace poet to use in describing inverted images of trees or hills; but Pope uses the word only to describe the inverted image of the sky in the water; and by doing this he obtains a most artistic effect,—giving us the sensation of the depth of the sky perceived in the depth of the water. And again, how beautiful the use of the word "pendant" to describe the reflection of the trees. "Pendant," you know, means hanging downwards, like a suspended lobe; and as anything suspended in the common way can easily be moved, the word gives us the sensation of trembling or shaking, as well as of hanging. "Absent"—a very common word—suddenly takes a ghostly beauty in Pope's line by its use to suggest the unreality of the phantom scenery. Lastly, the word "tremble" becomes beautiful only by reason of its relation to this ghostly use of "absent." The combination immediately suggests the motion of a spectre. This art of using a common word in a beautiful way is the distinguishing mark of all great poetry, but Pope, without being really a great poet, possessed the power of this art to an astounding degree. By the Roman writers this art was called *curiosa felicitas*, a "curious felicity,"—that is to say, an extraordinary and lucky success in obtaining the effect desired. Also, remark how, merely by the use of a few words well chosen, and reinforced by capital letters, Pope can make the very smallest trifles take an importance before unimagined. The subject is a woman's dressing-table with her combs and brushes, perfume bottle and other little things lying upon it:—

> This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
> And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
> The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
> Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.

(*The Rape of the Lock.* Canto I Lines 133-36)

One might quote a whole page of this sort of thing. We know that the casket of Indian gems means only a diamond necklace in its case; that Arabia means nothing but toilet-perfume; the Tortoise and the Elephant mean only tortoise-shell and ivory; — but the use of the words and the capital letters decided upon by Pope transforms the commonplace by suggestions of all that is rich and remote. One other extract describing sylphs deserves quotation here—so dainty it is.

> Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
> Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
> Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
> Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light.
>
> (*The Rape of the Loek.* Canto II. Lines 59-62)

Tennyson could not have bettered the 4th line of the above. Indeed I doubt whether he could have accomplished the same effect even with considerably more words. And we see in the line before, the excellent use of the word "fine": this is the true Latin use, signifying rarity, not tenderness.

Selections from Pope, a few lines long, can be made and studied with the greatest possible advantage. Pope must be studied. But he should be studied, only while keeping in the mind the fact that he is useful only as a master of words, and that you have nothing to learn from him in the matter of generous feeling or fine thought. He should represent to the student only so much literary material—building material,—perfectly shaped stones of many colours which can be used for the building of the true poetical structure. And probably Pope himself knew his own limitation. Therefore he wisely kept, or almost kept to a single form of verse. When he leaves this form of verse, it is generally to write something very trivial,—some imitation or parody of other poetry—some half satire of a very light kind. Perhaps the best example of his deftness in handling one or two light kinds of verse is the cruel little poem *Phryne*. Phryne was a celebrated Greek courtesan, whose beauty inspired many famous sculptors—especially Praxiteles. In later times her name became a euphemism for a public pro-

stitute; and it is this professional person that Pope describes the life of in three wicked little stanzas of six lines each. They are wonderfully clever and the student of English literature ought to know them; but, unfortunately, they cannot very well be quoted in the class-room.

The great power of Pope almost withered up all the other poetry for many years. During Pope's lifetime it required some courage to write in any other measure than the heroic couplet, —unless some good excuse could be added in conformity with the literary canons of the age. So we find most of Pope's contemporaries obeying him and imitating him in all respects. There were multitudes of such disciples and such imitators; but only a few of the more important names need concern us. John Gay,[1] one of Pope's few intimate friends, particularly deserves attention; because he did some work that still remains very much alive. He wrote many things in the heroic couplet, but he also wrote lyrics, dramas and an opera or two which occasionally appears on the stage even now. The best work of Gay may be very briefly mentioned,—*The Beggar's Opera*,[2] the *Fables*,[3] and the *Epistles*.[4] The best of his lyrics are to be found in the operatic works. *The Beggar's Opera* remains his masterpiece and it has furnished many familiar phrases to English literature. It was written at the suggestion of that terrible man Swift, — also one of Pope's friends — who said that he othught a very nice opera would be made out of material furnished by the records of Newgate Prison. Gay took this ironical suggestion seriously, and he made a comical drama in which robbers were the heroes. The play was very successful, and brought its author a sum equal to twelve thousand *yen*. In Pope's time the poets could make a great deal of money if they happened to be in the fashion. The works of Gay have lately been published, and a good deal of his matter is worth attention. However, it is necessary only for the student to know

[1] John Gay (1685-1732).
[2] *The beggar's opera* 1727.
[3] *Fables* (2 parts) 1727, *a* 1732 (II. 1738).
[4] *Epistles* 1714, 1722.

something about *The Beggar's Opera*—because a knowledge of it will explain for him many allusions to the plays scattered through both 18th and 19th century literature.

Another person must be mentioned for a very peculiar reason—Ambrose Philips.[1] Philips wrote a great deal in the style of Pope; but none of what he wrote really deserves to live. Among other things which he composed was a volume of sentimental verses addressed to children of noble persons. There was a man living at that time called Carey,[2] — a song-writer: he made the song *Sally in our Alley*[3] which is still a very famous English song and which you will find in any anthology. Carey was rather a strong character and he was disgusted with the verse that Ambrose Philips addressed to children; and he invented a nickname for Philips, — "Namby-Pamby." Now this nickname has become an English adjective, signifying mawkish, maudlin, foolishly sentimental and commonplace. To-day a "namby-pamby" writer does not mean only a man who writes poetry like the poetry of Philips: it means any man who writes stupid and tiresome sentimental nonsense either in verse or prose. And that is all that we need say here about Ambrose Philips.

Thomas Tickell,[4] another disciple of Pope, must be accorded considerable praise—not for the mass of his work, but for two short compositions which are still much admired. Both are elegies. One is a poem on the death of Addison:[5] the other is on the death of an English lieutenant Cadogan,[6] who served under the great general Marlborough. Nothing else need be said about Tickell.

An archdeacon of Clogher, named Parnell,[7] one of Pope's proteges, wrote some verses also of which parts still appear in English anthologies. Unfortunately he died rather young; — otherwise, to judge from his skill in the use of the heroic coup-

[1] Ambrose Philips (1675?-1749).
[2] Henry Carey (d. 1743).
[3] *The ballad of Sally in our alley* (in 1729 ed. of *Poems on several occasions*).
[4] Thomas Tickell (1686-1740).
[5] *To the Earl of Warwick on the death of Mr. Addison* (in Addison's *Works*, vol, I. 1721.)
[6] *On the death of the Earl of Cadogan a* 1740.
[7] Thomas Parnell (1679-1718).

let, he might well have become a very eminent poet. But a better poet than any of these, excepting Gay, was Matthew Prior.[1] Prior's work is still read; and some of it will be read for ages to come. But Prior differed very much from the writers of Pope's school. What he wrote in heroic measure is of no consequence. What he wrote in violation of the literary customs of his time, is, on the other hand, often delicious. You must try to remember the name of Prior; for he was really the first Englishman who wrote what we call "*society verse*" of a delicate musical kind. I do not know better how to describe the impression that Prior made upon one, than by saying that when you read him you sometimes imagine that you are reading verses by Thomas Moore. Prior had something of the same ear for music, the same skill in handling light verse, the same playful grace in addressing women that we find in Moore nearly a hundred years later. The student can find the best of Prior in any popular edition of selections from his works.

Only one more name will I now mention of the true disciples of Pope,—curiously enough the name of a woman. This woman was Anne, Lady Winchelsea.[2] Lady Winchelsea wrote, not perhaps better poetry as to form than others of the school, but she wrote very much better poetry as to feeling. She wrote a good deal in the couplet; but she wrote out of her heart, and some of them I think are very beautiful. Pope himself was not ashamed to borrow from her. The best of her compositions is a piece called *A Nocturnal Reverie*[3] which reminds one of the work of Thomson much more than of anything strictly belonging to the Classic Age. The famous line of Pope—"die of a rose in a romantic pain"—was suggested by a very similar line in the work of Lady Winchelsea.

But there was a tendency in spite of Pope's influence towards romantic feeling. This tendency must here be mentioned. Its first noteworthy representative in Pope's time, was Edward Young[4] who began as a follower of Pope and com-

[1] Matthew Prior (1664-1721).
[2] Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (d. 1720).
[3] *A Nocturnal Reverie* 1713.
[4] Edward Young (1683-1765).

posed a great deal of verse. He was a fellow of Oxford. All that he did while obeying the classic tradition may well be forgotton; but when he turned his back upon Pope's school and took Milton for his model, he produced some wonderful work in sonorous and majestic blank verse,—the *Night Thoughts*.[1] The *Night Thoughts* of Young are very gloomy meditations about death, eternity, and the existence of God:—and they are in their substance further more wearisome, because they are so shaped as to represent imaginary dialogues between the author and some infidels. The arguments are of no value whatever; and a great deal of the thoughts are commonplace. But, nevertheless, the work is of a higher order as blank verse, and some passages of it will probably always live. This was the only fine piece of poetical composition that Young accomplished. It is a land-mark in the history of Queen Anne literature,—as representing a return to blank verse, and to the scholarly method of Milton.

About the same time that Young produced his *Night Thoughts*, in 1744, a young Scotch clergyman was composing an equally dismal poem upon the subject of the grave.[2] This clergyman was Robert Blair.[3] His poem, also in blank verse, contains many beauties—though it is one of the most lugubrious ever witten. A description which he made of a school-boy walking along a lonely road at night in great terror of ghosts, is somewhat famous. The student might do well to remember that one of Blair's phrases has become an English proverb, or at least a household saying. I mean the phrase, "Like angels' visits, few and far between."[4] Blair and Young appear as part of the new movement in the direction of romantic feeling,—notwithstanding their gloom.

The third and greatest of the poets who broke away from the tyranny of Pope's school in Pope's own day was James Thomson.[5] Thomson is a greater poet, in the true sense of

[1] *The complaint; or, night-thoughts on life, death and immortality* (anon.) 1742-45.
[2] *The grave* 1743.
[3] Robert Blair (1699-1746).
[4] Cf. *The Grave* 589. "Its visits, Like those of angels, short and far between."
[5] James Thomson (1700-1748).

poetry, than Pope, than Dryden, than any poet between the time of Milton and the time of Gray. He is great, not simply because his verse is exquisite, but because of the feeling for natural beauty which he uttered with charming sincerity and grace. Appearing in sections, the first of his compositions dates back as early as 1726—the first part of the brave blank verse poems called *The Seasons.*[1] The last of his work brings us nearly to the close of the half century;—*The Castle of Indolence,*[2] appearing in 1748. This is written not in blank verse, but in the Spenserian stanza,—showing the return to romantic spirit of Elizabethan time as well as to forms of poetry that have been long neglected. Of the two great poems, the second is the greatest. It has deeply influenced English poetry up to our own time; much of the early part of Tennyson's work — notably such pieces as *The Vision of Sin, The Lotos Eaters*— showing Thomson's influence in the strangest manner. Perhaps Tennyson has been most deeply affected by Thomson; but it would be hard to name any great poet of the 19th century whose work does not show some trace of Thomson. One feature particularly to be noticed in *The Castle of Indolence* is the ghostly vagueness which enwraps the subject like some beautiful mist of spring. The poetry *suggests,* makes you think about more than what is said, makes you imagine more than his picture. And this is exactly contrary to the methods of the school of Pope. Classical poetry was, above all things, exact, precise in detail, like a sharp photograph: it left nothing to be fancied, nothing to be imagined. There was its great defect. When all is said, when the whole picture is filled in, you have nothing to think about, nothing to haunt you afterwards. Poetry that does not leave the imagination a little hungry, a little unsatisfied, a little dreaming, never can rise to the first rank. But Thomson was of the first rank when at his best; and he brought into 18th century poetry something that never appeared in English poetry before. After Thomson there is nothing to be found with the same quality as that which

[1] *The seasons* (*Autumn* 1730; *Spring* 1728; *Summer* 1727; *Winter* 1726) 1746.
[2] *The castle of indolence; an allegorical poem written of Spenser* 1748.

colours *The Castle of Indolence* until we come to the days of Coleridge and of Keats. Wordsworth was very much affected by Thomson in his nature studies; but the later Victorian poets still more so.

Thomson brings us to the close of the half century,—to the end of the Augustan age in poetry, and to the beginning of the new era. Before turning to the age of Johnson, let us now consider the prose of the Augustan era. It is quite as interesting in its way as the poetry.

The Prose of the Classic Age

The first half of the 18th century witnessed great changes in the development of English prose; and it may be said that this was indeed the period at which English prose attained its highest perfection. Perhaps some few writers of the 19th century have carried prose farther in a certain direction, in the direction of the coloured prose, in the direction of romantic prose. But so far as simple, severe, naked prose is concerned, the first half of the 18th century was the great prose age: and no 19th century writer has improved upon the severe forms of prose then established. This is the first thing to remember in regard to this time.

Now for a brief survey of the field of prose writing in the time of Pope. Roughly speaking, we may say that the prose writers of this period might be divided by opinion into two schools, — the school of the free thinkers or Deists, and the school of the conservatives, the religious poets.

The great intellectual movement in France at the corresponding time produced, you know, the wonderful school of the Encyclopædists representing such great names as those of Voltaire and Diderot. It was natural that, in a time when French thought was influencing English drama and English poetry to so great an extent, it should also influence English philosophy. Now England could not produce during the classic age minds of the calibre of Voltaire; but it produced many

brilliant essayists and free thinkers who formed a literary and social coterie and attempted to disseminate their opinions through literature. Some English critics grouped all these together as the Deists; but the word did not have in the 18th century quite so large a meaning as attaches to it to-day. By Deist we understand a man who believes only in God — not necessarily in the doctrines of religion. But some of the Deists of the 18th century were really only very liberal Christians — holding opinions not unlike those to-day professed by most liberal Christian sect as the Unitarians and the Universalists. Others were probably atheists, or something very close to atheists—although it was still dangerous in that period to make too open a confession of atheism. In France the corresponding school of thinkers was one of the most brilliant the world ever saw. But in England the school was rather small; and it contained no giants. It contained only men like Shaftesbury,[1] Bolingbroke,[2] Tindal[3] and Toland,[4] etc.—none of whom really belonged to the first rank. But the school that opposed them contained some of the most powerful minds of the age, and some of the very greatest names in English literature. In fact conservatism triumphed all along the line; and perhaps in that stage of England's mental and moral evolution, this was for the better, not for the worst. English society was still brutal, cruel; any weakening of the religious bands would have tended to make matters still worse. The Restoration feeling was not yet dead; and the humanism which had characterized previous ages had almost ceased to show itself. Some renovation was necessary; and conservatism brought about such a renovation.

There are only about two names worth remembering in the Deist group;—for to-day nobody reads Bolingbroke. Shaftesbury must be remembered; but not because of his work so much as because of his influence upon Pope. The philosophy of the *Essay on Man* was taught to Pope by Shaftesbury. And it is not altogether surprising that Pope, being a devout Roman

[1] Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713).
[2] Henry Saint-John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751).
[3] Matthew Tindal (1657-1733).
[4] John Toland (1670-1722).

Catholic, was very shy about acknowledging this obligation. The most curious figure in the Deist group was that of Bernard Mandeville.[1] He was not a bright scholar, like the two noblemen above mentioned; but he deserves mentioning, as his work is often referred to in contemporary literature, and has been made the subject of a poem by Robert Browning. Mandeville (whom his critics called by a pun upon his name "Man-devil") was a Dutch doctor who had settled in London, and who appeared to have had much hard common sense, but little or no feeling of delicacy. He was the first author, writing in English, who denied the evil of vice and the common standard of moral judgment. He did this first in a poem called *The Grumbling Hive*[2] — representing how a community of bees became ruined by the practice of morality. While the bees had been vicious, they prospered; when they became moral they died of starvation. This way of looking at things reminds us of the doctrines of Nietzsche in our own time. In this shape the poem did not attract much attention; but about 10 years after Mandeville republished it together with a long prose essay, entitling the whole *The Fable of the Bees.*[3] In this new edition he seriously attempted to prove that drunkenness and other vices, as well as various kinds of crimes, instead of being injurious to society, are really beneficial to society—in short, that society progresses by the help of vice. The Government prosecuted the book and it was publicly burned by the common executioner. Great was the indignation against Mandeville. But his book set serious minds to thinking; and it is now recognized that although his opinions were rawly and clumsily expressed they contained the germs of some sociological truth that has not been properly considered. With all his faults Mandeville could make men think, and oblige them to modify their opinions upon certain subjects.

Classifiers of English literature have ranked Defoe with the Deists; but I think that this classification could scarcely be well sustained. Defoe himself was a man of no conviction

[1] Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733).
[2] *The grumbling hive, or knaves turn'd honest* 1705.
[3] *The fable of the bees; or private vices publick benefits* 1714 (1723).

—or at least a man who always professed to believe anything which brought money into his pocket. I think that we must consider him separately; and this will be the best place in which to do so, before considering the great conservative writers. Leaving all schools out of the question for the moment, we may say that the greatest prose writers were Defoe, Swift, Addison, Steele and Bishop Berkeley. Of course there were other excellent writers; but these are the greatest names and the names above all others, which should be remembered. Let us then begin with Defoe.

I. Defoe

Daniel Defoe[1] was the son of a butcher, and was born in London in 1661, but he belongs to the Augustan age, because of the curious fact that he was nearly sixty before he seriously took to authorship. If ever there was an adventurer of literary fame it was Daniel Defoe. He was a kind of Jack-of-all-trades; but we could not say that he was master of none—because in at least two occupations, journalism and authorship, he was really great. The first business which he established was that of a dealer in clothing materials; and he was bankrupted for seventy thousand pounds. Next we hear of him manufacturing tiles; and this business he also failed in because of getting in prison for attacking the Government in some printed utterance. We hear of him also in the pillory. The pillory, in old English towns, was a wooden frame in which a man was placed standing with his head and hands exposed through openings in a cross beam. But, luckily for Defoe, the children and spectators did not pelt him with rotten eggs, according to custom, for he had attacked the Government in the popular cause, and the people were grateful to him. In fact his punishment made him so popular that the Government soon afterwards actually subsidized him — bought him over to its side. He had no scruples of conscience in the matter of "sides":

[1] Daniel Defoe *or* De Foe (1661-1731).

the side which he would take under all circumstances was, to use an English phrase, "the side on which his bread was buttered." After this we hear of him as a journalist and pamphleteer—in fact he was the first successful newspaper man among Englishmen. Besides writing for the newspaper and writing pamphlets he wrote works upon such various subjects, as banks, schools and education, religion, the army, causes of poverty, methods of improving commerce, marriage, devils, robbers, and of servants. I have not yet come to the subject of his novels. Let it here be sufficient to say that he wrote more books than any other Englishman either of the past or present time. He wrote no less than two hundred and fifty-four distinct works.

But his place in English literature was made for him by his novels; and the strange fact about the matter is that he never wanted to become a great literary man, and never even tried to create fine literature. He only wrote to make money —only wrote to please the public and he never cared "twopence" for the opinion of great scholars. Under these circumstances it is simply astonishing that a man could make a reputation in English literature and exert a wide influence upon English style. Yet Defoe was able to do both because he possessed some very peculiar faculties of mind, and of observation, —faculties actually rising to the level of genius.

First of all, Defoe had an enormous capacity for observing, grouping, and memorizing details—details about anything and everything under the sun. This power, remember, does not necessarily mean the power of thinking in relation, — that is to say, thinking about incidents or facts in their relation to general laws, in their relation to the whole of which they are parts. This is the capacity of the philosopher; and Defoe was not a philosopher. He was only a man able to find extraordinary interest in small things and to remember everything that he saw. And the small things included such diverse matters as woven textures, leather dressing, tile making, fashions of all kinds, customs of all classes, formulas of every description belonging to conventional usage, military regulations, clerical

habits, prison laws, the language and manners of the criminal classes—in short, all that could relate to living and working in a great city like London. For more than forty years, as a journalist he had been collecting knowledge of this sort, and when he began to write stories it was not at all necessary for him to go outside of his room in order to study his facts. He had the facts already; — he was a walking encyclopædia of facts. There is only one thing to notice here in the way of deficiency. He studied only the facts of his own time and place. About the facts of preceding centuries he had not concerned himself in the least—so that when he began to write novels, of which the scenes professed to be laid in the 16th or 17th century, the customs and the scenery described were invariably of the 18th century. Thus Defoe made a great number of strange anachronisms.

The second faculty that Defoe possessed was a particular faculty of constructive imagination. He was able to invent any number of extraordinary situations with the greatest ease, and to make his characters act in those situations so naturally that it was almost impossible for people living in Defoe's own time to suspect that Defoe's stories were not absolute truth. He knew his power and took advantage of it—making himself "the greatest liar that ever lived," as some of his critics have called him. He wrote a history of a plague in London which was long believed to be true history, but which is now known to be pure romance. He wrote novel after novel of life and manners, never acknowledging that his books were works of imagination, but invariably declaring them to be personal memoirs—records obtained from real diaries or notebooks kept by other persons. When he wrote *Robinson Crusoe* nobody imagined the book to be a story: they thought it was true history. Even Dr. Johnson thought so; and Dr. Johnson was not easily deceived.

Now the power to make fiction so dramatic that it appears to be truth is power of a very high order. But a great deal depends upon how the power is used, and upon the composition of the mind that uses it. If Defoe had been as sincere a man

as Shakespeare and had possessed a sense of beauty and a knowledge of proportion like Shakespeare, he might have created magnificent dramas. But in spite of his great ability in certain lines, Defoe had no sense of beauty and no sense of truth, in the higher meaning of the phrase. Furthermore, instead of attempting pure literature he never even thought of attempting anything better than a picaroon novel. All his romances are picaroon stories. He was the greatest and the last of English picaroon writers; and in this limited field he achieved successes of a literary kind without knowing it and even without caring about it.

In explaining the history of the picaroon romances, you will remember that I told you such romances have for their subject the lives of adventurers, thieves, prostitutes, or bad characters of society. That is the distinctive character of the picaroon romance;—that is what inspired the name given to it. And you will remember another peculiarity in these romances imitated from the Spanish writers, — namely, that they are, always or nearly always, written in the first person. Now Defoe's novels, with one exception *(Robinson Crusoe)*, fulfill these conditions. They are written in the first person and professed to be veritable personal history. *Roxana*[1] is a French adventureress who, partly by wanton arts, partly by cleverness, partly by cunning, makes her way through the world with the help of many lovers. All her adventures are recounted as if she had written them down herself in a diary. She represents the higher type of immoral women. *Moll Flanders*[2] represents the lower type,—the unfortunate country girl, driven by her own folly to become a public woman. She is not only a courtesan; she is also, at times, a thief; and at last she gets into prison, on leaving which she is banished from the country. But at last she reforms, and eventually becomes a model wife.

[1] *The fortunate mistress; or, a history of the life and vast variety of fortunes of Mademoiselle de Beleau, afterwards call'd the Countess de Wintselsheim, in Germany. Being the person known by the name of the Lady Roxana, in the time of King Charles II* 1724.

[2] *The fortunes and misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders, etc. Who was born in Newgate . . . twelve year a thief, eight year a transported felon in Virginia . . . written from her own memorandums* 1722.

These are two typical novels of the series. But there are many others. Some describe the lives of pickpockets, highwaymen, pirates. In fact, Defoe's characters are a very bad company. There is, however, no doubt about the interest of the books. In every one of them you really think that you are listening to the recital of somebody's adventures; the verisimilitude of the incidents is frequently amazing.

The exception, above referred to, is *Robinson Crusoe.*[1] I need not remind you that this book is not a picaroon romance: it is one of the masterpieces of English prose literature. There was, you know, a Scotch sailor, called Alexander Selkirk,[2] who had been left alone upon the desolate little island of Juan Fernandez in the South Pacific, where he lived for a number of years without seeing a human face. His story was published in Defoe's own time and Defoe thought to himself, "What a splendid novel that man's adventure would make!" Then, when he was 57 or 58 years old, he sat down to write the novel. Crusoe had been the name of one of his school-boy friends; and because it sounded both curious and well, he gave it to the hero of his fancy. The book succeeded astonishingly well, and was soon translated into many languages. I need scarcely tell you that every English boy who can read at all reads this book at the present time and that the editions of it are almost beyond enumeration. It is not true in one sense; but in another sense we may very well acknowledge that it is wonderfully true.

The merit of the book can be best explained by reminding you of something that Emerson said about the value of a man in this world. Emerson declared that the best man is the man, who, if thrown all by himself, naked and unarmed, into some uncivilized and uninhabited country, would there be able by patient effort to reproduce his own civilization. Now this requirement is fulfilled by Robinson Crusoe. Shipwrecked upon a desolate coast, he finds ways and means there of building

[1] *The life and strange surprising adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, mariner . . . written by himself* 1719. *The farther adventures of Robinson Crusoe: being the second and last part of his life, etc.* 1719. *Serious reflections during the life . . . of Robinson Crusoe* 1720.

[2] Alexander Selkirk (1676-1721).

himself a house, cultivating the soil, domesticating wild creatures, eventually even defending himself against savages. The interest of the book is in the struggle of a single man against nature,—his strong and successful battle with the elements for the right to live. Although the narrative is purely imaginary, no part of it is impossible; and it has all the charm of perfect reality. As a picture of character it is true; as a painting of effort and courage it is true. And because of so much truth in it, it will probably live as long as the English language.

It was the success of this book, published when Defoe was 60 years of age (it took him about 3 years to write the 3 parts), that tempted its author to write other stories only for the purpose of making money. But in the other stories he never again rose above the level of the picaresque. The books have indeed certain qualities of literary merit; but it is only by *Robinson Crusoe* that Defoe remains immortal.

But it is not only by the authorship of the delightful romance that Defoe takes a place in the history of English prose. The style of the man gives to his work a very high importance. It is a style quite unlike anything which preceded it, except perhaps the work of Richard Head, author of *The English Rogue;* but Defoe is a very much finer writer than Head. The character of his work is simplicity and clearness beyond anything we should have expected from the early 18th century. In an age when form was considered everything, — an age when classic models were everywhere being studied, — Defoe attempted nothing in the way of classic form, and nothing in the way of ornament. There is not the least bit of decoration in the whole of his work. It is pure naked English—smooth, easy, almost colloquial; yet never vulgar. He loves short, crisp, plain sentences; and—notwithstanding that many of his romances abound in quaint idioms — I should say that there are few English authors more to be recommended to the Japanese students in regard to prose style,—or, if you like, prose methods. The work of Addison and of Steele, usually considered model prose, is not nearly so good for you to study. The more delicate art of Addison and his friend will probably

escape you, unless you have made a close study of Latin classics. The English of *The Spectator* seems to be common English at first reading; but it is not. It is very uncommon English, and a real appreciation of it is even beyond the power of the common critic. But in Defoe's prose, there is nothing artificial at all; it is *really* common English. In this regard there is only one other writer of the classic age who actually surpassed Defoe—that is Jonathan Swift.

II. Jonathan Swift

Swift[1] is often spoken of as an Irishman, simply because of his having been born in Ireland; but no man ever was more English, whether by parentage or by character. His faults and his virtues were essentially English—but English upon a colossal and extraordinary scale. It is no exaggeration to say that he was the greatest literary figure of the whole 18th century,—greater than Johnson.

At all events remember that he was the dominant force of the classic age—the real literary king,—the master even of Pope, who bowed down before him and wrote almost as Swift suggested that he should write. When you come to study the literary history of this period in detail, you will be amused to find that everybody whom Pope satirized, or nearly everybody, was a man whom Swift disliked. Pope, as I told you, was able to make the public afraid of him; but even he was afraid of Swift; and when Swift wished, Pope was only a tool in his hand. However, the two men probably liked each other sincerely.

It is impossible to understand Swift's work and Swift's influence without knowing the character of this talented and very terrible person. He was born of genteel but poor parents, and his education was not accomplished without very much pecuniary difficulties. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin. And the difficulties attending his education were much aggra-

[1] Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's (1667-1745).

vated by his extraordinary self-will, obstinacy, and pride. He would not study according to the rules. There is a famous story about his refusal to study logic. His tutors furnished him with all the books of note upon logic; but he simply opened them one by one, sneered, and shut them again with a bang. Nevertheless he presented himself at the examination of the logic classes and answered all the questions put to him with perfect accuracy. However, he did not argue according to the rules;—he did not use syllogisms. The examiner, greatly astonished and vexed, asked him, "How can you expect to argue properly without studying the rules of logic?" "But you can see for yourself," answered Swift, "that I do argue very well without studying rules of logic." The examiners allowed him to graduate, but only by what is called "special favour" — and Swift was not grateful. On the contrary he declared that he had been grossly insulted by the use of that term "Special Favour." This university incident suggested the character of the future man.

When he left the university, his prospects were not at all favourable. He was poor. He could scarcely hope to obtain a good position without influential friends: and he was not of a friendly disposition. Imagine a very tall, rough, powerful man, with the rudest of manners, and the most unpleasant pair of angry blue eyes possible to behold. To ask ordinary people to interest themselves in this savage-looking young person would have been hopeless—even to see him was extremely disagreeable. But happily, or unhappily for him, he had a relative of great position,—Sir William Temple,[1] the same person whose name is celebrated among the essayists of the later 17th century. Sir William Temple was then somewhat old: he took Swift into his house as a student—reader and secretary. This was anything but a pleasant position. You know that the position of a student, who accepts service in a family for the sake of prosecuting his studies, is not always a pleasant one. But in Japan, as a rule, the student in service is considerately treated. He is allowed certain privileges, and he occupies a position

[1] Sir William Temple (1628-1699).

higher than that of a real servant. In England such a situation is not the same. No matter how amiable or clever or genteel you may happen to be, if you take any kind of service in a family of rank, you are made to feel the humbleness of your position at every moment of the day. In fact the treatment of "inferiors," as the English say, is a moral cruelty. But Swift, the proudest man and the most intelligent man and the most powerful man of his time, had to bear this moral cruelty for a long series of years. He was, although a relative, obliged to eat with the lower servants, and to submit to their ill will from time to time: he was not spoken to by the family except when it was considered absolutely necessary. Such treatment can only be borne either by a man of extraordinarily weak or extraordinarily strong will. In Swift's case it was strength of will: for he had a supreme conception of moral duty, and, for his mother's sake, he thought it his duty to bear all this. But the habit of repressing his anger—an anger incomparably greater than the anger of ordinary men—certainly helped to poison his mind, to embitter his feelings. Sir William Temple, a gouty old man, was irritable and had his humours. There were days when he would pass by Swift without looking at him or returning his salutation. And Swift would then wonder how he had displeased him, what was wrong, what was going to become of the little salary of 20 pounds a year that could help his mother. All this he never forgot; and in after life it still had such an effect upon him that even if he saw the greatest nobleman in England look coldly at him he would walk up to the nobleman and insist upon having from him an apologetic explanation of the look. He often did that. At one time he told the King's minister that he must never dare to show a cold face to him—adding, "I would not submit to it even from the King himself!" And he was able to make the ministers and the dukes very angry by apologizing to him. It was while he was in the service of Sir William Temple that he first made a reputation with the *Tale of a Tub.*[1] The *Tale*

[1] *A tale of a tub, written for the universal improvement of mankind . . . To which is added, An account of a battel between the ancient and modern books in St. James's library* 1704.

of a Tub is indeed a work of genius; but its title does not suggest to the ordinary reader the subject of the book. Whalers and other shipmen say that, when a whale is angry and rushes at the ship, you can save the ship by throwing a big tub to the whale; for the whale breaks the tub, and then goes away satisfied. In Swift's book the free thinking party represents the whale; the book itself the tub thrown to him in order to occupy his attention, and so keep him innocently employed. The story of the book is a parable—under which are represented, in various guises, the Church of England, the Church of Rome, and the Puritan element. Each is pictured as a man, with particular habits, tendencies and dress. The Church of Rome and the Nonconformists are terribly satirized; and the Church of England is supposed to be justified. But Swift's touch in writing is remarkably like that of a lion, or a tiger,—he could not lay his hand upon a delicate subject without smashing it. So by the time that you have finished reading the *Tale of a Tub*, you discover that the Church of England looks just as ridiculous as any other Church—in fact you feel that there is something to laugh at in any religion or dogma. Now Swift's studies had been directed with a view to ecclessiastical preferment: he was to take orders—to become a clergyman. Therefore in his own interest it would have been much better for him not to have written the *Tale of a Tub*. The Church and the Government never forgave him for it; and he was never allowed to obtain even a good curacy—although he had certainly ability to make himself the greatest of archbishops.

For he was not in any way an irreligious man, he hated fanaticism, he hated religious cant; but he believed in the essential truth of religion, and knew how to defend them against unbelievers better than any man of the country. When he wrote in defence of Christianity the Deists were silenced;—they were frightened into silence, because Swift did not condescend to take them seriously: he attacked them with mockery only—and no man could endure the mockery of Swift, the most terrible ever known. Nor was this mockery ever really used in a bad cause. Swift was actuated throughout his life as a

writer, by moral sentiment,—moral sentiment deeper than any religion. Even his later attacks upon human nature itself only represent his sincere horror of folly and vice. He himself never had a weakness—no vice, certainly no folly; and perhaps he was therefore less able to make an allowance for the weaknesses of ordinary men.

Not to go into too many particulars I shall refer to the rest of Swift's career more briefly. Becoming distinguished as a wonderful writer, opportunities were soon open to him, of which he was not slow to take advantage. Men began to understand what a tremendous force such a man might become in politics;—a political newspaper was put into his hand, and the result made him a great influence in society. The highest persons were happy to court his favour. He could now well forgive the past; for he was able to make the ministers and the dukes sue for his smile. He at once rallied to his side all that was valuable in the world of literature; — Pope served his interests; Addison and Steele for some time obeyed his rule, and when one of them broke it, he had reason to be sorry. In a very few years the poor clumsy student had become the most influential person in England. Every ambassador did their utmost to obtain his goodwill — no wonder! A single word from him might destroy the diplomacy of ten years. There was first shown that, under this formidable and repellent personality, was hidden a very kind heart. Remembering how he had suffered in his youth he tried to help every young man of talent who seemed deserving. And he did not wait for them to come to him for help,—he sought them out, wrote to them, brought them up to London, obtained positions for them, made the fortunes and reputations of not a few. He never made mistakes of a serious sort in judging characters: the thoughts and the feelings of other men were open to him as the text of a book. This the Government knew, and when Swift would bring a young man into the presence of some high official with the simple observation, "Here! I want you to find a place for this young man at once, — a good place!" the official knew that the person recommended would be found worthy of the

position asked for. Besides it was very dangerous to refuse Swift anything, no matter how polite the refusal. And he used all his power for others—not for himself. Indeed he could not have used it for himself in the same way, people were too much afraid of him. He could make a man a bishop, he could make him an ambassador, and he could make him a minister, —he could do almost anything. But for himself he could not get a high place. I think that you can understand why.

And all this time he was not simply writing political articles, or arranging political movements,—he was also pouring forth pamphlets that have now become part of classic English literature—wonderful pamphlets, all satirical; attacking abuses, folly, corruptions, social evils of every sort,—terribly, mercilessly, and often even personally. I believe that I spoke of Pope's satire upon Lord Wharton. It is an awful thing—that satire of Pope; but it is nothing at all, compared with the frightful prose pages written by Swift about the same individual. However, Swift properly understood the real office of satire; he considered that except in extraordinary cases it should be general rather than personal; and he seldom attacked individuals. That he could do so was, however, so well recognized that nobody dared to anger him beyond a certain point.

At last, when a change in politics threw him out of his position as a Government champion, and he had to content himself with a very humble position in the country, he turned his attention to something else besides public interests. He had satirized men, society in its corrupt phases, vices and weaknesses of particular kinds as they never had been satirized before. Now he took for his subject, not one class or country, but all humanity, and produced one of the most awful books that ever was written—*Gulliver's Travels.*[1] You know something about that book,—because in an expurgated edition, part of it has been made into a boy's book; and I suppose that you must have read part of it when you were still young in English

[1] *Travels into several remote nations of the world, in four parts, by Lemuel Gulliver* 1726.

studies. The full text is not so familiar; and I may therefore make some remarks about it. You know that a book, very much of the same kind, as to mere story, was written in Japanese by a clever Japanese author long ago.[1] But although the resemblance in idea between the Japanese work and the work of Swift is very great, the tone and meaning of the English author is entirely different from those of his Oriental brother. Both saw human nature in its weak and comical aspects; but both did not judge it in the same way. Swift takes you first to the country of the little men, the Lilliputians, and makes you see and think like the little men, only in order that you may observe the faults of human nature upon another scale. The scale is a small one. You have to look at people as if they were ants or worms, or contemptible little insects. A god might look down upon men and see them in just the same way. Next you are taken to a country where everything is enormous,—where a man of ordinary size becomes no larger than a flea to the eyes of those about him. This is the country of the Brobdingnagians. Here you perceive all that is disgusting in men upon an enormous scale. The effect is that of putting a diseased body under the microscope. Under Swift's microscope, the skin of the fairest woman becomes rough, horrible and unclean. Boys read these two voyages of Gulliver without understanding the irony of many passages, and the bitter cruelty of the whole thing. Voyages with which they are less well acquainted are the voyage to the Country of Horses and the voyage to the Country of Huldbrugs, who never die. It is in the story of the Horse Country that Swift has most violently expressed his contempt for human nature. The narrative is an attempt to prove that men are much inferior, morally as well as physically, to beasts and that a horse is in every way a nobler creature than a man. The remainder of the *Travels* represents satires upon particulars rather than upon general forms of human weakness. The great force of the book will be found in the first three narratives. No matter what may be

[1] *Usc-shikkari Gantori-cho* (or *Assured Collector of False Geese*) by Namakeno-Bakahito (*or* Idle Fool).

said for the great genius of this work we cannot deny that it is a monument of misanthropy. A man who could think of the human race as Swift's book shows that he must have thought of it, could scarcely have regarded life as worth living. Undoubtedly Swift at last came to hate his own self quite as much as, or even more than, he hated the worst of mankind; and only a great sense of moral duty could have kept him alive. He detested the world; he detested his fellow men; but he never detested what he thought to be moral and a human duty. Otherwise it would be difficult to understand why he did not kill himself.

But all this was not because of disappointment, or personal unhappiness, or resentment, or any ignoble passion. It was because Swift had been afflicted from his earliest youth with a strange and terrible disease,—a disease that constantly caused him intense pain, and that probably rendered him physically different from other men. His great mind was still unclouded, but he knew that this disease must end in madness—knew that he was gradually becoming insane. It was certainly owing to this disorder that he, without intending to be cruel, treated two women in so cruel a manner that both died. He had been married to one of them, he never lived with her as a husband, and his knowledge of what was due to feminine weakness could not help him to be tender or just. His words, his coldness, tortured them and destroyed them—because they loved him. He was perfectly aware that he had caused these deaths,—perfectly aware that he could not have helped it; but his remorse for that which he could not help almost tore him into pieces. And it was in the hour of such black remorse that he wrote the worst pages of *Gulliver's Travels.*

Finally he went mad, as he had himself long before predicted, and, after suffering what is too painful even to write of here, died in utter misery. Before his death he had made a small fortune, in spite of all disadvantages; and this money he bequeathed to the building of a madhouse. A lunatic asylum in the city of Dublin is still called "Dr. Swift's Madhouse."

Such was the career of this great and most unhappy man.

Let us now consider the qualities of his extraordinary work — the reason of his immense influence upon all 18th century literature and even upon some literature of the 19th century.

Paradoxically as the mere statement may seem, it is an absolute fact that the time to fight is never when one is angry. When it is necessary, absolutely necessary, to fight, the swordsman must keep perfectly cool,—must not allow himself to be angry in the least. In all countries this rule is well known to swordsmen. The best general is the man whose head remains cold as a block of ice in the moment of the greatest danger. And among those terrible fighters, the Scandinavian sea-kings, it was the custom to sing while fighting. The English have inherited something of this Northern character,—the power of keeping cool, and getting cooler, while the fight proceeds. Another English characteristic was perhaps inherited from the same Northern blood — watchful cunning. You find this all through English schoolboys. The rule is, when you dislike or suspect a person, to approach him smilingly, to be as agreeable as possible, and to wait until the stranger shows a weakness of some sort, either of words or acts. Then you immediately attack him on that weak point — with sarcasm or something of that sort, and crush or frighten him as quickly as possible. Anybody who goes to an English school learns this. He is taught within a very few days to be extremely careful how he speaks, acts, dresses; for there are a hundred eyes watching for the least defect or eccentricity. Unless you remember these things I do not think that you could understand the character of Swift. Swift had these English characteristics enormously developed—a power of coolness in attack, and a power of cunning in observing opportunities, and a power of cruel patience in waiting for them, that never have been exceeded.

When you read his books you find all this in his style, and it astonishes and alarms the reader. Here is a man who, using the simplest and briefest language, speaking almost like an innocent boy, always smiling a cold smile, is tearing to pieces a character, a reputation, or a political party, with such ease

as a cat tears a mouse. The simple things said are so astonishingly cruel that you wonder how the art of saying them was ever discovered; and no extraordinary word needs to be used. Whether the enemy be a great scholar or an ignorant quack, the treatment is precisely the same. It is the same in the case of a minister as in the case of an almanac maker. In fact, Swift always wrote with a tact to make every possible reader understand him, whether educated or uneducated. He saw faults and follies in their largest possible relations; but he never tried to make the reader see them as a philosopher or a sociologist sees them. He understood too well the weaknesses of the ordinary reader. He would say to himself: "The ordinary reader is a fool, and I cannot make him understand how wicked this person is if I tell him the whole truth. So I shall tell him only so much of the truth as his small head can comprehend." That was where the terrible public power of Swift lay. When he ridiculed a man, even the little boys in the street understood every word said and felt themselves obliged to mock with the mocker.

But the astonishing thing is the perfect plainness of the style—the blunt Anglo-Saxon strength of it—the use of monosyllabic words to express what other men require classical words even to suggest—and the perpetual dignity of the whole expression. This simplicity is the most deceptive of all things; it is that apparent simplicity of the Northmen of old days, which duped and discomfited even princely diplomats. Nothing but the consciousness of immense strength, and the most extraordinary capacity of quiet restraint can explain it. The style profoundly influenced all English literature of prose for a hundred years; and its influence even now continues. Swift taught his countrymen that the English language was capable of doing more than they have ever believed it possible to do without having recourse to the artifice of classical and neo-Latin expression. His great position was about this: "There is nothing stronger than plain English in the hands of the intelligent man. For attack, you do not want anything more than common language supplies: all that is necessary is to

know how to put telling the truth in the best possible way." It is therefore a great education in English to read Swift's prose; and if you do not like those parts of it relating to the topics of Swift's own time, you can easily make such a selection from among other essays and stories as will enable you to be amused and benefited at the same time. In simple prose, severe prose, easy prose, Swift is still—even to-day—without a superior in English literature. Hobbes, of whom I spoke before, comes nearest to him in some respects; but Hobbes was much weaker in attack; and moreover the language in the time of Hobbes was not so fully modernized as the language of Swift's day. The English of Hobbes seems a little quaint compared with the English of Swift—seems fully a hundred years older, though it is not. Most of what Swift wrote might have been written yesterday, so far as the pure English goes; but nothing like that can be written again except by a mind of the same type.

III. IV. Addison and Steele

Next to Swift as writers of famous prose were Addison and Steele. I am not going to say much about their personal history, — because you have all read something about them. What the student needs to know is their exact relation to the 18th century literary development. You have read that they were friends from boyhood — having been first at school together, and afterwards at Oxford University, where they often met to discuss literary things although happening to attend different colleges. Both were by blood and temper thoroughly gentlemen and both were excellent representatives of the best moral feeling of their time. Addison[1] was a little cold--which fact probably helped to make him more successful in life than Steele, who was impulsive and very affectionate.

Steele[2] was for a time in the army. After he left the army

[1] Joseph Addison (1672-1719).
[2] Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729)

he began to write plays for the stage—producing four comedies one after another. Only one of these, a comedy called *The Funeral*[1] was favourably received by the public. The others were, in theatrical language, "damned" — and, curiously enough, "damned for their piety." Piety at the beginning of the literary period in question meant anything good and moral as well as anything religious; and people had become so much accustomed to the bad plays, the immoral plays of the Restoration theatre that they were ready to condemn anything that seemed to them to show church influence. Steele saw that he could not hope to succeed as a writer of a comic play; and he did not have any capacity for tragedy, or thought that he did not. But it occurred to him that he might force his best opinions into men's minds by the medium of something like a newspaper. In this latter enterprise he was soon joined by his old student friend Addison and the two began together those series of little newspapers which afterwards became so famous, under the titles of *The Spectator*,[2] *The Guardian*,[3] etc., etc. Bound volumes of these little newspapers soon became greatly in demand even in Steele's lifetime. They are now a part of English classic literature.

But why? For the simple reason that the best element of English society then really wished for a moral tonic of some kind in the shape of literature. There was plenty of literature, of course, but much of it, like the great prose of Swift and the great verse of Pope, was cruel—inhuman. On the other hand there was plenty of drama, but it was the drama of the Restoration. There was, indeed, the work of Defoe, but nobody could call Defoe's romances moral in any sense of the word. Lastly there were books of sermons of the great preachers. But society does not want too much religious literature, in any age; and in the early 18th century, it wanted very badly some good reading which should be moral without being religious, and didactic without ceasing to be amusing.

That was exactly what Steele and Addison undertook to

[1] *The funeral, or grief a-la-mode, a comedy* 1701.
[2] *The Spectator* 1711-14.
[3] *The Guardian* 1713.

supply. These two young gentlemen said to the public: "Satire has been all the fashion recently, and but a short time ago immorality in literature was a fashion. What we now want to do is to make morality fashionable in a new way—to make it genteel, to make it a part of intellectual life, to make it beautiful at the same time." And Addison and Steele actually did this very thing. They made morality fashionable in England. And the fashion which they set has not yet passed away.

But this morality which Addison and Steele occupied their whole lives in teaching was not a religious morality. Addison was, indeed, himself a profoundly and sincerely religious man: he even wrote many religious hymns, some of which are still everywhere known by heart. But the two friends did not busy themselves with religious teachings:—their whole system was simply a system of *social* morality; and this new code of social morality was only intended to show people how to be gentlemen and ladies in the modern sense of both words. In the age of chivalry, you know there was a social code; but it was a code of an aristocracy only; and that aristocracy would not have dreamed of extending its courtesies to the middle classes, while as to the working classes, they were considered only as so much cattle. In the Elizabethan age, when the industrial classes had begun to assume a position of great importance, the moral conditions were vastly improved; but still there remained one code of conduct for the higher classes, and another for the lower classes. The great Puritan movement and the period of the Commonwealth brought about a new idea of conduct for all men, irrespective of class; but this idea, although universal, was founded upon religious views of an extreme kind; and the Restoration swept it away,—or at least stamped it as vulgar, and so made it unfashionable. And the Restoration aristocracy set up a standard of fashionable immorality—including everything which to-day we would call ungentlemanly and brutal. In the beginning of the 18th century, society had not yet recovered from the shock of the Restoration;—the savage satires of Pope in poetry and of Swift in prose really re-

flect something of the Restoration ferocity. The nation longed for some reform, some new spirit in social life. Then Addison and his friend proposed to fulfil this desire. They proceeded to give the English people such instruction as would enable every man or woman, of moderate culture, to act like a gentleman or a lady. The beginning of the English idea of what constitutes a gentleman and a lady is to be found in the writings of these two men. And for more than a hundred years the English people have been closely following the teaching of Addison and Steele. Indeed, I may say that the modern English middle class idea of conduct is still the code of Addison.

Perhaps you will ask what this idea is. I believe that the best definition ever given of a gentleman is that of the man capable of kindness in small things. I need not tell you that this is not the aristocratic idea, which is infinitely more exacting as well as more unnatural. The capacity of kindness in small things is, on the other hand, rather natural than otherwise; and the ideas taught by Addison were ideas which everybody could understand, and could feel the truth and value of without any need of elaborate explanation. What explanation, for example, is necessary to assure the reader that by endeavouring to be kind and tolerant and graceful upon all occasions men can make society agreeable? And Addison taught them in very simple ways how to be kind, how to be tolerant, how to make one's presence always welcome, how to restrain all appearances of resentment, and how to tolerate and overlook all those little disagreeable things in life which cannot be helped. He did not approve of satire, of invective, of passionate language of any sort: he considered all this vulgar, and as tending only to increase the unhappiness of life, and to aggravate the very evils so attacked. He was certainly right in this regard, and it is noteworthy that he never offended against his own code of social morality. When he was bitterly attacked in print, he never replied to the attacks, and never showed any resentment against his enemies.

Without going too much into details I may say that the ideal gentleman to be found in Addison's pages is Addison him-

self. Unconsciously he drew his own portrait, created his own image for us, in all this teaching. The image is pleasant, correct, kindly, graceful, just — yet I do not know whether you would like it. Whether one likes or dislikes this type of character must depend a good deal not only upon one's own character, but upon the social experience which one has passed through. It is altogether an English character. With all its good qualities it is very cold,—distantly sympathetic only, at the best of times,—disinclined to strong expression of any sort, —disinclined to strong opinion,—distrustful of emotion,—never rude or harsh; yet inclined to smile at things which it disapproves in a way that very much resembles a sneer—not a cruel sneer, but a pitying, superior sort of sneer. Addison was not a snob; but he was very formal, very cold, and by no means sympathetic in the best sense. He taught especially two things, —reserve in regard to strong emotion, and kindness in the active shape rather than in the negative shape. To-day we cannot think very highly of his best ideals, because we have got beyond them. But what he taught in the early part of the 18th century was an immense advance upon anything which had been taught to the public before.

I have spoken in the last two paragraphs especially of Addison. The influence of Steele certainly helped the work of social reform, but only in a small way. The work of Steele where it can be distinguished from that of Addison suffered very much by comparison. Steele took very little pains with his style; and some of it is not above criticism. The whole merit and durable value of the publications respectively entitled *The Spectator*, *The Tatler*,[1] and *The Guardian* was given by the fine tone of Addison's contributions. And here we may consider his style.

The style of Addison is not by any means so natural and easy a thing as many people imagine. There is an appearance of natural ease; but it is only that kind of apparent ease which a gentleman acquires in society by long and careful practice.

[1] *The Tatler. By Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.* (i.e. Sir R. Steele, J. Addison, and others) 1709-11.

No man took greater pains to polish his sentences, and to obtain a purely literary effect. And I must say that it was quite wrong to praise this style as a model of pure and simple English. I know that Johnson declared it the most perfect of all styles; but you must always beware of any style praised by Dr. Johnson, whose conservative prejudices in favour of classical methods coloured almost every criticism that he made. Addison's style is a fine style, but it is fine only as a classical style, in the very sense that Dr. Johnson understood the term.

There is, therefore, something a little artificial in it, quite visible to the man of letters. Addison was noted at Oxford as a classical scholar—a fine master of Latin verse. All his capacities and inclinations were in the direction of a severely classical style,—a style full of large Latin words and rhythmical sonorities. But he knew perfectly well that such a style would not "take" with the people, and he wanted to talk to the people, to the middle class. He needed therefore a style, which could not once obtain the approval of the scholarly class, by virtue of its correctness, and could be understood equally well by the middle class and even by persons of little culture, by virtue of its simplicity. So the proper way to consider Addison's style is that it was a modification of classical method intended for popular taste. For this end he proved very successful. But I certainly should not call it a great original style in the sense that the style of Swift or the style of Bishop Berkeley might be so called.

However, the main interest of Addison and of Steele to the student of literature must always be the part which they took in the development of moral sentiment in literature. All literature, or nearly all, that appeared in the subsequent prose of the 18th century was coloured by their influence. And the influence was very good. After the satires of the early 18th century, what is left to turn to is the prose sketches of English life, which make us smile in a kindly way at human eccentricities, instead of laughing at them in the way that Swift or Pope would have us do. Such characters as the old country knight Sir Roger or the amiable Will Honeycomb make us

smile at times, indeed; but we are happy when we smile, and we like these queer old-fashioned folk even while they amuse us.

V. Bishop Berkeley

Last, and greatest of the prose-writers of the Augustan age, in certain special directions, was George Berkeley.[1] In many ways Berkeley was perhaps the most fortunate man of the time, as Swift was the most unfortunate. He was remarkably handsome, wonderful, gentle and charming in his address, so kind that he never had a real enemy, and with no superior as a scholar. Berkeley was an Irishman, strangely enough; and in a time when the English prejudice against Irishmen was uncommonly strong, he was able to make English society adore him. It was Swift especially who made his fortune. Swift introduced him everywhere into London society and to the terrible old poetical dictator Pope, who was so pleased with the new acquaintance as to declare that God had given to Berkeley "every virtue under heaven." Another stranger thing is that Swift not only obtained for Berkeley the richest clerical living in Ireland, but seems to have been instrumental in causing money to be left him. It was the woman who loved Swift, known to us in literature as "Vanessa," who left to Berkeley one-half of her very considerable fortune—although, Berkeley says, she had never seen him. But she must have heard Swift praise him. Swift considered him the best man in the world. And there must have been something very delightful in his character, considering how he was worshipped for his personal quality in so jealous and so malicious a time. I need not go into the particulars of his romantic life, further than to say that it included a voluntary exile to North America where he lived, immersed in philosophical studies, for four years. It is said that he was one of the first great benefactors of the University of Yale. All his life was smooth and pleasant as a sound of music.

[1] George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, (1685-1753).

The work of the man is important for two different reasons,—both of which must be here dwelt upon. He was the greatest of all English metaphysicians; and he was the most melodious and lucid of writers. He had the clearness of Swift —without his force, it is true, but with qualities of a delicate kind that almost balanced the loss. His whole life was passed in theological discussion, he himself being the attacking party; but in all his pages you will find nothing unkind, nothing cruel —a delicate irony at times, but an irony only which mocks an error, not the person who makes it. Nevertheless it is not likely that Berkeley will be seriously studied for style alone by students of literature, because of the serious character of his writing. I shall not dwell upon its merits further than to say that, whereas the style of Addison had been chiefly founded upon a close study of Latin classics, the style of Berkeley was created by a loving knowledge of the Greek classics, and especially of Plato. No other Englishman has perhaps been quite so successful in writing an English which really preserves the grace and perfect beauty of Greek prose.

The works of Berkeley are entitled *A New Theory of Vision*,[1] *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*,[2] and *Alciphron*.[3] There is also a curious volume by him entitled *Siris*,[4] — dealing with the medicinal qualities of tar-water, but containing also many beautiful fragments of metaphysical speculation. The *New Theory of Vision* is a study of the fallacies which the sense of sight betrays us into making:—the philosopher arguing that nothing is more really deceptive than the evidence of the eyes. The *Dialogues* represent the flower of Berkeley's production: it is in these dialogues that he boldly claims the non-existence of matter. The book *Alciphron* is a series of attacks upon deism and materialism, written with great beauty and often with irresistible logic.

It is not possible to pass by Berkeley without attempting to put clearly before you his philosophical position. You are

[1] *An essay towards a new theory of vision* 1709.
[2] *Three dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* 1713.
[3] *Alciphron, or the minute philosopher* 1732.
[4] *Siris* 1744.

aware, no doubt, how much his theories have been sneered at; and you may remember that line of Byron:—

> When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter—
> It was no matter what he said.

However, Byron was utterly wrong, like most of Berkeley's critics. What Bishop Berkeley said has affected all English thought, and most of English philosophers down to the time of Herbert Spencer,—who was the first one able to point out the false positions which Berkeley had taken.

In the briefest possible language, Berkeley's views have been thus summed up in our own day by Professor Huxley: —

> Matter and motion are known to us only as forms of consciousness;—their being is to be conceived or known;—and the existence of a state of consciousness, apart from a thinking mind, is a contradiction in terms.

Huxley stated that this position is absolutely irrefragable, and any real thinker must confess the same thing—that is, if you grant the speaker his assumption that a thinking mind is something which can be known. No Western metaphysician has gone further than this; but Berkeley did not perceive that the same argument used against the reality of matter might also be used against the reality of mind. The Oriental thinker, deeper than the European, bravely faced this fact; and the greatest Oriental religion has for thousands of years taught that the Self is not real. But this was not known in Berkeley's day. Berkeley only said to the materialists of his time: "You say that everything in the universe can be resolved by a science into Matter and Motion. That is true—quite true; but pray tell me what is matter and what is motion? You know matter only as a something hard or soft, heavy or light, having colour, form, some sort of particular appearance to your senses. Motion you know of only as resistance. But I say that this hardness or softness or weight or lightness or form or resistance all exist only in your mind. Outside of your mind you cannot even conceive of their existence, not at least by any

logical operation of the brain. And I deny that they have any other existence. Matter and motion are only in the mind; and I say that the whole universe and all that appears to us, is only a manifestation of God to the soul. Nothing but God and the soul exists; all the rest is phenomenal." But suppose the materialist had said to Bishop Berkeley: "And I answer that if your argument be true as to matter and motion then your idea of God and your idea of the soul cannot possibly have any existence corresponding to them outside of imagination. God and soul are both dreams—mere mental fancies. There is no God and there is no soul." I do not know what Berkeley would have been able to reply to such a position. Really Locke's position was stronger from the modern point of view;—and you must remember that Locke was Berkeley's teacher. Locke said that we cannot know anything either as to the substance of matter or as to the substance of mind. Every great modern thinker, not influenced by theology, will agree with him. The only one who has, however, found a position a little beyond Locke's is Spencer—in his chapter upon Transcendental Realism. But Berkeley, as a profound Christian and a dignitary of the Church, could not have taken so agnostic a position as that of Locke. He did admirably show the fallacy of the senses; he did prove that the existence of matter cannot be proved,—and on those two standpoints he will always be admired. Otherwise he is very much open to scientific attack.

Drama

There is very little to be said about the drama of the first part of the 18th century and I shall only mention the names of Addison and Steele—and these only as indexes of dramatic tendency. Already I have told you how Steele tried to write pure, decent, amusing comedy: and how most of his plays were condemned by the public because they were thought to be too moral. Remember that what Steele could not accomplish in the classic age Goldsmith and Sheridan succeeded in

accomplishing during the next half of the century. But theirs was the last really fine comedy of English production. Addison, intensely classical, went back to the Senecan drama with his play of *Cato*;[1] and Senecan drama never could succeed really with an English audience. Moreover, Addison did not have the passionate strength the great tragedies require; and his attempts at classic tragedy exerted no influence whatever in the literary sense.

Now we must turn to the second part of the 18th century —perhaps the very most important fifty years in the whole of English literature.

[1] *Cato* 1712,

THE AGE OF DR. JOHNSON

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

THE second half of the 18th century has well been called by five or six different literary historians, both French and English, "the age of Johnson." It is certainly true that all this period was under the influence of Dr. Johnson, and that even after his death that influence for some time continued. In treating other periods of literary history, I have made it a rule to take the poetry first, then the prose, and so on. But in dealing with the second half of the 18th century I think that first of all it is necessary to consider Johnson—biographically and otherwise. We shall therefore talk about him before we begin to treat of the literary movement of this time in detail.

The student must recollect, however, that Johnson, with all his enormous influence, really represented only one side of literature, in the 18th century. Johnson was classical and conservative in the most extreme form;—he was the champion of every literary prejudice of his time;—he was the acknowledged enemy of romantic feeling in literature. And the evolutional history of literature in his period is really the history of the great literary fight for liberty, for romantic feeling, for conventional emancipation, against the power of Johnson and the classic tradition behind him. We can give our sympathy to both sides in this battle; but I think you will agree with me as to the fortunate victory of romanticism. The 19th century literature would indeed have very little to show if the party of Johnson and the party of conservatism had been succeeded in fixing English taste. The victory of the romantic had results on the other hand which have reached even to Japan and which will probably be felt sooner or later in Japanese literature itself.

Another fact that the student should bear in mind is the

extraordinary greatness of the changes which took place during the fifty years under consideration. When we enter the age of Johnson, we are still in the artificial and frozen atmosphere of Pope's school. But we leave this age in company with Sir Walter Scott, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge and the founders of the first splendid new school of modern poetry. When we begin the second half of the century, prose literature is still content with picaroon romance, or romance of the impossible, and the real novel of living manners, of contemporary society, is only about to be discovered. At the close of the age of Johnson the English novel has been brought to the highest possible perfection—so that even to-day every popular novelist must study the masters of Johnson's time. And lastly we find English comedy at its best after a long period of barrenness and silence. True, there is not much of it; and it is the last flicker of the dramatic torch. But it is fine; and it is still able to keep the stage which is the best possible test of its merit. I have myself as a boy in London attended performances of the play of Johnson's time; and I remember that the theatres were so full that it seemed a wonderful thing how anybody could either enter or squeeze his way out again. This means that such drama is still popular: classic plays of the older kind do not crowd the theatres.

One more great change in literature occurred during these fifty years — the change in the conception of history. True history, great history was unknown in England before the time of Johnson. I do not mean that histories had not been written before then; and I do not mean that such histories did not possess literary merit. I mean only that great history, scientific history, history demanding exact scholarship, methodical research, and artistic presentation, all combined — I mean that such history was first produced in the age of Johnson. And it was the greatest history of its kind ever done. It is as valuable to-day as when it was written; it has never been equalled and it is difficult to believe that it can ever be surpassed. I am referring, of course, to the great work of Gibbon in particular. Now consider from these facts what a wonderful fifty years

the age of Johnson represents. The triumph of romantic feeling in poetry; the production of good drama; the development of the English novel; the perfection of historical method: all these together took place within considerably less than the lifetime of one man. We shall now talk about Johnson himself and then discourse about the literature of his time under separate divisions.

Dr. Johnson

As Ben Jonson was the first of the line of the "literary kings," so Dr. Samuel Johnson[1] was the last. With the quick growth of the scholarly class, the development of a general taste for letters, and the enormous multiplication of books, literary kingship became after him out of the question. A "literary king,"—that is, a dictator in the world of letters,—was only possible when the world of letters was much smaller than it is now, when great ability was comparatively rare, and when one man could really sway a majority in public opinion, as to what constituted good reading.

I shall not attempt a biographical sketch of Johnson: I presume that you know the principal fact of his career,—how he began life as schoolmaster,—how he then went to London, in order to make living by writing,—and how he there became, after a few years, the greatest literary dictator that English letters have ever known. It is the last fact that now chiefly concerns us. How did this country schoolmaster from Lichfield succeed in making himself a Power in London, without social or political influence of any kind to help him? And how are we to understand that this man emerged as conqueror from a contest with the world in which much more talented men had perished? For Johnson was not a great genius by any means; and he succeeded in doing what many men of genius had died while attempting,—namely, to make a living by writing. The answer is short, and surprising: *Character.*

[1] Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

Character may mean a great deal in this world — as the case of Swift shows not less than the case of Johnson. But the value of character to its own possessor must depend a good deal upon public opinion. A perfectly honest, upright, and intelligent man may be hated for his character,—may find himself condemned to poverty and to contempt because of his very truthfulness. It is very much of a question in such cases how the man stands in relation to the sentiment of his epoch. The public will support the person who represents its opinions in the most powerful way,—as Macaulay, for example, supported them. But the public will try to crush any man who opposes its current opinions, and he has little chance of even being able to keep himself afloat. Now the success of Johnson was to a certain degree accidental: — he represented sincerely with all his force of sincerity both the good and the bad ideas of his age. This was a happening only. But the happening assumed its after-importance because of the personal character of the man.

Johnson, like Swift, had the power to make men afraid of him. This, in itself, is not necessarily a good, though it may be a very useful, quality. It depends upon the motives and impulses that direct it. Swift made men afraid of him, much more than Johnson; but he could not make men love him—he despised them too much for that. Johnson was able to command both fear and love, and the latter even more than the former. Swift's capacity of terrorizing was largely owing to public knowledge of his terrible malice. Johnson had really no malice in his soul; and his ability to make people afraid was not caused by any fear of vengeful action on his part. He had immense courage and determination in always stating publicly what he really believed to be the truth; and nothing in the way of society or rank, or wealth, ever influenced his utterances in the slightest possible degree. To a king or to a farmer he spoke his mind in exactly the same way; and this was quite enough to make people afraid in the 18th century. Indeed I believe that it is enough to make people equally afraid in the 19th century. To tell the truth, — bravely to express

one's honest opinions about right and wrong upon all occasions,—is really one of the most difficult things in the world. Even kings cannot always afford to do it. But Johnson could; and the world still admires him for it,—just as it admires him for other admirable things. Once the public anywhere knows of some man who is not opposed to its best interests, who cannot be bribed or intimidated, who loves to tell the truth upon every possible occasion,—who may be relied upon to speak for law, and justice, and morality, no matter what may be the consequence to himself,—that public will certainly look to such a man as a kind of natural protector, ideal champion, model hero. Such was the case with Johnson. He had both the respect and the absolute confidence of the English people.

Personally, everything was against him. He was a very big, fat, clumsy man—with ugly red spots upon his face, as well as the disfiguration caused by smallpox. He had no society training—no knowledge of fine courtesies, and no inclination to learn them. He thought that all politeness was humbug which did not spring from a sincere wish to be agreeable. He was rude in his address, harsh in his speech, and full of eccentricities. He had been mistaken for a watchman or a policeman of the old-fashioned kind; and he might have been mistaken for a farmer. But nobody would have taken him at first for a gentleman. Certainly he was thus under great disadvantages in the city of London.

Then his terrible way of saying things was certainly not calculated to please conventional people. A lady asks him, in reference to a naked statue, "Doctor, don't you think that statue very indecent?" "No, Madam," answers Johnson — "but your mind is." Or a mother goes to him for advice about what subject it were best that her little boy should be taught first. "Madam," answers Johnson, "that is like asking whether you should put on the boy's stockings first or his trousers first, and waiting to think about it; — and while you are waiting, Madam, the child's breech is cold!" Naturally society thought this country schoolmaster something of a monster. And at table his action by no means tended to better this opinion. He

was an ugly eater, devouring his food with a great noise, and at a tea-party had been known to drink without shame twenty-four cups of tea. (You must remember that an English tea-cup is almost as large as a Japanese rice-bowl and that in the early 18th century cups were even larger than now). Moreover he never allowed anybody, where he happened to be present, to talk more than himself. He insisted upon being the king of the conversation, and made everybody unhappy who dared to oppose him in argument. Even at the table or in the parlour of a nobleman he still treated people just as he used to treat a little boy in his country school, — excepting that he did not whip them with a rod, but only with his terrible tongue.

After a time, however, people discovered three facts about Johnson's apparent roughness. First, that it was always sincere and good in a moral sense; that is to say, he meant well. Secondly, that there was always a wonderful deal of strong sense in his harshest replies:—they made people think about things in a new way. And thirdly, that this bear had a very tender heart. He had only once made his wife cry—on the day she married him, and in order to show her that he intended to be a master; but she had never had another moment of sorrow in her married existence. He had a cat, which he treated with a strangely considerate kindness—always himself purchasing the cat's food, for fear that the servants might not wish to take such trouble for the sake of an animal. He opened his purse, slender as it was, to almost any poor man of letters who came to him for assistance. And with children he was always tender and playful in an extraordinary way. So society concluded that the bear was a good bear and should be allowed to growl as much as it wanted.

Thereafter it growled to the end of the century or within a few years of the end; and all England listened with extreme pleasure to the growl. Gradually a circle of artists, men of letters, knights, divines, in short the best Englishmen of culture from every class gathered about the ex-schoolmaster, and honoured him and submitted to his dictation, to his arrogance, to his every whim, just as if they were only so many school-

boys. Dr. Johnson actually became for a generation the schoolmaster of the whole English nation—teaching people what was right, telling them what he thought was wrong, justifying their prejudices to the same extent that he shared them, and instructing them particularly as to how they should write, how they should read, and how they should accept the Christian religion as a useful moral convention in its outward observances. So that he had actually—while always remaining a poor man—more real power than the King himself.

Now a beautiful thing about Johnson is that all this power never spoiled him — never made him foolishly proud — never made him vain of his own performances—never made him less tender to the humble persons with whom he shared the hardships of his first years of literary struggle. There is no test of character like the test that power gives; and in Johnson's case it brought out nothing mean. He has justly been called "the good and great man," and if you read the wonderful *Life* of him by Boswell, I am sure that you will share to some extent this opinion of his contemporaries.

Now as for his relation to the literary movement. It was not altogether good. In two ways Johnson's influence must be recognized as obstructive. One of these was his strong conservatism in matters of literary method and form. The other was in his attitude as a critic to matters outside of the real province of literature as art. Even to-day the influence of Johnson has not disappeared from English criticism, and various great English journals and magazines are yet conducted very much as Dr. Johnson thought that all journalism should be conducted. I shall first speak of his influence as a critic.

Johnson was not perfectly well equipped for criticism. He was not an artist in the finer sense; and he had scarcely any romantic feeling in certain directions. His book of *The Lives of the Poets*[1] is still delightful reading; but as criticism it is almost entirely worthless. The poets whom Johnson thought immortal nobody reads at the present time—with perhaps two exceptions. He thought a great deal of form—more of form

[1] *The lives of the English poets* 1779-81.

than of the sentiment; and this explains a good deal of his bad criticism. In this respect he was true to the real classical spirit. Of course Johnson's criticism could not long exert influence so far as we are concerned with his judgment of the literary value of a book. But his criticism exerted a prodigious influence in regard to the attitude that many were to take toward literature not in accordance with established moral conventions. As a moral critic Johnson was absolutely despotic; and his power still lives. It was carried too far—though he certainly meant well. But such restrictions as he would have placed, and actually did place, for a time, upon literary productions, are of a nature to prevent any real progress. Two or three Johnsons reigning in succession, would freeze and paralyze any literature.

The first thing that Johnson did when a new book came into his hand was to ask himself, "Is this a good book?"—"Is it a moral book?" "Is it a Christian book?" If he satisfied himself that it was morally unimpeachable, — then he would ask himself, "Is this book well written and properly constructed according to the great principles and unities of classicism?" And only after the book had passed both tests, would Johnson believe himself ethically and æsthetically justified in praising it.

You will perceive that this is the criticism of the country schoolmaster, not of the university professor: it is the method of the teacher who must first concern himself about the morals of his little boys, and, only afterwards, about their knowledge of reading books and grammars. But is it a bad system? It is *narrow*, it is *small:* but we cannot say that it is bad, and you must recognize that it is absolutely safe, so far as the teacher himself is concerned. Yet a system which may be very good for one condition of things may prove to be very bad when applied to a higher condition of things. Here, however, let me beg of you to listen attentively for a moment, so that you will not have occasion to judge Johnson unfairly.

To estimate the value of a book by its moral excellence cannot in itself seem a bad way of judging. But the trouble is that men are not uniformly agreed as to what constitutes moral value. A fanatic will naturally consider many things

absolutely moral which a more liberal mind will find to be cruel and unjust. A moral judgment, to be worth anything, must depend upon the character of the man who makes it, and upon the intellectual power of that man, for its importance. Now Johnson was not a fanatic — not a zealot. He did not think Christianity was the only religion which had any good in it, and did not believe in sectarian disputes of any kind. He thought that only the fundamental moral teachings and fundamental doctrines of religion should never be criticized or attacked; it seemed to him that their value had been fully established by human experience; and he would not even allow certain kinds of metaphysical discussion that seemed to him dangerous to religion—such as the question whether animals have souls. But, if you remember that this was in the 18th century, you will see that it does not imply any great religious prejudice, but on the contrary a remarkably tolerant spirit. Indeed, Johnson was very tolerant in religious matters, though less so in moral matters. But the reason of this tolerance was the largeness of Johnson's mind—his power of seeing things differently from other men. The same intellectual power did not belong to his followers; and when those smaller-minded men tried to follow his principles, the result was prudishness and prejudice and intolerance of the most positive English kind. Johnson's influence was bad—not as he used it, but as others used it after him.

As to the other method of judging literature — judgment by classical standard—time has well shown that Johnson was quite wrong. He was wrong chiefly because he could not help it. Having himself no romantic feeling whatever, no sense of beauty in certain directions, he could not even conceive of merit outside of certain fixed rules. Within those rules he could judge well, outside of those rules he often judged very badly. And when he did not judge badly, as to works done against the rules, it was because his prodigious common sense enabled him to see their value of opinion or values of fact, — but not values of beauty. Now his followers did not have his power or practical perception; and they followed his principles

in a much narrower and blinder way. Thus we may say that his influence was opposed to the literary development of his age. The really surprising thing is that Johnson should sometimes have been just and correct in his estimates of books essentially opposed to his own ideal of art. With such opinions, correct estimates could scarcely be expected, yet Johnson did make surprisingly correct estimates on certain occasions.

Johnson's place in literature you must not think of as the place occupied by a *writer*, — but as the place occupied by a *talker*—a conversational autocrat. When a new book appeared, the people said, "What does Dr. Johnson think of the book?" —If he said it was a good book, everybody believed him. If he said it was bad, it was likely to be damned—except in one or two extraordinary cases which we shall have presently to consider. In matters of politics and of social reform also Dr. Johnson's opinion was anxiously looked for, — exactly as in these days men want to know the opinion of the *London Times* about some great event. But Dr. Johnson very seldom gave himself the trouble to write his opinions; he only spoke them — and his friends spread the news all round. He hated to write: it gave him a great deal of physical pain to write. And the bulk of his work is mainly represented by his great *Dictionary*[1] in two volumes. Otherwise Johnson's literary work proves to be quite small. There is the story of *Rasselas*[2] written in the time of two weeks, we are told, in order to pay the expense of his mother's funeral;—there is *The Lives of the Poets*, which can be pressed into an exceedingly small modern volume; there is the single tragedy of *Irene*;[3] — and there are the various moral essays contributed to his weekly periodical in imitation of Addison and his *Spectator* literature. But all this is very slight as to mass compared with the extraordinary fertility of his contemporaries. You can easily put Johnson's work into a single volume—excepting the *Dictionary*. Therefore it cannot be said that he affected English literature much in his writings.

[1] *A dictionary of the English language* 1755. — ed. H. J. Todd (1818) — ed. R. G. Latham (1866).
[2] *The Prince of Abissinia* (Rasselas), *a tale* 1759.
[3] *Irene, a tragedy* 1749.

And perhaps it was much better that he did not, for the truth is that Johnson's style is very bad—bad, not in the sense of incorrect, but decidedly bad as regards good taste and pure English. In fact, one of the adjectives which we to-day apply to a pretentious, bombastic, affected style is "Johnsonian."

Dr. Johnson had taken for his model in style one of the most charming, most scholarly, most delightful of all English prose-writers,—Sir Thomas Browne. But Johnson could not imitate the fine elements of Browne's style, though he could very well imitate its Latinism. For Browne was by nature a glorious poet and romantic dreamer, though he wrote only in prose. Johnson could see the form — not the spirit: and he often reads like a mere parody of Browne. As Professor Dowden has very clearly pointed out, Johnson never got beyond the classical rules of the French Jesuits; and any one, without romantic feeling, who adheres to that system, is inevitably condemned to remain the slave of form. Johnson took the Latin authors for his models, and the rules of Aristotle for his rhetorical guides, but the result was utterly sapless. When Sir Thomas Browne chose a Greek or Latin word in preference to an Anglo-Saxon one, he did so, not merely for the sake of sound or conventional dignity, but because such a word could appeal to the *imagination* of his readers as no Anglo-Saxon words could have done.

Imagination has everything to do with beauty of style; and Johnson was singularly barren of imagination. To sum up the characteristics of his style, we may say that it is remarkable first for a great excess of Latinism,—long pedantic words, chosen chiefly by reason of their sonorities; secondly, for a great use of antithesis, — use of contrasts in balanced phrase—studied partly from Browne, but much more from the Latin writers; and thirdly, for a certain massive dignity and reserve which really reflects the personal character of the man. It is not without impressiveness, this rumbling, thundering style; but it soon becomes tiresome; and its egotism eventually offends us. Nevertheless, although no style could be a worse model for the student of English, Johnson's influence was so

great that up to the middle of the 19th century he was still read and studied as a stylist; and the essays of his *Rambler*[1] and *Idler*[2] were regularly placed in the hands of young people for obligatory reading.

Before reading the subject of Johnson, let me call your attention to one very interesting survival of his influence in English journalism. You have all heard of, and most of you must have occasionally read something of, the London *Spectator*,[3] — a weekly newspaper which has lately been speaking rather badly about Japan and Japanese politics. You must not suppose that these expressions of opinion, however, really represent the prejudices of one man, nor that the conduct of the paper is a personal or individual matter. This very old paper follows a policy that has been unchanged from Johnson's time,—the policy of expressing the opinions of cultivated conservative as fully and as fairly as possible. Fifty years ago the opinions of that paper were just as they are to-day; and they have always been very much like the opinions of Dr. Johnson. England wants a paper to champion all its prejudices,—to champion them with scholarship and dignity; and that is the paper which does it. And with all its faults it is a wonderfully good paper in certain ways: it gives evidence of a toleration in literary and in religious directions which is quite remarkable, considering its professed opinions. *The Spectator* will take up a subject or a book which it hates, and will express its dislike of that book or subject; but it will not lie about the book, and will try to state fairly whatever real merit there exists. And when it is wrong, it is not ashamed to apologize, —just as the great Dr. Johnson himself would apologize to a working man whom he had unwittingly found fault with for no good reason. I only mention the newspaper to give you an idea how much the influence of Johnson is still alive—showing you that it now reaches even to the other side of the world both for good, and, I am sorry to say, for evil.

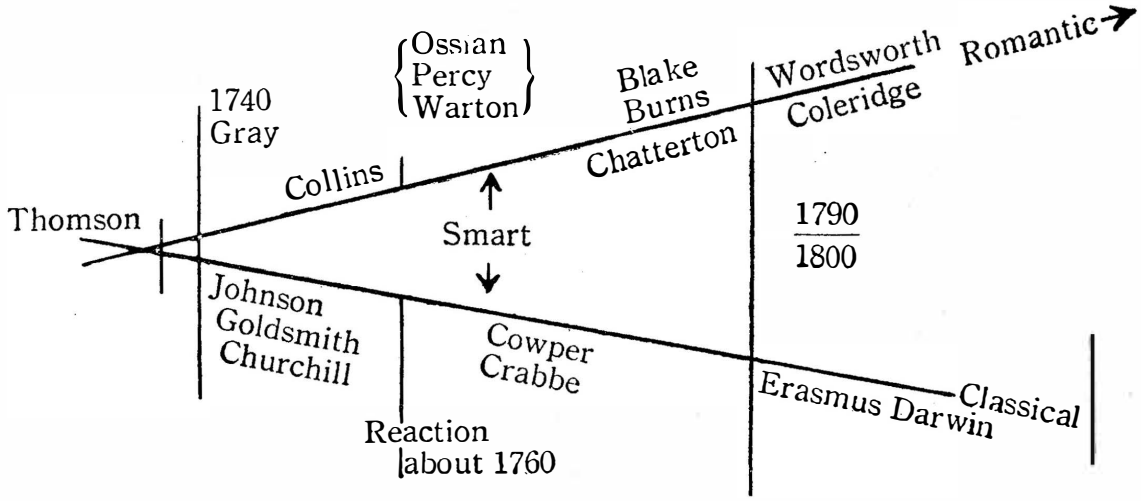
[1] *The Rambler* 1750-52.
[2] *The Idler* 1758-61.
[3] *The Spectator; a weekly review of politics* etc. 1828-

The Poetry of Johnson's Age

GENERAL SURVEY

When Johnson wrote his *Lives of the Poets,* he did so with a determination to oppose the romantic movement which had begun with Thomson and to uphold all the formality and conventions of the classic school. His judgment as to the comparative merits of the two schools was as wrong as could possibly be; but he had such power that he actually provoked a reaction—a classical reaction—against the romantic accident which, rather than anything else, prevented him from accomplishing his object,—which was to reinstate all the conventions of the age of Pope as ruling forces in literature.

In order to explain more fully the history of this reaction in poetry, and of the accidents that conquered it, we will proceed to make some illustration of the general movement in poetry during the second half of the century And, first, I shall draw a little diagram:—



The above diagram will show you that the course of poetry, just before issuing from the classic age of Pope into the age of Johnson, branched off into two streams. Thomson represents the point at which the river divided. The upper branch represents the romantic school of poetry; the lower branch, the classical tradition. The movement begun by Thomson ended triumphantly in Wordsworth and Coleridge, whose first work

was published in 1798. The tradition which Johnson fought for struggled on to the last decade of the century, which ended with *The Botanic Garden* of Erasmus Darwin, the last great representative of artificiality and of what we may call Popism. So much for the general outline. Now for the history.

I. The Romantic Flow

Try here to understand clearly, first of all, what the romantic movement was. Do not think that it means any particular kind or mode of expression in poetry, do not think that it even means a school—in the strict meaning of a term implying rules and forms. If it was distinguished by any one quality, more than by any other, — that quality was natural feeling, imagination, sentiment. But we cannot define romanticism into anything of fixed form. The romantic movement was a struggle against fixed forms, against rules, against conventions that hampered literature. It was a battle for freedom from a tyrannous system of rhetoric. That it should have been called *romantic* signifies nothing more than this:—that those who wanted freedom in literature looked back with longing to the freedom enjoyed by the old writers of real romances — the great poets of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. That is all. Dismiss from your minds as much as possible the idea that romanticism means either a school or a style. On the contrary, it means absolute freedom in the choice of forms and of subject — the right to speak one's sincere thoughts, to utter natural feelings in any kind of verse or of prose, without obeying any established and conventional rules.

The next great romantic poet after Thomson was Gray.[1] Gray, you know, was a great scholar, who spent his whole life in the university, and who was probably the most learned man of his generation. Gray, like Thomson, felt that the verse forms of Pope and his school were killing real poetry. Such verse had served a useful purpose: it had taught men some-

[1] Thomas Gray (1716-1771).

thing new about what could be done by mere choice of words; and its long tyranny had obliged men to be exact and precise in poetical composition. But the classical school ignored a great fact well perceived by the ancients, namely, that particular forms of verse are suitable only for particular subjects. If you attempt to treat all subjects in the same kind of verse, certain kinds of poetry must die—on the same principle that you cannot cultivate every kind of plant in a hothouse, under glass. But Gray, finished scholar as he was, could not quite free himself from all the weight of classical opinion;—the very atmosphere of his university was classical; and he could hope for little sympathy by attempting extreme innovation. He did just what was safe for him to do,—just what he could defend upon scholarly ground; but he did not do anything more. He adopted new forms; but in these new forms he preserved a great deal of the artificial and pseudo-classical feeling. I mean, for example, that he continued to use the conventional imagery of Pope's day—the shepherdesses and the shepherds, the Cupids and the Muses, the clipped garden scenery and the conventional fountains. But he did this with extraordinary art; and he introduced effects of melody almost worthy of those Greek poets whom he knew so well. When he became classic he was so perfectly classic as to surpass all his predecessors; when he became romantic no one could venture to dispute the correctness or elegancy of his forms, — indeed nobody was capable of criticizing effectively so great a scholar — though Dr. Johnson tried it. As for painstaking, Gray was certainly the most careful poet in the whole history of English literature, and his carefulness produced wonderful results. It is said that he took fourteen years to compose one of his shorter poems, the famous *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*,[1] and that single poem helped to produce the romantic movement in French literature. From the *Elegy in a Country Church-yard* Lamartine especially derived his inspiration for the most celebrated of his quatrains; and Chateaubriand likewise derived directly from Gray. Then, another thing that Gray did was

[1] *Elegy written in a country church-yard* 1750, 1768

to suggest new subjects for poetry such as had not hitherto been even thought of. He was the first great man of letters to study the Scandinavian literature in England; and several of his grand compositions are upon subjects taken from the Norse mythology. His odes were as great as his elegies; indeed everything that he touched became beautiful, and beautiful with the exquisite finish of an antique gem. It made little difference whether he was discussing the mystery of human life and vanity of earthly ambition or lamenting the death of a pet cat —the utterance was something altogether original, dignified, and rarely beautiful. But Gray was really, as Milton had been, too much in advance of his age to be immediately influential. People could not really understand him. His influence began only about fifty years later. One of his poems, half classical, half romantic, in the way that I have already suggested, may be quoted in this relation. You will find it exquisite like Pope, but the exquisiteness is of a new kind—the same kind afterwards to blossom in what we call to-day "society verse":—

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

(The cat is sitting upon the edge of a large porcelain vase, from China, in which there is water, and gold-fish swimming in the water. The beauty of the adjectives here you should especially notice. "Tabby," you know, is a general name for cats; "Demure" has the sense both of "serious" and "modest," and is used particularly in relation to the sex of the cat; "pensive" here means meditative, and gives us at once the suggestion of the motionless way in which a cat rests, with wide open eyes, as if thinking. The word "azure," as used here, tells us exactly what kind of porcelain vase the author means; old-fashioned

china ware with some design of landscape gardens, trees and houses, all in blue.)

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize:—
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled.)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in!

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry God,
Some speedy aid to send:—
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd;
Nor cruel *Tom*, nor *Susan* heard—
A fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold:
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes

And headless hearts, is lawful prize,
Nor all, that glisters, gold!

This exquisite little thing is not an imitation of Pope's school, — but rather a parody of its manner, and really surpasses anything which the Pope's school did. But, of course, the mere finish of the piece is not the principal beauty of it: its cleverness best appears in what we call the "tone," which is the tone of "society verse." By the canons of "society verse" you may write about the most trifling sorrow or accident, on condition that you treat the matter lightly, mockingly, and at the same time with elegance and grace. The whole spirit of such verse is to conceive real emotion, and nevertheless to suggest it by the way that you laugh. No doubt Gray was really very sorry for his cat, and scolded the servants for their carelessness; but he only jests and moralizes about his loss as a poet—which was just as it should be. I have selected this piece from Gray as the lightest thing that I know; but his greater work is of so fine a character that it calls for most serious study —quite as much, indeed, as the work of Milton does. And a surprising thing is the great variety of this work within a very small bulk. You find Gray writing it with equal skill in octo-syllables, in deca-syllables, in old-fashioned verse of fourteen syllables, and in the most complex forms of the sonnet and of the ode. No poet between Milton and Tennyson shows equal finish joined to such a variety of form.

Next to Gray can be placed Collins. No less than four of the poets belonging to the romantic movement of the 18th century were mad, or died mad. The four thus afflicted by insanity were Collins, Smart, Cowper, and Blake—whose madness, however, had only a very mild and gentle form, and rather helped than injured their work as a poet.

William Collins[1] who studied at Oxford, but without taking a degree, was a friend of Johnson in spite of literary position. He died at the early age of 37, before he could have matured his powers fully; and his life was unfortunate in all

[1] Williams Collins (1721-1759).

respects. Few great talents have struggled under greater difficulties. His financial and other troubles may have helped to bring about his madness; but it is probable that he had some fits of insanity even during his student life, and that this was the cause of his being unable to take a degree. The bulk of his work is quite small; and some of it, especially, perhaps, the *Eclogues*,[1] quite worthless. His fame rests almost entirely upon his *Odes*:[2] these are often grand, always great, and belong to the highest range of poetry. Probably you have all read his ode *The Passions*;[3] for that is to be found in almost every representative collection of English verse. And it is by his odes that Collins specially belongs to the romantic school. But, like Gray, he could not get rid of all the convention of his age,—he sang in romantic measures, but he kept too many of the artificial personifications and the symbolisms of the classic school. And this gives to his work a certain unevenness. It is not all equally good, even as regards the odes. The most that we can say for Collins is that his very best belongs to the very best of English prosody.

After Gray and Collins there was a kind of reaction,—as I told you before; and this reaction is represented even in the work of such poets as Akenside[4] and Beattie,[5] although both of these occasionally wrote in romantic forms. Even within such forms their verse became frozen, stiff, lifeless,—altogether worthless. It is not necessary to give much attention to the representatives of the reaction, nor to many other minor poets of the time, indifferently representing either side. Only remember that these names marked the reaction toward classicism. The triumph of the classic school seemed imminent, but that triumph was checked by a series of unlooked-for events.

The first of these events was the sudden public interest excited in the public mind by the old ballads,—the old street songs and love songs of the common people. The first collection and publication of these songs was made in the year 1765

[1] *Persian eclogues* 1742--2nd ed. *Oriental eclogues* 1757.
[2] *Odes on several descriptive and allegoric subjects* 1746.
[3] *The passions, an ode* 1750.
[4] Mark Akenside (1721-1770).
[5] James Beattie (1735-1803).

by Bishop Percy,[1] — and the result you are doubtless acquainted with in the form of those three famous volumes known as Percy's *Reliques*.[2] Percy's work had a great influence not only upon English, but also upon German and French poetry. Percy's work, as an editor, was very bad; he changed the text of a popular song whenever he thought that he could improve it; and he added verses of his own to ballads which he had found in an imperfect state. No editor of to-day would be forgiven by the literary world for doing such a thing. But in Percy's case, this was only the result of ignorance, not of trickery: he was a pioneer in a new country, and did not exactly know what to do. And in spite of his great errors, the book remained full of such beauty that it was able to change the character of three different literatures. For you must remember that it was not in England only that people were tired of the classic school and its dry, exact, lifeless, withering rule; —there was going on simultaneously a movement toward romanticism in France and in Germany. Now to everybody weary of dead convention and artificial decoration, Percy's *Reliques* offered exactly the kind of inspirations wished for. This book taught people that true poetry might be independent altogether of classical rules,—that true poetry springs from the hearts of even uneducated folk under the stress of great emotion,—that the peasant may under certain circumstances even surpass a poet laureate in true lyrical expression,—that naturalness and absolute sincerity are more important to poetry than any knowledge of the rules of Aristotle or of Aristotle's mediæval followers. Consequently the ballads which Percy collected were able to inspire such great German singers as Uhland and his followers, and indirectly affected later on the work of the French romantic school. Percy was not the only worker in this field: after him, D'Urfey[3] and Evans[4] both published collections, and collections better edited than Percy's. Remember,

[1] Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore (1729-1811).
[2] *Reliques of ancient English poetry* 1765 (1839, 1876-77).
[3] Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723) *Wit and mirth: or pills to purge melancholy, being a collection of . . . ballads and songs* 1719 (1872).
[4] Thomas Evans (1742-1784) *Old ballads, historical and narrative, with some of modern date* v.d. (1777, 1784, 1810).

too, that Walter Scott's first great poetical inspiration was drawn from Percy and the ballad collectors who imitated him.

Dr. Johnson was not at all pleased by the appearance of the ballads and still less by the interest which they excited. He said, and it is no credit to him, that anybody could write a ballad, thereby showing his utter inability to understand the existence of poetry outside of mere form. Still he thought that the public would come round to his way of thinking. But the second event which opposed his influence, and which really took a more serious shape than the publication of the ballads, he did not at first perceive the force of. About two years before Percy's collection was published, there had appeared some mysterious composition called *The Poems of Ossian.*[1] These were not in verse, but in prose, — they profess to be translations from the ancient Gælic. One thing about them greatly charmed the public. The prose was of the very simplest possible description, not composed according to any classic rules, and nevertheless very musical, very sonorous, and full of rude but deep sentiment, — sentiment of nature and sentiment of passion. These *Poems of Ossian* (Ossian appears to have been really a Celtic poet) appeared by instalments—one small volume at a time. Presently it was discovered that they were the production of a Scotch schoolmaster called James Macpherson.[2]

Of course the public wanted to know what Dr. Johnson thought of this newly discovered poetry; and he was forced to give it more attention than he thought it really deserved. Closely examining the composition he recognized that the best of it showed evidence of a close study of the English of the Bible; and secondly, he observed that the so-called poems, professedly a work of barbarians and hunters, showed no acquaintance with those wild animals which barbarians and hunters know very much more about than civilized men. He came to the conclusion that the whole thing was an impudent forgery; and he said so. The author of the poems said that Dr. John-

[1] *Fragments of ancient poetry (by Ossian)* 1760; *Ossian's Fingal, an ancient epic poem* 1762; *Ossian's Temora, an ancient epic poem* 1763.
[2] James Macpherson (1736-1796).

son was a liar. Dr. Johnson answered him effectively about as follows:—

"You say that your rubbish is a translation from the ancient Gælic. Produce the original manuscript."

Instead of producing the MS., Macpherson sent word to Dr. Johnson that he would give him a beating as soon as he could get near him. Then Dr. Johnson bought a very big stick and waited for him; but Macpherson never came, and he never was able to produce the MS.. In short he convinced himself of being both a liar and a coward. One would suppose that this fact should have ended the matter. But it did not. The same public that always listened to Dr. Johnson when he was wrong, would not now listen to Dr. Johnson when he happened to be right. They bought thousands and thousands of the copies of *The Poems of Ossian;* they made Macpherson rich; they gave him a grave in Westminster Abbey when he died. Nor was this all. Everybody both in England, in France and in Germany, expressed delight with *The Poems of Ossian.* Among the great men who admired the book abroad, may be mentioned the poets Gœthe and Schiller in Germany, Lamartine and Chateaubriand in France, — and among men of intellect outside of literary circles, Napoleon, who declared *Ossian* the greatest of literature. For a time, even in the country of Dr. Johnson it was seriously doubted whether Homer and the great Greek authors could compare with *Ossian.* The whole world was not only deceived and doubly deceived, but strangely fascinated by this impudent forger.

To-day, it is true, we can find very little merit in Macpherson's work. What then accounts for the absurd popularity which it once enjoyed? Almost nothing except the fact that it happened to appear at a time when the romantic movement was struggling for life and death, when the people were utterly tired of classic forms. Then, reading *Ossian,* almost everybody discovered in it, not so much what he really wished for, but the *suggestion* of what he wished for. The whole thing was a craze,—much like the modern craze on the subject of the poet Whitman. Both *Ossian* and Whitman really give nothing, but

both have been able to suggest a great deal. In Macpherson's case the suggestion was better than in Whitman's. For Macpherson was an educated man, and he really had read old Scotch poems, old Gælic compositions which inspired his work. Moreover he could write well—let us say, beautifully at times, and a good elocutionist can still make a fine effect by the reading of *Ossian.* When I was a boy, students were still taught to recite *Ossian;* and many famous and popular books of oratory then contained pages from Macpherson's forgery. I think that part of the success of the book was due to the fact that Macpherson wrote it with a view to its being *oratorically read.* It is impossible to deny a certain beauty to those lines which begin the famous *Address to the Sun:*—

> O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers'.
> Whence are thy beams, O Sun, thy ever-lasting light?

The influence of the imaginary *Ossian* did more to break the influence of Dr. Johnson than any other event of the century. And Dr. Johnson was right. But it was a very lucky thing that his influence was thus broken. It is true that good does not generally come from deceit and pretence and lying,—not as a general rule; but sometimes even deceit and lying may produce something good to the world. There is an example of it. Macpherson was a liar, a forger, a detestable humbug, and he was opposed to a good and great man fighting for truth—yet the good and great man lost the battle, and the humbug unwittingly did a great service to literature. I do not mean that he is to be thanked—not at all; but the fact must be acknowledged.

Another strange humbug of the same time was Thomas Chatterton.[1] Chatterton, however, was only a child—perhaps the cleverest child that ever lived in England or anywhere else: but he was a great liar, a great trickster; and it took about a hundred and thirty years to find him out. Chatterton was composing poetry at a time when other little boys were scarcely able to talk. When still a little boy he pretended that he had

[1] Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770).

discovered some ancient MSS. of the 15th and the 16th century, called the Rowley MSS. by reason of the place where they were said to have been found. There were no such MSS.. He sent copies of these imaginary poems to different newspapers and magazines; and the editors were astonished and delighted and published them with joy and thankfulness. More and more of these poems were by degrees put into print.

Remember that the poems were not at all bad. They very much resemble the Elizabethan poets—and that is high praise. At the age of 15 Chatterton imagined that he could make a living by literature and in London. But he had begun, greatly to his own disadvantage, by a forgery; and nobody knew anything about his real abilities. *The Rowley Poems*,[1] yes: everybody knew how beautiful they were; but nobody knew anything about the talent of Thomas Chatterton. And the boy was very amiable, very sensitive, very shy, and very proud. He could not push his way into any position without help; and he was too shy and too proud to ask for it in the proper direction. I have no doubt that the terrible Dr. Johnson would have helped him, — though he would also have given him a severe lecture in regard to those *Rowley Poems*. But he did not ask, and finding himself starving in London he committed suicide. Without any doubt he was an astonishing genius; and it is much to be regretted that such a mind was destroyed while it was yet only in the bud. Chatterton's work had no such influence as Macpherson's, but it did a certain amount of service to literature by turning public attention once more back to the beautiful and warm freshness of the Elizabethan poets whom he imitated. How he imitated them and where he got his inspiration from, was only discovered a few years ago through the patient labour of Professor Skeat, — perhaps the greatest of the English etymologists, and a supreme authority in regard to Middle and Tudor English. Imagine that it required the great science of a man like that to prove the forgery of a little child; and thus you will be able to feel what a won-

[1] *Poems supposed to have been written at Bristol by Tho. Rowley and others in the XVth century a* 1770 (ed. T. Tyrwhitt 1777).

derful being Chatterton was. Remember that the age at which Chatterton began to compose his poems was the age of 7 years. And most of the wonderful trickery was done before he reached the age of 12 years. Had he lived it is not improbable that he might have become the genius of the very highest order; perhaps another Shakespeare, for he gave proof of dramatic talent. But except as a phenomenon, I do not wish to interest you very much in Chatterton. No work produced between the ages of 7 and 12 years could be really great literary work; and the most which can be said for it in Chatterton's case is that it was often very pretty.

One more important event, which aided the romantic movement was the publication of Warton's *History of English Poetry.*[1] There were two Wartons—brothers: the eldest, Joseph Warton,[2] was a man of letters who is best known to literature as the editor of Pope's works. Both brothers were Oxford men. The other, Thomas,[3] became a Professor at Oxford; and while there he composed his excellent *History of English Poetry.* As a man of letters he was very much greater than Johnson—a better scholar, a better thinker, and a more tolerant spirit. He possessed exactly those literary qualifications which Johnson lacked such as the capacity to judge poetry independently of the form, the time, or the belief of the writer; the power to appreciate Middle English works very thoroughly; and a liberal appreciation of merit of all kinds, from the earliest period of true English to the age of Queen Anne. This is still an excellent book for students; every great critic still praises it. But it had little weight, except for the romantic themselves in Johnson's time, for Johnson's influence was much larger than Warton's. We may even say that Warton was too good for his age. Even now a hundred people read Johnson for one that reads Warton.

So there were four obstacles in the way of classic triumph —the popularity of Percy and the collectors of the ballads; the

[1] *The history of English poetry from the close of the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century. To which are prefixed dissertations.* 3 vols. 1774-81 (1840).

[2] Joseph Warton (1722-1800).

[3] Thomas Warton (1728-1790).

astounding success of *Ossian;* the interest in 15th century poetry aroused by the forgeries of Chatterton; and lastly the excellent *History of English Poetry* by Thomas Warton. It is as remarkable as it is unfortunate that the best of the four works mentioned should have had the least influence. The great power that opposed Johnson was *Ossian,* next to *Ossian* the influence of the ballads. But the really beautiful and scholarly criticism of the Oxford Professor affected only a very small number of cultivated minds. Another queer thing is that Warton himself wrote not romantic, but classic poetry — in the very best style of the Pope school. In his history he is quite a romantic; but when he put himself before the public as a poet he did not venture to depart from the conventions of classicism.

Nevertheless, the classical power thereafter steadily began to decline. And a very curious thing happened at this period in the case of a curious poet called Christopher Smart.[1] Smart was a friend of Johnson, and, strictly speaking, a very classic verse-maker. He wrote a great deal of tiresome and worthless heroic verse, until one day he suddenly went mad. While he was mad he began to write religious poetry in a romantic form. What he then produced is among the very best examples of 18th century romantic poetry. You can imagine how strange the conservatism of the time was, from the fact that when Smart's verses were published in a "complete" edition after his death, this very poem was left out. Neither Johnson nor anybody else of that time could have seen anything good in it—at least no good classic could have done so. In our own time, the poet Robert Browning first called public attention to it in an effective way: and you will find extracts from it published in the anthology of Palgrave. It is called *A Song to David,*[2] and it is really worth a special lecture.

I have already given one lecture upon it;[3] and to-day I shall only quote one or two of the hundred six-line stanzas compos-

[1] Christopher Smart (1722-1771).
[2] *A song to David* 1763 (1819, 1895, 1898, ed. Tutin; 1901, ed. Streatfeild; 1924, ed. Blunden).
[3] Printed in *Some Strange English Literary Figures* edited by R. Tanabe.

ing it. The excellence of this composition is excellence of a very complex kind — being musical, majestic, and intensely original at the same time. Perhaps the most remarkable fact in the structure of the verses is the way in which the simplest Anglo-Saxon words are mixed with the choicest and rarest Latin terms. Mixtures of this kind are very dangerous to attempt; and that Smart succeeded with such a mixture is astonishing. But succeed he certainly did. I suppose you know that this is really a poem upon one of *The Psalms*—the famous song of praise attributed to King David:—

Strong is the horse upon his speed;
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,
Which makes at once his game;
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;
Strong through the turbulent profound
Shoots xiphias to his aim.

Strong is the lion--like a coal
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole
His chest against the foes:
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail,
Strong against the tide, th' enormous whale
Emerges, as he goes.

Glede—old English for hawk.
Xiphias—the sword-fish.
Gier-eagle—largest kind of eagle.

Even in those two stanzas[1] you will see what strange effective foreign words are used in combination with simple English words of one syllable. "Xiphias" is Greek; but what word could give a finer effect in this line, especially when coupled with the simple word "shoot"? "Profound" is a fine Latin term for the sea; and "turbulent" has here the tumultuous signification that exactly suggests the roaring of waves. There are, as I have said, about one hundred such verses; and most of them are jewels—although a few show that the man who wrote them was a little mad at the time. In his madness

[1] Stanzas LXXV & LXXVI.

only he became thus great. After getting well again he became just as commonplace and as tiresome as he had been before.

Really the next great romantic poet to notice is Burns.[1] Burns made an immense revolution in the English notions of lyrical poetry. You know that he was a peasant,—a Scotch peasant,—and that he wrote not in the King's English, but in the dialect of his native province. It was just as if, here in Japan, some peasant from the most remote district should come up to Tokyo with a MS. of songs written in his own provincial idiom, and with that MS. change the whole poetical literature of the country for 150 years. It was a very wonderful thing. And still more wonderful, the fact that when this man tried to write poetry in pure English, he could only write a trash. As an English poet Burns is not even worth mentioning. But as a dialect poet, a peasant poet, he was one of the very greatest singers that the world ever produced. Presently we shall consider the reasons of this greatness.

You must remember the facts of the life of Burns in order to understand what to think of him. As I have already told you, he was a peasant, a farmer—the very poorest kind of a farmer, with very little schooling of any sort. His family, with all their efforts, could not earn more than 7 pounds a year. Seven pounds at the present rate of exchange signifies a sum of about 70 *yen:* 70 *yen* represents very little indeed even for the support of one person; but when you remember that a large family had to live upon this money, you will begin to see that the condition of Burns was quite as unfortunate as the condition of the poorest peasant in the poorest part of Japan. Indeed a small Japanese farmer is a great deal better situated than Burns was; for he can do without fire in winter, and he can do without such heavy and costly clothing as the severe climate of Scotland required. To live at all, Burns and his family had to work from before the rising of the sun until after sunset,—desperately, and with all their strength. Every night when they came back from the fields, their exhaustion was so great, that they could only, after eating the simplest of food,

[1] Robert Burns (1759-1796).

throw themselves down to sleep. Meat was not tasted in that house. And every evening the young man less robust, perhaps, than his forefathers, was troubled with frightful pains in the head, as a consequence of over-work. Such was the whole of his youth and early manhood. How did he find time to read or to write? He found time to read only while he was eating; —he used to sit at the table with a book in one hand and a spoon in the other, eating and reading as fast as he could,—for there was little time even for a meal. Had it not been for the Sunday law prohibiting labour on the 7th day of the week, very possibly Burns would never have been able to write at all. But he managed to read a little every day at his meals, and to write a little on Sundays, and while working in the fields he used to sing to himself, composing new songs in his mind to the old popular Scotch tunes which he knew.

Does it not seem as if every possible disadvantage had been put into his path? Yet this, which I have told you, was not all. Burns did not spend all his Sunday time and Holiday hours in writing; he was young; he wanted amusement; he wanted to have a little pleasure in this unhappy world. For the Scotch peasants the only possible pleasures were coarse and dangerous—drinking, dancing, card playing, or making love to peasant girls. Burns was handsome, the girls liked him: he was also young, and inclined to be rash. He seduced a girl of a neighbouring house, gave her a child, and incurred as a consequence the ill will of the neighbourhood, for the peasant class is not without a solid code of morals. He tried to act honestly by the girl, wanted to marry her; but the father would not give her to him, disgraced though she was,—believing that he could not support her. On the other hand he threatened a legal prosecution, which would have resulted in utterly ruining Burns as he would not have been able to pay the money for the support of the child exacted by the law in such cases. Subsequently the farmer was persuaded to take a more generous view of the matter; but in the meantime Burns was practically bankrupt. His only chance, he thought, was to go to the West Indies in some humble capacity of assistant upon a plan-

tation. But even to go to the West Indies required a great deal of money: how was he to get the money? For the first time he thought about the songs which he had written. If he could get these printed, some people would buy them, because they were written to popular airs, and some of them had already become well known among the peasantry. The songs were printed: the literary world was surprised and pleased; the book had a much larger sale than Burns could have hoped for; and all at once, he found himself with a good sum of money in his pockets, his debts paid, and a reputation established. Rich men and women in Edinburgh wanted to see him; society was ready to open her gates to him. Now he could marry, without fear; and he did so. He also bought a farm. Then he went to the great city—which was a serious mistake. Flattered insincerely by people who regarded him only as a curiosity,—admitted into circles for which he had not received the proper training,—he easily became the victim of his own natural vanity, and committed a great many blunders, due to ignorance, which lost him the good will of those who could have served him. His chance in life was lost forever. He even lost for a time his natural power to write beautiful songs: he wanted to be thought a great gentleman, and to write in the style of the classic school. He had to go back to his farm,—back to the old hideous struggle with poverty and cold and want of every sort. A Government position, yielding about 60 pounds a year, was obtained for him; but he could not keep it. At an early age he died, broken down by work and by the unfortunate habit of drink to which he had fallen a victim.

A very miserable life this; but never was a man more excusable for his faults and his failures than Burns. You will see that for yourselves, without any need of explanation. Stronger men than Burns might well have done worse under the same circumstances. He had, in spite of an impulsive nature, almost every fine quality of the heart: his faults were chiefly of the head. Time would have remedied most of these weaknesses if Burns could have been able to live in some happier and easier way. But he died before he was yet at the age

when a man begins to understand the common laws of social existence—the laws of life.

And this was the man who brought to English literature a totally new lyrical spirit,—a precious quality of song which subsequently affected many other literatures besides the English. What did he sing about? About the things only which everybody knows, which everybody feels—the things which we commonly call "commonplace": the joy of life, the pleasure of a bright day, the pain of labour, the feelings of the peasant in regard to the hardship of his lot, the qualities of manhood, —the spirit of democracy in the largest and the most human sense, and also the pleasures of the country-folk,—drinking, dancing, and making love. Also he wrote about ghosts and goblins and devils—reflecting the humour and the grotesqueness of certain popular superstitions, and he wrote healthy satires upon religious fanaticisms; for, although profoundly religious in the best sense, Burns hated religious convention and religious cant. There is a great variety of subjects in his poetry; but it is true that loving and drinking and joyous revelry are the dominant themes. And is it not curious that, in spite of his miserable life, we find no pessimism in his verses? Burns was essentially an optimist,—a believer in the good and the beauty of the world which treated him so harshly.

I need scarcely tell you that the originality of Burns could not consist in his choice of subjects—subjects old as the human world. With great genius the subject matters very little indeed. The world most loves to hear about what it understands, what everybody knows, what everybody feels. Millions of people feel the joy of a bright day, the pleasure of a festival evening, the pleasure of looking at a pretty face—there is nothing new about all that. Millions of people also feel that true manhood is not a question of rank or title or scholarship, but is something which belongs to the heart—something which our best emotional nature produces quite independently of mere intellectual power. Millions and millions have felt all these things. But very few have been able to express the common feeling. It was in his power to tell the feelings of millions of

men in the simplest possible way, but with great forth and truth and pathos, that the genius of Burns revealed itself. For example, no one supposes that a common labourer thinks of arguing philosophically or otherwise upon that which makes a man worthy of respect. The average common labourer would be very much puzzled to answer such a question as "What kind of a man do you think is the best man?" He feels the truth; but he can scarcely express it except in a moment of great anger or great sorrow,—when pain gives him a strange power of rough eloquence. But when Burns wrote such a line as "The rank is but the guinea's stamp: the man's the gold for all that!"—when he wrote that, I say, he expressed the feeling of millions of men. Rank really, and title and scholarship, and intellectual attainment represent only the decorative and nominal values of men: it is the fine human nature beneath which is the gold.

You cannot read Burns without a glossary: even for English students it is hard work to read him. He does not properly belong to our study except as an influence; to consider him in any detailed study of his works would require a special lecture of very considerable length. I am not going to give quotations from him at the present time—they would not help the subject of this discourse. But remember that Burns is philologically of the highest interest. It is true that he wrote in a dialect. But we must not forget that this dialect was once the literary language of the English people. It is the old Northern tongue of the first great Anglo-Saxon poets—the language in which were written those wonderful early religious poems of which I spoke at the beginning of our lectures upon the history of English literature. As the Midland English gained ground,—driving the other forms of English out of official and educational use, the original Northern English became at last only a dialect, only the speech of peasants in the remoter districts. Burns, after hundreds of years, gave the Northern speech new life by writing in it: his example has been followed by multitudes of poets; and even to-day a great many compositions in the same language are produced by men of culture. I have no

doubt that an examination of some of the older country dialects in Japan might serve in establishing some curious philological relationship with forms of the language now to be found only in ancient records and in the earliest Japanese literature. In any event the history of Burns should teach every student one thing—that dialect is not to be despised, not to be thought of as something essentially vulgar or beneath the notice of a man of letters, on the contrary it is something of which the literary value to a man of real capacity cannot be over-estimated.

Before Burns there had been a number of lesser lights in Scotch poetry, — one of whom, Robert Fergusson,[1] wrote so much like Burns that you would find it quite difficult to distinguish between the works of the two men. Fergusson wrote very little and died young. Then there was Lady Barnard,[2] who wrote in the same dialect beautiful songs, some of which are still sung. I shall read in prose English one of these songs in order that you may the more easily perceive what was the new spirit that Scotch literature brought into English lyrical poetry towards the end of the 18th century. The song is entitled *Auld Robin Gray*:—

When the sheep are in the fold, and the cows at home and all the weary world to rest are gone, the woes of my heart fall in showers from my eyes, while my goodman sleeps soundly by my side.

When the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye at hame,
And a' the warld to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young James loved me well, and sought me for his bride; but saving a crown, he had nothing else beside. To make that crown a pound, my James went to sea; and the crown and the pound were both for me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving a croun he had naething else beside:

[1] Robert Fergusson (1750-1774).
[2] Lady Anne Barnard *or* Lindsay (1750-1825)

To make the croun a pund, young Jamie gaed to sea;
And the croùn and the pund were baith for me.

He had not been away more than two weeks, when my father broke his arm, and the cow was stolen away; my mother fell sick, and while young James was away at sea, auld Robin Gray came to court me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown awa';
My mother she fell sick,—and my Jamie at the sea—
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father could not work, and my mother could not spin; I toiled day and night, but I could not earn enough to support them; auld Robin supported them both, and kept asking me, with tears in his eyes, 'Oh Jennie, will you not marry me for their sake?'

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin;
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e
Said, 'Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!'

My heart it said, 'no'; for I looked for James to come back. But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was wrecked:—Why did not James then die, or why did I live to say, 'Woe is me?'

My heart it said nay; I look'd for Jamie back;
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack—Why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to cry, Wae's me!

My father argued strongly with me, my mother did not speak; but she looked into my face in such a way that I felt as if my heart was going to break. So I gave him my hand, though my heart was in the sea; and auld Robin Gray was a husband to me.

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak;
But she look'd in my face till my heart was like to break:
They gi'ed him my hand, tho' my heart was in the sea;
Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I had not been a wife more than two weeks, when as I was sitting in sorrow at the door, I saw my James's ghost — for I could not believe that it was really himself until he said: 'I have come home to marry you.'

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith,—for I couldna think it he,
Till he said, 'I'm come hame to marry thee.'

O sorrowfully did we greet each other, and much we had to say! We only took one kiss, and we tore ourselves apart. I wish that I were dead; but I am not likely to die;—and why must I live to say, 'How unhappy I am!'

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say;
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away:
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
And why was I born to say, Wae's me!

I go about like a ghost; and I do not care to spin. I dare not think about James; for that would be a sin. But I will try to do my best to be a good wife; for auld Robin Gray is kind to me.

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin;
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin;
But I'll do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For auld Robin Gray he is kind unto me.

This little song composed about the middle of the 18th century long before Burns' voice had begun to reach men's hearts, is still sung to-day all over the English speaking world. Partly, you may say, on account of the music; that is true, but not only on account of the music. It has perfect beauty of its kind, because of its intense and touching truth. Here is the whole tragedy of a woman's life put into a few lines, without attempt at ornament—simply as a cry out of the heart. And that is not all that you should see in it. The same thing might happen anywhere as well as in Scotland: it might happen in exactly the same way in Japan, in Tokyo,—or, let us say, a little outside of Tokyo, in any one of those small villages which

we pass in our holiday walks. There is a Japanese farmer, his wife and an only daughter. She has with her parents' consent promised to marry a young man who has gone to sea, in order to make a little money against the wedding day. The old folks are very poor. The father and the daughter work in the fields; and they have a cow to help them. The mother weaves, as I often see a peasant's wife doing at the door of her little house when I walk about in the country. Well, one day, a misfortune upsets the whole existence of the household. The farmer breaks an arm or a leg; the mother falls ill and cannot weave; the cow dies or is stolen,—and the daughter alone cannot help her parents sufficiently to support them. In the same moment comes the news of the wreck of the ship on which her betrothed was engaged. Well, a good-natured farmer, of the neighbourhood,—a widower, we must suppose, comes and helps the poor folks with money and provisions, and he says that he wishes to marry the daughter. She, with the great grief of her loss still upon her, does not wish to marry the old man; but he is good and patient and loving; he continues to help the old folks, and once in a while only he repeats his offer to marriage. Would not the Japanese parents have acted just like the Scotch parents in the song? The father argues with the girl—kindly, but strongly: he thinks it is her duty to marry the friend who has been so good to them. The mother who has more influence knows better than to argue;—she only looks into the face of the daughter. The girl cannot bear the kind reproach of those eyes. So she marries the old man. And only a week or two after, back comes the young promised husband from the sea, safe and sound, with the money earned for the wedding day. All this is quite as Japanese as it is Scotch, because it is world literature. And what a cruel little tragedy it is! Now this was the kind of things that prepared the way for the singing of Robert Burns. It was the poetry of the heart—healthy, true, and universal. It belongs to what we call the literature of folk-song,—that is the songs of the folk or common people. From this song and many others of a like kind Burns learned how to sing; and he became the greatest folk-singer of England, and

one of the greatest folk-singers of the world. Indeed there is but one other modern singer at all to be compared with him,—namely, Béranger. But though Burns was not a better musician than Béranger, perhaps not even so good, he surpassed Béranger in the quality which I have called universal. However much the French singer's verses charm us, we always feel that those verses are only French human nature. It is not so with Burns whose feeling expressed all human nature. Some day, when I can give you a special lecture upon Burns, you will find that the best of all his work, like that little song by Lady Barnard, reflects emotions which are as much Japanese as they are Scotch, because they are supremely natural and supremely true. For the time being we must leave Burns and turn to another poet of the series.

I think we had better here consider Cowper.[1] Cowper, like Smart, belongs to both the romantic and classic movements: he occupies a kind of middle position, and it is more convenient to consider him here. By form Cowper, in the bulk of his work, showed classical sympathies. He wrote a good deal in rhymed couplets after the manner of the age, although he also wrote in excellent blank verse, in quatrains and in many other forms. But a queer thing to notice is that even the later followers of the classical tradition became more and more romantic in feeling towards the end of the century. By his birth Cowper belongs to a rather early period, but he did not take to poetry until he was fifty years old. Thus his work falls into the latter half of the century. Cowper was one of the mad poets whom I have already referred to; and, as in the case of Smart, his madness took a religious form. But Smart was religious chiefly when he was mad, and Cowper, on the contrary, came into the world with something of religious madness in his very blood. He was the son of a clergyman, and appears to have been rather severely brought up. He was a terribly nervous and sensitive child; and this sensitiveness made his early school-life, of which he afterwards gave a terrible picture in his *Tirocinium*,[2]

[1] William Cowper (1731-1800).
[2] *Tirocinium* 1784.

supremely unhappy. After the completion of his studies some good friends interested themselves in getting for him a good position in the Government service. They succeeded in nominating him for a position of secretary in connection with parliamentary work: but it was necessary that he should pass an examination to prove his competency for the post which would have paid him a very fine salary. Then occurred a strange incident showing the disordered condition of Cowper's nerves. He became so afraid of that examination that he actually tried to perform suicide rather than be examined. He put a rope round his neck and hung himself; but the rope was old and worn, and it broke under his weight. Then his friends came and saved him, but found him insane with fear and shame. He remained for a considerable time insane, and all the rest of his life had to be taken constant care of. He never married. At one time he was in love with a beautiful cousin, Theodora; and it is thought that he might have been able to marry her if he had had courage to woo her like a man. But he had no courage to do anything; and up to his fiftieth year he remained helpless as a child. His amusements were also of a juvenile kind,—making cages for rabbits, cultivating flowers in a very small garden, and things of that kind. Then some ladies interested in him, persuaded him to try to write poetry,—thinking that the writing of poetry would serve to compose his mind. Then he did exactly as was told him, like a mesmerized person. The result was *The Task*[1] and other things. A clergyman, called John Newton, also got control of him and put him to writing religious hymns. The hymns and the poems which he was thus induced to compose, always under direction, have become recognized as treasures of literature. The hymns are among the best of this character;—the poems give Cowper his great position in English literature. He is the great link between Thomson and Wordsworth. Of the rest of his life little more needs to be said except that he died mad,—religiously mad, almost despairing of his future.

Nothing is more strange than the fact that very little of

[1] *The task* 1784.

Cowper's religious gloom appears in his poetry. It does indeed appear in one of the last things that he wrote,—*The Castaway* —a poem about a sailor falling overboard at night from his ship, and struggling in the black immensity of the sea, certain to die, yet not able to die quickly, being a strong swimmer. Cowper compares his own soul to this sailor, whom he calls — "Such a destined wretch as I"—but this poem is quite an exceptional bit of black thinking. Usually Cowper was not only cheerful and tender in his poetry, but actually joyous. Sometimes he was even merry; he had a fine sense of humour,— as all of you know who have read his comical ballad of *John Gilpin.*[1] As for his importance in literature, he may be said to have been the strongest of inspiration to Wordsworth, — that is to say, to the great 19th century school of nature poetry. Chiefly classic his forms are; but not severely classic, and he departed from every tradition of the classic school in his classic treatment of subjects. You must remember that the classic rules were quite narrow on the matter of subjects and their treatment. No classic poet would have dreamed of describing common things exactly as seen and felt; nor would any classic poet have thought in Pope's time that it was lawful to introduce into poetry the naturalism of the country. But Cowper first taught to English poets that the most commonplace things might be beautifully treated in a natural way. Thomson had indeed given exquisite descriptions of nature, in a romantic way; but Thomson had not taken up the little details of country sights and sounds and smells. This Cowper did, he looked at a field, watched it for hours at a time, to observe what the animals were doing there—how they ate, how they rested, how they amused themselves. For instance, he tells us about the young horses, suddenly galloping around the meadow, kicking up their heels in the air, and whinning: then stopping to graze a little; then running about again in a circle. This is what young horses have been in the habit of doing for ten thousand years; but poets had not thought of describing it before. Throughout Cowper's descriptive poems you will always find

[1] *The diverting history of John Gilpin* 1782.

scattered pictures of this kind,—supremely delightful pictures. And no pictures are more difficult to execute successfully. Wordsworth tried to imitate Cowper in this respect in the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* and he made himself ridiculous by failing on the side of good taste and moderation. Cowper never failed in these. But remember that he was 50 years old when he began to write poetry, having the experience of an ordinary lifetime to depend upon; and that Wordsworth began to write poetry while still a very young man.

I will not here detain you longer on the subject of Cowper. The next romantic poet we have to consider is Blake.[1] You will remember that I gave a lecture[2] on Blake last year; and I need not now attempt a very detailed notice of him, but he is a very important poet, and quite unlike any other figure in 18th century literature. Born in the middle of the century, he had nothing whatever in common with it. This is not because he must be considered as a mad poet, but because, quite aside from his undoubted madness, his artistic tendencies made it impossible for him to sympathize with the poetry of his time. He was trained to be an engraver; and he became a very good one. Early in life he married an excellent wife, to whom he probably owed most of his artistic successes; for she not only sympathized with his work, but shared in it. The work which I referred to consisted of a long series of books of poems, illustrated with beautifully coloured drawings. Blake composed the poems and designed the pictures; and his wife helped to colour them. The original books thus published are now among the treasures of the British Museum. Blake believed that his poems and his pictures were composed and designed under the direct inspiration of angels, ghosts, or of God himself. He was mad; but there was a mystical method in his madness, which produced most beautiful and eternally precious results. Otherwise he was a most good, honest, and kindly man,—never attempting to make more than enough money to enable him to carry on his artistic undertaking. Both he and his wife may

[1] William Blake (1757-1827).
[2] i.e. *On Poets*, Chapter XVIII "Blake the First English Mystic."

be said to have sacrificed everything in the world for the sake of what they believed to be art. In the 18th century they were chiefly thought of as poor crazy people: they are now known to have been very great and good people as well.

Now a word about Blake's literary position. His early sympathy carried him back to the time of Elizabethan singers. And he began his poetical career by imitating them — this means, of course, that he went back to the great romantic period of English poetry — detesting the conventions of the classic schools. Above all things Blake was *natural*—a lover of truth and simplicity and frank expression. Later on he became influenced by the strange prose of *Ossian*,—the humbug poetry of Macpherson. By mixing the new suggestions offered him by this book with the fine effects of the poetical prose of the Bible, he was able himself to produce prose finer than Macpherson's. Both as a prose-writer and as a poet, Blake is very important, but in poetry he always remained more of an Elizabethan than of anything else. In simplicity he most resembled, but far surpasses, Herrick.

With Blake's prose we are not here concerned. The best of his poetry is to be found in the *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*.[1] The *Songs of Innocence* intended to represent the happy condition of the mind of a child before it knows anything about the pains of existence, or to represent the similar condition of mankind in an imaginary sinless world. The *Songs of Experience* are intended to represent the effect upon the mind of the knowledge of sin and sorrow. Besides these two books, Blake's poems include short pieces of a miscellaneous description and a short play of indifferent merit. All of the poetry is not equally good. Some of it is unintelligible, some of it positively mad. But the best of it is unique in English literature. It is not only beautiful,—it is very, very extraordinary. Indeed there is nothing else like it. You have in Blake a man who writes thoughts wide as the sky and deep as the sea in the language of the nursery,—in such baby rhymes as little infants are taught to learn by heart. As child poetry

[1] *Songs of innocence and experience* 1789-94.

many of his verses are so very simple and pretty that they are still taught to little boys and girls among the first reading lessons given in infant schools. But only the adult really understands the thought behind the simple verse. This is what particularly gives a unique character to the work of Blake; but he has also a sweetness of melody, a particular quality of music, unlike any other poet of the times.

In one sense Blake was not the earliest English mystic in poetry: there were poetical mystics even in the Elizabethan age. But Blake was certainly the first great and original English mystic in the world of verse. His smaller predecessors had been profoundly religious men in only the orthodox sense; and orthodoxy is the greatest of all checks upon original thinking. By orthodoxy I mean here belief in one of the old established Churches—whether Catholic or Protestant makes no difference. But Blake made a religion for himself; and his mysticism is entirely original. He was, indeed, at one time strongly influenced by Swedenborg, but he threw off all allegiance to Swedenborg, long before reaching his poetical maturity. His great originality, strength, depth, simplicity and sweetness continue to make him a great influence. I doubt whether there is one of the greater Victorian poets who has not been affected by him, but perhaps Rossetti shows the result more than any other.

And now we reach the end of the romantic branch in the flow of 18th century poetry. This romantic flow ends in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. All these men can only be fully considered in a coming lecture on 19th century poetry; for their work lasts far into our time. But all were born in the 18th century; and all did some work in the 18th century. Wordsworth was born in 1770; Coleridge in 1772; Southey in 1774. As for Wordsworth, he lived and wrote, you know, almost up to the middle of the 19th century. But the triumph of the romantic movement must be dated from the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*[1] in the last decade of the 18th century. In this book Wordsworth and Coleridge published their early poems together. Wordsworth set forth in a rather pretentious and

[1] *Lyrical ballads* 1798; 2nd ed. 1800.

rather comical preface the doctrines of his imagined new school. These were an amplification of the method of Cowper. Wordsworth declared that he intended to take both inanimate and human nature for his themes—choosing only the real, the commonplace, and the vulgar by preference. He declared that the emotions of the commonest country woman were just as sacred and deep and suitable for poetry as the emotions of a queen or a princess. He did not think that the poet should describe only beautiful people or beautiful animals. On the contrary he was going to write about ugly people and stupid people and criminal people—also about ugly, common animals, donkeys, pigs, etc.. Coleridge did not altogether sympathize with Wordsworth's notions—which indeed, as Wordsworth expressed them in his preface, were *not* romantic, but what we should call to-day naturalistic or realistic. Carried out to its logical consequences, Wordsworth's doctrine would have given us the school of Zola; and nothing really was so far from Wordsworth's sincere intention. He mis-stated the romantic position; and he afterwards repented of it, very properly. But Coleridge announced that he intended to take up the subject of the supernatural and the mediæval, only putting or infusing something of human interest and human worth into both. This was a much more correct position. But the work of the two was published together. The book contained a number of miscellaneous poems by Wordsworth, such as *Betty Foy*, *Peter Bell*, *The Idiot Boy*, *We are Seven*, and the priceless and the immortal *Ancient Mariner*[1] of Coleridge. The world was not quite prepared for the book, so far as Coleridge's share in it was concerned. They scarcely noticed *The Ancient Mariner*. But they noticed the first attempts of Wordsworth to write about everyday things, commonplace things; and the critics yelled with derision. Really Wordsworth had written a great deal of nonsense,—ridiculous nonsense; and the review tore the book to pieces. Some of the cleverest satires and parodies ever written were composed upon that book. Wordsworth was too proud to be affected by the criticism at that time. He imagined that the fault must

[1] *The rime of the ancyent marinere, in seven parts* 1798.

have been with Coleridge and that he had made a great mistake in printing his own poetry together with that of so eccentric a man. But later on he was able to understand that he had really made some very serious mistakes, and when another edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was published the worst of the nonsense which the critics had jeered at was suppressed. Later on Wordsworth and Coleridge did great things; which everybody praised. But the appearance of *The Ancient Mariner* in that first volume really signifies the beginning of the romantic triumph. Thereafter was founded what people still call the school of the Lake Poets; and when we come to treat of the 19th century poetry these will be the subject of the first lecture. Scott was already writing at this time; and he had published poetical translations of great value. But Scott also belongs much more to the 19th century than to the 18th century; and we must now go back to the time of Johnson, and follow the stream of expiring classical poetry to the last decade of the 18th century, when it ended with Erasmus Darwin.

II. Classical Poetry

FROM JOHNSON TO DARWIN

The subject of the classical decay need not occupy us so long as the much more important story of the romantic development has been doing. The narrative is brief enough,—although there were a great number of minor classic poets, during the second half of the century, very few of them are important enough to arrest the student's attention. Such a poet as Shenstone,[1] the author of *The Schoolmistress*,[2] is important much more because of the help which he gave to Bishop Percy, than because of his own work. Churchill,[3] a brutal satirist of great talent, has left nothing except the power of his wicked verse to admire. He is not the sort of poet that the

[1] William Shenstone (1714-1763).
[2] *The school-mistress, a poem* (anon.) 1742.
[3] Charles Churchill (1731-1764).

student need attempt to study except in connection with the special subject of satire. Savage,[1] a cunning rascal, who was able to deceive the good Dr. Johnson, and even to obtain his social support, is not worth considering at all, except as a proof that good Dr. Johnson could some time let his heart betray him into sympathy for the undeserving. There are scores of small poets who adhered to the classic. But really we need not concern ourselves with more than four names: these are Johnson, Goldsmith, Crabbe, and Darwin. Such a poet as Byrom[2] may be mentioned as his name bears a curious resemblance to that of a much greater poet who belongs to the 19th century; but you need not otherwise trouble yourselves to remember him. He wrote correct verse of an uninspired kind, and married a daughter of the great scholar Bentley, in whose praise he composed several verses.

As to Johnson's own poetry, there is not much to be said. It is intensely classical, pompous, and always correct; but it is seldom marked by any really deep feeling. Johnson cultivated the satire to some extent—not, however, in the personal way, — he was too kind a man for that, and preferred to attack general evils or follies rather than to make individuals needlessly unhappy. His satires have no other merit unfortunately than their correctness of form. But twice the doctor may be said to have done really fine things in verse. The best of these is his composition on *The Vanity of Human Wishes*[3] — these verses are truly noble, and the greatness of the subject makes the heavy and dignified verse appropriate as the dead march to a grand funeral. The other fine thing that Johnson did was his little elegy on the death of a doctor who happened to be his personal friend.[4] It is written, not in the couplet, but in very simple quatrain, and it still touches everybody who reads it, notwithstanding that two words which are used in it — "vulgar" and "coarsely" — have so changed their meaning since Johnson's time, that they shock us a little by their ap-

[1] Richard Savage (*d.* 1743).
[2] John Byrom (1692-1763).
[3] *The vanity of human wishes: the tenth satire of Juvenal imitated* 1743.
[4] *On the death of Dr. Robert Levet* 1783.

pearance in these beautiful lines. We should not like to-day to hear a man describe his dear friend as "coarsely kind," or his knowledge as "vulgar." But Johnson did not mean exactly what those words mean now. Like the composition on *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, this elegy is the expression of sincere and deep emotion. It was very seldom that the doctor allowed his big heart to express itself; but, when he did, the results were the very best of all that he was able to give us in the shape of verse.

Goldsmith[1] was scarcely less of a classical poet than Johnson; but he was altogether a much finer poet. He used the couplet, and obeyed classical conventions, but he had a delicate spirit of romantic feeling that made his verse beautiful in spite of the severe forms in which he thought himself obliged to clothe his thought. Thus in his *Traveller*[2] and his *Deserted Village*[3] you will find a feeling much closer to Thomson than to Pope, though the verse is Popesque enough at times. Again in spite of some critics we all continue to find pleasure in his artificial but beautiful ballad of *Edwin and Angelina*[4] — certainly the verse is conventional; the phrases of the old-fashioned Pope's school of poetry are sometimes used; but there is a tenderness and a beauty of feeling that you cannot discover elsewhere in the old school at all. However, Goldsmith is much more important as a prose-writer than as a poet; and we shall have to speak of him again. For the present it is enough to say that he did beautifully whatever he tried to do; and that his classical verse is not to be despised. It was much better than Johnson's, though not any more correct.

Crabbe[5] deserves a special lecture; and I hope to attempt this next term. For the present I must be brief, and I shall only say that he is the very greatest classical poet of the later 18th century. He is altogether an extraordinary figure in poetry. I told you that Cowper, who stands between the two schools, had introduced into English literature the use of com-

[1] Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774).
[2] *The traveller, or a prospect of society* 1764.
[3] *The deserted village* 1770.
[4] *Edwin and Angelina* 1765.
[5] George Crabbe (1754-1832).

monplace detail as an element in poetry. He approached naturalism, without ever becoming a naturalist in the later meaning of the word. You must think of Crabbe rather as a realist and a realist of the very grimmest kind. There was not one particle of romance in Crabbe. He was a clergyman who lived in the country among poor people and saw life only as it really was—bitter, painful, tragical, often horrible. Using classic forms,—using the couplet just as Dryden had used it before Pope, — Crabbe attacked the convention of the old classical school, nevertheless, in a totally new way. He said, in the plainest possible manner, "You have been talking about the country as a kind of paradise, full of love and health, and happiness. But that is all nonsense. You do not know anything about the real life of the country, the hardships and the misery of the peasant." And then he proceeded to describe that life exactly as he had studied it. For this reason, there is not an English poet whose work gives the reader more pain than Crabbe's. Yet, in spite of the pain, and the tiresome old-fashioned verse, and the total absence of all romance, Crabbe interests and more than interests. He has been called "a Pope in Worsted Stockings," such stockings being worn at that time only by peasants—which is very much like saying that he was a rude and rustic, but great poet. This is true. If you once begin to read him fairly, without prejudice, you will see that he deserves to obtain what no other classical poet of the age, except Johnson, at all obtains—the reverence of the romantic school. Johnson got respect from his enemies only because of his fine character; but Crabbe more than respect, both on account of his character and of his verse. Whoever learned to laugh at the faults of the classic poet, never laughed at Crabbe. There was too much great art there—art of a dark but profound kind: the art of the realist. The first work of Crabbe with the exception of a composition called *The Library*[1] was revised by Johnson himself; and it is rather remarkable that Johnson should have expressed such a warm interest in the work of a man so very different in his methods from those

[1] *The library* 1781.

classic masters whom Johnson had been accustomed to admire. This first work was called *The Village*.[1] It contained a clear exposition of Crabbe's poetical convictions, and those convictions were never departed from in the course of a long lifetime.

The Village was a powerful description of the miseries of the life of the English peasant, and after nearly a hundred years one must acknowledge that the verses of Crabbe are still, to a great extent, terribly true. Here there was no cabinet poetry—no talk of the beauties of nature, of nymphs and goddesses and fairies; nothing but pitiless and cruel fact set forth in correct, vigorous, and undecorated verse. Afterwards Crabbe went on to describe all the details of English country life. He went to the poor-houses (establishments where people too old to work are maintained by public charity), and he told us the history of each of its inmates. He went to the prisons and related the story of each criminal within their walls. He also narrated the history of various marriages in his parish,—of many deaths,—of many domestic misfortunes. And he did this with the severe naturalism of a great realist. For about twenty years he stopped writing;—then, in his old age, he produced another series of a like study of exactly the same sort,—entitled *Tales*.[2] But remember that he was not a pessimist. He was only a man who described life as he saw it, and he saw the good as well as the bad side. Many of his sketches are extremely painful; but a number are quite pretty, and all are interesting. We must return in another lecture to the subject of Crabbe. His influence was not great in his own time, and he can scarcely be said to have had any successful imitators until our own days. Lately one English poet, Mr. Robert Buchanan, followed the example of Crabbe by producing a terrible set of poems describing the miseries of the English poor. These are not without merit. But I do not think that Buchanan has been able to approach Crabbe. One reason is that Buchanan is too emotional. Crabbe never expressed his own emotion, though

[1] *The Village* 1783.
[2] *Tales* 1812.

he is able to awaken that of his readers. Buchanan weakens his work by putting too much of himself into it.

One more figure remains to be considered in the history of the decline of classic poetry,—and this is the most interesting figure of any in a certain way. I mean Erasmus Darwin.[1] Erasmus Darwin really killed classic poetry—made its coffin, and drove in the nails. He was not a great poet,—though he was able to make verse even more correct than the verse of Pope. But he was a very great man of science and a very wonderful and lovable person. He was the grandfather of Charles Darwin, whose modern discoveries in natural history did so much to change the course of thought in modern Europe. Nevertheless, great as Charles Darwin certainly was, I doubt whether he could be called as great as his grandfather; for Erasmus Darwin anticipated almost every discovery which Charles Darwin made, and anticipated it chiefly by power of reason and constructive imagination at a time before there were good microscopes, good scientific instruments, or any great opportunities for travel and research such as are open to men of science now. He was only a country doctor, who passed his whole life in one place, and made all of his discoveries in his own little study.

Erasmus Darwin was born in 1731, at Eton, but his people soon after removed to the town of Lichfield, the birthplace of Dr. Johnson; and at a comparatively early age the boy showed great aptitude for the study of medicine and was educated for the profession as well as opportunity permitted. After having obtained his degree in medicine, he established his office in Lichfield; and there he soon became not only the fashionable doctor of the place, but the most influential member of its society. This was owing to the strange mixture of charm and force in his character. A curious fact is that he very much resembled Dr. Johnson, whom the people of Lichfield could well remember. Like Johnson, he was a very big, fat, ugly man,—with a strong good-natured face deeply pitted by smallpox; and like Johnson, he was naturally dictatorial, — inclined to

[1] Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802).

play the master with everybody, and to express his sincere opinions without regard to anybody's prejudices. But he was trusted and liked, and he deserved it. Presently the society of Lichfield boldly proclaimed that their Dr. Darwin was in all respects a greater man than Dr. Johnson. He was equal, they said, to Johnson in learning; and he was much superior to Johnson in genius. This praise was really deserved. Darwin was very much more learned than Dr. Johnson, and he was far in advance of his time as a scientific thinker. The little town of Lichfield has a right to be proud of him; and, although Lichfield was only a small country town, it had a great cathedral, a great bishop, and a number of very wealthy and cultivated residents. It was an aristocratic little place; and it remains so even to this day. There were many men and women of letters there—not perhaps very great, but all very earnest, in the pursuit of knowledge and of culture. These formed a little literary society which was called "The Darwinian Sphere," and they produced a great deal of mediocre poetry and prose in the taste of the classic school. It was one of the great afflictions of this society that Dr. Johnson never took any notice of Dr. Darwin. The society accused Johnson of jealousy and pride; but he remained perfectly silent and indifferent. Perhaps Johnson disliked to have an imitator, or acknowledged rival; — perhaps the two men secretly detested each other, because of being too much alike in character. They never came together. If they had done so the result could not have been good; for Johnson must have detested the theories of Dr. Darwin as being contrary to religious teaching and Dr. Darwin must have thought of Dr. Johnson as a bigot and a narrow-minded conservative. Both were excellent men; but they were certainly not made so as to be in sympathy with each other under any circumstances. However, Dr. Darwin could not complain: he had all Lichfield for his little kingdom; and he ruled it despotically for more than fifty years, dying in 1802, regretted by all who knew him.

A word about Darwin's scientific works will be necessary to offset what we have to say in condemnation of his poetry.

His great work in prose was entitled *Zoonomia.*[1] This was nothing less than an attempt to explain the whole infinite process of nature by a general law. It was a very great attempt, indeed, and it must be ranked with the scientific work of Gœthe and Lamarck in the same direction; but it reached truths which were not clearly perceived by either the great German or the great Frenchman. In fact the theory of Natural Selection is the only theory of the philosophy of modern evolution which Dr. Darwin did not in some way vaguely anticipated. You are, of course, aware that his grandson discovered this theory, which is now generally accepted by all competent thinkers. To give you an idea of Dr. Darwin's philosophy, I shall mention only one of his teachings. He said that all differences in the shapes, colours, powers, and habits of animals or plants might be accounted for by the conditions under which these had multiplied and developed; but that all animals, all living organisms, had been evolved from "a similar living filament." As a general truth, indistinctly enunciated, there is little fault to be found with this statement. Nineteenth century science knows a little better, because it has obtained better microscopes and a larger knowledge of chemistry. But the result of its researches is very nearly the same declaration. All living forms have been evolved from a similar simple cell; and any practical physiologist can prove to you, with a microscope, that all living bodies are constructed of a fundamentally similar cell. Substitute the word "cell" for Darwin's "filament"; and you have the truth. But I need scarcely tell you that the man capable of such a theory in the 18th century was far beyond his age. His *Zoonomia* did not attract much scientific attention; —indeed it might have been quite forgotten but for the wonderful work of his grandson. However, the doctor never imagined himself to be so far in advance of the time. He only imagined that if he had written in poetry instead of prose he would have obtained a wider audience. Then he undertook to write in poetry, and he produced in two volumes his extraordinary composition entitled *The Botanic Garden.*[2] It was pub-

[1] *Zoonomia, or the laws of organic life* 1794-96 (1801, 1802). [2] *The botanic*

lished in two parts; the first appeared, entitled *The Loves of the Plants,* and the second part *The Economy of Vegetation.* But really the second volume was the first part; the doctor publishing the end of the book before the beginning. *The Botanic Garden* appeared between 1789 and 1791.

This great composition is nothing less than the whole of the botanical system of Linnæus in heroic verse of the most perfectly correct form. Indeed the form is too correct. And excess of correctness is not the only excess. There is an equal extravagance of antithesis, and a still greater extravagance in the use of mythological imagery. The whole thing is a vast mass of personification,—every flower, called by its Latin name, being represented as a person with peculiar habits and characteristics. Indeed the thing reads like a grand parody of Pope —like a satire upon the classical school of verse. For a time it was popular enough. The doctor was paid £900 for it—equal to 9,000 *yen* to-day. But this work really killed classical poetry. It showed, in a way that never had been shown before, all the artificial and insincere character of classic poetry, and it showed this by exaggerating every excellence and correctness of Pope. You could not say that any line of this poem was not according to classic rules. And yet the thing was ridiculous. After the time of Dr. Darwin nobody dared to attempt any more composition in the style of Pope. *The Botanic Garden* has never been reprinted and probably never will be. But it is probable that we shall have new editions of the *Zoonomia,* for that book will always be interesting to the student of scientific history.

Among the literary circle of Lichfield, surrounding Dr. Darwin as planets turn about the sun, there were several persons whose names cannot be omitted in any mention of the age of Johnson. There was for example Thomas Day,[1] author of *Sandford and Merton,*[2] a book for boys, which every boy was obliged to read, whether he liked it or not, even in the

garden; a poem in two parts (I. The economy of vegetation, 1791. *II. The loves of the plants,* 1789) 1791.

[1] Thomas Day (1748-1789).
[2] *A history of Sandford and Merton* 1783-89.

time of my own childhood. Then there was Richard Edgeworth,[1] father of the future novelist Maria Edgeworth. Also there was the handsome and unfortunate young Major Andre,[2] afterwards executed as a spy during the American civil war. A great deal of sympathy has already been felt for this young officer, whose ignominious death does not seem to have cast any shadow upon his real character. And there was Miss Anna Seward,[3] a beautiful girl, who wrote much poetry, and who adored Dr. Darwin just as Boswell adored Samuel Johnson. Like Boswell she wrote the life of her intellectual idol.[4] Nobody now reads Miss Seward's poetry; but her life of Dr. Darwin is a very interesting and amusing book in its way, although not comparable to the work of Boswell. It is written in a most artificial and extravagant style; but through all the disguise of fashion in language, you can see the charming character of the young woman, who gives us a glimpse into the quaint and delightful Lichfield of the 18th century.

The Historians

We have seen that the age of Johnson witnessed the beginning of romantic poetry, the birth and full development of the English novel, and the perfection of English prose which, as I have already said, has not been surpassed even by the masters of the 19th century in clearness, precision and polish. But the splendour of this prose was particularly shown in history; and the third great fact for the student to remember is that really great history was first written by Englishmen in the age of Johnson. This history, in its best example, has never been surpassed and perhaps it never will be equalled. Properly speaking, history, philosophy and science do not intrinsically belong to literature. I should always insist upon considering literature the art of expressing emotion, sentiment, thoughts

[1] Richard Lovel Edgeworth (1744-1817).
[2] John Andre (1751-1780).
[3] Anna Seward (1747-1809).
[4] *Memoir of the life of Dr. Darwin* 1804.

as they exist in real life: I should say that literature in the true sense must always be a picture of life whether the form be poetry, fiction or drama. But a work of science or philosophy or history may belong to literature when written so that it produces the effect of real literature upon the reader's mind. The greatest English histories do this,—and the same may be said of the best French histories. And the English 18th century historians are related to literature quite as much as to science —indeed, in the case of two, the literary relation is the only important one. There were three great historians in the age of Johnson; they lived and worked almost at the same time. These were Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. Hume[1] wrote *The History of England*,[2] Robertson[3] *The History of Scotland*,[4] Gibbon *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*[5] —a title very much small than the fact which it represents; for Gibbon's *History* is really a history of the whole world from the age of Augustus to the Middle Ages and beyond—almost to the time of the Renaissance. An enormous undertaking that only enormous faculties could have successfully carried out. No other man has yet attempted to do anything upon the same scale; and it is quite certain in view of the present tendency and necessity for specialization that no man will ever again venture upon so huge a task. But the still more astonishing fact is that this *History* of Gibbon, which after a hundred years still remains the best of all histories, is quite as much of a literary monument as a work of science. Even if Gibbon had been a bad historian, his mastership of style would keep his pages forever alive. But he was even greater as an exact scholar than as a pure man of letters. The combination is astonishing and rare. Hume and Robertson can live only as historians, by their style; — their histories are so faulty and untrustworthy that we need not mention them any further as historians and

[1] David Hume (1711-1776).

[2] *The history of Great Britain (under the House of Stuart)* 1754-57; *The history of England under the House of Tudor* 1759; —*from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the accession of Henry VII* 1762; —*to the Revolution in 1688* 1763.

[3] William Robertson (1721-1793).

[4] *The history of Scotland during the reigns of queen Mary and of king James VI* etc. 1759 (1813).

[5] *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire* 1776-88 (1846, 1869).

we shall consider Hume separately elsewhere. But Gibbon in himself is the supreme representative of 18th century science of scholarship in its grandest form; and his place in literature is so closely connected with his researches in learned fields that we cannot separately consider the historian and the stylist.

Edward Gibbon was born in 1737 and died in 1794. The facts of his life can only be briefly touched upon here: his own most interesting autobiography[1] is one of the books which you should find sincere pleasure in reading; — it will give you a much better idea of the man than a brief lecture could possibly do. Suffice to say that Gibbon was of good parentage, the son of a wealthy family, a gentleman by rank, well educated and rich. He often expressed his conviction that he was a very fortunate person. Had he not been rich and very well educated, he could not have attempted what he did attempt. There was not in those days the opportunities which professional historians can now obtain through great libraries and the help of Government archives, which are placed at their disposal. Moreover, thousands of books had to be bought — procured from foreign countries at great prices—which nowadays even the poorest student can consult in the Government libraries of European countries. However, wealth and education alone could not have made a Gibbon. Immense natural faculty for the acquisition of language, immense patience to acquire them, and extraordinary love of exactness, and a patience indomitable in tiresome research—all these were necessary. Gibbon was born with such powers, and circumstances only assisted to bring them out. I suppose you remember that he was educated but partly in England, more in Switzerland and in France; that he spoke and wrote French quite as well as English—actually publishing some of his first essays in that language; also that he became a Roman Catholic at the age of 16, then was reconverted back to Protestantism; then became a free thinker and so remained to the end of his life. It was not a very eventful life, being mostly spent in libraries and study-rooms. For a short time Gibbon was an officer of militia, in his youth; but

[1] *Autobiography and correspondence a* 1794 (1796, 1854).

toward middle life he began to get fat, and at last he became so fat that when he knelt down he could not easily get up again. There is a story about his kneeling down in the presence of a lady and not being able to rise until help was sent for. He never married, really giving up all the pleasures of life for the single object of his *History*. And yet with a queer pride, he did not like to be called a historian; he thought that it was quite enough to be called a gentleman. But this was one of the little follies of the time, and he could not be blamed for it. Even to-day in English aristocratic circles there is a lingering feeling that literature is not exactly the kind of pursuit which a nobleman should follow. We can trace such notions straight back to the Middle Ages when it was thought disgraceful for a warrior to be able to read and write. Only in the very last years of Gibbon's life did startling events occur to disturb his peace. The revolutionary upheaval in Switzerland obliged him to fly from that country, where he lost considerable property. He did not long survive after his return to his own country.

To consider Gibbon's work as a task, it is not enough to tell you that the mere collection of material for it occupied more than 15 years, nor that another 15 years were spent in mental digestion and preparation of that material. This would give you no particular impression of what had to be done. Gibbon had to establish a new science of history by himself; he had no predecessors; he had to invent every plan. He had also to read and to read scientifically all the Latin authors, the Greek authors of the Byzantine Empire, the historians and chroniclers of the Middle Ages; the mere list of authorities which he was obliged to read in mediæval Latin and later Greek would make a large book. He had also to read books in the Persian, the Arabic, and other Eastern languages—he had to read for the later part of his *History* all accessible histories in all the languages of Europe. And is it not wonderful that in all his reading of these tens of thousands of books in different languages, and quotations and references almost innumerable, he has never been convicted of a single serious mistake that could not have been avoided by a writer in his time? Many

and many have been the editors of Gibbon who tried to point out mis-statements, falsehoods, contradictions; but in nearly every case these editors themselves have been proved wrong. Time has indicated the accuracy of Gibbon after a manner that seems to us little short of miraculous.

The great historian Freeman said of Gibbon in our own time: "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too. He is the sole historian of the 18th century whom modern research has neither set aside nor threatens to set aside." And, although Roman Catholics have a particular reason to dislike Gibbon, a great Catholic prelate some years ago bravely acknowledged that the only real history of the early church is the *History* of Gibbon. Now to speak ill of Gibbon's *History* is either a proof of religious prejudice or want of culture. In former times the prejudice only would have accounted for attacks upon the work.

I must say a word on the reasons for this prejudice. It was chiefly provoked by the 15th and 16th chapters of the first volume of the *History*, dealing with Christianity. Gibbon was an open free-thinker; and he had some dislike to Christianity. Besides he belonged to the age of the great French sceptics—the Encyclopaedists, Voltaire, Diderot, etc.,—and his sympathies were altogether with the French tendencies of the time. The English public were, however, easily offended by any attempt to express in its language the tone of sceptical thought then fashionable in France. When Gibbon discovered this, he did not retract anything which he had written; but he somewhat modified the tone of his criticism of Christianity so as to avoid giving needless offence. But the prejudices which his mockery first aroused are not even yet dead; and very religious persons are still inclined to denounce Gibbon in a fashion which only proves ignorance, if it proves anything. The wise way to accept Gibbon's work is to consider it quite independently of the personal opinions of the historian. As history, it is the best of its kind; and if you are religious and at the same time a person of culture, you can easily recognize this fact. On the other hand, if you are sceptical, you will find yourself in perfect sympathy with Gibbon at all points. And I may state my own

belief that the final judgment upon Gibbon's work has yet to be made. He considered the civilization of the 18th century inferior to the great civilization of antiquity; and there are many good scholars who would probably declare the same thing in regard to the European civilization of the 20th century. Formerly it was the custom of English historians to represent the civilization of Christianity as far superior to the civilization of paganism; and Gibbon gave great offence by daring to take the opposite view—a view in which Hume partly joined him. But with the widening of modern scholarship, the modern tendency seems to be in the direction of Gibbon's thought. The more we learn of the ancient civilization, the more we are astonished to find how much the Greeks and the Romans surpassed us in many things, however much we may be otherwise in advance of them.

And now I want to talk to you about Gibbon's style—the supreme expression of classical style,—the supreme prose of the 18th century,—the nearest approach ever made in English to the majestic sonority and rolling music of the old Greek and Roman writers. First of all I shall speak of the style only as regards general construction. Afterwards I shall try to illustrate its peculiar economy and strength. No one before ever wrote like Gibbon; and the nearest approach to his splendour of language was in the pages of Sir Thomas Browne. But that was a much older form of English. No man will write like Gibbon again; the fashion has passed and we cannot regret that it has passed, for in some ways, representing a climax of perfection, it was not a stimulant to further progress. But we must admire it in exactly the same way that we admire a Roman aqueduct, or a Greek marble theatre—notwithstanding that modern hydraulics have rendered the first useless and that the second would be totally inadequate to modern theatrical requirements.

The first thing, then, to notice about Gibbon's style is that it makes the nearest possible approach to the blank verse which is consistent with fine prose. Just like poetry, it can be measured—scanned, to use the technical term. You can divide

it into feet; and you will find that the phrases can be scanned under the same rules as a line of verse. Every phrase is not of exactly the same length; but there are few departures from the general rule that in all the work there are only about three forms of phrase, and that each form has its own rhythm. So much for short phrases. Sentences commonly occur by succession of three different kinds. You have first a short phrase, making a complete sentence in itself. Next you have a sentence of two phrases, sharply distinguished by rhythm, and often antithetically balanced. Then you have a long, rolling sentence, consisting of a varying number of independent sentences or phrases, ending with a phrase which nearly always recalls the rhythm of a Greek hexameter. And this varying succession of different forms of sentences, always ending with the same grand rolling sound, has all the effect of splendid poetry.

Examples are not difficult to find—you need only open any volume at any page of the *History* to find them. I know there are numerous exceptions to the general rule which I have suggested: indeed, without exception, such a rule would have made the prose too monotonous. But leaving the exceptions aside, I do not think that there is a single page of Gibbon devoid of the poetic perfection which I have indicated. I am going to quote to you a few examples of this wonderful style—taking them here and there from the 7th volume of the *History*. Here is a passage describing the revolt of the Western Tartars against Timour.

> The new khan forgot the merits and the strength of his benefactor, the base usurper, as he deemed him, of the sacred rights of the house of Zingis. Through the gates of Derbend, he entered Persia at the head of ninety thousand horse; with the innumerable forces of Kipzak, Bulgaria, Circassia, and Russia, he passed the Sihoon, burnt the palaces of Timour, and compelled him, amidst the winter snows, to contend for Samarcand and his life. After a mild expostulation and a glorious victory, the emperor resolved on revenge; and by the east, and the west, of the Caspian and the Volga, he twice invaded Kipzak with such mighty

> powers, that thirteen miles were measured from his right to his left wing. In a march of five months, they rarely beheld the footsteps of man; and their daily subsistence was often trusted to the fortune of the chase. At length the armies encountered each other; but the treachery of the standard-bearer, who, in the heat of action, reversed the imperial standard of Kipzak, determined the victory of the Zagatais; and Toctamish (I speak the language of the Institutions) gave the tribe of Touschi to the wind of desolation.

That is to say, to the Wind of Death; for even the grim Timour could be a poet on occasions. The above quotation is but one of a thousand possible, showing how the most enormous event can be described by Gibbon within a few musical sentences. I take another example referring to the conquest of China by Kubla Khan, whose name Gibbon spelled, according to the fashion of the time, Cublai,—the same name made famous to multitudes knowing nothing of Far Eastern history by the celebrated dream poetry of Coleridge, beginning:—

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree:
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea.

> When the fleet of the *Song* was surrounded and oppressed by a superior armament, their last champion leaped into the waves with his infant emperor in his arms. "It is more glorious," he cried, "to die a prince than to live a slave." A hundred thousand Chinese imitated his example; and the whole empire, from Tonkin to the great wall, submitted to the dominion of Cublai. His boundless ambition aspired to the conquest of Japan; his fleet was twice shipwrecked; and the lives of a hundred thousand Moguls and Chinese were sacrificed in the fruitless expedition.

You will notice that the termination of the longer sentences in these quotations always end with the rolling sound; and Gibbon never neglects an artistic opportunity to produce this effect,—sometimes greatly enhancing it by a splendid quota-

tion. For example, when Mahomet II. captured Constantinople, his feelings after the storming of the city are thus briefly but memorably narrated:—

> A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind; and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry: "The spider has woven his web in the imperial palace; and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab."

One more illustrative quotation — suggesting the whole history of a life within a few splendid sentences: these form the introduction to the great story of the patriot Rienzi:

> In a quarter of the city, which was inhabited only by mechanics and Jews, the marriage of an innkeeper to a washerwoman produced the future deliverer of Rome. From such parents Nicholas Rienzi Gabrini could inherit neither dignity nor fortune; and the gift of a liberal education, which they painfully bestowed, was the cause of his glory and untimely end. The study of history and eloquence, the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Livy, Cæsar, and Valerius Maximus, elevated above his equals and contemporaries the genius of the young plebeian; he perused with indefatigable diligence the manuscripts and marbles of antiquity; loved to dispense his knowledge in familiar language; and was often provoked to exclaim, "Where are now these Romans? their virtue, their justice, their power? why was I not born in those happy times?"

See how the last long sentence roils like poetry—how even the Latin names cited have been so arranged that the most musical sounding is put last. In no case does Gibbon ever forget to be melodious. And this is very properly a style comparable to the motion of waves;—the sentences come by billowings and surgings, as waves break and pass. We compare fine poetry of certain kinds to the motion of waves; but it is not often that we can find a prose style equally grand, equally suggesting the chant of the sea. However, neither in the case of blank verse nor of prose does this comparison imply monotony. If you have watched the sea wave, — if you have learned to know it as a swimmer does, you must recognize that the wave

motion is never absolutely regular. People do talk about something or other occurring "regularly as the breaking of waves on the shore," but those who make this comparison would not seem to have watched sea waves. Waves do not come regularly. The motion is never twice the same. But you will see a great wave come and break,—then a smaller one, — then, perhaps, three large ones in rapid succession, then, after an interval, several smaller ones,—then, perhaps, a very large one. In some parts of Europe the sea-coast people say that the seventh wave is always the largest; in other parts of Europe they say the ninth wave—a statement accepted by Tennyson. But the fact that in different countries and even upon different coasts in the same countries there are different statements as to whether it is the seventh or the ninth wave that is heaviest,—this proves that notwithstanding the experience of thousands and thousands of years men have not been able to learn accurately the laws of wave rhythm, and that wave motion has only an apparent regularity. Gibbon's style also has a regularity much more apparent than measurable;—it resembles in almost all respects the nearest possible approach to wave rhythm in prose.

Nevertheless there are certain laws of measurement to be observed in his composition—laws relating to dimension. There are no prodigious sentences,—no tidal waves in this undulating prose. The fluctuations vary from a single line to six or seven; and a fair average of five or six lines represents the volume of the greater number among the longer sentences. Gibbon would not ever have ventured upon such long sentences as even Macaulay occasionally wrote: he would have found these contrary to pure classic taste.

As for the musical part of his work, this style can be managed only by an excellent scholar, perfectly acquainted with the phonetic value of all words derived from Greek or Latin, not less than of English words derived from other sources. It requires what is musically called "a good ear" to be able to write correct poetry; and Gibbon's prose needs, perhaps, even a finer ear than ordinary forms of blank verse.

The next thing which I want to say about Gibbon's style

is in relation to its economy. In this it also resembles the best kind of classic poetry. Having before him a fixed measure into which he must compress his thoughts to the best advantage, the classic poet is obliged to be very sparing and choice in his use of words. If the first essential of good writing be, as critics have said, "to have something to say," certainly the next most essential thing is "to know what *not* to say." No man, not even Pope, ever knew this better than Gibbon. See, in the last quotation which I gave you, how the whole story of the difficulties under which Rienzi obtained his education has been conveyed to the reader by the use of a single adverb "painfully." Everywhere, on every page of his *History*, you can find instances of this sort of economy. For example, Pope Gregory VII. is referred to as one "who may be *adored* or *detested* as the founder of the papal monarchy." How much is implied by that antithetical use of those two verbs?—the signification is, of course, that by the Roman Catholics he may well be adored, and that by all the enemies of the ecclessiastic power he may justly be detested; and either sentiment signifies no small tribute to the great capacities of the man. A little further on the story of early papal elections is thus suggested in a single sentence:—

> The chair of St. Peter was disputed by the votes, the venality, the violence, of a popular election.

Those three nouns tell us more than three newspaper columns would tell us to-day. The candidates were voted for; the votes were influenced by bribes; the bribery proving insufficient for the object desired, fighting resulted;—we do not need to be told anything more from the historical point of view. Again we are told of a pope, who instituted what is now called "a jubilee," that he "*watched* and *irritated* the devout impatience of the faithful." "Watched" means that he attentively observed how impatient they were to obtain the religious privileges. "Irritated" means that it was his policy, successfully carried out, to make them still more impatient,—still more anxious to get what he would only give at his own

high terms. And how much is told in the following brief statement:—

> The venerable father of the Colonna was exposed in his own palace to the double shame of being desirous, and of being unable, to protect a criminal.

That is to say, that notwithstanding his rank and wealth the great lord could not do as he pleased even in his own house; —that he wanted to protect a criminal,—which was a shameful thing to do; and that he had not even the strength to protect him,—which was also a great shame to one in so high a position; thus he was at once both morally and socially disgraced. But how many words I have wasted to say what Gibbon has said in a single line. Another example concerning Rienzi:

> The ambition of the honours of chivalry betrayed the meanness of his birth, and degraded the importance of his office; and the equestrian tribune was not less odious to the nobles, whom he adopted, than to the plebeians, whom he deserted.

Although a man of the people and trusted by the people, Rienzi wanted to get himself made by political power a knight and a gentleman; — and this eagerness of his to be called a gentleman only proved that he was ashamed of his humble parentage and that he was not worthy to act for the people as their trusted leader and therefore both parties learned to hate him — the noble man, because he was a vulgar person who wished to mix with them; and the common people, who saw that he wanted to be friends with the nobles, soon perceived that he was not their faithful and honest friend. But this is a very long way and a very clumsy way of stating what Gibbon has put into four lines. One more example of economic method, incessantly used by Gibbon, is suggestion by two words of antithetical or different meaning in reference to an act or a person. A conqueror, after having his enemies in his power, dismisses them with words of friendly warning. Why does he do this? Gibbon finds that three historians declare he did it out of goodness of heart; while three other declare he

did it out of fear. Gibbon wastes no words upon the existence of such historical contradiction, and sums up the whole known facts of the matter in one phrase:—

> The prudence or the generosity of the king forbade him to take further advantage of the suppliant enemy.

Everything is told by the words "prudence" and "generosity." Which was it? No mortal man knows; you may guess for yourselves—the historical fact alone is really necessary to state. But I would not like to have you think that this grand economy of words ever means inattention to small details of history. Gibbon is economical of language; but he tells us everything that can be told—if he has to mention the building of a castle he will give you all the details of the work in the most astonishing and vivid way, with a few brief sentences,—as the following quotation will show.

> Of a master who never forgives, the orders are seldom disobeyed. . . . . The lime had been burnt in Cataphrygia; the timber was cut down in the woods of Heraclea and Nicomedia; and the stones were dug from the Anatolian quarries. Each of the thousand masons was assisted by two workmen; and a measure of two cubits was marked for their daily task. The fortress was built in a triangular form; each angle was flanked by a strong and massy tower; one on the declivity of the hill, two along the sea-shore; a thickness of twenty-two feet was assigned for the walls, thirty for the towers; and the whole building was covered with a solid platform of lead.

That is describing a castle and the building of it, and the preparations for the building and the discipline of the workmen all in four sentences. Nor would it be possible to say that the description is inadequate, or leaves us with any doubt as to the real form and strength of the structure. That is economy; and yet the economy of Gibbon in language is not carried at any time to the point of dryness. If a story be worth telling, he will interrupt his narrative in the most serious passage in order to tell it; and if he finds that the follies of a king may be of value as moral warning, he will give us every detail

of such follies — whether in the form of banqueting or any other extravagance. There is yet another point to be noticed about Gibbon's economy of language in narration. This is his use of the potential mood. Suppose that a tradition or a statement happens to be at once doubtful and yet not impossible, the historian ordinarily would give you dozens of tiresome pages recounting all the authorities, together with the reasons for believing, and the reasons for disbelieving. But Gibbon never tires our patience in this way: he saves all trouble by using the potential forms "may," "might," "could," "would," or "should," instead of saying "was," "did," etc. For example there is a story that a man of tremendous strength performed a wonderful feat of arms; but some critics have denied the possibility of such a feat. Gibbon would say not, "He did this," but, "He might have so done." All through Gibbon's *History* you will notice this cautious use of the potential mood. Nor has any other historian ever succeeded in using that mood to such advantage.

I think I have now said enough to suggest to you the literary marvels of Gibbon—his immense significance as a prose-writer. Even the best scholars and critics of our own time are puzzled to understand how any man could have undertaken to write in such a style,—a style so close to poetry,—without becoming tiresome. It is not an easy thing to do even within the space of two pages; but imagine that this style has been triumphantly managed through seven volumes of between five and six hundred pages of small type; and you will have some notion of the labour and the genius which the performance required. It is for this reason that Gibbon will never perish from English literature, but there is also another reason for his immortality. This is one of the great works which, like Shakespeare's great plays, can be read over and over again, each time with additional pleasure and profit and wonder. No one can ever become tired of the real Gibbon. But I should not blame anybody for becoming tired of epitomes of Gibbon whether it be a "student's Gibbon" or any other condensed form of the *History*. Such publications are no doubt very use-

ful in the mere study of the skeleton of history; but that is not Gibbon, and it has nothing to do with literature or with art.

A word about the other historians may now be ventured. Robertson is scarcely read—though he has merits of style, and was a charming man and a wonderful worker. He wrote, besides *The History of Scotland*, many other histories; and he was at one time thought to be almost equal to Gibbon. So literary reputation comes and goes, except in the case of the very strongest. But in the case of Hume we cannot say the same thing. Though his *History of England* is scarcely good history, it is very good English; and he further deserves literary notice because of his remarkable collections of historical essays. These essays have a particular charm;—I would call the students' attention especially to one entitled *On the Populousness of the Antique World.*[1] If you compare that with the first grand chapter of Gibbon's *History*, I think you will find that Hume compares more favourably with the giant of history than might be expected. But it is only within small spaces that he shows his best in historical writings. Otherwise his importance relates rather to the domain of philosophy and ethics, and there we will have occasion to speak of him again.

The Prose of the Age of Johnson

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

The most important of all the literary development in the second half of the 18th century was that of the true novel. Poetry ranks higher than prose; but, although the 18th century witnessed the beginning of the romantic triumph in poetry, it did not witness the full blossoming of that movement. On the other hand, in prose, the fullest perfection of the art was reached in the novel even while Johnson was still alive. No better novels have ever been written than some of the novels produced in the 18th century. Therefore I say that the de-

[1] *On the populousness of the antique nations* 1752.

velopment of the novel is the most important of the literary events of the half century.

I hope that you remember what I told you about the old English romance in prose,—the enormous romances in ten or twelve great volumes followed by the picaroon romance. You should recollect that the great romances in prose were suggested by French literature, and the picaroon romances by the Spanish. I told you how these latter grew into such stories as the novels of Defoe, and the stories of Swift. After Swift there was little done in the way of romance of adventure, except by a man called Paltock. All that is necessary to remember for the time being is the general course of this development. I want to show you how the English novel,—the true novel,—is related to the picaroon work that preceded it.

All the old books of the latter class were written in the first person. They took the shape of personal narratives. Defoe followed this Spanish method,—all his stories being written in the first person: so did Swift. *Gulliver's Travels,* for example, is all written in the first person. Only in a loose way can any of these books be called novels. More strictly speaking they are romances. The difference between a novel and a romance chiefly lies in the fact that the novel gives us pictures of real life and society, contemporary life, and deals especially in sentiment,—that is love, etc.,—whereas the romance may be a work of pure imagination, referring to impossible incidents, and having its scenes laid in any time or place, or even outside of time and place altogether. Up to the time of Johnson we may say that the true novel had not appeared,—not even in a rudimentary shape.

The first true novel of manners, — the first real novel of sentiment, — was the work of Samuel Richardson;[1] — and he appears to have discovered his method almost by mere chance. Richardson, born in 1689, was a printer; and he was more than 50 years of age when he became by chance a novelist. He had always been very clever at writing letters; and the printing house in which he worked knew this fact. One day the head

[1] Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).

of the firm asked him to write a little book of letters, as a guide for uneducated people. You have no doubt seen modern books of this sort,—such as "The Complete Letter-Writer," showing people how to write a letter upon almost any ordinary subject. This was Richardson's first literary work. While he was engaged in it the thought suddenly occurred to him, "Why could not a good story be told in the shape of correspondence—in a series of letters?" He had, perhaps, observed that Swift and Defoe and many others had written in the first person, and letters are written in the same way. A French author called Marivaux had already produced a kind of novel in the form of letters; but Richardson could not read French, and he never saw the English translation of this book. Out of his own head he obtained the plan of a novel,—the story of a servant girl who had become the wife of her employer, furnishing a basis; and he produced at length the book which immediately made him famous: *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded.*[1] The whole book is in the form of letters. These letters tell the story of a girl's struggles in the world, her temptations, her emotions, her sorrows, and at last her happy marriage. Pamela is a servant girl; and very beautiful, very clever, and very virtuous,—but with just a little bit of worldly cunning in the virtue. She wins the esteem of a man who at first tried in vain to seduce her, and she at last compels this man to marry her. The book has great faults, as well as great merits; but it is the first real English novel of sentiment, and it delighted the public of that age. But remark how little of an advance in form it offers. All the story is told in the shape of letters, and is written, like the picaroon romance, in the first person.

Encouraged by the success of *Pamela,* Richardson next produced *Clarissa Harlowe.*[2] This is the best of all his novels. It is the story of a lady, whereas the story of *Pamela* had been the story of a servant. Richardson did not know enough about

[1] *Pamela; or virtue rewarded. In a series of familiar letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents* 1739-40.

[2] *Clarissa; or the history of a young lady, comprehending the most important concerns of private life, and particularly shewing the distresses that may attend the misconduct both of parents and children in relation to marriage, published by the Editor of Pamela* 1747-48.

the highest form of society to represent a lady of the finest class; but he knew enough about the woman who belonged to the society just above the middle class to make a very faithful picture. The story is tragical, and the reader is made to suffer a great variety of emotion during the perusal. As a picture of 18th century manners this book is very remarkable. But, like *Pamela*, it is all written in the form of letters. The only difference is that in *Clarissa Harlowe* we have two sets of letters, —one written by the man who is a thorough rascal, and the other set by the unfortunate girl whom he outrages. Not even in our own time has this method of making a novel been altogether abandoned, though it is now almost universally condemned by good critics. To mention only one later example, I may cite the case of Wilkie Collins, most of whose novels of the best class are also written in the shape of letters. I think that some of Collins' novels have been translated into Japanese. *Armadale*, for instance, is a work entirely constructed after the manner of Richardson.

Once more Richardson attempted a new departure, producing *Sir Charles Grandison*.[1] In this book he tried to portray what he imagined to be a perfect gentleman and a perfect man of the world. In this he was not successful. He understood women very much better than men; and of the really aristocratic society he knew nothing at all. Sir Charles Grandison is rather the stage caricature of a gentleman than a gentleman in the true sense. In Richardson's time the book was admired: but to-day we laugh at it. However, we do not laugh at *Clarissa Harlowe* nor at *Pamela*. Especially the former as a study of woman's character will always be regarded by good judges as a wonderful piece of work. But all the three books are written in the first person, and in the form of letters. The man who made the first perfect novel—perfect as to form and truth and life—was not Richardson, but Fielding. And Fielding drops the first person. He wrote novels just as Thackeray wrote novels in the century after his.

[1] *The history of Sir Charles Grandison in a series of letters published from the original by the editor of Pamela and Clarissa* 1753-54.

The extraordinary suddenness of the appearance of this novel literature is worth noticing. In the Elizabethan age the sudden development of the drama offered another phenomenon of the same kind. Great books and great men everywhere come suddenly, take us by surprise, though we may be able in all cases to trace back either the book or the man through some long process of development. Between 1740 and 1776 there suddenly appeared, in successive groups, 15 great novels, —although before that time, there had, strictly speaking, been no novels at all. And this was not merely the result of imitation—I mean that the successors of Richardson were not mere imitators. There was something spontaneous in the work; — no less than 5 different novelists writing at the same time. These first five were Richardson, Fielding, Fielding's sister Sarah, Smollett, and Sterne. Of all these Fielding was incomparably the greatest.

Fielding[1] was physically a very fine man, much taller than the common,—a gentleman by birth and education,—and a great lover of joyous amusements. He might have been a magnificent officer, had he entered the army; but, without a fortune, the army was not likely to prove in those days a happy career. Fielding studied law instead. But to succeed in law requires influence, friends, time and patience, as well as talent, and Fielding was rather impatient of waiting, so he tried to make a fortune by literature. The stage was then, as it is now, the great attraction of young authors;—one could make more money out of a successful play than out of half a dozen novels. Fielding wrote no less than 28 plays in rapid succession. They were nearly all failures. His talents did not appear to lie in dramatic production. Suddenly Richardson's novel *Pamela* fell into his hand. He did not admire it at all—on the contrary it disgusted him. He thought it sentimental, mawkish, untrue to life, unmanly. He was himself too strong a man to be pleased by womanish things: he had no sympathy with tears, hysterics, and matters of that kind. Yet the whole world was admiring that book; and Fielding knew that he could write a better one.

[1] Henry Fielding (1707-1754).

Out of mere indignation he sat down to produce a parody upon *Pamela*, entitling his work *The History of Joseph Andrews.*[1] You know that in the story of Joseph in the Bible, Joseph is represented as a very moral young man who refuses to allow the wife of a king to make love to him. We still call an extremely modest young man a young Joseph. That was why Fielding proposed to call the hero of his parody *Joseph* Andrews; and in the beginning of the book Joseph Andrews is represented as being made love to by a lady of quality. In Richardson's book the whole interest lies in the attempt of a man to seduce a woman and her cleverness in resisting;—Fielding wanted to satirize Richardson by making the interest in Joseph Andrews lie in the attempt of a woman trying to seduce a man. But before he had more than half finished the book, Fielding gave up this idea. The characters had become alive under his pen; and he was too much pleased with the discovery of his literary power to continue the narrative merely as a satire. He became almost serious; and when the book was done, it was the most splendid novel of a humourous kind that English literature had yet created. But it did not succeed in dethroning Richardson,—Richardson was still idolized by the women, and the Fielding admirers were rather among the cultivated literary circle, who could appreciate the superiority of the workmanship. The next novel that Fielding produced was not so good; it was rather a satire than a real novel, and was called *The History of Jonathan Wild.*[2] Fielding was angry because the public had given so much praise to a picaresque literture dealing with mere roguery and rascality; and he said that a man might write in the most epic style about the worst subject, and produce the same kind of effect. Then he undertook to write the history of a highway robber who had been hanged in prison some years before, and whose name was really Jonathan Wild. But he made his imaginary Jonathan much more wicked and much more clever than the real person. Every sentence of this book is better irony — mocking the corrupt

[1] *The history of the adventures of Joseph Andrews, written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of Don Quixote* 1742.
[2] *The life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* 1743.

taste of a public devoted to the literature of mere sensation. As a piece of irony, it is almost worthy of Swift; but it does not define Fielding's real place as a story-teller. This was established by the appearance a few years later of *Tom Jones*,[1] — the best of all his books, the best novel of the 18th century, and probably the best novel ever written since or before. This great masterpiece is thought by some to have been a kind of reply to Richardson's *History of Sir Charles Grandison,* and certainly it made Richardson, for some reason or other, very angry. But it was so incomparably superior to the work of Richardson, and so utterly different in all respects, that we may doubt whether it was really written with any purpose of antagonism. Books written as attacks upon somebody or something, are very seldom of the greatest; but *Tom Jones* is matchless. For the reader of to-day, its pictures of the 18th century seem a little rough, but that is only because the life was really much more rougher then than now.

However rough it may seem, it is impossible not to delight in the book, and to feel a strong liking for the man who wrote it. No manlier book was ever written. In the person of Tom Jones Fielding undertook to give a true history of the life of an ordinary man—not a great gentleman, nor yet a common person, but an ordinary, healthy, fairly educated man, who has to make his way through life as best he can,—without a fortune, without friends, with nothing but common sense to help him. Any ordinary man is likely to make mistakes in struggling with the world—moral mistakes, mistakes of confidence, mistakes of indulgence,—but he learns from his mistakes, and if he have a good heart, he is almost certain to come out all right when the struggle is over. *The History of Tom Jones* is the history of a young man's mistakes and successes, loves and hates, joys and sorrows. The characters in this book live with a life almost as real as that of Shakespeare's persons, and a delightful thing about the volume is its splendid optimism, its sinewy health, its breezy joy. Whoever reads it will find himself happier for the experience; and everybody ought to read

[1] *The history of Tom Jones, a foundling* 1749.

Tom Jones. Nobody can claim a knowledge of English prose literature unless he has read this wonderful book.

One more novel Fielding produced—quite different from each of the preceding three: this was *Amelia.*[1] The last novel of Fielding is again quite unlike its predecessors; it is less strong, less animated: but it makes up in great part for these defects by a tenderness which the previous work of Fielding would not have led us to suppose him capable of. *Amelia* is the story of the life of a married woman; and the heroine is the most beautiful of all Fielding's characters of women. About this novel opinions have differed greatly; but the judgment of Thackeray is a good guide, and it is noteworthy that this was the novel which particularly influenced his work. You may remember that Thackeray even gave the same name to one of his most charming female personages. At the same time I must observe to you that Thackeray did not like the moral tone of *Tom Jones* and of *Joseph Andrews;* it was, in his opinion, much too rough for the 19th century. But Thackeray's women are perhaps the most delightful in all English fiction; and it means a great deal to say that Thackeray was inspired for his portraiture by Fielding's *Amelia.*

It will not here be necessary to speak of Fielding's miscellaneous work: the four great novels represent sufficiently well his place in English literature. And that place is the highest possible in a new art. Fielding still remains the greatest of English novelists, and his *Tom Jones* the greatest English novel. His last years were years of great suffering, caused by the hardships of his younger days. No man had a finer bodily constitution; but he had worked prodigiously, and amused himself prodigiously also, while suffering almost always from want of means to live comfortably. Hard work alone will break down any strength; but if you add to this hard work the exhausting forms of reckless amusement,—drinking, banqueting, and late hours of festivity,—you have a condition under which even a giant must break down. And Fielding broke down. In his latter years he obtained a position as magistrate,

[1] *Amelia* 1751.

which gave him a good salary. But he was obliged after a few years to leave England for a warmer country, and he never returned. He was greatly regretted, because greatly loved, by those who knew him. Even his faults were those of a generous and truthful nature; and his follies never injured anybody but himself. You can feel the charm of his character in his books: it is impossible to read them without liking the man.

So much cannot be said for the third great novelist of the time, Tobias Smollett.[1] If we judge this man by his books, we must believe him to have been one of the most detestable persons of his century. Very probably he was. He came of very good parentage, allied to the aristocracy, but he had no personal means, and was obliged to make his own way in the world. Having studied medicine, he was able to obtain a place as surgeon on a man-of-war, and in this capacity he found the way to the West Indies, where he tried to settle down. There he married a young woman whom he supposed to be very rich; but in this he was deceived, and after a few years he returned to London where he tried to live by writing stories and practising medicine at the same time. His first book, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*,[2] is really an account of his own experiences in the navy and in the West Indies, given in the shape of a novel. It is at once a repulsive and yet attractive book—repulsive because of the brutality of the characters and the facts; attractive because of the extraordinary interest and furious vigour of the narrative. You detest almost everybody in the story and yet you cannot deny that the story is good and told with prodigious cleverness. Smollett's genius would appear to have had something in it of the same element which afterwards made Dickens famous in a finer way,—the capacity for observing human peculiarities, and exaggerating them so as to present them somewhat like caricatures. Dickens made his caricatures often lovable, almost always agreeable. Smollett could not do this. He painted the brutalities of his day so as to make them appear much more hateful than they possibly could have been

[1] Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771).
[2] *The adventures of Roderick Random* 1748.

in the nature of things. Life at sea has always been, and still remains, somewhat rough; but we cannot believe that it was ever quite so rough as Smollett describes it, — except upon a pirate-ship, or among buccaneers. Undoubtedly Smollett was attracted by the ugly and the brutal. In his next great novel, we find the very same tone,—*Peregrine Pickle.*[1] In a third and a fourth publication — *The Adventures of Count Fathom*[2] and *The Adventures of an Atom*[3] — the malice and coarseness of Smollett's real character are still more plainly manifested. These books, written in the old picaroon style, are very brutal and very nasty satires, in which the writer is gratifying personal feeling as well as endeavouring to ridicule the faults of his time. They do not rank with his first two productions. A much better book—the best of all that he wrote—is *Humphrey Clinker;*[4] and this was produced only a little time before his death. All his life Smollett was quarrelling, hating and violently abusing people, either in books or in newspapers. He must have been a most disagreeable as well as a most unhappy man. That he had genius is certain, but it was the genius without any sense of beauty. A good proof of the fact is that when he was sick, and had to travel in Italy for his health, and obtained an opportunity to study, at Rome, and in Florence, and elsewhere, the wonders of Roman and Greek art,—the work of the Renaissance in painting and in architecture,—he could find nothing to admire. He only abused everything that he saw, whether cathedral, painting or statue. This part of his writing is very curious; it is a complete revelation of insensibilities to the beautiful. It was finely satirized by Sterne, who called Smollett by the now immortal name of "Smelfungus" and observed that he ought to have expressed his opinions about art *only* to his doctors.

It would not be amiss to say that as Richardson portrayed the feminine sentimentality of his time, and Fielding the manly

[1] *The adventures of Peregrine Pickle. In which are included, Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* 1751.

[2] *The adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom. By the author of Roderick Random* 1753

[3] *The history and adventures of an atom* 1769.

[4] *The expedition of Humphrey Clinker. By the author of Roderick Random* 1771.

vigourous realities of life, Smollett represented, and more than represented, English brutality, English coarseness, and English want of feeling. He was certainly, in a moral sense, behind his age rather than with it. But this would not sufficiently define Smollett's place as a novelist. He was more than this, and he is still read with pleasure by boys,—or at least by lads just old enough to feel the charm of adventure and the love of danger. For success in the world, a certain amount of roughness is not undesirable in young men; and such young men like Smollett. But we can better place him by calling him the father of the writers of the sea novels. Smollett has inspired almost every writer of the kind even up to the living time of Clark Russell and Rudyard Kipling. And, speaking of the latter, I believe that a good deal of the roughness complained of in the tone of Kipling's poems and short stories, can be traced to the influence of Smollett. Among other names of authors who derived from Smollett as tellers of sea stories I may mention especially Captain Marryat. Captain Marryat brought the sea novel to the highest degree of perfection. We shall speak of him again in relation to 19th century romance.

Sterne,[1] the man who not unjustly satirized Smollett, is the fourth great novelist of the 18th century. At least he has always been classed as a novelist; and his influence upon English literature has been altogether upon novel writers and story-tellers. Yet in the strict sense of the word, he did not write any novel. He wrote two extraordinary, eccentric, witty, indecent, nondescript books, impossible to class with any other production of English literature in any age. It is not even possible to compare Sterne's book with anything else in English. We must go to France to find the like of it, and then to the France of the 16th century. The only other writer in all European literature resembling Sterne is François Rabelais, and there is no doubt that Sterne plagiarized a great deal from Rabelais. Indeed he makes no secret of his thefts from the great author of *Pantagruel.* But you must not think of him only as a mere imitator,—not any more than you should think

[1] Laurence Sterne (1713-1768).

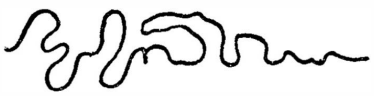
of Shakespeare as an imitator. Sterne had a wonderful genius of his own; and it enabled him to recreate and to embellish all that he appropriated.

A word about the man is necessary to a proper understanding of his literary history and relationships. Laurence Sterne was born in Ireland, the son of an English army officer, who was constantly being ordered from one place to another,—kept travelling around the world, in short, much as multitudes of English officers are kept travelling to-day. The family suffered a great deal from changes of climate, fatigue of journeys, and all the discomforts of military voyaging. Most of the children born to Roger Sterne died young. Opportunities for education were difficult in the case of the little survivors,—Laurence and a sister. The boy did not learn to write until he was nearly fourteen, but then he displayed extraordinary aptitude, and other relations helped towards his education. Presently Lieutenant Sterne, while at Gibraltar, got into a quarrel with another officer about a goose, and the result was a duel in which Sterne was run through the body. He never recovered from the wound, although his death took place much later in the West Indies. Young Sterne had lost his father; but his relations took good care of him, and put him through Cambridge University. After leaving the university he became a clergyman of the Church of England, and settled down in the country. Until he was nearly 50 years old, he never thought of writing a book. He passed his leisure time in ways the most extraordinary, considering that he was a clergyman. He hunted, and rode, and fished, and drank, and played cards, and made love to all the women within reach,—even after he had become a married man. He was what was called in old times "a roystering parson." No man ever was less fitted to become a clergyman, and when he turned to authorship, it was to write the most indecent book in all English literature. I do not mean to condemn the books merely upon account of their immodesty,—for the immodesty is redeemed by great wit,—great tenderness, great beauty of style and sentiment. I only mean to say that it is very curious that the most audacious book of this sort

in all English literature — true literature — should have been written by a clergyman. But up to the age of Sterne the very same thing might be said concerning Sterne's great French prototype Rabelais. The indecency of Rabelais most astonishes us in view of the fact that it is the work of a monk. However, we must acknowledge that Sterne is at times a little more wicked than Rabelais ever becomes. Perhaps, in both cases the anomaly between the author's calling and the character of his book, was due to the same cause. Neither the French monk of the 16th century nor the fox-hunting English clergyman of the 18th century was fitted by nature for religious duty. Both men had taken up an unsuitable profession for reasons of necessity or interest; and neither of them could help expressing his true nature through the pages of his book.

A word about Rabelais — you cannot understand the existence of Sterne without some knowledge of Rabelais. Rabelais was a wonderful man, who, in the age of inquisitions and burning, dared to satirize not only the follies of his age in general, but the corruptions and the ignorance of his own Church, in particular, by means of an extraordinary romance. This romance was modelled in a way after the old French prose romances of previous times; but it resembled true romance much less than *Don Quixote* resembled the Spanish romances of chivalry. It is much more of a satire than the work of Cervantes. The narrative of Rabelais is put into language of the most extraordinary kind — terms of scholarship being everywhere mixed with common terms of filth and nastiness, so that the humour is of the most grotesque description. Then everything ridiculed by Rabelais is ridiculed in a mixture of terms partly learned, partly obscene or vulgarly dirty. And Rabelais had an extraordinary delight in the use of dirty words. To mention or to qualify everything by a *single dirty* word was not Rabelais's custom; on the contrary he would pick out all the dirty or ridiculous words in the French language (sometimes also borrowing from other languages) and put all these vulgar words before the name of the thing he wanted to ridicule. Sometimes he arranges all these terms in alphabetical

order. You will find hints of this system also in the books of Sterne.

Another of Rabelais' characteristics is a provoking habit of digression. By digression we mean leaving the subject under consideration to talk about something else—something having no real relation to it at all. Many great writers have been guilty of digression, even in our own time:—De Quincey, for example. But Sterne, following Rabelais, carried digression to a degree never seen before; he actually made it the rule rather than the exception,—actually treated it as a fine art. He has himself compared his method of telling a story to one who, instead of travelling a straight line, should travel something like this  In his own book the line describing it is more irregular. Great patience is required to read Sterne all through, but that patience will be rewarded.

This ends the comparison between Sterne and Rabelais. Rabelais was insolently dirty,—purposely dirty. But he wrote for a very rough age. Sterne was too fine a gentleman, too nervous, too delicate to be dirty; he never makes the reader smell unpleasant things; but, on the other hand, he is morally indecent to a much greater degree than Rabelais. He is this not only directly and boldly; but much more by suggestion: there are double meanings on almost every page, and these are often of a kind which no man could venture to put into print to-day. But in spite of this there is wit, beauty and fine pathos at times! This may surprise you. Nothing seems so far removed from pathos as the tendency to indecent joking. The man who writes the latter is not suspected of being capable of the former. There is no possibility of imagining tenderness in the case of Rabelais. But Sterne has the strange power of mingling the two tendencies together in a single artistic production. This is a very rare power. In the present century there was one great French writer who had the same ability,—and curiously enough, he was also a close student of Rabelais: I mean Balzac. There is a wonderful book by Balzac written in old French,—the French of the early 17th century, and called

the *Contes Drolatiques.* I believe you have in the library a very good English translation entitled *Droll Stories Collected from the Abbeys of Touraine.* Now in this book you will find an extraordinary admixture of tenderness and moral looseness,—beautiful feeling side by side with indecent jests. At one moment you laugh at a reckless jest; and next moment you find your heart touched and tears in your eyes. This is astonishing art. Perhaps it is especially the story in that book called *Le Péché Veniel* (The Venial Sin) which you will find to illustrate the extraordinary skill I have suggested. But there are several other stories in that book showing the very same thing. Sterne had this kind of art in the 18th century and we can forgive him for a great many naughty things because of possessing it.

All Sterne's work excepting some sermons, which I advise you not to read, can be had to-day in two volumes—even, for that matter, in one. It is represented by two distinct works, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*[1] and *A Sentimental Journey.* The first of these books was originally issued in a great number of volumes; and we wonder at the patience of the generation who liked the book so much as to make it an immediate success in spite of this peculiar way of publication. It is very hard to describe in brief the real nature of this composition. It is not a novel, yet it is full of stories and studies of real life. It is not an essay; yet it is more than half made with the real material of an essay,—philosophical and moral reflections. We are first introduced to the hero Tristram Shandy in his babyhood; the first chapter assuring us that the book is a kind of autobiography. But thereafter Tristram Shandy himself does not make his appearance more than twice or thrice. The rest of the book chiefly refers to the events of the house—conversations between Tristram's father and mother, between Tristram's uncle Toby and his servant the Corporal, and between various visitors to the house and members of the family. At the latter part of the book there is a love episode but of a

[1] *The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy* 1759-67 (Vols. I & II, 1760; III to VI, 1761-2: VII & VIII. 1765; IX, 1767).

most Rabelaisian kind—telling how a certain handsome widow Shadman determined to get Uncle Toby for a husband, and how with the help of her servant she appears to have brought about the desired result. The humour here is really of a dramatic kind; the two servants being pitched against each other in the battle of diplomacy; and the widow herself being able single-handed to defeat the united powers of Uncle Toby, the elder Mr. Shandy and all the family advisers. Then the book ends as suddenly as it began. There really is not any beginning, any true middle, or any end. The whole thing is an amazing medley. And yet after having read this you never can forget the scenes which it has opened to your eyes;—you feel that you have been looking as through a window, upon real warm human life,—the life not of to-day by its outward aspect, and yet the life of all times by its inner human aspect. What could be a more commonplace subject, for example, than the conversation of a father and a mother as to whether their child son should have a pair of trousers made for him or not? (I suppose you know that the first great day of an English or French boy's life is the day when he is first permitted to put on trousers). But the chapter in Tristram Shandy as to whether Tristram should or should not be "breeched"—so they called it in those times—is one of the masterpieces of literature. Sterne could make the most commonplace thing of intense interest—merely the conversation of two servants in the kitchen, or the accident of a visiting doctor falling off his horse, or the gossip of a midwife about events of her neighbourhood. Of course the greater number of the episodes are comical. But the few pathetic episodes are of startling power, and cannot be too highly praised. Such an incident as the death of Lefêvre has been justly admired by all critics; and I believe that it has found its way into the most of standard books upon elocution. Many schoolboys who could not be allowed by reason of age to read *Tristram Shandy* are nevertheless taught to recite the scene of Lefêvre's death—by way of an exercise in the art of oratory.

Much shorter as a composition is the *Sentimental Journey*.[1]

[1] *A sentimental journey through France and Italy by Mr Yorick* 1768.

The *Sentimental Journey* is the narrative of personal experiences of travel in France. It is certainly the best of the two—though not the best known,—in spite of the fact that a beautiful French edition was published some years ago with illustrations at a luxurious price. From the literary point of view this book can be fairly described as the best attempt ever made by any Englishman to write English with the grace and wit of a Frenchman writing French. Of course Sterne was a perfect master of both languages — a perfect mastery means much more than a literary knowledge of French. He spoke it like a mother tongue. But I have often told you that French is a finer language than English, it has a longer period of civilization behind it; it can convey delicacies of feeling and grace of fancy impossible for the English tongue to utter. Hence, it is next to impossible to produce French literary effect with English words. But this next to impossible, Sterne achieved. You almost forget that you are reading English. Besides it is not a mere question of language and style—the whole tone of the 18th century French life breathes from the pages. And yet another wonder; the book is not a mere reflection of any one class or kind of life. Sterne could make himself at home with French princes and princesses and certainly was well received by good French society; but he was quite as much at home with the flower girls of the shops, the servants of his hotel, the coachman who drove him from town to town, or the peasant maidens dancing the wine festival dance in the fields of Provence. Of all these and much more he has given us perfect little pictures full of joy, merriment, sunshine; with occasionally a jest or a tear by way of variety. There is not a single tiresome page in the *Sentimental Journey*. It ends as no other modern English book has ended and no future English book is ever likely to end. I can not tell you how it ends—that is the reason I say that no man is likely, in England at least, ever to attempt another such ending. For the Japanese student the *Sentimental Journey* will prove better reading than *Tristram Shandy;* but some knowledge of French and of French life is necessary to proper enjoyment of it.

Sterne died, quite suddenly, shortly after becoming famous, died away from home, in a little room above a London shop, which he had temporarily occupied. The people there did not know who he was; and somehow or other his dead body appears to have been sold for medical purpose, and to have been bought by a Professor of Anatomy in the University of Cambridge. That was Sterne's university; and it is not a little strange that his body should have found its way back in such a fashion to the dissecting room of the same institution.

Very important is his place in literature for one reason — the new tone of refinement and of toleration and of kindness which his books introduced. Even Fielding seems rough at times compared with Sterne. The century had been a very coarse one; and Sterne was the first to say, "Try to be a man of good taste and delicacy in all things. If you want to tell a nasty story, try to tell it at least in a refined way. If you want to ridicule the follies of humanity, let the ridicule be of a gentlemanly kind,—not of the brutal kind. Be free in the expression of your thoughts and emotions; but do not consider yourselves free to give pain, free to hurt the self-respect of weaker minds and weaker hearts." In this teaching he was really a good preacher—although his religious preaching seems not to have been good at all. But after Sterne there was an end of the old brutality of English literature. Who could have dared to write in the manner of Smollett after having read pages of Sterne?

These were the really great novelists of the 18th century. There may be mentioned a few other names; but they are far less important, with the exception of two. The two are works of Johnson and Goldsmith; and only one of them can properly claim to be a novel. Johnson's *Rasselas*[1] is usually classsd with 18th century novels; but I think that this is wrong. *Rasselas* is not a novel any more than *Utopia* of More or Sidney's *Arcadia* are novels. It is not a reflection of real life at all, but a romance with a didactic and philosophical purpose. As a romance it is now old-fashioned; and you will find it a little tiresome. It is chiefly interesting as an example of Johnson's style. But

[1] *The prince of Abissinia* (Rasselas), *a tale* 1759.

Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*[1] is really a novel of the 18th century—though not so great as the novels of the Great Four. Indeed it would be better described as a novellette by reason of its brevity, its idealism and the small number of the characters that move across its pages. Also it is not a work which is quite in tone with the time; it is much more like some of the early French stories than like the work of Fielding's age. I suppose that you have all read it. As a picture of 18th century life it is not altogether cheerful, and the reader is glad that the conditions described have become impossible. Noblemen in England to-day cannot kidnap girls without considerable difficulty and the sponging houses no longer exist. No doubt there are English people of rank quite as bad and quite as good as those described in Goldsmith's story; but the manifestation of the goodness or the badness would now be of quite a different kind. There are faults in this book of a kind which no modern novel writer would commit. Yet it is an immortal book, because the real human nature figured in it has always been and will always be. The simple-minded and kindly-hearted clergyman; the aristocratic seducer; the weak and amiable victim; the clumsy well-meaning son; the sharpers at the fair—all these are still alive, and to be found almost anywhere, in almost any country. They do not now wear the same clothes and wigs. But their hearts and minds have changed very little in course of a hundred years. Only two more novels need be here mentioned. Johnstone's *Chrysal*,[2] and Miss Fielding's *David Simple*.[3] The first book is of a kind somewhat related to the picaresque novel. It is the story of a piece of gold money, which, continually passing from hand to hand, witnesses all kinds of adventures, perceives all kinds of secrets, discovers all kinds of villainies. Making an inanimate object the narrator of a romance was a successful literary device before Johnstone; but his satirical book is perhaps the best of its kind. Early in the 19th century his example was imitated by Douglas Jerrold,

[1] *The vicar of Wakefield* 1766.

[2] Charles Johnstone (1719?-1800?) *Chrysal: or the adventures of a guinea* (anon.) 1760.

[3] Sarah Fielding (1710-1768) *The adventures of David Simple in search of a faithful friend* 1744-52.

whose *Story of a Feather* relates the private history of a number of different women who successively purchased the same ostrich feather to wear in their hats. But Miss Fielding's book is a better example of the real novel. It was not comparable to the great novels of her brother; but it was in its way a very good venture in a new and difficult direction. The story is about a young man in love with two girls at the same time and long unable to decide which he should marry. But now we had better turn to a different department of 18th century prose.

The Last Essayists of the Eighteenth Century

Among essay writers of the age of Johnson, essayists as distinguished from historians and didactic or theological writers, the greatest figure of the later period was certainly Edmund Burke.[1] Probably Burke was greater as a personality than as a writer—greater as an orator and statesman than as a mere man of letters; but he obtained and still holds immense distinction in both fields. As Johnson was in the literary world the king of his time, so Burke was in matters of political opinion another king,—indeed it may be doubted whether he did not at one time exert even more influence than the reigning monarch. Such was his influence upon public opinion that we must consider him especially as having at an early time decided the hostile attitude of England toward the French Revolution, and as the attitude of England changed the whole course of European history and politics, it is hard to over-estimate the power of Burke's personality.

Next to Johnson, Burke was the most consulted authority on literature of his time; and like Johnson he was a generous friend to literary strugglers, and like Johnson he was a strong and extreme conservative. Beginning life as a law student, and an occasional hack writer for publishers, he gradually worked his way up to the highest possible place, outside of

[1] Edmund Burke (1729-1797).

political preferment, that a private individual could hope to gain. And almost everybody liked him. Johnson not only liked him, but acknowledged his superiority in a curious way. At one time, when Johnson was sick, it was thought that a visit from his friend Mr. Burke might cheer him up; but when the suggestion was made, Johnson said: "No—that fellow taxes all my intellectual powers to the full extent. If I had to talk to him now, sick as I am, it would kill me." In other words Johnson acknowledged that it required a great deal of intellectual quickness and energy to sustain a conversation with his friend — that only a robust mind, in the best of health, was equal to the task. I believe that Johnson never paid such a compliment to any other mortal man; and as in most cases where he did pay compliments this was one well deserved. Burke's political enemies very quickly found that it required extraordinary powers of mind to cope with him. As Johnson at another time said, Burke was a man who appeared distinguished and extraordinary even to the poorest and most ignorant people. "If Mr. Burke," said Johnson, "were to go into a stable to look at a horse, the groom would immediately say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'" We have therefore, in Burke, to consider a character of the rarest kind—equally remarkable for its charm and for its force. Perhaps part of this charm was Irish. Burke was one of the great Irishmen, not an Englishman, of the 18th century, and in point of personal charm, there is only one other Irishman of the age to be compared with him—that was Bishop Berkeley. But Berkeley, with all his lovableness, did not possess the dominating power, this personal force of Burke. In his power to dominate, Burke rather resembled Swift; but he had none of Swift's cruelty.

It is by speeches chiefly, or short political essays, that Burke is best known; — though it is by his æsthetic essay, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*,[1] that he is most closely and most nobly related to literature. Altogether he was the author of about 60 different publications, mostly brief; and these were originally

[1] *A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* 1756.

republished in book form in 16 volumes. You will see from this fact that Burke's literary production was not small. We have now to consider what it represents in the evolution of English prose.

It represents really the beginning of a new prose style. It is very different to the other prose of the 18th century. It is quite as musical as the best prose of the classic writers, but in another way; and it cannot be called, in the true sense, classic. It is too rich in ornament — too crowded with imagery and metaphor,—too passionate and warm for classic taste. It has extraordinary faults as well as extraordinary beauties, and the faults are faults of good taste. Mr. Taine, who was an excellent critic of 18th century literature, has actually said that Burke had no good taste. Perhaps from the classic point of view, this criticism is undeniable. But there is a strange and splendid beauty,—a disordered beauty,—in this faulty style;—it is immensely powerful; it astonishes and delights by its rapid succession of discordant but most effective imagery; it has the charm and the colour of some tremendous panorama. The chief fault of taste is in the direction of violence. For Burke, in his anger, thought no comparison, no metaphor, no simile below the dignity of literature if it could help him to vividly express the indignation that burned within him. He would compare his antagonists or their measures to insects, to reptiles, to tapeworms, to whales, to mythological monsters or to tropical amphibians, when it suited him. And the pain and the anger that he felt goes into the mind and heart of his reader. No matter what people may say about the faults of the style, nobody can deny its prodigious power to move the emotions. Mr. Saintsbury, another critic, says that Burke failed in two great respects; that he had no command over tears and laughter; that he cannot make us laugh and that he never makes us weep. Mr. Saintsbury is a very great critic; and I suppose that what he says in this regard is true. But the purpose of Burke was not to make people smile or weep,—not to produce laughter or tears; it was to stir their moral sympathies, their sense of justice or their capacities of honest indignation. And this

object was always fulfilled. Acknowledging the correctness of the two criticisms to which I have referred, still the fact remains that Burke was one of the greatest masters of language who belonged to English literature.

The new style which Burke unconsciously invented, — a style simply the expression of his own supreme character—laid the foundation to what we call the "coloured prose." All the richly florid prose of the 19th century is derived from it: I mean such prose as of De Quincey, of Ruskin, and in a less degree even of Carlyle with his German eccentricities. Probably Burke influenced Macaulay a great deal also—though without spoiling him. Burke is a dangerous, a very dangerous master. One is much more tempted to imitate his form than to go to the trouble of analysing his merits. He is not a good model for the Japanese student of style—quite the reverse. But he is a very good subject for the study of the orator, the parliamentarian,—for any public speaker who can be judicious enough to observe the general effect of such eloquence, without trying to imitate the detail and the individual peculiarity of the style.

This brings me to make a second necessary definition of Burke's literary place. I have said that he is the father and founder of modern coloured prose; but this prose, for the most part, was not intended merely for reading. I doubt whether Burke seriously cared to figure as authority in matters of style. He wrote his addresses only thinking how they would sound as delivered with all the art of a well-trained voice. The style of Burke is not the style of the ordinary essayist, nor of the historian; it is the style of the orator. I may call this style, therefore, the best example of 18th century oratorical prose.

Now there are two kinds of oratory—political oratory and religious oratory. The oratory of Burke has this peculiarity, —that while its form is the oratory of the statesman, of the secularian, its feeling, its whole tone is much like that of religious oratory. Burke uses language which no preacher would use—at least no preacher of so dignified a church as the Church of England. But the way that he feels is the way of the preacher; the moral appeal is of the same kind; and you feel as

you read him that you are being preached to. About political, social and even literary matters, Burke thought only from the standpoint of ethics; — hence the passionate character of his language of denunciation. This man, who had such power that he could change the whole tide of English feeling on the subject of the French Revolution[1] — such power that to oppose his teaching was dangerous, and that the houses of men like Price and Priestley, who had dared to express sympathy with the French Revolution, were sacked by English mobs, — this man was utterly incapable of entertaining a thought of self-interest. All his policies, all his ethics, all his notions and opinions were solved for him by such simple moral questions as "Is this right?—Is this honest? Is this good for the country and for the people?" In this way he resembled Johnson—also a man of very simple character; but in his hatred of wrong, his furious indignation, he resembled Swift. Very often Burke was wrong. But he was never knowingly wrong. He never said or did anything which he did not believe to be honest and right. And for this his memory remains in honour.

I suppose that in these days of elaborate German psychology, and French psychology on the subject of æsthetics and æsthetic feeling, very few serious thinkers would care to quote from Burke's essay *On the Sublime and Beautiful.* But perhaps that book shows Burke at his best in the calmer and gentler phases of his noble spirit; and it may be considered, from a purely literary point of view, as his least faulty production. Yet, at one time, this essay was the only important essay upon æsthetic problems written by any English subject; and it long remained a solitary authority. It is said to have influenced thought upon æsthetic subjects, both in France and in Germany; and it is supposed that Lessing obtained a great deal of inspiration from it. At all events, I think it is one of the books which every student of English literature should try to read. It marked an epoch. Burke was not only the founder of coloured prose; — he was among the first, if not the very first, who taught Englishmen to think seriously upon the problem of

[1] By his *Reflections on the revolution in France* 1790.

beauty and the intrinsic signification of art.

There is none among the later essayists of Johnson's time at all comparable to Burke, beyond those already mentioned. Many of the greatest thinkers and most valuable writers of the age, moreover, do not strictly belong to literature at all. For instance, the great father of English political economy, Adam Smith,[1] cannot be said to belong to literature by his *Wealth of Nations*;[2] — nor can Malthus[3] be said to belong to literature by his most famous treatise on population.[4] These men, like Bentham, like Godwin, like half a dozen others, will always be remembered in their relation to science or philosophy; but they were not stylists, and we need not dwell upon them. On the other hand the names of Lord Chesterfield, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Horace Walpole, and the mysterious Junius have literary claim. We turn to the last mentioned first, because he approaches more closely to Burke, than to any other figure of the time. No less than twelve different persons have at different times been accredited with the famous or infamous letters called *The Letters of Junius*[5] — and even now their real authorship remains unknown. There is some reason to believe them to have been written by Sir Philip Francis, a member of the Government service; but up to the present year nobody can say that the real writer is ever likely to become known. Fifty years ago *The Letters of Junius* were considered models of good English and were even compared with the speeches of Burke. But no critic of to-day would make such a comparison; nor would anybody offer these *Letters* to English students as models of style. This is not because the English is bad—for it is very good; it is because there are so many better things to choose from, and because the study of such pages is not apt to improve the moral feeling of the readers. These so-called letters, anonymously published in a newspaper, have the length, the polish, the rhetoric of essays; but they are in themselves nothing more than violent personal attacks upon the statesmen and

[1] Adam Smith (1723-1790).
[2] *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* 1776.
[3] Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834).
[4] *An essay on the principle of population* etc. 1798, 1803.
[5] '*Junius*' *Letters* 1769-72.

the Government of the time. The invective is ferocious, the personalities often brutal; and we may justifiably wonder whether any man would have written in this way, if his name were known. Swift would have had the courage, perhaps; but I can think of nobody else. Burke had any amount of courage; but Burke has no personal cruelty in his composition, — and he would not have attacked anybody exactly after the fashion of Junius. Of course, the literature of invective has a certain value; and I suppose that *The Letters of Junius* still retain some value of that kind. But, if for the purpose of controversy or of political oratory any of you should wish to study the art of great invective—then it is not to Junius that I should recommend you to go, but to Swift and to Burke,—remembering the while, that while it is a grand thing to attack great abuses, general wrongs, it is never a grand thing to attack persons. This was not so well understood in the 18th century as it is understood to-day. Indeed, by confining one's attacks to persons, the almost invariable result is to create sympathy for the person attacked. There is no doubt that Burke's own impeachment of Warren Hastings,[1] although intended much more as an attack upon great political abuses of power than as an attack upon Hastings himself, actually created a good deal of false pity and unreasoning sympathy for the chief criminal.

The next figure to be considered is that of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield,[2]—the famous author of the famous *Letters*. Professor Saintsbury has said that it was a great misfortune for Chesterfield that the world should have to look at him "through the spectacles of a much greater man's indignation." The greater man was of course Dr. Johnson. No doubt Lord Chesterfield had abilities; but I doubt whether any of his admirers could prove that Dr. Johnson was wrong in his judgment of the man—notwithstanding the fact that Johnson was angry when he pronounced it. Let us here make a little digression; — for it is necessary that you should know something about the history of the quarrel between these men. The quar-

[1] *Speeches on the impeachment of Warren Hastings* 1788.
[2] Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773).

rel is not in itself at all important; but it draws our attention to an important thing—the 18th century relation of patron to author.

There are now no patrons. The custom of literary patronage is very ancient—we find it twenty-five hundred years ago among the Greeks and at a much later date among the Romans. It was revived principally after the Renaissance; and it continued in England up to the end of the 19th century. To explain the custom in the fewest words possible, I will only say that after the revival of learning it was considered a good custom for any rich man and capable man among the nobility to help some authors with gifts of money,—to assist them in finding publishers,—to smooth away for them the difficulties of life. Some patrons would take an author into their houses, and treat him somewhat as a poor student might be treated by a rich family in Tokyo—that is to say, something better than a servant, yet not quite so well as a member of the family. You will remember that the great Swift had Sir William Temple for a patron, and that Temple proved a very harsh master. A much happier case was that of the poet Crabbe: he had Edmund Burke for his patron; and Burke treated him like a son. Other examples might be mentioned. But there were strong-willed, independent men, who would not enter the house of a patron under any circumstances; — they would only ask for financial help in their undertaking. Men of this class would approach some noble man by letter, or by dedicating a book to him, or by offering to make the dedication—asking for certain help. Dr. Johnson was a man of the latter kind; he would ask a favour only as a prince or a king might ask it. He approached Chesterfield to ask for that nobleman's patronage, only because Lord Chesterfield had long been known as a good scholar and a patron of learning. Now Johnson wanted, and badly wanted, some help for the publication of his great *Dictionary*. Nothing is so difficult as to make a good dictionary; few things are more costly to publish; and it usually takes a long time to get back the money expended in such undertakings. But as this undertaking was really for the benefit of

the English language, and of scholarship generally, Johnson thought it only reasonable to ask Chesterfield for some assistance. Chesterfield promised a great deal, sent Johnson a very little money and then took great care not to see him for a number of years. Therefore Johnson was very angry—angry because Chesterfield had lied to him and caused him to expect money that never came. So when Johnson finished his *Dictionary* without anybody's help, he dedicated it to Lord Chesterfield as he had promised—but the dedication was really a terrible thing and it damned Lord Chesterfield in public opinion for a hundred years. It was a fine piece of writing—dignified, strong, containing not one unpleasant word; but it was the most terrible punishment that could have been imagined for falsehood. After that Dr. Johnson never had anything good to say about Chesterfield's work. But there is no doubt that Chesterfield acted very dishonourably.

Now a word about Chesterfield. He represented in himself everything artificial and detestable in the 18th century, as well as its refinements. Before Johnson's day even, it had been thought that an English gentleman ought to show no emotion, to feel no enthusiasm, to indulge no admiration, to appear as much like a wooden man or walking statue as possible. He was to have all his actions and thoughts and habits regulated by irrefragable laws. You can imagine one reasonable side of such a theory of conduct—the duty of high self-control. But you can also imagine a very unreasonable side to the practice of this theory by untruthful or hypocritical men. I think that Chesterfield represents the hypocritical class to a great extent. His entire life was one uninterrupted piece of acting. He had a rule for everything and he actually wrote down a defiance to the effect that no man could truthfully say that he had ever seen Lord Chesterfield laugh. Perhaps this is true. But imagine what an unpleasant character must be the man who could boast of never having laughed in his life. All his life was only acting. And Lord Chesterfield, who never laughed in his life, was not very particular about his morals. He had an illegitimate son whom he appears to have well provided

for, but to whom he always preserved the strange attitude of a patron, rather than of a father. That was the style of the 18th century—though not the style of men like Burke. Chesterfield's great anxiety was to make his son as much like himself in character as possible; and it was for his sake that the famous *Letters* were written. The attempt to educate his son in this way was not successful; and the young man died before reaching his intellectual maturity.

When Dr. Johnson got a copy of those *Letters* and had read them, and was asked for his opinion of the book, he said that it represented "the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master."

Now this is really true. You cannot possibly get over certain disgusting immoralities which appear in Chesterfield's *Letters*—cynical instructions to his son on the subject of relation to women, showing a strange amount of cold cruelty, and a strange absence of what we should call a good conscience. And again there is no denying that the book contains a great deal of instruction how to bow, how to wipe one's nose, how to cough, how to wear a sword so that the scabbard does not get between your legs and cause you to fall down when you walk,—and all these things really are the things which dancing masters should know how to teach, and which might therefore be called "the manners of a dancing master." Another thing that Johnson said about the book is also probably not far from the truth,—namely, that a young man brought up according to the teachings of the *Letters* would make a good subject for a tragic novel. Several persons had suggested a novel of this kind,—that should show the results of such immoral teachings; and it was proposed to make the father, the teacher, a victim of his own teaching. Johnson approved this. But this is not the whole of the truth about the *Letters*. They are perfect models of cold, polished English, and they perfectly reflect the ideal style of the man-of-the-world of the 18th century. If only for this, they have literary importance. And in the second place, they are full of good advice and keen observation—notwithstanding the question of the character of certain pages.

Revised and expurgated, they would still make good reading for young men. Finally—and this is an important thing to remember—they were not intended to be published at all. Nor were they published by Chesterfield: they were published after the death of his son by that son's widow.[1] I should recommend you to look at these letters when you have time, and to judge for yourselves what real merit they possess. They will certainly amuse you in some parts; and you will not find any part dull.

More deservedly famous as an essayist was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.[2] This extraordinary woman lived through a great part of the 18th century, and exercised much social as well as literary influence. As a child she was wonderfully beautiful, and was introduced by her father to a famous Club —the Kit-Cat Club—at which she was toasted as the beauty of the time. Growing up she had scarcely a rival among the handsome women of the day; and portraits of her may still be seen which justify the praise of her contemporaries. But her attractions were not merely physical; she was the most intellectual woman of her age. Educated privately by no less a teacher than Bishop Burnet, she early imbibed a great love for philosophy and the severer forms of literary scholarship. While still in her teens she translated difficult Greek authors with the greatest ease. And another thing by which she is remembered is that she first introduced into England, from Turkey, the practice of vaccination for small-pox. Marrying a gentleman who was appointed ambassador to Turkey, she passed several years in that country which she described in a series of most interesting letters. In Turkey, however, she herself got the small-pox, and lost her wonderful beauty: it was this misfortune, no doubt, which impelled her to interest herself so earnestly in the question of vaccination. After returning to England, strangely enough, she separated from her husband—although they never had a quarrel; then she went away again to Italy, and lived separated from England and her people for nearly twenty years. On the whole it must be confessed that

[1] *Letters to his son Philip Stanhope* 1737-68 (Published by Mrs Eugenia Stanhope. 2 vols. 1774).

[2] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762).

this wonderful woman achieved much less than might have been expected from one so gifted in all respects. Her life was a long series of quarrels and troubles. You remember that she had a little quarrel with Pope and that Pope wrote very wicked things about her. She had also quarrels with most of the distinguished people of her kind. She knew Johnson, and the two did not get along very well together—though Johnson admired her great talents. No doubt she was a most imperious woman —and whoever refused to submit to her dictate was almost certain to have trouble with her. On the other hand she appears to have had scarcely any of the quality we call *tenderness*—a quality which means so much in literature. You will perceive the absence of this sympathetic element all through her letters. They are witty, brilliant, surprisingly clever, surprisingly picturesque; but they are strangely cold.

It is by her letters[1] alone that she belongs to the great prose literature of the 18th century. There are two sets of these letters—the letters written from Turkey, and the letters written from Italy or elsewhere. Some good critics prefer the letters treating of social matters and Italian experiences. I must say that I greatly prefer the Turkish letters. They were beautifully published with wonderful pictures of Constantinople; and I remember that it was from reading these letters and looking at the beautiful steel engravings which accompanied them that I first obtained some vivid ideas of Oriental life. Since that time, hundreds of books about Turkey have been written, but I do not think that the book of Lady Mary has even yet been surpassed.

Of course I must say something to you about James Boswell[2] — though I suppose you have learned a good deal about his wonderful book. Boswell was a young Scotch gentleman, of independent fortune, who came to London about 1761 and made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson for whom he immediately expressed a sentiment of admiration but little removed from idolatry. Thereafter for twenty-one years, he constantly

[1] *Letters* (1763-67, 1790, 1820).
[2] James Boswell (1740-1795).

followed Johnson about, making himself as familiar as he dared, and writing down in a little note-book every thing that Johnson did or said. The extraordinary thing is that Johnson tolerated him, for the great Doctor professed a supreme dislike for all Scotchmen and this little Boswell was the most unpleasant kind of Scotchman. Moreover he was very inquisitive, very talkative, and somewhat impudent, — three things which Johnson detested. Perpetually Johnson snubbed him, frightened him, said rough things to him, put him to shame in company. But he bore all this quite patiently, always confessing himself wrong, and writing down the hard things that Johnson had said to him in his little note-book. It mattered not to him how much so great a man snubbed him; for he thought it was an honour and a privilege even to be permitted to enter the same room with Dr. Johnson. And after all he must have been a good-hearted fellow — otherwise the Doctor could never have endured him. After Johnson's death Boswell published all the contents of his note-books, which had been steadily kept for twenty-one years; and the result was the best biography ever written in any language of any human being. This is now universally acknowledged. There is really no other biography to be compared with Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*[1] It is the classic biography. We may of course use it as a standard by which to estimate such excellent biographies as Lockhart's *Life of Scott,* Moore's *Life of Byron,* Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay.* But any of these failed to reach the standard—Boswell's biography of Johnson remains unique of its kind.

Horace Walpole[2] is a name which you should remember for other reasons than those which demand its insertion here. He is important as a writer of romance—as the first link in a chain of story-writers who dealt in the Gothic and the horrible —we might call him the founder of the Romance of Mystery. I am referring to his *Castle of Otranto*[3] which appeared early in Johnson's time. But we shall have to speak of all the Romances of Mystery and Horror at a later day, in another place. I am

[1] *The life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.* 1791.
[2] Horatio *or* Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford (1717-1797).
[3] *The castle of Otranto; a Gothic story* (anon.) 1765.

mentioning Walpole here as a letter-writer. As a letter-writer he ranks with Lady Mary—perhaps even excels her; and his letters are famous pictures of 18th century life. Perhaps you may think it strange that I should speak of letter-writers under the head of essayists. But really the 18th century letter-writers wrote their letters like essays; and we may very properly class them with essay literature.

Even the department of natural history gives us some valuable additions to 18th century literature. The famous book called *White's Natural History of Selborne*[1] was written by a country clergyman[2] chiefly to amuse his personal friends, and without the faintest idea of creating a really standard work of natural observation. The whole merit of the volume may be said to lie in the author's remarkably patient, minute and always accurate observations of the habits of birds, animals, fishes,—and of the characteristics of the seasons in the country. Although now more than a hundred years old, and although written considerably before the really scientific period of natural history, this book still delights scientific men; and it has otherwise become a classic. Also let me remind you that it was almost the first book of its kind written by an Englishman. About one hundred years before there was indeed the great Izaak Walton,[3] the author of a book called *The Compleat Angler*,[4]—which has also become a classic. But this delightful book was, after all, little more than a treatise upon fishing. We may say that Gilbert White was really the first to make daily study of bird-life and animal-life a picturesque subject of literature.

[1] *The natural history and antiquities of Selborne* 1789.
[2] Gilbert White (1720-1793).
[3] Izaak Walton (1593-1683).
[4] *The compleat angler* (Part I) 1653; ed. 2, much enlarged 1655; ed. 3, much enlarged, 1661; ed. 4, much enlarged, 1668. *The universal angler* 1676 (Pt. I. Walton s Compleat angler, ed. 5; Pt. II. The compleat angler, being instructions how to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear stream, by C. Cotton; Pt. III. The experienced angler, by Col. R. Venables).

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DRAMA

THE LAST DRAMA OF THE CENTURY

We may say that the history of English drama closes with the age of Johnson. During the time in question there were but two dramatists of any great power; and these have never been succeeded upon the English stage. Indeed, I may tell you that English drama died with the 18th century.

But here I must make a qualification. You must not suppose that no great English plays have been written since the 18th century; on the contrary multitudes of good plays and a few very great plays have been produced even during the Victorian era. Almost every great poet of the time has been a dramatist, Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne must all rank very high as dramatists,—from the literary point of view, but only from a literary point of view. The great English plays of the 19th century are not suited for the stage, with few exceptions; and those few exceptions have not been successful in the meaning of being popular. The general fact may be thus stated:—After the 18th century English plays of literary merit have not been suitable for the stage; and English plays that have been theatrically successful cannot be considered as really belonging to literature. Before the 19th century, it was considered that a play must be both good literature and good drama, in the sense of being actable. But during nearly a hundred years these two essentials of good dramatic work have scarcely been found together in English production. Accordingly we may say that English drama died with the 18th century.

The two dramatists of whom I have spoken above were Goldsmith and Sheridan. Of Goldsmith's plays in the literature of the time we have already spoken and I need add nothing more regarding his dramatic work than the fact that his plays still "keep the stage"; that is to say, that such comedies as *She Stoops to Conquer,*[1] and *The Good-Natured Man*[2] are still

[1] *She stoops to conquer, or the mistakes of a night, a comedy* 1773.
[2] *The good-natured man, a comedy* 1768.

acted. The same may be said of most of the plays of Sheridan.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan,[1] the last of the great English writers of pure comedy, was like Goldsmith an Irishman; but his life and work were altogether in England, and neither offer us any remarkable Irish features. He was a man of considerable personal charm, obtained at an early age considerable social influence, eventually became a Member of Parliament, and temporarily distinguished himself as an orator. But his relation to English literature is almost entirely through his comedies, and several are still favourites with the English public. The best of these comedies is *The School for Scandal;*[2] but *The Rivals*[3] and *The Duenna*[4] are still acted, — and the second named has actually given several household phrases to the English language. Sheridan also wrote an amusing comedy called *The Critic*[5] and several minor pieces, we might say farces, such as *The Scheming Lieutenant.*[6] The bulk of his production is not large; but it is of almost unapproachable quality throughout. For wit and truth to life, we must go back to the best comedy of the Restoration in order to find a parallel;—and then we can find it only in Congreve, the prince of Restoration comedy. However, the plays of Sheridan contain nothing of the gross and cynical kind which offends us in nearly all the comedies of the Restoration. Both Goldsmith and Sheridan present us with comedy completely purified of all coarseness and yet even more interesting and more natural than any Restoration comedy. And their reward has been continued popularity. Not only are these plays still acted in England, they have become an imperishable power of English dramatic literature.

Before leaving the subject of 18th century drama, please to remember that tragedy figures scarcely at all among its productions. The tragedies of Addison and of Johnson cannot be called great works, though possessing merit. Comedy alone

[1] Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816).
[2] *The school for scandal* 1777.
[3] *The rivals* 1775.
[4] *The duenna* 1775 (1783).
[5] *The critic, or a tragedy rehearsed* 1779.
[6] *St Patrick's day, or the scheming lieutenant* 1775.

takes a permanent value in this expiring season. And of the comedies, I could recommend a Japanese student to read only *The Rivals* of Sheridan. The others, although good, represent features of English society that you would find it very difficult to understand and could not much sympathize with. But *The Rivals* gives us pictures of human nature, which have an interest altogether independent of particular social conditions; and the character of the famous person whose courage "oozes out of his finger's ends" before the duel, will be appreciated in any part of the world where the English language can be read.

The Romance of Mystery and Horror

Really the subject of this division of our lecture belongs both to the 19th and to the 18th centuries. The movement in literature which produced a taste for the pleasure of fear, maintained that form of taste well into the age of Byron and even a little beyond it. But as it began in Johnson's time, about the year 1764, we must consider it in this place. It is important, because it leads up to the great work of Sir Walter Scott and his followers in romance of another and a higher kind.

You will remember that I told you about the love of the Gothic, the mediæval, created by the poems of *Ossian* and the ballads published by Bishop Percy—in short, by those books which represented the seed of a romantic movement in prose as well as in poetry. The first fruit of this kind of taste was that romance of Horace Walpole, of which I have already spoken—*The Castle of Otranto.* This is a mediæval story, of which the scenes are laid in southern Italy and vicinity; and it is full of what we call blood-curdling adventures, in which the supernatural element is strangely mixed with the natural. Even to-day boys find enjoyment in reading this book,—though it was not written for boys. Its success tempted other authors into the same field of imagination. Afterwards came Mrs.

Radcliffe[1] with her *Mysteries of Udolpho*,[2] a book of very much the same kind, but for one curious distinction. Mrs. Radcliffe had no faith in the supernatural; and she used no ghosts or goblins in her story. She made a compromise. She would describe something as having happened in such a way that the reader felt sure some ghost or goblin or devil must have done it; and then she would explain the whole thing by natural causes. As a boy this book greatly delighted me, but I do not know whether I could find any pleasure in it now. Enough to say that it is still read by the young. A third writer in the same direction was Miss Clara Reeve,[3] who instead of putting the scenes of her romance in Italy and some far-away country, made a good English mystery story *The Old English Baron*.[4] This too still lives as a "juvenile;"—and it is curious to notice how in literary history, the books which appealed to one generation of adults had a tendency to become "juveniles" in another generation. A fourth writer who belonged to the 19th century also, Matthew Gregory Lewis,[5] carried the love of horror and mystery to the extreme pitch in a succession of romances of which *The Monk*[6] is the most famous. *The Monk* is an extraordinarily unpleasant and monstrous story — recounting rape, incest, murder, all kinds of crimes, successfully perpetrated by a Catholic monk, whose profession of religion long enabled him to escape detection. I believe that this book still has readers, but to-day it appeals only to a rather vulgar class of imagination,—not because of the offensiveness of the subject, but because of the extremely low and brutal appeal to the physical impression of horror. However, Lewis, who wrote such detestable things, was personally one of the most amiable and gentle of men, a great friend of Sir Walter Scott, and a great influence in bringing the later success of the romantic movement. You ought to remember him for another book

[1] Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823).

[2] *The mysteries of Udolpho; a romance interspersed with some pieces of poetry.* 4 vols. 1794.

[3] Clara Reeve (1729-1807).

[4] *The champion of virtue, a Gothic story*, 1777. Title changed to *The old English baron* in 2nd (1778) and all later edns.

[5] Matthew Gregory Lewis ('Monk' Lewis) (1775-1818).

[6] *Ambrosio, or, the monk* 1795. Entitled in 2nd edn *The monk; a romance*, 1796.

which he edited and edited very well — the famous *Tales of Wonder*,[1] — a series of extraordinary ballads and poems upon horrible subjects, to which Sir Walter Scott made several splendid contributions. And we may mention a fifth writer, Charles Maturin,[2] who wrote up to about 1820, though he began in the latter part of the 18th century to startle people with his astounding nightmares of fancy. Maturin was quite as much of a horror-monger as Lewis; but he was a much better artist; and his *Melmoth the Wanderer*[3] is the best of the whole series of Gothic romances in regard to the terror-producing impression that it makes. It is still read—indeed, almost every man of letters has to become familiar with it. Maturin was not so successful in other directions. He tried drama; and one of his plays was so hideous, so impossibly horrible, that the public refused to listen to it. So far as horror and mystery can be separated in this regard we may say that merely horrible romance died with Maturin. But we can trace his influence much later — especially in the wonderful and terrible book of Mrs. Shelley, the famous *Frankenstein.*

In another way and a much greater way, the romance of mystery was assisted by the literary work of William Beckford,[4] who took an Oriental subject for his theme. Beckford was one of the most extraordinary Englishmen—indeed I should say the most extraordinary of human beings that ever lived. Perhaps you will remember that Byron in *Childe Harold* called him "England's wealthiest son." Perhaps no other Englishman had ever been so rich. We have now accounts of larger fortunes, both in America and England, but it is at least certain that no other Englishman either before or since, ever lived upon such a scale as Beckford. Even the living of the King of England was miserable poverty compared with the style in which Beckford lived. His vast wealth was derived from the labour of black slaves on plantations in the West Indies and he spent it as if it were utterly inexhaustible. He had been

[1] *Tales of wonder.* [*In verse.*] *Written and collected by M. G. Lewis.* 2 vols. 1801.

[2] Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824).

[3] *Melmoth the wanderer, a tale* 1820.

[4] William Backford (1760-1844).

very well educated; he was possessed of extraordinary intellectual powers; he had great artistic tastes;—and yet he was a typical misanthrope. From an early age he lived in super-isolation, in a more than princely domain surrounded with immense walls, lofty as the walls of a prison or a castle. These walls enclosed a landscape garden seven miles in circumference, —so contrived as to imitate almost every variety of scenery. Within the domain were also museums, filled with curiosities and antiquities of all kinds;—the finest library owned by any private individual in Europe;—and a palace in Gothic style, constructed at enormous expense, and dominated by a lofty tower from whose summit a vast amount of country could be seen. There are many strange stories about the building of this palace, which its owner desired to have completed as soon as possible,—obliging the masons to work all night by light of torches. The great tower several times fell, but was as often reconstructed. Employed by Beckford were various professors of arts and sciences,—the most learned that he could obtain; thus he had a professional musician of eminence for his teacher of music; a professor of archæology and pneumatics for his secretary; professors of Arabic and Persian to teach him the two principal languages of the Mohammedan East. Whenever Beckford travelled he was attended by all these;—also by a private physician, a librarian, many cooks and as many servants. The greater part of his youth he passed in luxurious travel during a part of every year,—during the rest of the year in equally luxurious seclusion. As other men devote their lives to some pursuit of a scientific or philosophical kind, Beckford devoted his life to personal pleasure, to the art of living as magnificently as possible without having any intercourse with his fellow men. Such a life is certainly not commendable; and Beckford's hardness and selfishness were almost as remarkable as his wealth and his eccentricity. But this selfish man was at times an artist—really interested in matters of literature and taste. This alone connects him in a way with the subject of our study.

Besides building palaces in England, he also built palaces

abroad. At Cintra in Portugal, the traveller is still shown the grand ruins of one of Beckford's residences. There also he wanted a great tower; and in a country subject to earthquakes this proved even more difficult to build than in England. After several failures he was obliged to abandon the tower; but the rest of his dwelling and its surroundings was the astonishment of the Portuguese.

In the later years of his life, finding his fortune somewhat diminished, he sold his immense estate at Fonthill and then built himself a third palace in the neighbourhood of the city of Bath. This estate may still be seen. As the richest Englishman he was several times Lord Mayor of London; but his acceptance of the office did not bring him much into contact with the rest of the world. Most of his life—a long one, as he was born in 1760 and died in 1844—was uneventful, except to himself. Two of his daughters he married to great noblemen. A third daughter, daring to refuse the titled husband whom her father wished to give her, was immediately dismissed from his presence, and was never forgiven. During the remainder of his life he would never speak of her, or see her, or assist her in any way; and at his death he left her not even a penny. This is a striking instance of his capacity for cold and cruel resentment. In some ways the man reminds us of certain great characters of the Italian Renaissance, who were great poets and artists, although voluptuous and cruel. Yet there was about those Italians an emotional strength, a vigour, an energy, a capacity for affection, which were utterly lacking in Beckford. He was the coldest of men,—cold in his pleasures, incapable of making anybody about him happy, but more than capable of inspiring fear. As his life, nevertheless, reads like a fairy tale, — and as it contains a great moral lesson for the intelligent and unselfish—I would advise you to make a study of it. It were well worth an essay, if any of you should care to attempt an essay upon the Vanity of Riches. And now about his famous book.

If Beckford had been poor, he might have been a great author, though in a different way. He wrote only to amuse

himself. What he did was chiefly done in his young days, when he produced *Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters*[1] and the classical romance of *Vathek*.[2] Then he wrote nothing more for forty years, after which he published two volumes of letters of travel reminiscences of sojourns in Italy, Spain, Portugal chiefly.[1] All these books have extraordinary literary merit; but only one of them need concern us,—the romance of *Vathek*. Curiously enough he wrote this book, published about 1782, in French,—the finest kind of classical French; and did not think of putting it into English until several years later. And the English of *Vathek* still has something French about it—nothing that detracts from its literary perfection, but something that reminds us of the perfect polish and elegance of Voltaire in his stories. Beckford went to the best French models for the study of classic style.

I suppose that you know the story of *Vathek*, and if you do not know, you should certainly read it. An edition can be obtained anywhere for a few cents—though there are luxurious editions worth a good deal of money. One value of the story is the faultless style—there is no better example of style in any short story of the 18th century. But it has a still greater value as a work of pure imagination, being at once unusually powerful, and yet original to a degree unlike anything produced before or since in English,—if we except the equally wonderful Oriental tale of George Meredith, *The Shaving of Shagpat*, written in our own time. Both of these books were the outcome of Oriental studies; but both are intensely original; and have borrowed from Oriental literature nothing but local colour. But there is an immense difference otherwise in the two as to literary and as to moral value. The work of Beckford is a model of classic style, and contains little or no moral or philosophical thought: it is only a splendid story of imagination. The work of Meredith is a model of modern romantic style, written under inspiration of *The Arabian Nights;* and its great value is the philosophical and moral teachings that un-

[1] *Memoirs of extraordinary painters* 1780.
[2] *Vathek* written 1781 or 1782; tr. 1786.
[3] *Letters from Italy, with sketches of Spain and Portugal* 1834.

derlie the wildest of narratives. To find any teaching in Beckford is almost impossible,—although we may consider the study of Nouronihar as a remarkable suggestion of how an innocent and beautiful girl might be seduced into all kinds of wickedness by the prospect of wealth and the flattery of greatness; presupposing, of course, some germs of natural evil in her character. But that was not Beckford's object. His object was to dazzle and terrify imagination; and he has done this grandly in the final chapter,—the great scene of the everlasting torment of hell. Excepting the hell of Dante (and it is scarcely fair to compare poetry with prose in this way) the hell of Beckford is almost unapproached in modern literature. Another fact about the book is that it bears a very interesting relation to the life and the thoughts of the writer. Most impersonally written, its details are nevertheless intensely personal in a way that will delight the reader who knows the strange romance of Beckford's private existence. For the palaces of the Caliph of Vathek really represent to us the palaces of Beckford at Fonthill and at Cintra;—the tower of fourteen hundred steps is the tower which Beckford so often built in vain in England or in Portugal; the infernal splendor of the hall of Eblis was painted from some one of the lordly interiors of this millionaire; and not a little of the personal character of Beckford—its coldness, its capacity for cruelty, its admiration for art and beauty—seems to be reflected in the character of the Caliph of Vathek. The girl Nouronihar would appear also something of a study from life; but we do not know anything of the original. If you want to have a good imaginative sensation, let me advise you first to read the life of Beckford, and only then to read *Vathek,* or at least to read it over again if you have not done so already. You will find that the effect is immediately enhanced by knowledge of the author's biography.

There was another strange person, of vast wealth, living contemporaneously with Beckford, who made an impression both upon art and literature, — but an impression much less magnificent and less durable. This was Thomas Hope.[1] Hope

[1] Thomas Hope (1770?-1831).

was originally a Dutch merchant, who settled in England, and astonished society by the splendour of his living. But Hope was a dweller in cities; he would not have cared for places in the country; he loved company, and was altogether a most sociable person. Having travelled a good deal in the East of Europe,—especially in Turkey, he there acquired a great taste for the luxurious arts of decoration and of comfort which made beautiful the palaces of the Turkish nobles. He then tried to introduce into England a corresponding taste in matters of house-furnishings and house-decoration; and in this he was partly successful. We may say that he was the first to awaken the English minds to a love of Oriental furniture, Oriental carpets, Oriental hangings,—divans, and things of that kind. He wrote one famous book called *The History of Anastasius.*[1]

Anastasius is a wicked Greek adventurer; and the whole of the book is simply an account of Oriental intrigues in which Anastasius successfully engaged. For this reason the book is much more closely related to the picaroon novel than to the new romance; but it has one relation to the later literature in the fact that it is Oriental, and that it had some effect in quickening public taste in a new direction. It was so successful that its author was not thereafter called by his real name of Thomas: he was everywhere known as Anastasius Hope. But he was not a good scholar like Beckford and the book did not possess sufficient literary merit to preserve it for a generation. It is now almost forgotten, and has been mentioned only because of its temporary relation to literature.

Here we need say no more about the Romance of Horror and Mystery. In the next century it will reapper; but Beckford was the last of the great representatives of this literature in the 18th century. Please, however, to notice one fact,—the place of men like Beckford and Hope in regard to the evolution of a new taste. Previous romantics had revived a liking for Gothic things, mediæval things; these created a new liking for exotic subjects, Eastern romance. Afterwards we shall find

[1] *Anastasius: or the memoirs of a Greek written at the close of the eighteenth century* 1819.

that Scott, Southey, Byron, Coleridge, and a number of others also indulged the public with Oriental themes. And since the 18th cenury—since Beckford's day—the two chief subjects of romanticism, both in poetry and in prose, have been the mediæval and the Oriental. Before the 18th century, the charm of the Orient had remained almost unknown,—in spite of the Crusades. A public taste had not yet been created for the exotic.

A Group of Revolutionaries

We cannot leave the subject of 18th century literature without calling attention to a few names among the many writers profoundly influenced by the French Revolution. You know that at one time there was really a likelihood that the English nation might follow the example of the French,—might proclaim a republic, and the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. It was the great influence and eloquence of Burke that especially checked the English sympathy with France; but among Burke's opponents there were persons of great ability who figured in the literature of the time. Three of these only need be mentioned; Thomas Paine, William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft. The last two will especially interest us, — as their history reaches into the 19th century, where it connects itself in a tragical and most fantastic way with the life of the great poet Shelley. If there had been no Godwin, there would still have been a Shelley—but not the Shelley whom we know.

But first a word about Thomas Paine.[1] Paine had a certain relation to literature through the fine strong clear English prose of his *Common Sense*,[2] and of his *Vindication of the Rights of Man*.[3] The first of these books was a strong argument in support of the American Revolution: it was highly successful and made many friends for Paine in America, where he went

[1] Thomas Paine (1737-1809).
[2] *Common sense* 1776.
[3] *The rights of man* 1791-92.

and remained for a considerable time. The second of his books was an argument in support of the French Revolution; and it was written in answer to the terrible speech of Burke. If it was not warmly received in England, it at least aroused enthusiasm in France; and Paine was honoured by a gift of French citizenship and various titles. He was later one of the very few Englishmen to whom Napoleon was kind. You see that he must have been a person of considerable ability and social charm. But all that Paine really did and really was, has been almost forgotten because of the tremendous abuse and calumny excited by his third book *The Age of Reason.*[1] Paine was a deist; and, with the example of Voltaire before him, he wrote a book attacking the Bible—pointing out the contradictions in its records, in its laws, in its history. It would be very difficult to pick out from *The Age of Reason* those passages which are original;—Voltaire had almost exhausted the subject in his attack upon the Bible, both as a history and as a work of religion. But Paine wrote very differently from Voltaire — in a rough, angry, mocking way, that greatly enraged Christian believers. So great was the storm which he raised that even to-day it requires some courage to speak justly about him in print; and a new life of him published some years ago by Moncure D. Conway, a Unitarian clergyman, was tremendously abused by the whole English press. It has been so much the custom to call Paine an atheist, a drunkard, a vulgarian—all of which is untrue—that people are apt to forget the relation of the man to English literature, and the remarkably fine English of his earlier books. From Paine may be said to have descended the whole great school of journalistic writers, among whom the most distinguished perhaps was Cobbett. If only for this reason Paine must be mentioned.

But a greater literary figure than Paine was William Godwin.[2] Beginning life as a dissenting minister, of almost Puritan austerity, he later threw off the ecclesiastical frock altogether, and became a professor of something very like atheism. He

[1] *The age of reason* 1794-5. Pt III. 1811.
[2] William Godwin (1756-1836).

was no doubt a sincere man; and in freely expressing opinions contrary to those of his time, he had no advantage to hope for. How far his opinions were contrary to the opinions of the time you may judge from the fact that he desired the abolition of all government, the abolition of marriage laws, the abolition of property laws. He held that all government is necessarily bad,—that men would be much better without any government at all. He thought that marriage was bad,—that a man and a woman ought to be able to live together when they pleased, to separate when they pleased. He was much more of a revolutionary than the people who made the French Revolution. These ideas he boldly published in a book called *Political Justice*[1]—afterwards considerably modified. Some people thought him crazy;—most people thought him a scoundrel. He was neither crazy nor a scoundrel. He was simply a man bewildered by the new ideas of his time, and unable to properly coordinate and balance the mass of new facts presented to his mind. As he had to live somehow and could not continue to be a minister, he took to literature and journalism, producing a number of curious books. I need only mention two—*Caleb Williams*[2] and *St. Leon*[3]—both of which are novels. *Caleb Williams* is still read; it is a physiological romance of a strange kind. The other book is still more strange—its subject being the Elixir of Life, but it has not the literary power of *Caleb Williams*. Very probably Godwin inspired Bulwer-Lytton with the idea of writing his *Strange Story*—but there is no comparison between the merits of the two books. The *Strange Story* is the greatest romance of magic in the English language—perhaps in any language. The work of Godwin is very pale indeed beside it. Godwin at last got a government pension. He was recognized as a sincere man, in spite of his eccentricities, and he did a good deal of political writing for the government interest. But from that time his literary production amounted to nothing. He belonged to literature chiefly through

[1] *Enquiry concerning political justice and its influence on general virtue and happiness* 1793.
[2] *Things as they are, or the adventures of Caleb Williams.* 3 vols. 1794.
[3] *St Leon. A tale of the sixteenth century.* 4 vols. 1799.

Caleb Williams, and by reason of his relation to Shelley and to Mary Wollstonecraft.

Now about Mary Wollstonecraft.[1] She was a beautiful Irish girl, who had been at one time employed as a secretary by Dr. Johnson. She had, however, a lazy family to support; and her salary as secretary was not sufficient for this. Then she became a governess; still later she went to France as a teacher of English. In Paris she met a handsome but wicked man—an American soldier named Gilbert Imlay. His name lives only through the memory of the wrong which he did her. He seduced her under promise of marriage, and deserted her in Paris. She was in a most desperate condition when Godwin happened to meet her in Paris. Godwin was a kind-hearted man; and although he had written a book against marriage, he was neither afraid nor ashamed to marry Mary Wollstonecraft and to take care of her child. And this marriage seems stranger for the reason that Mary Wollstonecraft herself had written a book against marriage. Because of her sufferings, she had become the first English advocate of what we now call Women's Rights—though she took some ground which a modern advocate of the same cause would not take. By this book she belongs to English literature. It is called *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.*[2] Poor Mary was happy with Godwin; but she died after the birth of her first child. And that child was Mary Godwin,—who afterwards became the second wife of the poet Shelley. That story is very strange as we shall see later on.

Summary of the Eighteenth Century Literature

The chief facts in the history of 18th century literature may now be briefly summarized.

The 18th century opens with the Augustan or classic period, and closes with the beginning of the romantic period.

[1] Mrs Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759-1797)
[2] *A vindication of the rights of woman.* Vol. I. [No more appeared.] 1792.

Really the classic period begins some forty years before the opening of the century; but it reached its full development only in the time of Pope.

The classic period may be defined as the time during which all English literature was subjected to the laws of what is called classic composition—that is to say, the rules of rhetoric and prosody derived from the study of the ancient *classics*, or Greek and Roman authors, especially the rules of Aristotle. But, as these rules were not directly taken by the English from the ancient authors, but from the French masters who began the same kind of literary reform at an earlier time, the movement has sometimes been called Gallo-classic,—which in plain English means only French-classic.

The classic spirit was opposed to individual liberty of expression in literature; it insisted that everything should be done according to rules, and that no expression should be made use of for which a good classic author should not be found. Accordingly, it was intensely conservative; it substituted everywhere convention for originality; and it could not but produce a decline in the true spirit of literature. It always upheld the artificial in opposition to the natural.

But, on the other hand, it accomplished a vast amount of good in relation to form and exactness. It corrected the extravagances of poetry and the inaccuracies of prose. By insisting upon exact measure in verse, it compelled a great improvement in poetical execution. By insisting upon method in prose, it perfected English prose to such a degree that no improvement has really since been made. The last prose of the 18th century remains the best prose of the English language.

But, having accomplished this good, it had nothing further to do. Had its tyranny continued, there could have been no poetical advance; and originality of every kind would have proportionately suffered. By those who knew that more liberty was compatible with new rules, new unities, a romantic movement was begun.

The object of this new movement was the breaking down of convention,—the securing to the individual of freedom to

express his sense of the beautiful in any way that could be made to accord with the laws of beauty in language and form. So much for the general fact of the great contest. The contest itself is the largest fact in the literary history of the time.

Now try to memorize as well as you can the history of the period in poetry,—beginning with Pope and ending with Wordsworth and Coleridge. You need not remember all the names; that would be of little use. But you should remember that poetry, a little before the middle of the century, divided itself into two streams,—a classical stream continually becoming narrower and shallower; and a romantic stream continually widening and deepening, which was to be broadened at last into the grand current of Victorian poetry. Remember that the last great representative of classical verse in the 18th century was Erasmus Darwin, and that the greatest representatives of the new romanticism at the end of the same period were Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Walter Scott—who had just begun to sing.

The novel was the special creation of the 18th century in prose. Try to remember clearly the difference between a novel and a romance—the novel being essentially a narrative which reflects real and contemporary life; while the romance is a work of imagination, in which truthful life is not essentially necessary, and which may be pictured conditions having no reality in contemporary time or place. Remember too the four great novelists — Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne. But do not forget the connection between their work and the fiction which preceded it,—the work of Swift, Defoe, and the makers of romances of adventure,—picaroon books. Also two classical works — difficult to put in either category — the *Rasselas* of Johnson, *The Vicar of Wakefield* of Goldsmith—should serve to remind you of the struggle maintained even in prose fiction between the old spirit and the new.

Johnson fought for conservatism; Goldsmith attempted a compromise. And while we are mentioning names, remember that you should be able to answer the question who were the two greatest men of letters of the 18th century—the literary

kings. They were Swift and Johnson. Swift was the great literary power of the first half of the age; Johnson of the second; and Johnson was the last of the literary kings.

It is also of importance to recollect the particular part played by Johnson as the champion of conservatism in literature. More than anybody else he was able to delay the triumphs of the romantics. If he had been unopposed by genius, as well as by fate, we should have had none of the Victorian poetry which now delights us—no Tennyson, no Browning, no Rossetti, no Swinburne.

What were these forces that broke down the classical reserve? Remember the publication of (1) the popular ballads by Bishop Percy, (2) the *Ossian* of Macpherson, (3) the imitations of Elizabethan poetry by Chatterton, and (4) Warton's *History*. Such works, though not in themselves of the greatest importance, pleased the popular mind, and prepared the way for better things. Remember the work of Thomson and of those who abandoned the heroic couplet for freer forms of verse.

History also first came to perfection in the 18th century. Consider the minor historians lightly; but remember Hume, Robertson, and the prince of historians, Edward Gibbon. You should be able to state in very few words, what distinguished Gibbon from every preceding English historian.

Another branch of literature which reached perfection in this period was the art of letter-writing. In remembering this it were also well to remember the relation between this art of letter-writing and the early English novel. I told you that the first great novelist, Samuel Richardson, began as a letter-writer; and that his novels were written in the form of letters. No doubt this method may have been suggested to him by the methods of the picaroon writers, who wrote everything in the shape of memoirs and in the first person. Nevertheless Richardson's method was original in a special way, and shows the connection between the art of correspondence and the art of fiction. Also do not forget that the essay eventually often assumed the same form. The letters of Chesterfield and of the other letter-writers really take the polished form of literary essays.

Ethics and ethical writings should not be forgotten. The beginning of the Augustan age was a time of cruel satire and coarse realism—the spirit of the Restoration still lived in letters. Remember that Addison and Steele were most instrumental in bringing about a better state of literary morals by their little newspapers, which actually made morality fashionable. And this good work was afterwards continued by Johnson in his *Rambler* and other publications. By the end of the 18th century brutal satire had almost ceased to exist; and a gentler tone of criticism made itself visible in all critical estimates. It is true that the great reviews—*The Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly* especially founded and maintained in opposition to certain political tendencies—did furiously attack some of the best works of the time, and this even after the 18th century. But these attacks were of a dignified kind; they were not written merely to give pain; there was an absence in them of everything which disgusts us in the satirical criticism of an earlier time. The 18th century was really the great period of English social and moral reform.

Remember too the effects of the French Revolution on English literature—the eloquence of Burke upon one side, the productions of Godwin, Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft upon the other. You must not forget that there was a natural sympathy between the romantic literature and revolutionary doctrines of any kind. So much did the romantics naturally hate classical invention, that they were inclined to sympathize with any opposition to any kind of convention. Godwin's literary work ought to be considered in this light. The sympathy of such men with the doctrines of the revolution was really a sympathy born of the literary struggle. Later on we shall find that even Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, in their young days, were zealous for the revolution. Afterwards they became conservative in their politics. But during the 18th century, it was difficult for a romantic to put himself upon the conservative side even in regard to national topics.

These are the principal facts of 18th century literature compressed into the smallest possible space, with one excep-

tion. You should remember the failure of the drama. There was, in the classic period, no good tragedy; and after the 18th century, there was no good comedy. And only the names of writers of comedy are worth remembering. The death of drama in the 18th century is partly illustrative of the injury done to letters by classical tyranny. On one side this tyranny accomplished immense good; but in another direction it worked for evil. Drama, above all things, requires great imagination, the highest faculty of imagination; and the whole spirit of classicism was opposed to imagination. Drama requires strong personality, intense individuality. But individuality, personality — these were just what classical convention was fighting against. The rule was that every one should suppress his personal tendencies, and should write only according to set models. Under such rules no human being could produce a good English play of the serious kind. Comedy was possible, not great tragedy.

There is one little thing which I forgot to remind you about —the madness of some of the gifted men of the time. Swift, Collins, Cowper and Smart died mad; and the gifted mystic Blake may be said to have lived mad. Such little biographical details have a particular value in assisting the memory of events. You should be able to mention at any time the names of the five great writers who became insane.

To conclude:—The 18th century is the most important of all centuries in the history of English literature—though less splendid in its productions than the age of Elizabeth. After all has been said and done, our study of English literature must be essentially a study of living literature, contemporary literature—the English written and spoken in our own time. We read Shakespeare, we read Milton; but in order to do so we have to translate their English into the English of to-day. Now the English of to-day really begins with the 18th century. Upon the work of the 18th century masters rests the whole foundation of 19th century and existing English literature. Our next studies will be studies of the early literature of the 19th century; but in every case, or nearly every case we shall

be obliged to explain facts by looking back to the century of Swift and Johnson. Even the most beautiful flowers of Victorian poetry are nourished by streams that flow to us through the classic age and beyond its boundary.

NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

PRE-VICTORIAN POETS

PERHAPS the 19th century is the greatest of all English poetical periods. It certainly would be so called, but for the fact that the Elizabethan age includes Shakespeare; and the weight of Shakespeare is so great that we must still regard the age in which he lived as the greatest, altogether, in English history. However, the 19th century is in some respects well worthy to compare with even Shakespeare's age. It contains a greater number of poets of high rank; and, if we except the lyric, it contains a much wider variety of poetical work. Of course perfect drama, the greatest drama is the highest form of literary art possible; but here the 19th century has nothing of the first class to show. So we must take its poetry first—as the highest form of its later production.

The first thing to remember is that the poetical history of the century begins with the apparition of seven great poets,—Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Shelley and Keats. This first group of seven may be said to represent the romantic triumph during the first half of the century. All were romantics — though one or two showed sympathy with classical ideas at various times. But this group of seven cannot be considered together. Almost every one of the seven might be said to have founded a little school of his own,—to have exerted a very direct influence, with the possible exception of Southey. Besides we find that the group may be otherwise classed. It naturally divides itself into two sub-groups — Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott and Southey on one side; and Byron, Shelley and Keats on the other. Walter Scott may be separately considered; and in that case, we should accept the classification of the time,—and call Wordsworth, Cole-

ridge and Southey "The Lake Poets," or "The Lake School"; and call the other group, at least two of them, "The Satanic School," for Keats is really very different from them; he was accused of founding a school of his own called "The Cockney School,"—"cockney" being a nickname for a Londoner, one having the peculiarities of speech and manner by which the inhabitant of London can be distinguished. But all these names are absurd; they are not founded upon facts of any kind; and they need not have any interest for us except as curiosities of literary history. It will be better for us to make two groups; and call the first, "The First Romantic School," and to call the second, "The Second Romantic School."

The First Romantic School

The First Romantic School includes Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. Before we go any further let us clearly understand the difference separating the two schools from one another,—the reason that Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, and Southey are widely separated from Shelley, Byron, and Keats.

The difference is a difference in romantic feeling. All the poets of the first romantic group observed certain forms of convention. They broke classical conventions in the matter of subject and form; but they remain—all four of them conservative enough in regard to literary ethics. They allow free rein to the imagination in most directions, but not in the direction of religious and social thinking. To put the matter in the plainest possible way, they were very moral people in their books—quite respectable. In the other school all conventions were broken—not indeed by Keats, but by Shelley and Byron. This was especially the reason for their being called "The Satanic School," or "The School of the Devil." Neither Byron nor Shelley observed any respect toward religious and social conventions; while Keats was altogether a pagan in sentiment —bewitched by the beauty and poetry and the truth of the old

Greek world. It is not for us to express our sympathy here with either school, nor to criticize. We can do that afterwards. But for the present only remember this, that the first romantic group represents less of the romantic feeling than the second group. Byron and Shelley carried romanticism further than their predecessors. Therefore these two schools represent distinct movements or stages in the romantic evolution.

Now we may talk about the history and the work of the first group; and we shall begin with Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter Scott was the greatest influence of all in the direction of the revival of an interest in the Gothic and the mediæval. His influence has lasted well into our own time, and is not yet quite dead. All the great poets of the later Victorian era were influenced by him. I do not mean as to form, but as to subject and feeling; and in these respects the power of Sir Walter Scott became a European influence. Almost every European literature was affected by him in a twofold way.

Sir Walter Scott

Now the history of Sir Walter Scott[1] is really the history of the influence of popular literature upon academic literature: at least it is the greatest chapter in the record of the effect which peasant ballads and other forms of popular emotional expression produced upon English poetry. Those of us disgusted with Sir Walter Scott by having been obliged to read his *Lady of the Lake* as a school text are apt to overlook entirely that part of his work which belongs to folklore. For Scott was one of the greatest collectors of folklore that ever lived; and he did much more for English literature by his work in this direction than by his long romances in verse. You will remember that Bishop Percy was the first to collect the ballads of the peasantry in book form; and you will remember that he apologized for the work as if he had done something vulgar

[1] Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).

and you will remember that Dr. Johnson laughed at the ballads. Neither Bishop Percy nor Dr. Johnson could have dreamed that such common literature would ever profoundly change and improve the best quality of English poetry. But Walter Scott may have been wiser. At all events he was so charmed by Percy's collection read in his boyhood, that his whole life was thereby influenced. While still a student he began to collect all the ballads and songs that he could find in his native Scotch neighbourhood — going out himself among the people, and coaxing them to dictate to him all the verses that they remembered. Thus he wrote down and preserved hundreds of beautiful and curious songs and ballads. Nor was he content to study only the folklore of his own country. He collected and translated poems and songs of the same class from many European languages, and he was one of the first, if not the first, to interest English readers in the ballads of the great German poets. In Germany, Percy's books had aroused much interest, and had influenced a romantic movement there. Many ballads had been written there already in imitation of the local folklore ballads; and among the German ballad makers were great poets like Gœthe, Schiller, Bürger, Uhland, and others. Sir Walter Scott made his first appearance in literature in 1796, with a little book containing only two ballads translated from the German Bürger; but the translations were not only worthy of the original, but are still said, by good judges, to surpass them. One of these ballads was *The Wild Huntsman* and the other *Lenore;* but Scott first entitled them *The Chase* and *William and Helen.*[1] As the time is short I shall not dwell upon the subject of *The Wild Huntsman,*—further than to remind you that this strange story must always have a weird charm for any imagination able to appreciate the wild character of the sounds made by a storm wind in the forest at night. Sir Walter's translation is very impressive. But the subject of *William and Helen* is a subject possessing the quality called "universality" — that is, it touches something in our minds

[1] *The chase and William and Helen: two ballads from the German of Gottfried A. Burger* (anon.) Edinburgh and London, 1796.

and feelings much deeper than custom and independent of nationality. Perhaps you will find some version of the legend in every European literature. The tale is laid in the time of the Crusades; a maiden betrothed to a Crusader despairs upon finding that he does not return from the Holy Wars; and supposing him to be dead she upbraids heaven for having treated her unjustly. But, in the dead of the night, she hears the voice of her lover at the door and, looking out, sees him standing there in full armour. He says, "I have come for you;—to-night is our bridal night. But we have a long way to go. Be quick; dress yourself and come down." She descends the stairs and finds a great black horse standing at the gate. The knight puts her on the horse, mounts before her, and they ride away like the wind. The speed is something terrible and unnatural; under the hoofs of the horse the stones continually flash fire. But she is not afraid because she loves. They pass a cemetery, where a dead man is about to be buried; and the knight calls out to the dead, "Come to my wedding; you can be buried just as well to-morrow." Then the dead man rises and follows the horse. Presently they pass the skeleton of a murderer hanging in chains. "Come and dance at my wedding," the knight cries; and the skeleton descends and follows the horse. Morning begins to dawn as the rider dashes into a graveyard and halts the horse at an open grave. "And here is our bridal bed," he says. Of course the girl dies of terror. In the ballad the emotions and the sights of the incident are treated with so much artistic skill that we quite forget the impossible and find ourselves alternately touched or terrified by the recital. Sir Walter Scott's version is perhaps the best in any European tongue and is especially famous for the lines, which recur almost like a burden, describing the gallop:

> Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
> Splash! splash! along the sea;

as well as for the simple force of the adjectives in such verses as these:

"No room for me?" "Enough for both;—
Speed, speed, my Barb, thy course!"
O'er *thundering* bridge, through *boiling* surge
He drove the *furious* horse.

The success of the little book containing this masterly ballad encouraged Sir Walter Scott to attempt a much more important publication—*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*[1]

Minstrelsy of course signifies the songs or compositions of the minstrels, or wandering musicians, as well as the whole art of popular song which these represented. The collection—consisting of all the popular songs and ballads that Sir Walter Scott had been able to collect along the border-land between England and Scotland—was very well named. And it remains the most valuable book of its kind, and the most successful after Percy. Even the great modern collection edited by the late Professor Child would be a very poor collection indeed if we were to take out of it these pieces originally collected by Sir Walter Scott. The border-land between England and Scotland, as you may well suppose, teemed with traditions and songs of the old wars between the two countries; and it was chiefly through the impression obtained from this popular literature that Scott subsequently found inspiration, not only for his poetical, but for his prose romances.

The effect of this book, published in 1802, upon almost every poet of the first rank in the 19th century literature has been very great.

Nor did Scott content himself with collecting and translating ballads; he imitated them with astonishing success—producing ballads and songs of his own, some of which will probably live quite as long as the ancient ones. Some of these—and the best of them—are scattered through the pages of his later works. Others were contributed to Lewis' *Tales of Wonder* such as *Glenfinlas* (the most terrible ghost story of its kind to be found in ballad form), *The Eve of St. John, The Gray Brother, The Fire-King,* and a number of others.

[1] *Minstrelsy of the Scottish border.* Vols. I and II. Kelso, 1802, Vol. III. London and Edinburgh, 1803.

But as a singer — I mean as a writer of *songs* as distinguished from ballads,—Scott was even more successful. Every English regimental band is to-day playing *Bonny Dundee* the whole world over; every English schoolboy learns how to recite *Young Lochinvar*, and I may say that almost every English girl learns how to sing *Jock of Hazeldean*. Scott was a great song writer; and if he had done nothing else but write songs he would still have been famous, yet perhaps the most wonderful of his little songs are the least talked about, such as *Proud Maisie*.

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
  Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
  Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonny bird,
  When shall I marry me?'
'When six braw gentlemen
  Kirkward shall carry ye.'

'Who makes the bridal bed,
  Birdie, say truly?'
'The grey-headed sexton
  That delves the grave duly.

'The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
  Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing,
  "Welcome, proud lady."'

What a weird little thing this songlet is! There are a number of things like it scattered through the novels of Sir Walter Scott.

He next began to write poetical romances of his own — romances of a new kind dealing with old Scotch or old English history, especially Border history, and written with many of the strange and beautiful or terrible old words and phrases which he had learned in his studies of peasant literature. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*[1] was the first of these, and, in the pre-

[1] *The lay of the last minstrel*, 1805.

sent lecturer's opinion, the best of all. It teems especially with the elements of the supernatural and the mediæval. *Marmion*[1] has finer passages, — such as the splendid description of the battle of Flodden; but *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* has a Gothic charm and a ghostly charm comparable only to the work of Coleridge — though less exquisitely shaped. Many others—too many—followed; not only *The Lady of the Lake*,[2] which is of better class, and *The Lord of the Isles*,[3] containing a battle piece almost as fine as anything in *Marmion*, but also *Rokeby*[4] and various inferior productions, which might have been more successfully treated in prose. In fact Scott did not know that he was a poet—did not think of taking the pains that men like Coleridge and Wordsworth were taking to perfect their verses. He only thought of the matter this way: "The people like stories in verse; and I can write verse nearly as easily as prose, so I shall tell them stories in verse." He might have gone on and written the whole of the Waverley novels in verse; but an accident changed his purpose. Byron had suddenly begun to attract popularity by writing romances in very much the same kind of verse; and Sir Walter Scott imagined that he could not compete as a poet with Byron. So he took to writing prose, and became an immortal novelist, whose work has been translated into every European language. He never knew that he was a great poet. If he had known—or rather, if he had not been too modest to know—he might have risen to a very great position in poetry. But we have no reason to regret it. He would always have done beautiful things of a certain kind in verse; but the loss of his prose would have been irreparable to literature, and there were other men able to write romances in verse. Observe, however, that although Scott took very little pains with his verse, that verse still bears the test of time; and Byron's does not.

I think that you know the sad history of this good and great man's life—how he killed himself by overwork in trying

[1] *Marmion: a tale of Flodden Field* 1808.
[2] *The lady of the lake: a poem.* Edinburgh, 1810.
[3] *The lord of the isles; a poem in six cantos* 1815.
[4] *Rokeby, a poem.* Edinburgh, 1813.

to pay off the enormous debts of £120,000 incurred through the fault of an unscrupulous man whom he had trusted. And I suppose you remember that this vast debt was actually paid —most of it before he died and the remainder soon afterwards.

No more honest, generous or noble-hearted man ever lived than Scott. But we need not dwell much upon his life here, as its details are very familiar. A word, however, about the peculiar form of his verse, and its history—I mean the verse of his romances.

The poetical measure is perhaps the very best possible in English for the telling of a long romance, and it is this for several reasons. It allows the poet the greatest possible amount of liberty, with the least number of rules. It is never monotonous; because the form is, or may be, varied at will. Most of it is in the measure of four iambic feet, or eight syllables; but the trochaic measure and the anapæstic measure are also used; —while the feet sometimes lengthen to five in number or shrink up to two. Moreover although the bulk of the work is in couplets—that is to say, in lines of which two or every *couple* rhyme together,—nevertheless the rhymes may be alternate as in the ballad measure, and this is frequently done.

So you will see that there are some extraordinary things about this form,—of which the best example in Scott is *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* In this form you can lengthen your line from four syllables to ten or eleven; you can use the couplet, or you can alternate the rhymes; you can change the foot from the iambic to the trochaic or anapæstic, and back again; or you can use different kinds of feet in the same line. In fact you can do almost everything that you please—on the single condition of being musical and of maintaining a certain emotional quality. That is to say, you can use any form you like, provided that you keep to *poetry,* and that the different measures that you use be of a kind which harmonize together. Of course you cannot use 16 syllable couplets very well and you cannot use blank verse—because these would not harmonize with each other in the general construction nor with octosyllabic or five foot measures. But that is all. Again there are

no stanzas; but you can make pauses wherever you please — dividing the whole thing into cantos, which correspond to chapters in prose, and dividing the cantos into parts separated by blank lines; these separations correspond to paragraphs of a chapter.

Some years ago there was an effort made by Professors and others in this University to turn the attention of the new generation of poets to new forms of verse,—or at least to such modifications of the old forms as would allow of much greater liberty in narrative poetry. I believe that the attempt was not very successful; and the form suggested did not seem to me to differ very much from forms already existing in old Japanese literature, the irregular "*naga-uta*" for example. Really I do not know enough about these things to venture any definite opinion as to the worth of the form just mentioned. But I may say this without hesitation, that I believe Japanese poets can learn something from the study of the measures used by Scott and by Coleridge much better than by the study of other forms of English verse. Here is a verse, as I tell you, which allows the line to more than double its length at will, to vary accents, to make sudden alterations of form, to bring changes upon the expression of emotion by making the tone of the utterance sink or swell; we can also strengthen them according to the sentiment of the moment. It is much more irregular than the irregular "*naga-uta*"; and it allows very much more liberty. Could such a thing be successfully attempted in Japanese poetry? It is worth while thinking about — if you have not thought about it already. But I am quite convinced now of one thing, that further advances in Japanese literature will not be made until scholars cease to despise the spoken language as a vehicle of the highest and most serious expression of thought and emotion. The 18th century in England was just as conservative in regard to what might be called the spoken language of that time; but eventually it was found that further advance could only be made by a bold return to the language of the people. And the poets that we are now talking of especially represent this fact.

But Scott did not invent the wonderful measure of which I tell you. He got it from Coleridge,—about whom we are going to talk. The first appearance of this measure is in *Christabel*.[1] Coleridge could not or did not get *Christabel* printed for many years after writing it; and then he got it printed only through the kindness of Lord Byron, who wrote to the great publisher Murray on his behalf. While the poem was still in manuscript, Coleridge used to read it to his friends; and he sometimes lent the manuscript to persons who would read it in their own literary circles. Scott, hearing *Christabel* read for the first time, at once caught the measure, and adopted it for his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Byron imitated Scott. And Coleridge, the inventor of the new form, was not able to use it in print until those who learned its form had already made fortunes out of it. This is a good example of the injustice of circumstances—though not an example of the injustice of men, for both Scott and Byron helped Coleridge in every way they could.

Well, as Coleridge first invented the measure, it is better we should illustrate it by an example from *Christabel* than by any example from Scott. Just take the opening lines of the poem for a brief example:

'Tis the mid | dle of night | by the cas | tle clock, |

And the owls | have awak | ened the crow | ing cock; |

Tu—whit! |—Tu—whoo! |

And hark, | again! | the crow | ing cock, |

How drow | sily | it crew. |

Now mark the extraordinary irregularity at the very beginning—I do not mean merely the irregularity in the length of the line, which varies from four syllables to eleven, but in the measure. The first line is anapæstic except in the last foot, which is iambic. The same is the case with the second line. The third short line of four syllables, the fourth line of eight,

[1] *Christabel* [Composed 1797] 1816.

and the fifth line of six, are all iambic. I might show you in another quotation a sudden change to the trochee; but that will not be necessary. You will perceive well enough how very great is the liberty allowed to the narrative poet in so varying a meter as this. But how musical the effect! That is the apology for any and every form. What does it matter whether a form be according to old rules or to new rules if you can produce a beautiful effect with it? If that American eccentric Whitman had been able to produce a beautiful effect we could not justly condemn his form, but the trouble with such men is that they have neither the power to produce the effect of music nor the power to produce emotional beauty. Not Coleridge!

How did Coleridge invent this measure?

Here let me remind you that the student of literature must be as careful about using the word "invent" as the student of science. This word is very frequently and very wrongfully used in the sense of "to create"—to make something out of nothing or to manufacture something out of one's own head, somewhat as a spider manufactures a thread out of the contents of her own belly. The word "create" does belong to literature, but only as referring to real creations of the brain, —dreams of persons or of incidents such as Shakespeare's mind could and did actually manufacture. But, otherwise, please to remember that the Latin verb *inventare* from which our "invent" comes signifies only to find, to discover, and in the true sense the literary inventor is only a discoverer. For literature is an evolutional growth; and the poet does not create it at all: he can only discover something new about the possible arrangement of forms already existing. Where did Coleridge get this measure from?—that is the real meaning of my question.

He got it from the old ballads and popular songs. I do not mean that he found in any old ballads and songs the same variation of meter, the same changes of line. He did not find these in any one ballad or song, but he found them all in different songs, in different ballads, in different kinds of poetry. Then he amused himself by joining different varieties discovered in this way, by combining them and recombining them,

much as a child plays with wooden blocks. Putting some of the different songs together he found that the effect was bad or unsatisfactory; putting other forms together he found that very pretty effects could be obtained. And making at last a mosaic work of different ballad measures and song measures he discovered the form of *Christabel*.

I sometimes imagine that a Japanese poet might do very much the same thing. Listening, as I often do, to the songs of children, and the songs of soldiers, and the songs of the peasants walking beside their burden horses, I think to myself that there are suggestions in all these greatly varying melodies for a future Japanese Coleridge. The words, too, fit the times so well in many cases that I cannot but imagine it some day possible to produce new tonic effects in some yet undiscovered form of Japanese stanza. I know that many will answer, "Oh, the effect of those songs is altogether due to the music, not to the measure and accent of the line!" I suppose that is true; but there is another truth worth thinking about. *The real art of the poet is to make words sing!* That is at least in all Western poetry. By the phrase "to make words sing" I mean to put words together in such a way that as you read them you cannot help singing them in your mind: they force you to think of music; — they really sing. And I believe that Japanese words can be made to sing in yet unknown ways.

WORDSWORTH

The Lake School owes its name to the fact that its chief representative Wordsworth[1] happened to live near the Lake at Grasmere—a very beautiful place; and that his sympathizers, like Coleridge and Southey, spent some time there with him. The appellation has nothing to do with the poetry of the group at all; the great poet of the lakes was really Sir Walter Scott, who did not belong to Wordsworth's school at all.

[1] William Wordsworth (1770-1850).

Wordsworth is not in any sense an attractive personality. He was the son of a lawyer, and was educated at Cambridge—being the only member of the Law School who took a degree. Still he did not distinguish himself at study. Obtaining through relatives a very small annuity, he went to live in the country with his sister and resolved to devote his entire life to poetry, regardless of comfort. He must have been a man of very great determination; for nobody could ever resolve to be a poet under more discouraging circumstances. He had only about one hundred pounds a year to support himself upon; and he was an old man before his books began to obtain any kind of attention from the public. Yet he never flinched. For pleasure he certainly had no natural disposition. His was a cold, dry, ascetic nature — hard and selfish, with very little feeling or sympathy for others,—but with a natural inclination towards contemplation, and a love of nature that had in it a good deal of religious feeling, probably inherited. Wordsworth would have been a good monk. His whole nature, even his love of natural scenery was ecclesiastical rather than anything else; and we must acknowledge that it was a nature in many respects deficient, atrophied. But if he had the faults of the monk, he had also the strong resolve and self-mastery of the monk; and it was this that enabled him to do so much. Nothing is more remarkable than the curious mixture of influences that made him a poet. The religious side of him had been completely captivated by Milton; and Milton he studied very hard for the grand and serious qualities of verse. On the other hand his love of nature had been charmed by the work of Percy, —in the old ballad,—and by the poetry of Burns. Percy's collection no doubt inspired him with the early idea of the *Lyrical Ballads*,[1]—even to the title of the book. He wanted to attempt new poetry in two widely different styles. He divulged his plans to Coleridge; and Coleridge seconded him in the enterprise, — even to the extent of contributing to the first book. The plan was this. One serious poem was to be written as

[1] *Lyrical ballads, with a few other poems* 1798. *Lyrical ballads with other poems* 2 vols. 1800.

simply as the old ballad or as simply as Burns' song; and this class was to describe common human life with its pleasure and pain. The other class of poems was later to be written in song and serious verse, — verse serious as that of Milton; but the subject was to be the feeling produced upon the imagination and the heart by nature. Such were Wordsworth's purposes after having left his University; and from these purposes he never departed until the end of his long life. Always he was trying to write very simply about real life, objective life, and very grandly about subjective life. Those ideas alone show you that his range was of necessity limited. And he never quite succeeded in either direction. A vast portion of his verse is simply unreadable; and no matter what critics may say about it, it cannot be read without extreme weariness and provocation. A small proportion of his work is very beautiful — so beautiful that it were hard to praise it overmuch; but this does not really represent what Wordsworth hoped to do; it represents something which he did do in spite of himself. And you must pick out the beauties of Wordsworth from the nonsense and rubbish of Wordsworth exactly as a gold-washer separates the grains of metal from the mass of sand.

In our own time a scholar and genius named Stephen (James K.) has very fairly expressed in some cruel but very witty lines the present literary opinion of Wordsworth:—

Two voices are there: one is of the deep;
It learns the storm-cloud's thunderous melody,
Now roars, now murmurs with the changing sea,
Now bird-like pipes, now closes soft in sleep:
And one is of an old half-witted sheep
Which bleats articulate monotony,
And indicates that two and one are three,
That grass is green, lakes damp, and mountains steep:
And, Wordsworth, both are thine: at certain times,
Forth from the heart of thy melodious rhymes
The form and pressure of high thoughts will burst:
At other times—good Lord! I'd rather be
Quite unacquainted with the A.B.C.
Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst.

Of course the lines which close this wicked but truthful wit are in imitation of Wordsworth's famous sonnet,

> The world is too much with us—

of which a few verses are often quoted:

> Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn:
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.

Really I do not know any better criticism of Wordsworth than the mocking sonnet of Stephen complains; for it gives large praise as well as ridicule, — and this is exactly what Wordsworth deserves. There was a time when he was much more ridiculed—the time when Reynolds wrote his famous parody called *Peter Bell: a Lyrical Ballad*, containing such lines as these:—

> He mutters ever, 'W. W.,'
> Never more will trouble you, trouble you.

And when the world first read the original *Peter Bell*, it indeed made up its mind not to read anything more by W. W. Happily things were to change, and the first follies of the *Lyrical Ballads* were to be succeeded by verse so splendid that the world can easily forgive all the dulness for the sake of these few beauties.

I say "few," because the really grand things of Wordsworth can be put into a very small book indeed. You will find them nearly all in the anthologies, where they represent scarcely more than a hundred pages. But Wordsworth has given more than ten times a hundred pages—I may say fully 2,000 pages of small type of verse. Even in the one volume Macmillan edition—two columns a page—the mass of his poetry considerably exceeds that of Tennyson. But of Tennyson, there is scarcely a line which cannot be called exquisite; and in Wordsworth there is very little that we can even call true poetry. So that we have here a most extraordinary phenomenon—flashes of incomparable beauty from a mind ordinarily

barren and dull, and below the average. There is scarcely any poetry finer than are bits of *The Excursion*, the lines of *Tintern Abbey*, the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* (notwithstanding its errors of imagination), *The Daffodils, The Affliction of Margaret, We are Seven, Westminster Bridge*, and *In King's College Chapel, Cambridge*—poems of great variety in form and feeling. But they are oases in a desert. We must suppose that except at moments of extraordinary emotion the deeper feeling of Wordsworth could not find expression. Ordinarily he wrote by theory and by rule—made poetry a mechanic exercise. Yet through the thick chest of his dulness an impression would occasionally force its way to depth of character undivined, — and then true poetry would leap out of him, like water from an Artesian well.

What did he give to English literature that made him great after his death?—what was the particular quality in his work that made him an influence? As for poetical form, he gave us nothing new. Of invention he had absolutely nothing. His rare merit is not in novelty of fact or thought; it is in novelty of feeling. Before his time there was plenty of the expression of the love of nature; but it was an expression of a purely sensuous thought—a mere record of visual and auditory impression. Other poets told you that they saw mountains, woods, and streams, and how beautiful they thought mountains, woods and streams were. But Wordsworth did more than this—did what is one of the most difficult things in this world to do; he explained his own innermost feelings,—and those feelings were the feelings of a *pantheist.*

But do not mistake my use of this term. Wordsworth was only unconsciously pantheistic. Had he been accused of pantheism, he would have been very much shocked and frightened. He was a most conventional Christian, and thought it necessary to make an apology for writing his ode on intimations of immortality of soul—because in that one he has spoken of the soul as having existed possibly before the body. Nevertheless his feeling towards nature was pantheistic, just as we find the same feeling to be in the great German poet. He felt the unity

of life — in the flowers, the birds, the life of setting sun, the mind of man—in all the sorrow and joy of the world;—and he called this all-embracing life God; but it was not the God of the old-fashioned Christianity. It was the Supreme Life that had revealed itself to Wordsworth—feeling himself with a new ecstasy, inspiring him with new poetry and making him sometimes afraid to utter what he thought without great caution of expression. Now the natural tendency of a monotheistic faith, enlarging under the influence of later knowledge, *is* toward pantheistic; and a good deal of the highest form of cultivated Christianity is indistinguishable from pantheism. A fine tone of pantheistic sentiment colours everything in the work of Tennyson, for example, — although he would not have acknowledged himself a pantheist. The same feeling touches a great deal of Victorian poetry and Victorian prose. But in Wordsworth's day, the feeling was almost new to Englishmen. It was he that first expressed in English poetry what we may call the artistic pantheism — the highest emotional expression of the spirit of nature as a kind of Holy Ghost. During his lifetime, which was long, Wordsworth had little attention. He became poet laureate; but the fact did not help to sell his books. After his death, matters changed. Slowly and steadily his works began to "take" with the public, until at last these developed what has been called a "Wordsworth craze" -- that is admiration pushed to foolish extreme. To-day there is a natural reaction, and Wordsworth is less liked. But some of his poems must always be prized; and his influence in 19th century literature must be recognized as even greater than the merits of his work would presuppose.

COLERIDGE

Let us now speak of Coleridge.[1] Coleridge was the son of a clergyman,—nicely cared for in his childhood, but peculiarly

[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834).

unfitted to cope with the difficulties of life by reason of delicate health. In his childhood everything seemed to go to brain, and very little to make body. He was all mind, all fancy, all imagination—very sensitive and very sickly. When he was at last sent away to a public school, he found school life very difficult. Even when he was less than six years old his little school-fellows made him a butt for ill-treatment and ridicule. In higher schools, he remained almost always alone. Though very amiable, he could not make himself liked by his comrades —partly because he did not join in their games which were too rough for him, and partly because his thoughts were always running upon subjects in which they were not interested. Fancy a little boy of fourteen or fifteen spending all his time in the study of metaphysics—I do not mean English—metaphysics of the ancient world, the works of Plato and neo-Platonists, and together with these the works of such writers of the early Christian world as Synesius! and the boy was reading these and translating them from the original Greek. On the other hand Coleridge was extraordinarily distinguished as a student. Though he seemed only a fool in the playground, he was forever first in the class room. Eventually he was picked out with two or three other extraordinary students for a special training and fitting for a special course of study at the University. Students thus selected and honoured come under the particular training of a particular master, and he looks after them in every way, mentally, morally,—and, in Coleridge's time, physically. He trained their minds, corrected their morals and inflicted severe pain upon their bodies occasionally by way of correction. Coleridge, perhaps, needed correction. It was while receiving this special education that he began to do certain extraordinary things which marked him out as an eccentric of the bewildering kind. For example, one day, he took it into his head that he would rather be a shoemaker than a student, and he induced the shoemaker in the neighbourhood of the college to go to the director and ask him to let Coleridge immediately become his apprentice. This made the master so angry that he beat the shoemaker and I

need scarcely add that Coleridge also got a beating. Later on he wanted to become something else, equally extraordinary; but he did not get into serious trouble until one day, after having read Voltaire, he went to the master and told him that he wished to become an infidel. You must remember that Coleridge was being educated for the Church. He was then very severely flogged. Somehow or other he got through the school in spite of his queer ways, taking all the honours as he went; and he landed successfully in Cambridge University There also he quickly became distinguished, but there also he did very curious things; and the University was not quite so forgiving as the master of the school had been. However they did show a certain amount of consideration for him. He ran away from the University and enlisted under a false name, as a soldier in a cavalry regiment; and he was a soldier for almost six months before being discovered and helped out of his difficulty by friends. As a soldier he was very bad; he could not ride a horse properly and he could not do the work that every soldier was expected to do; but he talked to his fellow soldiers so cleverly and pleased them so much that they used to do the work for him—and he thus escaped a great deal of punishment. Eventually after a public reprimand he was readmitted to the University; but he left it without taking his degree. I have said this much about him only because a great deal of his literary history cannot be understood without a knowledge of his character.

The whole of the great *original* work done by this man consists of less than 2,500 lines. *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* together represent 2,100 lines; and there are only two other pieces of the first class, — *Kubla Khan* and *Love*. Either of these could be printed on one page. And it is by this very small quantity of poetry that Coleridge is great. He did indeed do some wonderful things in translating; but translations seldom put a poet into the first class, and they do not influence native literature very often. You may ask why Coleridge wrote only about 2,400 lines of poetry. But before answering this question, observe another fact: all of these poems

are dreams — not pictures of real life, and the greatest two, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan,* were never finished. For leaving *Kubla Khan* unfinished, there is a very good reason; but for leaving *Christabel* unfinished, there is no reason at all of a justifiable kind. The fact is that Coleridge remained helpless all his life, could never earn his living. I might say that he never made any money; certainly we may say that he never tried very hard to make money. He lived entirely upon his friends, sometimes living with them until they got tired of him; sometimes borrowing money from them. Before his death he had made nearly every body who knew him very angry with him. And the reason was—opium. From early manhood he had become a victim of opium, and with his very delicate health, such indulgence almost destroyed his powers of work.

English literature has two great names which are names of opium-eaters. Coleridge is one; the other is his contemporary De Quincey. De Quincey was better able, however, than Coleridge to fulfil the duties of existence. He worked hard and successfully. Coleridge could only work at rare moments.

Very few men could impose upon their friends as Coleridge did; and this requires explanation. No man was more fascinating, more sympathetic, more strangely eloquent and strangely caressing in his manner than Coleridge. He was so gentle, so agreeable, so affectionate in his manner that it was almost impossible to refuse him anything; and he was furthermore the most delightful of companions. Just as in the barracks he had been able to charm the soldiers and to persuade them to do his own work for him, so in the literary world, he was able to charm all his acquaintances into helping him pecuniarly and otherwise. Nor can we regret this fact altogether; for Coleridge, while imposing upon men of letters, was able to influence the literary art of nearly everybody that he met. He greatly influenced Wordsworth, Scott, Southey, and indirectly Byron, Shelley and Keats. He gave them all new ideas; he gave some of them new forms. And they continued to admire his mind even when they were obliged to forbid his visits. His

great fault was helplessness. He never could have been an unkind husband or father; but his wife could not live with him. He gave her nothing to eat. That is, in brief, the story of Coleridge. But having stated it, let us reconsider his influence in poetry.

Already I told you about the new form of poetry that he invented, which Scott and Byron at once adopted. But he also affected poetry very considerably through his astonishing skill in playing with ballad-measure—especially the common octo-syllabic, or eight-syllable form. This is the basis of *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner;* and the changes which he introduced in the use of meter are as beautiful as they are surprising. Here again he changes the place of rhymes—makes the four-line stanza occasionally in a five-line stanza,—and introduces leonine rhymes; that is, makes two rhymes follow each other in the same line, as in

> We were the *first* that ever *burst*
> Into that silent sea.

In all his work he also carefully introduced a new element, a new idea of artistic *irregularity*—careful study of ways and means to avoid monotony of any kind. He made English poetry much more free and flexible than it had ever been since the time of Elizabeth; but he introduced beauties of melodies and variety which the Elizabethan did not know. And I may also remind you that he was very influential as a prose-poetry writer. Here he followed in the steps of Blake; but he greatly excelled Blake by his *Wanderings of Cain.* Unfortunately, this too is only the fragment of a dream; but there is nothing in English prose superior to it, and it has had a great deal of influence upon the prose romance of the Victorian period. But we cannot here speak of Coleridge either as a philosopher nor as an essayist; we are concerned only with his poetry.

Now observe one thing about all the poets of the school so far considered: Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge—none of them followed classic subjects. They did not attempt any imitation of the Latin nor of the Greek writers, their inspiration was

chiefly from old popular literature, and the romance of the Middle Ages. The fourth, and last of this school, was equally opposed to classic models; he took, however, Oriental subjects for his chief themes—I mean Robert Southey.

Robert Southey

Southey[1] was a very great scholar and a very hard worker. If we except Defoe, it would be hard to mention any Englishman who wrote so much as Robert Southey. At no moment of his life did he allow himself to be idle. When he took a walk into the country, he walked with a book in his hand; when he sat down to eat, a book was always opened before him beside his place. He wrote so much that all of it could not be published; but the astonishing thing is that he always wrote well. He was an Oxford man; the others, excepting Scott, being Cambridge men. The character of Southey can be well compared even with that of Sir Walter Scott. Inferior to Scott in genius, he was quite equal to him in nobility of disposition, and may be called one of the best men of letters that any country ever produced. I will not tell you now the details of his friendships with Wordsworth and Coleridge, his pranks in boyhood, his travels in Spain and Portugal, his generosity to struggling men of letters, his domestic joys and sorrows and his sad death from over-work. But his place in poetry needs to be well explained to you.

I told you of what Coleridge did in freeing English poetry from old restraints. Southey wanted to do still more than that —in the direction of form. Southey wanted to do away with rhyme altogether. I do not mean that he wanted everything to be written in classical blank verse. No. He proposed a new form of blank verse, quite as irregular and elastic as the rhymed measure invented by Coleridge. The result was very strange; but it was not without a certain beauty and dignity.

[1] Robert Southey (1774-1843).

The best way in which I can explain to you what this kind of verse looks like is to tell you that it looks like a grand inscription on a tombstone. Western inscriptions (and remember there is a special literary form used for inscriptions), modelled after Greek and Roman inscriptions for the most part, present to the eye a series of horizontal lines of different length, often so arranged as to give us the form of a great vase of something of the kind. Such forms of inscription may be called monumental or marmoreal (marble-like in more senses than one). The shape suggested is often just such a shape as we find in old classic marble monuments or in the great marble urns placed in ancient cemeteries. But Southey did not copy this form of verse from any literature of epitaphs, though the appearance of the poetry might lead us to imagine this. He got it partly from the study of the poet Cowley and of another poet of the 18th century called Sayers — both of whom had tried to imitate in English verse the Greek form of verse used in the grand *Odes* of Pindar. And all this was a mistake. The *Odes* of Pindar are not written in irregular verse at all, but are composed upon a method so complicated and so exquisitely artistic that in the 18th century there was scarcely anybody (except perhaps Gray) learned enough to understand it. Nevertheless Cowley and Sayers and Dryden, above all, wrote irregular forms of verse which they thought to be in the style of Pindar and they called this Pindaric verse. Dryden's ode to *St. Cecilia's Day* is an example of the idea. The idea is wrong. But even the mistake produced some fine effects, and Southey imagined that it would be possible to write a whole romance in a kind of false Pindaric verse. It was possible—because he actually did it and his verse often looks like inscriptions upon monuments in consequence. Let me give you a short example.

Cold! cold! 'tis a chilly clime
That the youth in his journey hath reach'd,
And he is aweary now,
And faint for lack of food.
Cold! cold! there is no Sun in heaven,
A heavy and uniform cloud

Overspreads the face of the sky,
And the snows are beginning to fall.
Dost thou wish for thy deserts, O Son of Hodeirah?
Dost thou long for the gales of Arabia?
Cold! cold! his blood flows languidly,
His hands are red, his lips are blue.
His feet are sore with the frost.
Cheer thee! cheer thee! Thalaba!
A little yet bear up!

If we added a few more lines as the poet actually does, we should find the quotation taking the form of a vase, pedestal and all. From this kind of freedom, to the absurdity of Walt Whitman, is only a short step. But Southey never takes that step. He preserved certain limits of measure, certain dignified forms, certain laws of rhythm and proportion; and he produces very fine effect. You may say that this is not poetry; but if you make the test of scanning it you will find that it is poetry —that every line has a certain well-arranged number of feet. It is only blank verse of irregular length, put together after a plan invented partly by Southey, partly by the poet Cowley and the imitators or would-be imitators of Pindaric verse. Southey wanted to do away with rhyme; but after all he had to come back to it. In a later poem he used rhyme with this irregular verse; and the result was fine. I refer to *The Curse of Kehama.*[1]

I charm thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beasts of blood:
From Sickness I charm thee,
And Time shall not harm thee;
But Earth which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee;
And Water shall hear me,

[1] *The curse of Kehama* 1810, 1818.

And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee:
And thou shalt seek Death
To release thee, in vain;
Thou shalt live in thy pain
While Kehama shall reign,
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain;
And Sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
For ever and ever.

This famous curse, which English schoolboys used to learn by heart and repeat for pastime in the last generation, is a very good example of the fine effect that Southey could produce with rhymed irregular verse. But when Southey put rhyme in his verse—what was really gained? I mean what advance did this represent in the direction of freer form of English poetry? Just exactly nothing at all! The most irregular of Southey's irregular rhymed verse cannot compare with the free measure of Coleridge either as to liberty or musical effect. So as an innovator Southey could not and did not influence English poetry—though his experiments were worth making, and were admirable in their way. He tried irregular blank verse; and could not produce anything really new in effect. He tried irregular rhymed verse and could not advance beyond Coleridge. Such experiments are not rightly to be attempted a second time. But for all that, Southey was by nature a good poet, as well as by training a good scholar; and his poetry must not be despised. Indeed, a great deal of it has been undeservedly forgotten—though some of it must always live.

The forgotten part, or at least the part now seldom read, includes four long compositions of a very curious and, I still think, highly interesting kind. Southey made a tremendous plan for a new series of poetical romances—a plan too large to

be carried out by any one man, unless indeed the work were very carelessly done. He proposed to embody the whole poetry of the different great religions of the world in a series of romantic narratives. The religion of the Arabs was to be the subject of one romance;—the religions of India were to furnish the subject of another romance;—the religion of ancient Mexico was to inspire a third romance,—Scandinavian and Northern mythologies were to be represented in a fourth; mediæval Christianity might be expressed in a fifth and so on. The astonishment is that Southey did produce three of these proposed narratives. The first *Thalaba the Destroyer*[1] contains all the wildest fancies of the Persian and Arabian story-tellers; and as a poem it is certainly a success. Still greater, as a romance, is *The Curse of Kehama*—based upon the study of Indian religion and superstition, and of Indian philosophy—at that time very little known in England. None of the great Indian system —the six schools of philosophy—were then clearly understood; nor had Sanscrit studies made any great progress. No system of satisfactory transliteration had yet been agreed upon; and different scholars would spell Indian names in very different ways. Southey's spelling of Indian names is quite amusing to one who is to-day acquainted with *The Sacred Books of the East.* But Southey took the spelling from the books of the old pioneers in Indian studies,—just as he took most of his Arabian material from D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale,* a book now known only as a great curiosity. Semitic as well as Indian studies have so much progressed since Southey's time that nearly all the sources of his poetic material have now become useless. But imagination saves the poetry in spite of this fact. We do not care whether Southey's mythology is right or wrong, nor whether his proper names are correctly or incorrectly spelled, because he is telling us a wonderful story in a wonderful way. Very fine, for example, is the chapter where Kehama, after having, by magical religious practices, conquered the kingdom of heaven and all the religions of earth, proceeds to

[1] *Thalaba the destroyer* (*a metrical romance*) 2 vols. 1801. 2nd edn, 1809. 3rd edn, 1814.

subdue the kingdom of Hell and Death—the kingdom of Yama, as we spell the name to-day: Southey spelled it "Yamen." Kehama knows that the kingdom of Death has eight gates. He multiplies himself eight times, breaks through the eight gates of Hell at once, drives down the eight roads at once, making bridges grow before him over the rivers of fire, and, at last, *surrounding* Yama, he attacks him at once from eight directions. These legends of magical power are no doubt familiar to you, and you will be all the better able to appreciate the power and skill with which Southey used such material. You may find that the sentiment and mythology are all wrong, but that does not make any difference. The work is both great and good.

So we must think of Southey as generously in this regard as we think of Chaucer. Who cares now whether Chaucer's Greek stories and Roman stories are or are not historically correct? What we love in them, as he tells them, is the beautiful study of character — English character — that he gives. And in Southey's Oriental studies we can also find something to love and respect. A great moral idea forms the chief motive of each. In *Thalaba* the great moral motive is Duty. In *Kehama* it is Courage — a really astonishing conception of Southey's own. He is teaching us that even a God, armed with all power to destroy, cannot conquer the spirit of one brave man. The third great romance, *Madoc*,[1] dealing with Aztec mythology, is less pleasing, and less well carried out; but there are fine passages in it; and the central idea is Love. The fourth great romance *Roderick*,[2] a story of mediæval Spain, is more successful than *Madoc*—though less interesting than the Oriental studies in regard to imaginative display. Here the motive is Atonement—the brave resolve of a king to do every thing in his power to redress an error of youth. I am almost certain that in some future time these long poems of Southey will again come into favour and will be given a higher place in literature than they ever received before. The English is too

[1] *Madoc* 1805. 2 vols. 1815. 1825.
[2] *Roderick, the last of the Goths* 1814. 2nd edn, 2 vols. 1815. Also 1818, 1826.

beautiful, and imagination too fine, to admit of their becoming utterly forgotten.

As poet laureate Southey composed an immense variety of poems upon an immense variety of subjects. I shall only mention two subjects in which he continues famous. One is the ballad. Southey's ballads—at least the best of them cannot die; notwithstanding the fact that he never polished them. He never tried to make exquisite ballads like Tennyson or like Rossetti. His idea was to write a ballad exactly as professional ballad writers wrote; and you know that professional ballad writers are not highly educated men. But, without any polish, Southey's ballads remain popular even among good critics and among men of letters generally. Southey knew how to make readers tremble or weep or laugh with very simple words. As an example of the weird quality, mixed with deep pathos, we have for example the ballad of *Lord William.* As an example of the grotesquely terrible, there is no modern ballad better than *The Old Woman of Berkeley.* And as an example of merely legendary ballad *The Inchcape Rock* or *Bishop Hatto* would, either of them, take a high place. Finally I need not praise to you that wonderful little thing *The Battle of Blenheim,* which can at once delight the child, and yet set the philosopher thinking.

The other subject in which Southey made himself famous as a writer of light verse is rhyme-play. He delighted to play with rhyme and produce nonsensical jingling effects with them, merely for the delight of children. And in this respect he had a very peculiar talent. If you have not read, for example, *The Cataract of Ladore,* you ought to read it for fun. It was written to amuse his own children—one of whom had asked him how the water fell at the great Ladore cataract. And he replied in wonderful verses, containing no less than 162 different present-participles each describing a different appearance of the water. Another celebrated example is *The March of Moscow.* Here Southey, recounting the defeat of the French by the Russians, plays strange tricks with Russian names—tricks that amuse us less to-day than formerly, but that will always amuse children:—

There was Tormazow and Jemalow,
And all the others that end in "ow;"
Milarodovitch and Jaladovitch
And Karatschkowitch,
And all the others that end in "itch;"
Schoamscheff, Souchosaneff,
And Schepaleff,
And all the others that end in "eff;"
Wasiltschikoff, Kostomaroff
And Tchoglokoff,
And all the others that end in "off."

These are the names of the Russian generals and officers; and he tells us what they did to the French:—

And Platoff he played them off,
And Shouvaloff he shovelled them off,
And Markoff he marked them off,
And Krosnoff he crossed them off, . . .
And Boroskoff he bored them off,
Kutousoff he cut them off, . . .
And Worronzoff he worried them off,
And Doctoroff he doctored them off, etc.

Of course you may say that this is mere nonsense: but it is nonsense that requires great talent to write well, and good nonsense takes a real place in the literature of every country. Southey could not change English verse; Coleridge had done that too well. But Southey did change English taste in a certain way. He was the first poet of the century who really turned the attention of the general reader to the romance of the East. Prose writers had begun to do this even at the end of the 18th century. But Southey was certainly the first poet who made Oriental poetry—I mean poetry on Oriental subjects—really popular. For you must remember that Southey's books were very popular at one time. In this way English literature must regard him as a pioneer. A new interest in the subject, but of a much less serious kind, was to be aroused by the Oriental romances of the new school—by the romances of Byron and Moore.

The Second Romantic School

We now come to the history of the so-called Satanic School and its relation. The four poets of the first group, so I have told you before, were in their writings most rigidly moral. Indeed it has been said, even by good critics, that they were too moral, too timid to deal with the deeper passions and tragedies of human life. But, by a compensatory process, the other school were decidedly immoral in a certain sense—at least two of them were. Moralists may regret this fact; preachers may preach about it—but it was really a very good thing for English literature. Poetry has been too much restrained by ethical and social conventions;—somebody was needed to break down those conventions, and nobody could do it without greatly offending all the prejudices of the time. Byron and Shelley did both. But let me say that so far as their poetical production is concerned, the charge of immorality would not be tolerated by any man of letters. I mean that there is nothing really bad either in the writings of Byron nor in the writings of Shelley —nothing bad at all. Such is the literary judgment. But from a religious point of view and conventional and social point of view, they are not so judged by a certain people. Remember, however, that *literary judgment* must be without prejudice; and if we leave mere English convention out of the question, there is nothing in Byron or in Shelley to be called really bad. In our own time much worse things are written every year by members of the French Academy; and if either Byron or Shelley had been Frenchmen nobody would have anything bad to say about their work from a moral point of view.

It is quite otherwise in the case of their lives. These cannot be defended, either from a literary or from any other point of view. But we may find certain excuses—especially in the case of Byron.

BYRON

You cannot understand his poetry or the history of his poetry without knowing the tragedy of his existence;—and we must speak of him first—as he was the leader of the new movement—the second romantic wave which passed over the previously sleepy surface of English poetry.

Very briefly, then, let us say that Byron[1] was born in 1788, and died in 1824—so that the whole of his career was compressed into the brief space of 36 years. Within that time he travelled much and studied much—wrote the most successful poems of the century—was a member of Parliament for a little time—turned away from poetry to take part in the Greek movement for independence, and proved himself a good military organizer in the service of the country to which he gave his life. This alone would not have been much for any man to do even within a shorter space of time. But you must remember that Byron really wrote all his poetry very quickly—at sudden intervals, and that much of the rest of the time at his disposal he wasted in pleasure seeking. Again, the latter part of his existence was filled with bitterness. Socially he was outlawed —driven out of England by public opinion. Considering these facts what he actually did in literature seems amazing. Indeed, I need scarcely tell you the minor details of his biography. You know that he had inherited good blood as well as some bad blood; that he was very passionate and very generous; that he had much more of what we might call the Celtic than of the English temperament. He was all impulse; and his impulse was natural toward good and beautiful things. But, as I told you, the strain of bad blood must not be forgotten; and so passionate a man could be impelled toward wrong without very much difficulty. A separation from his wife—of which no mortal man really knows the history — caused society to turn against him. Society took the part of the woman without knowing. . . . . this injustice, with the only possible result

[1] George Gordon, sixth Baron Byron (1788-1824)

of strengthening the power of public opinion against him. A single man might as well try to move the whole range of the Himalaya mountains as to try to fight English society when it has declared war. So Byron was practically forced out of England; and he determined recklessly to be what he had before been falsely accused of being. They had said that he was a rake—now he should be a rake. They had said that he was an immoral scoundrel—now he would really be a scoundrel and defy all moral criticism. At heart he could not be supremely bad; but he tried to be very bad for a few years, merely to vex people—after which he resolved to be noble and good. And he was both noble and good thereafter; but he had already greatly injured his body by excesses, and he easily fell a prey to fever in the best years of his youth. There is the whole history. It deserves blame. It also calls for sympathy. Englishmen now do not hesitate to acknowledge that Byron was unjustly treated.—The question of his poetry next concerns us. That poetry was everything which the poetry of the Lake School had not been, and it was also something more. It openly mocked all conventions that society loved and that Byron hated; it even mocked at common notions of morality, it preached revolt against rigid beliefs and fixed rules of every kind—and yet it delighted people. There was something more in it than the spirit of revolt—a new spirit of tolerance, a large sense of indulgence for human weakness. And English literature needed this—needed somebody to proclaim that thousands of things in this world ought to be pitied rather than hated, and that want of generosity, want of kindness, may be in itself much wickeder than any of the errors which it condemns. He attacked hypocricy and cant of every sort; and he did it so well that sensible people could forgive him for occasional mockery of a less pardonable kind. And he created sympathy in all his poems for some imaginary hero or demi-god or adventurer or renegade, represented in rebellion against law and order—yet for all that in nowise really bad at heart. People said that these characters were just so many pictures of Byron himself —which is probably true. They can be criticized from many

points of view. But they gave to English literature a new element of colour, and a new quality of feeling. Apart from the mere question of poetic value Byron's verses deserve the gratitude of literature, simply because they helped to give literature a kind of freedom never enjoyed before—at least not in England.

It would scarcely be possible for you to understand the facts stated in the last paragraph without some little explanation. It will puzzle you to understand how a man can be driven out of a country by public opinion and yet become the most popular of all men of letters in that same country. To understand this, you must understand very clearly what is meant by the English word "society." Society signifies the aristocratic class of wealth and power, holding in its hand every important position to which a man can aspire in political or higher social life. It is a very small class. It can make and unmake the fortune of any man that belongs to it. It can shut all the doors of high position to any man whom it dislikes. The higher offices of the state, the army, the navy, the church, the civil service, the great educational interests, are in its control. But, as I said, it is a small thing as to numbers;—it by no means represents the nation. And it has nothing to do with literature or with art—except to patronize them. Society may help an artist—which it very seldom does; but it cannot prevent a man of genius from expressing his genius; and you cannot make the nation refuse to admire his work. It is no use to say that the work of such a man ought not to be admired because society does not like him. This was the case of Byron. Society banished Byron; and society would have put all his books into the fire if possible; but, happily, that was not possible and the great critics could not be frightened into declaring that the books were not worth reading. The great public judges such matters quite independently of society. You would have to imagine, for a parallel case, some young scholar of Tokyo, who, having given offense to some member of an aristocratic family, should suddenly find the whole power of Government silently turned against him. He might find it very disagreeable to live

in Tokyo; but if he should have the power to talk to the millions of people in print,—to talk to them about things that they love, or that amuse them, he might always remain as an author, a popular favourite in spite of all social obstacles. Byron even did more. He made the great mass of the nation sympathize with him.

A word about the peculiar class of poets which he represents. In Italy, from old times, there has been always a class of poets who compose poetry, whenever asked to do so, immediately — not writing it, but speaking it, composing as fast as they can speak, making perfectly correct verse, rhymes and all, and pronouncing it just as if they were reading from a book. To-day this art is practised chiefly among the lower classes; but in old times it used to be practised by great scholars. Such wonderful men were called "improvisatori"—that is to say, improvisators; to improvise is to compose immediately without preparation. Now the early 19th century witnessed something very like this in the case of two of their poets. They were not exactly in the habit of doing what the Italian improvisatori did;—they did not make their poetry in public; but they showed the same astounding faculty in off-hand compositions. Scott was essentially an improvisator, in the fact that he wrote his political romances off-hand, as other men would write prose, and also in the fact that he composed many of his best things while riding on horseback. Byron was a still greater improvisator—the greatest in all English literature —though his work is more defective than that of Scott. No other poet ever wrote so much, in so many different forms of verse, in so many different kinds of compositions without study —without preparation—without correction—without even caring to read over again and to revise a great deal of the work done. For Byron is a voluminous poet; the new edition of his works, now being issued, will represent no less than 10 ample volumes. He was not only a lyric poet, but also a narrative poet, a poet of description, a dramatist of considerable range, a satirist, and a translator from various languages. But most of this work can be classed only as poetry of improvisation;

and that is why it has so many faults — faults even against grammar;—that is why Byron cannot rank with such poets as Wordsworth or Coleridge. Defective in form, nevertheless, his immediate influence was prodigious. No English poet before him had ever obtained such a hearing, nor was this hearing in England only. Byron affected every existing European literature. He influenced German literature in the case of even such men as Heine and Goethe; he influenced French literature, to the extent that the French romantic movement will always be connected with his name;—he influenced the younger literature of northern Europe as well as those of Latin countries; and even modern Russian literature owes to him not a little of the stimulus that made its awakening.

Now you must remember that Byron's poetry was known in other countries than England only through translation; and that most of the translations were in prose. In that time English was very little studied upon the Continent: it did not form a part of public education. So Byron was known in Europe chiefly through prose translations. You will see at once that his power as a poet could not have depended upon form. In one sense, the translations improved upon him; — the faults of his verse disappeared in the French and German and other prose translations. But the fact speaks for itself. If Byron could influence all European literature through prose translations, the mere faults of his verse, no more than the merits of his verse, can determine his great place in the history of literature. He was, in one way—in form—rather a great improvisator than a great poet; but his power proves to be a real power of sentiment and feeling. And, remember again, that although Byron is not now popular in England, he has never ceased to be popular in other countries. There is the proof of his real importance.

I have told you before that he brought into literature an entirely new element of feeling. He brought into it a new spirit of revolt against conventions and against shams of every kind; and he compelled the world to sympathize with the struggles of great minds resisting the old conventional and

social restraints. Poets before him had tried to make their readers sympathize chiefly with good men or good women unjustly persecuted or wronged. But Byron struck a different note: he taught the world to sympathize with what society would call bad men or bad women in revolt against established authority. He forced people to think: "Are we really right in judging such splendid persons as bad?" Then this first doubt naturally suggested another — "Are the standards of right and wrong—the standards of the 18th century—by which we have been judging everybody's conduct, just and correct?" And when you set people thinking about whether established customs and conventions are good or bad, you are really shaking the whole foundations of the existing fabric of received opinion. Byron could do that, not only for England, but for almost every country of the time. He obliged nations to think and to feel in a new way. And he used the facts of his own life to illustrate his teaching.

For, through nearly all of his poems, the real hero—disguised under many names—is really himself. He is the Giaour,[1] the European adventurer living as a pirate or renegade among men of another race and another face. He is Alp, the renegade leader in *The Siege of Corinth.*[2] He is Lara,[3] mysteriously loved and mysteriously wronged. Something of him is visible even in the singular and splendid study of the Cossack hetman Mazeppa.[4] When Cain and Lucifer speak together among the stars[5] — speak against the God of the Universe — we recognize in the conversation that Byron has simply multiplied himself; for he is both Lucifer and Cain. I need not remind you that he is Childe Harold[6] or Manfred[7] or Sardanapalus,[8] — for whoever reads these must know. Every one of his greater poems is a study and an expression of himself. Perhaps it would be

[1] *The Giaour, a fragment of a Turkish tale* 1813, 14th edn. 1815.
[2] *The siege of Corinth. A poem* 1816.
[3] *Lara, a tale* 1814,
[4] *Mazeppa, a poem* 1819. Paris, 1819. Also 1824.
[5] *Cain; a mystery. By Lord Byron. To which is added a Letter from the author to Mr Murray, the original publisher* 1822.
[6] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* [Cantos I and II]. *A romaunt* 1812. 11th edn. 1819. *Canto the third* 1816. *Canto the fourth* 1818. *A rowaunt in four cantos,* 2 vols 1819.
[7] *Manfred, a dramatic poem* 1817. 2nd edn, 1817. Also 1824.
[8] *Sardanapalus, a tragedy* 1821.

unjust to say that he is altogether himself in Don Juan;[1]—but there can be no doubt that he really wished the world to think of him as Don Juan, and that not a few of the adventures related in the poem were founded upon personal experiences. Understand me clearly: I do not wish to imply for a moment that Byron did all the things and experienced all the adventures attributed to his heroes. I only mean that every time he made a hero—and all his heroes are rebels against society—he represented that person as imbued with his own particular hates and loves, convictions and doubts. And the world knew this, and felt him.

In conclusion I need only make a few remarks as to choice of reading in the study of Byron. The student should know that even in *Childe Harold* the later cantos are the best;—these were added in the latter part of his life. Of the narrative poems or romances written in the style of Scott, the best two are *Mazeppa* and *The Siege of Corinth*—both were written in the later years of his career. About the plays critics greatly differ. Goethe admired *Manfred* most of all; English writers generally differ with him. I should recommend to the student *Marino Faliero*[2] as representing one side of Byron's dramatic power, and *Cain* as representing another. *Don Juan* is Byron's greatest work—though unfinished; and the student is almost bound to read the whole of it,—forgetting the faults for the sake of the wit, brilliancy and even occasional beauty of tenderness which may be found in it. It is a narrative of intrigues with women —an imaginary history of a decidedly nonmoral kind, but it is also to be considered as a study of human nature and of nature in many aspects, and the student should think of the art and the truth as not excusing, indeed, but as partly atoning for the rebellion against accepted ethics. Of the shorter poems there are two which ought to be read; and both of them are of the same subject. One is *Darkness*. It is perhaps the best of all the shorter pieces produced by Byron — it is the fanciful

[1] *Don Juan* [*Cantos I and II*]. 6th edn, 1822. *Cantos III, IV and V*. 1321. 5th edn, 1821. *Cantos VI, VII and VIII* 1323. *Cantos IX, X and XI* 1823. *Cantos XII, XIII and XIV* 1823. *Cantos XV and XVI* 1824. *A poem* [16 cantos] 5 pts. 1822 [-4].

[2] *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice. An historical tragedy, in five acts. With notes* 1821. Also 1823 and 1824.

picture of what might have happened in this world if the sun suddenly went out. It is very terrible. The other *The Dream* is retrospective: it is the story of a man's life in three episodes —childhood, youth, manhood; and there is a tenderness in it of a very beautiful kind. You will find in Byron almost every tone—from the highest expression of aspiration to the lowest depth of brutal frankness. He can make you hate him or love him as he pleases; but he will never tire you, unless you should waste time over his juvenile poems. And now we turn to Shelley.

SHELLEY

Wordsworth had introduced into English poetry a tone of dreamy religious feeling much resembling pantheism;—but it was not a real pantheism; it was only the philosophical Christianity of Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* revived in a new form and applied to the study of nature. Wordsworth always remained fundamentally orthodox. Real pantheism first comes into English poetry with Shelley,[1] — thought of a strange and splendid kind that startles us by its appearance in English literature. Rather we should expect to find such thought in the utterance of some Hindoo or Persian poetry, for example:—

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
  From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
  Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
  But they are still immortal
  Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
  Clothe their unceasing flight
  In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go.

This significant verse is totally different from anything

[1] Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822).

that ever had been heard from English lips before. It is from the great poem *Hellas*.[1] First we are told of the perishableness of all that has form or name. In the awful flowing of time, even suns and worlds are nothing but bubbles;—they rise and pass, sparkle a moment only to vanish forever. Because they are only forms. But the spirits of men are more than forms: these are eternal;—these always have been, and forever will be, each one like a traveller, journeying upon an endless road, through light and darkness—the light which is life, the darkness which is death. Each life, each death, is but a gateway through which the chariot of existence is rapidly driven. And of course by chariots the poet means the perishable body, with all that belongs to it — the individuality of a human being. That is nothing; but the eternal principle never ceases its journey through birth and death.

Or take these lines from the wonderful elegy of *Adonais*[2] (I suppose that you know that Adonais means the poet Keats, whose untimely death Shelley passionately regretted):

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
> Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

This is much grander poetry than even Wordsworth's famous line about "the light that never was on sea or land." This is even something more than pantheism: it is rather what we would call to-day monism—the conception of the universe as one. But we could not call Shelley a monist in the modern sense, which implies a certain amount of agnosticism. Shelley was not an agnostic in his later life: he believed that the universe was one; but to him that one was the Spirit of Love.

[1] *Hellas. A lyrical drama* 1822.
[2] *Adonais. An elegy on the death of John Keats.* Pisa, 1821.

This philosophy is fully expressed in the verse that I have quoted. The universe is created by the smile of the Spirit of Love; all things have been shaped in accord with the will of the Spirit of Beauty;—and within ourselves, all that is good and true belongs to the Eternal Principle. Of course we cannot clearly see or know; every succeeding universe eclipses or darkens our memory and our knowledge of the infinite goodness out of which we come. Nevertheless we can feel a little of it. All beings are but mirrors that reflect the everlasting fire of the everlasting Life. If the mirror be bright and pure, the reflection is bright—if the mirror be foul and dim it can scarcely reflect at all. Yet behind all things, which are only a veil, the infinite Love exists. It is very strange to find in this verse almost exactly the idea expressed in the *Jātakas*, or birth stories of the Buddha, recently translated but quite unknown in Shelley's time. In almost every story we are told that the memory of the person referred to has been darkened by successive birth. Shelley's impression "eclipsed by the curse of birth" has precisely the same signification; but with him the idea was original. You will see then that, in addition to poetic workmanship of the highest quality, Shelley brought into English poetry a new philosophy. The school of which I am speaking to you was breaking down all the conventions which the Wordsworth school had spared. Byron had taught men to look upon life in a more tolerant spirit than that of the 18th century, and had shattered the fences established by prudery and cant. Shelley was to break down the conventions relating to expression of religious belief or non-belief and to preach a new gospel of love. Apostles of new doctrines are generally persecuted and made thoroughly unhappy. In this respect Shelley fared even worse than Byron. To put the matter briefly he was outlawed by society; his children were taken away from him by the power of English law; and he died in a foreign country even before reaching the full term of manhood. But what he tried to do in poetry he did well—so well, that he represents the supreme perfection of the romantic spirit. Now let us try to understand the extraordinary stories of his follies

and his misfortune. This story will bring us back to the subject of that famous William Godwin about whom we talked when considering the later prose writers of the 18th century.

If you were to see, placed before you in a line, good pictures of all the English poets who sang during the last 800 years,—from the old Anglo-Saxon singers even to the time of Swinburne and of Tennyson,—you would almost immediately pick out the face of Shelley as the most interesting. It is also the most beautiful. Shelley, not excepting Milton, whose feminine beauty made his fellow students call him the Lady, was the most attractive-looking person ever connected with English poetry. And the face is a true index of character. Some great French critics have defined a poet as a man that is half a woman. By this, the critic meant, of course, a man who has the tenderness of woman, the same capacity for sympathy, the same horror of doing wrong, the same spirit of kindness in small things. Shelley had all this—all the charm of the feminine character, though he also possessed a certain masculine strength of his own. He looked very much like his mother, who was a remarkable beauty; and he retained the resemblance of her all through his life. The family, if not exactly noble, was at least very aristocratic, and related to the nobility. Shelley was born in 1792 and died in 1822.

When a pretty boy goes to an English public school for the first time, his good looks are never to his advantage. Rough boys at once judge him to be a "milk-sop," a soft, cowardly fellow; and they make him fight, to prove his courage. Then you know that they have what is called fagging in English schools;—that is, the younger boys are obliged to obey the older boys, to act like servants for them, sometimes to bear a good deal of cruel treatment. The elder student is supposed to protect his own fags from other big students; but he is apt to be a good deal of a tyrant himself. English public opinion has never yet been fairly aroused against this system. It is alleged that fagging is good in a certain way,—that the boy who does not learn to obey never can learn to command; and that fagging really is a good test of patience on one side and of

self-control on the other. Good thinkers denounce the whole system as utterly brutal; but public opinion has not as yet been moved by such denunciation.

Well, Shelley's first experience of having to fight against his will, and of having to fag for bigger boys, were not at all pleasant. Gentle as he was, he had a great deal of quiet obstinate courage; and to the astonishment of everybody this delicate lad stood alone in rebellion against the whole time-honoured custom of Eton. He would not fag;—they might beat him, but he would never do it. He would not fight, except when obliged to in self-defence against torture; and then he "could be dangerous"—that is, ready to kill, so he had his way. Everybody called him mad, foolish, and other bad things; —they tormented him all they could; but he boldly went to work at his studies and endured all. He proved himself to be an excellent scholar; and no matter how much his fellow students affected to despise him, he obtained the recognition of the masters as a most promising scholar. But of course the long irritation produced by years of bad treatment could not but have its effect upon his mind. He knew that he was being cruelly and unjustly treated, because he would not submit to conditions which he felt to be in their nature essentially brutal and wrong. Yet the great school was supposed to be conducted upon the strictest principles of Christianity—the so-called religion of love! Naturally Shelley began to doubt the intrinsic value of Christianity His experiences of Christianity have been experiences of hate or of contempt—not of love of enemy. I am sure that you can very well imagine how he felt. And while he was feeling this way he got hold of the books of the famous William Godwin, about whom I have before told you. Of course Shelley was delighted with the opinions of this man, full of revolutionary doctrines; and his every word came like a balm to his wounded mind. Godwin had said that existing society was all selfish and wrong; and Shelley had come to the same conclusion. Godwin had said that the religious ideas of the time were all wrong, and Shelley thought so too. And Godwin had preached the doctrine of the fullest individual

liberty, the right to do as one pleases in all directions save that of unkindness,—the right to rebel against all unjust constraint. Even the laws concerning marriage were unjust. Godwin's books completely changed Shelley's mind. We shall see presently into what mischief those opinions led him.

Understand, I do not wish you to think bad about Godwin and his books. Godwin was a sincere man, who wished to do well, and whose books can be very safely read by trained and disciplined minds. If there are great errors in them there is also much good. But Shelley's was not a disciplined mind; it was the mind of an innocent and sensitive child—doubly sensitive because of harsh experiences. To other lads Godwin would have done no harm at all. To Shelley he was deadly and poisonous.

Somehow or other, Shelley was able to finish his studies creditably at Eton; then he went to Oxford. Now the opinions of Godwin began to bear fruit. Shelley published a little pamphlet—that is a small book in paper covers, entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*.[1] You know that at the great English University the ancient ecclesiastical system still lives; and all students are required to subscribe to—I mean, pledge themselves to recognize—certain general doctrines of religion. So that it was really a grave matter for a student to publish such a book. But the University authorities were good, kind men, and they took no notice of this little foolishness. Then Shelley was vexed, because they took no notice. He sent copies of the book to all the bishops, and to the heads of all the University colleges. After that it was impossible not to take notice. This was a direct breach of discipline.

Now, as Shelley had only studied so far those sides of religious and social questions which accorded with his spirit of revolt, he could not understand that he deserved to be expelled from the University, and especially that the expulsion was not on account of his opinion (which in the case of a boy of 18 signifies nothing at all), but for insubordination and insolent breach of discipline which signify a great deal. He thought

[1] *The necessity of atheism.* Worthing [1811].

that he was persecuted because of his courage to express his non-religious conviction; he believed himself a martyr in a good cause; and he thought he might yet be able to convert the rest of the world to a better way of thinking. This was his first great misfortune in life; and it was not to be the last —for he had no really wise friend to guide him. The next misfortune was the refusal of the parents of the girl to whom he had been engaged, to let their daughter marry a young man of such dangerous opinions. Again, Shelley thought himself a victim of religious persecution — being still unable to understand the social idea of the matter. The next thing that happened to him was still more unfortunate. He entered into a very hasty marriage with a pretty girl of 16, of a class inferior to his own—not out of love, be it observed, but rather out of pity. He said that he married her in order to save her from pain and trouble—in order to protect her. But as Godwin had said that marriage should not be a legal constraint, he told her that if they ever came to dislike each other, then he would have the right to separate from her. Up to this time society was not at all angry with Shelley. He had so far done foolish things, but nothing very bad. Not to do what is bad unfortunately depends upon a certain amount of practical knowledge of the world; and Shelley had not this knowledge. The bad was to come.

So after his marriage he made the personal acquaintance of Godwin, whose books had had such an effect upon his mind. Godwin's family was then a very strange one. His first wife, the famous Mary Wollstonecraft, was dead; but her two daughters were in the house—Fanny (Imlay) Godwin, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft before her marriage with Godwin — and Mary Godwin, her daughter by Godwin. And Godwin had married again, and had a step-daughter Clare, who afterwards became the mistress of Lord Byron. Fanny Godwin committed suicide. It was a very strange and unhappy household. And Shelley fell in love with Mary Godwin, and ran away with her out of the country—after which he wrote a letter to his wife of a most foolish and cruel kind—saying that he would always

take care of her, but that Mary suited him better. You see that he was simply following the teachings of Godwin; and Godwin, in this case, was very angry at the consequence of his own doctrine. Still Shelley did not know what a wicked thing he was doing; — he was quite a child in his knowledge of women. The ultimate result of his elopement was that his first wife drowned herself in one of the London parks.

Society could not endure that. Either Shelley was a selfish and cruel brute, or he was a very extraordinary fool. In either case it was necessary to punish him. And he was outlawed indeed—England could not suffer his presence any longer. Thereafter his eyes were opened and his heart was opened. He who had been preaching love had sinned against all love in the most cruel way. He who had been teaching the gospel of kindness, now had the testimony of the dead against him for more than unkindness. He understood at last that one cannot deny the value of all human moral experience without serious mischief. It was the pain of the death that made a good man out of Shelley—not the anger of society. Thereafter he was greatly changed.

New ideas of religion came to him: he was not now an atheist, but a real thinker — preaching the doctrine that the Spirit of the Universe is love, and singularly tolerant in his views of human error. He had always been of a generous nature. Now he became as much of a philanthropist as his means permitted. His new wife was, after all, a very good wife for him — a woman of strong character who helped to make him a wiser man. The English law deprived him of his children by the first wife—it being decided that he could not be trusted to educate his children. But by his second marriage he had children, and as he returned no more to England he was probably consoled for this loss. Meanwhile his poetry had been obtaining attention. Perhaps he might have become, even in his lifetime, a great influence to poetry; but he was drowned by the wreck of his pleasure yacht in a storm off the Italian coast, in 1822. His body was burned on the seashore in the presence of his friend Byron.

All this, I think, will give you a just idea of Shelley's history. His follies were, as suggested, not without some excuse; and although the one great shame of his life cannot be excused, nobody now believes that it was the wickedness of intention, but the wickedness of ignorance that caused it. The world now recognizes that Shelley was by nature a very lovable and generous man—ready to sacrifice himself for any doctrine which he believed to be right — passionate as a woman, but strangely forgiving and kindly,—and, in addition to all this, one of the greatest poets that ever lived.

Now we go to his poetry. He began writing poetry when he was a schoolboy at Eton, but his early poetry is not good. His first poem that really attracted attention and that still keeps it, is *Queen Mab*[1] — still read, in spite of its attack on Christianity, by many fervent Christians. For in this composition Shelley is only uttering his cry of indignation against injustice or wrong done in the name of religion, and proposing to substitute a new gospel of kindness. The work is not yet mature, but it is full of beautiful things. Next in succession came a number of maturer pieces—such as *Alastor*,[2] *Laon*,[3] *The Witch of Atlas*,[4] *Hellas*, *The Revolt of Islam*,[5] interspersed with beautiful little lyrical pieces that appeared from time to time.

Later came those great dramatic compositions—*Prometheus Unbound*,[6] a composition imitating Greek tragedy; and the sinister and powerful play of *The Cenci*,[7] — a tragedy in the Elizabethan manner. Finally mention must be made of Shelley's translations—wonderful metrical translations from Italian and Greek and German: above all the translations from Homer and from Goethe's *Faust*. It would be difficult to name, in the course of this lecture, half of the titles; for the large part of Shelley's bequest to us is in short poems, and these are multitude. In a general way I may say that Shelley's work as ar-

[1] *Queen Mab; a philosophical poem: with notes* 1813.
[2] *Alastor; or, the spirit of solitude: and other poems* 1816.
[3] *Laon and Cythna; or, the revolution of the golden city. A vision of the nineteenth century. In the stanzas of Spenser* (dated 1818) 1817.
[4] *The witch of Atlas* (Composed Aug. 1820; published in *Posthumous poems* 1824.)
[5] *The Revolt of Islam: a poem, in twelve cantos.* Jan. 1818.
[6] *Prometheus unbound. A lyrical drama in four acts. With other poems* 1820.
[7] *The Cenci. A tragedy, in five acts.* Italy, 1819. 2nd edn, 1821, 1827.

ranged in chronological order, shows the most extraordinary growth of form and thought, from the boyish platitude of the first compositions to the superlative excellence of supreme poetry in the last pieces. Had Shelley lived, he would probably have become greater than anybody else in English poetry. Even as it is, he has surpassed all other poets in a few wonderful pieces.

But now we must make a second general statement about Shelley's poetry. The longer compositions, though containing dazzling jewels scattered through them, do not compare with the perfection of the shorter poems; and even these shorter poems are to a great extent mere fragments. They were not collected and published in a complete edition until after his death. If you will look at Professor Dowden's edition, the edition edited first by Mrs. Shelley, you will see that there are a great many lines containing blank spaces. Shelley had shaped the poem in every such case, but had not finished it—could not for the moment find the exact word that he wanted. So he left blank spaces for these words; and no succeeding poet has yet found the courage to fill up these blank spaces. Well, I was saying that this shorter work, though fragmentary, surpasses the other work; and you will observe that nearly all the shorter pieces take the form of the song. In other words Shelley's greatness was in lyrical poetry and it is only in lyrical poetry that we cannot find anybody to compare with him. This does not mean, however, that his longer compositions are not great. Certainly the two dramas are very great. But I doubt whether as students you could have patience to read through the other longer poems. They are of no significance as to "story"; there is no story,—none at least that could interest you. All these long poems must be studied chiefly for form and music and the splendid flashes of thought and emotion to be found in them by painful research. You must work hard at the text—just as a gold miner must labour carefully to separate the precious matter from the rock with which it is mixed. That is to say, in very plain English, that it is hard work to read the big poems of Shelley. But it is quite different when we come to the short poems. These appeal immediately to every feeling

for truth and beauty that we possess; and the completed ones are almost Greek in their perfection of form.

The third consideration that we must make about Shelley is this:—What place does he occupy in the romantic movement?—What did he do for English poetry? He did not invent new forms to any great extent; and he introduced very few new subjects,—if we except his position towards religious and social questions. He did not and could not found a school. Really he did only one great thing,—that was to express what Wordsworth and Coleridge and Scott and Southey and even Byron wanted to express, better than any of them had done; the full capacities of the English language for lyric—lyric unfettered by any kind of convention except the law of beauty and of truth. Byron and Shelley together successfully opposed old standards; but Shelley especially in the world of thought, in religion and in philosophy; Byron rather in social directions. Both were imbued with something of the spirit of the French Revolution. It is curious to observe, however, that Shelley, in all his poetry, is wonderfully chaste, almost cold in regard to things of sense; there is a ghostly purity about him. Byron, on the other hand, is deliberately sensuous, and sometimes decidedly sensual. Nevertheless both helped to reform poetry in one way—by giving it larger freedom. After Byron, anybody could express his honest conviction about social morality. After Shelley, anybody could express his belief or aspiration in regard to metaphysics, religion, or a future life. Before these two, it would have been dangerous to do that. So we may say that Shelley is to be remembered as the greatest lyrical poet of the romantic movement, and as a great reformer in winning, to his own cost, freedom to think in new ways about the universe, for all future poets.

KEATS

One more great poet was destined to carry the romantic movement still farther than Byron and Shelley—but in quite

another way. The third great name of the second group of the pre-Victorian poets is the name of Keats. John Keats was no exception to the general misfortune that fell upon all the members of this group—though in his case he never did anything blameworthy and the misfortune was no fault either of society or of his own. Like the other two he lived but a very short time, he was the youngest of all, having been born in 1795 and was the first to die,—which occurred in 1821, the year before Shelley's death. Byron and Shelley were noblemen, at least both belonged to the noble classes. But Keats was a man of the common people—the son of a person who lived by hiring out horses and carriages. Byron and Shelley both had the best educational opportunities. Keats had very little schooling. Nevertheless, this boy—for we may really call him a boy—did work which neither Byron nor Shelley could have done, and in some directions must be regarded as superior to both of them.

This may seem to you an extraordinary fact; and the statement certainly needs explanation. If I tell you that Keats did more for English poetry in certain respects than either Wordsworth or Coleridge or Byron or Shelley, it is quite necessary that you should know how and why he did so. And before we go any farther, I shall try to make this quite clear. Now you will remember that I asked you to remark the revolt of the whole romantic school against classical — that is, Greek and Roman—subjects. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Byron left classical subjects almost alone. Even Shelley meddled with them only in his great drama of *Prometheus* and in his translations from the Greek. Classical subjects had been generally condemned, if not tabooed. This was natural, because the school of Pope had made the classical subjects wearisome and disgusting. But that was not a reason, after all, for refusing to recognize the beauty which the Greek world still had to offer. Now what Keats did was this. He taught English poets how to return to classical subjects by successfully treating those subjects in the purely romantic manner. He introduced what has been very prettily called "romantic classicism."

The classical poets, remember, knew a great deal more

than Keats about classical subjects from a merely pedantic point of view. Most of them had been Greek scholars;—all of them knew Latin. But Keats never studied Greek at all; and all the Latin that he knew was what a student of medicine could learn in a few months. He read Greek authors only in translations; and the translations were very bad. About Greek mythology he learned a little only from Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*. This dictionary is to-day of very little value. But it had a great many pictures. It was from these pictures chiefly, if not altogether, that Keats learned to know more about Greek life than any other English poet before him. Is not this a very wonderful thing in literature, the story of this poor sick boy divining from the pictures in an old classical dictionary the spirit of Greek life? Looking at those pictures he may have thought to himself, "How beautiful and gentle must have been the soul of the people who worshipped the Gods like these! How wise and yet simple and yet true must have been the minds that conceived the beautiful stories about them! How very fair and good must the world have appeared to such minds!" And you know that one result of these boyish studies was the matchless *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.[1] This is the most perfectly Greek poem in English literature. It is the most perfect because it is the most human. Greek life was more human —more natural, more emotionally sincere than any other life of any other western civilization; and Keats felt that. Other poets had tried to show their learning of Greek texts, but Keats, instead of troubling himself about texts, went straight to the question, "How did these people feel and think and worship their Gods and love their families?" Observe another fact in this poem — the new thought in it, the new note of pathos. Let us suppose that there is placed before you a little Japanese painting, painted four hundred years ago—some little picture of men, women and children engaged in some pleasant pursuit. You cannot look at it, I think, without feeling a peculiar emotion. Those pictures were certainly drawn by somebody who had seen what he drew; but the hand that painted them is dust;

[1] *Ode on a Grecian urn* (Jan. 1820).

and the place and the name are forgotten; and the world has so much changed since then that the dresses and the attitude seem very strange. Strange, yet beautiful perhaps—you are peeping at the vision of dead happiness. All those people are gone; but they still smile and play in the picture. Well, this was the way that Keats felt when he looked at the urn; and he was not afraid to tell the whole world how he felt—just as finely as a Greek might have done. No other poet had even thought of doing the same thing before him. Later on, he did it again in his poem of *Lamia*.[1]

Lamia was a generic name for a particular kind of evil spirit or phantom believed in by the Greeks and by the Romans. There are many strange old stories about "Lamiæ." They appeared in the shape of beautiful women, and tempted men to love them; but this was only in order that they might suck the blood of their lovers. In all countries, or nearly all, there is some old belief concerning such spirits. Keats found a Greek story about a rich man's son who had married a "Lamia." At the wedding an old philosopher came in who had the power to distinguish a spirit in any shape; and he denounced the illusion, whereupon the bride changed into a serpent and fled away. Perhaps you do not think this story very interesting. Before Keats' time nobody cared much about it; but Keats discovered a new suggestion in it. Suppose, he thought, that this phantom woman really loved the man, what monstrous cruelty it would have been to destroy her little magic! And he wrote the story from that point of view, sympathizing with the ghost—not with the philosopher. Immediately the old story assumed a new and beautiful interest and set an example to romantic writers for a century to come. Formerly the Church, while not denying the existence of pagan gods and spirits, had declared them all to be devils, and had implied that it was monstrously wicked to praise them or to sympathize with them. But, by the 19th century, people had ceased to be so extravagantly pious as to refuse to utilize a pagan myth for such reasons. A whole school of writers since the time of Keats, have followed

[1] *Lamia* (July 1820).

the example in lending new human interest to all myths; and the French romantics have here especially distinguished themselves. The most beautiful story of the kind in French romantic literature is by Théophile Gautier and is entitled *La Morte Amoureuse.* It is almost exactly the Lamia story over again, with the slight difference that the woman is a vampire, the lover a priest and the scene is laid in the 16th century or perhaps a little earlier.

Now what Keats did for Greek subjects he also did for old fairy tales, for incidents of history, for mediæval love stories, for a host of subjects. He taught men to think about all these subjects in a new way, with pure sympathy—it is even true that he taught them to think and to feel like pagans, not like Christians. But he did this only in a beautiful and legitimate way; and his paganism was nothing more than pure Greek feeling. The result of his work was—Tennyson! Keats made Tennyson. And he also made almost every great poet of the Victorian period. He was the teacher of what is called the neo-romantic movement.

It is for this reason that I have spoken to you about Keats at such length: he is immensely important—as an influence—more than Wordsworth or Shelley or Byron or any other poet of the first period. I do not mean that he is greater as a poet; but he is greater as a poetical teacher. He died, as you know, of consumption when only about 26 years old. I suppose that you have heard the story once believed, that his death was caused by cruel criticism. Byron and Shelley both believed that story; and wrote poems about it which are famous for their splendid indignation. But the story is not true. The poet died of disease; and he bore criticism very bravely. What is true is the story about the wicked attacks upon him in newspapers and magazines. He was jeered at because he was a poor student and they told him that a doctor's apprentice had no business to try to write poetry. Even this needs some explanation. Brutal as English prejudice is, it is seldom so wanton as to try to ridicule an honourable profession, or to express contempt for honest poverty. But it is capable of much wick-

edness when the question is one of political or party prejudices. The attacks on Keats were chiefly made for political reasons; and they were made by mistake. Keats had no politics at all; he was only a poet—but he had two political friends, one of whom was Leigh Hunt. These friends were radical, and had given offence to the Government; therefore Keats was supposed also to be an enemy of the Government.

Much as I have said about the importance of Keats, I should be sorry that any of you should try to read all that he wrote. The "all" is not very big, but some of it is by no means perfect. He knew that himself, and was very much ashamed of his first work. For example you ought not to try to read *Endymion*[1] as a whole. It is the old Greek story of how the moon saw a shepherd boy asleep on a mountain and came down and kissed him and became his wife. As Keats conceived the story, it is full of beautiful passages; but the whole composition is not successful. It is tiresome. *Hyperion*,[2] another Greek subject, is far finer. It is founded upon the Greek myth that before the time of the Gods there had been older and greater Gods, who had been turned out of Heaven by the later ones. Keats wanted to represent the Greek idea of the more ancient Gods and he imagined an assembly of Gods in which the injustice of the past and hopes of the future were to be discussed. But he never finished the composition and I should recommend you to read only the wonderful beginning with perhaps an extract here and there. Yet these two things represent the bulk of Keats' work. The rest of it consists chiefly of short pieces—if we except *The Eve of St. Agnes*,[3] *Lamia* and *The Pot of Basil*,[4] which are of moderate length. The first is a mediæval love story—Gothic work and full of charm—resembling the work of Coleridge more than anything else. The second I have told you about; the third is a terrible story from Boccaccio, told over again with a new spirit of tenderness—the story about the girl who, after her lover had been killed by

[1] *Endymion: a poetic romance* 1818.
[2] *Hyperion* (1820).
[3] *The eve of St. Agnes* (Composed Jan. 1819; published July 1820).
[4] *Isabella; or, the pot of basil. A story from Boccaccio* (July 1820).

her brothers, kept his head concealed in a flower-pot containing a basil plant, where it was afterwards discovered through the accidental breaking of the pot. I should not insist too much upon any of these; but every student should read such pieces as the sonnet after reading Chapman's Homer,[1] or such lighter pieces as the peerless ballad of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.[2] The latter is perhaps the most perfect of all modern ballads. Then there are such things to be carefully studied as *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, the marvellous *Ode to a Nightingale*,[3] the splendid address *To Autumn*,[4] and at least half a dozen of the most precious sonnets on the subjects of love, regret or the prospect of death. Some day we shall study the rest of these together. At present we may leave Keats — the last of the seven great poets of the first period, or First Romantic Period, —and discourse a little about the smaller poets in their train. Some of these have a good deal of importance.

Minor Poets of the First Romantic Period

The whole of the minor poets before Tennyson cannot here be considered; nor could we here obtain any profit from any acquaintance with all of them. But there are a number of very considerable significance, whose names you can easily remember. The most notable of these are Moore, Rogers, Campbell, Landor, Beddoes, Hood, Praed, Peacock, and a few whom we need to mention only by name — such as Hogg and Mrs. Hemans. All were romantics. The most important of this group is perhaps Thomas Moore,[5] a great friend of Byron, who, although born before the last decade of the 18th century, lived to the middle of the 19th. As a poet there is still a great deal of hot discussion regarding his value; some people become impatient at the mere mention of his name; while others praise

[1] *On first looking into Chapmn's Homer* (1817).
[2] *La belle dame sans merci* (Published in *The Indicator* 10 May 1820).
[3] *Ode to a nightingale* (Composed May, published July, 1819).
[4] *To autumn* (Composed September 1819, published July 1820).
[5] Thomas Moore (1779-1852).

him more than he deserved. I am glad to assure you that the most severe critics are just those who speak well of him. But, no matter of what may be said about him as a poet, he is a very great figure in the early literature of the period; and his influence in favour of the romantic movement was prodigious —second only to that of Byron in the strictly popular direction. He resembled, neither in his career nor in his condition, any of his brother poets. You must try to imagine him as a fine, old-fashioned gentleman, a great lover of society, and a man who never thought himself a great poet, though he knew himself to be a great singer.

I use the word "singer" here in its most literal meaning; for Moore was a natural musician; and his great fame was chiefly made in the drawing-rooms of rich men, where he would sit down at a piano and play and sing for the amusement of friends. The poetry which made his name once a household word in every part of Great Britain—which caused his picture to be hung up in almost everybody's house—which still causes the Irish people to mention his name only with love and reverence—was merely composed for the purpose of singing. He had learned all the popular airs of the Irish, the English, the Scotch peasantry; and he wrote new words for these airs and popularized them by singing them. Afterwards he did the same thing for Spanish, French, Italian and Greek airs,—though his masterwork in song is compiled in the collection of Irish airs.[1] In short Moore did for the music of the common people exactly what Walter Scott and others have done for the poetry and the folk-lore of the peasants. So you see that his place as a musician takes him a little away from the true place of poets. This, however, is only true so far as his songs are concerned. Besides the greatest singer of his time, he was really a romantic poet of no mean order. Like Byron and Southey he went to the East for inspiration; and produced Oriental romances in verse which can still be read with much pleasure even by persons who know that his Orientalism is all wrong. In those stories of his, the scenery and the characters

[1] *Irish melodies* 1807-35.

are Oriental only in a theatrical way; but the verse is always sweet and musical, and passages of beauty might easily be mentioned which cannot die. Thus Moore's reputation is to be decided by his songs on the one hand and by his Oriental poems on the other; and we find that though there is genius in both, it is not enough to place him in the first rank of poets. He is only second class.

But this second class is quite unique. One gift which Moore had, even to excess, was the gift possessed by very few English men of letters—a perfect musical ear. Even when the words of his song are little better than nonsense, you have only to read them aloud in order to understand this. Most of them are pure delights of sounds; they ring and thrill like the notes of a well played musical instrument. I shall presently give you some examples of the art of melody. But as poetry, scarcely half a dozen of the hundreds of songs he wrote could live by their merit. What keeps them alive is the music for which they were written. As long as those airs are remembered the poems will be remembered too. Otherwise we might say that such pieces as "Oft, in the stilly night," "When in death I shall calm recline," and "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms" alone deserve high praise. On the other hand, read with the music such a trifling thing as *Love's Young Dream*, and you cannot help wondering at the exactness with which the syllables strike out the notes of the air - every syllable fitting exactly into its place, like keys of a piano board. The Oriental work is comprised under the title of *Lalla Rookh*.[1] Lalla Rookh is an Indian princess betrothed to a prince of a neighbouring kingdom. According to custom she leaves her father's house, with a great retinue of attendants and slaves, to meet her future husband; and she feels a little anxious as to whether he will love her. Now the future husband is equally anxious to find out if his betrothed is a nice girl; so he disguises himself as a wandering musician, and joins the retinue in order to get a chance to look at her. He is asked to amuse the party every evening during the journey with music and

[1] *Lalla Rookh. An oriental romance* 1817. 6th edn 1817, 15th edn 1829.

song; and he sings four romances to please the princess. These romances make up the greater part of the volume: all are Oriental stories of a strange and imaginative kind: *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, The Fire-Worshippers, Paradise and the Peri,* and *The Light of the Haram.* When the journey is ended the princess is at once frightened and delighted to discover that the musician who sang for her is the prince whom she must wed. In all these poems only the stories—the skeleton of narrative — is Oriental; the sentiments, the thoughts are European, and European of the age of extravagant sentiment. But it would be just as absurd to deny them value as poetry for that reason, as it would be absurd to deny poetic merit to the classic stories of Chaucer, whose Greek women think and talk like English women of the 14th century. The poems have very great beauty of a certain kind and the lilt of the verse is sometimes even finer in sound than the music of Coleridge. Take an example from *The Light of the Haram:*—

The Georgian's song was scarcely mute,
  When the same measure, sound for sound,
Was caught up by another lute,
  And so divinely breathed around,
That all stood hush'd and wondering,
  And turn'd and look'd into the air,
As if they thought to see the wing
  Of Israfil, the Angel, there;—
So powerfully on every soul
That new, enchanted measure stole.
While now a voice, sweet as the note
Of the charm'd lute, was heard to float
Along its chords, and so entwine
  Its sound with theirs, that none knew whether
The voice or lute was most divine,
  So wonderously they went together.

No, Coleridge himself never uttered any sweeter music than that. Or, take this:—

Come hither, come hither—by night and by day,
  We linger in pleasures that never are gone;

Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,
Another as sweet and as shining comes on.
And the love that is o'er, in expiring, gives birth
To a new one as warm, as unequall'd in bliss,
And oh! if there be an elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this.

The above is but one verse of a song out of which it would be very hard to choose the most musical stanza. And four great romances full of such poetry are certainly of no little importance in English literature.

But I do not want you to think that Moore is never a serious poet. He can be both a painter and a serious poet at times. It is when he is most simple that he is often at his best. One little song, very simple indeed, I shall quote here—a little song that is well known all the world over.

Those evening bells! those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time,
When last I heard their soothing chime.

Those joyous hours are pass'd away;
And many a heart, that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone;
That tuneful peal will still ring on,
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells!

In any country I think the same thought must have occurred to many minds when hearing the sound of old bells—bells of temples, bells of churches: it makes no difference—the vibration of the sound measuring time reminds us that the same sound was heard by thousands before us, and will still be heard by thousands after we have ceased to view the song. It is not because a thought is old that it is not a good subject for verse or song: on the contrary he who repeats the old

thought in the best and simplest way is the best poet. And Moore often does this very thing.

It would require a special lecture to illustrate the beauties of Moore, because these are of great variety. For the present I only wish to suggest to you what his merits are. Besides the songs and romances which I have spoken of, and the comic poems and *The Loves of the Angels*[1] which I have not spoken of because they would not interest you at present, you must remember that Moore wrote many excellent things in prose. His romance of *The Epicurean*,[2] a story of Egyptian life, is almost worthy to be called a classic; and his *Life of Byron*[3] is worthy to be compared with any English biography—indeed, some consider it almost as good as Boswell's *Life of Johnson.* And there is another thing to remember about Moore — his great influence in helping the romantic victory by his choice of new subjects and by his musical rendering of old ones. Though now old-fashioned, his poetry is worth studying even for that reason alone.

The next of the minor poets can be very briefly dismissed —Samuel Rogers.[4] He lived almost into the middle of the new era; but he belonged also to the 18th century—a man who was both a contemporary of Dr. Johnson and of Thomas Carlyle. His influence was social, much more than literary; nevertheless it was important. By occupation he was a banker, — a very rich banker; and he only played at literature because he really loved poetry and would have been a great poet if he could. He did not succeed in doing any great thing in verse; but he was acquainted with nearly every literary man of the later 18th century and with nearly every literary man of the time before Tennyson. He invited them to his house, and made much of them and helped them with his influence in society. For he was a very great social power—so great in fact that nobody dared to say anything bad about his poetry while he was alive.

[1] *The loves of the angels. A poem* 1823. 5th edn 1823.
[2] *The Epicurian. A tale* 1827. Illustrated by Turner, J.M.W. 1839.
[3] *Letters and journals of Lord Byron, with notices of his life.* 2 vols 1830. *The works of Lord Byron, with his Letters* and *journals, and his life by Thomas Moore.* 17 vols 1832-5.
[4] Samuel Rogers (1763-1855).

He was rich; therefore it was not wise to offend him. He knew everybody, therefore it was dangerous to offend him. And he had a terribly venomous tongue—such a tongue that nobody would risk getting talked about by such a person. Nevertheless, to literary men he was kind. His productions, all written in blank verse very correctly, were romantic only in subject, the subject being his own travels in Europe. I do not think that his *Pleasures of Memory*[1] are now much read; and some critics declare that they never were worth reading. But there is one thing of his which I should like to have you read—the little story of *Ginevra.* Ginevra was a beautiful Italian girl who on the night of her wedding suddenly disappeared. Twenty or thirty years afterwards, an old wooden chest which had been lying in some lumber-room of the house was opened; — and there her skeleton was found, still wearing the bridal dress and jewels. The chest had what we call a "spring-lock"—so contrived that it locked itself by the simple act of shutting the lid down. The young bride had wanted to hide from her husband, by way of play—being little more than a child; she wanted to put him to the trouble of finding her. So she got into the box, forgetting all about the spring-lock. This true and sad story has been told by Rogers in blank verse better than it has been told by any other English poet; and there are many poems and songs on the subject of Ginevra.

The third minor poet of importance was Thomas Campbell.[2] Campbell also belonged to both centuries; and he began to write in blank verse and in couplets. His *Pleasures of Hope*[3] belong to classic rather than to romantic literature; and they are no longer read. But when the romantic movement fairly set in, Campbell became a romantic; and he produced ballads and songs of a very great kind. Also he produced a romance of North American life in Spenserian stanza, *Gertrude of Wyoming,*[4] which has considerable merit. It is not read to-day,

[1] *The pleasures of memory, with other poems* 1792. 9th edn 1796. 15th edn 1806.
[2] Thomas Campbell (1777-1844).
[3] *The pleasures of hope, with other poems.* Edinburgh, 1799. 6th edn, Edinburgh, 1802. 9th edn, Edinburgh, 1807.
[4] *Gertrudo of Wyoming: A Pennsylvanian tale, and other poems* 1809. 2nd edn, 2 vols, 1810. 7th edn, 1819.

nevertheless—probably because of the kind of verse in which it was composed; and Campbell's fame rests upon his short poems altogether. Who does not know some of these, such as *Lord Ullin's Daughter?* You will find them in every anthology. Every English boy learns them by heart. Great critics, however, find that Campbell produced only three immortal things —three songs, battle songs which are the best in the English language. These are *Hohenlinden, The Battle of the Baltic,* and *Ye Mariners of England.* Therefore it is as a song writer, like Moore, that Campbell takes his place. Three songs alone might give him even a better place than he has, were it not for some blemishes in the songs. The best of the three, for example, is *The Battle of the Baltic,* but we have in that grand composition one stanza thus beginning:

> But the might of England flushed
> To anticipate the scene—.

Of course this is very bad, though very musical: it is bad grammar, or, at least, bad sense. How can a scene be anticipated in this meaning? What Campbell meant was that the English wanted to begin fighting as soon as possible—to rush at the enemy even before the proper time had come. According to an old law of good English and clear expression, this is very bad—but the song was the best of the kind ever written by any Englishman, or rather by a Scotchman.

Another Scotchman must be mentioned; but as he wrote his best things in Scotch dialect, we cannot pay much attention to him. His name was James Hogg,[1] and he is celebrated in the 19th century literature under the name of Ettrick Shepherd. Hogg learned the alphabet as a child; but as his parents were miserably poor, he was put to taking care of sheep while he was still a little boy and he remained a shepherd until the age of 23 or 24. Alone upon the mountains all day with his sheep and having no books or means of buying books, he soon forgot even how to read the letters of the alphabet—could not tell big C from G. About that time Sir Walter Scott was riding

[1] James Hogg (1770-1835).

about the country, trying to find peasants who knew old songs and old stories, and who would dictate these to him. One day he found Hogg; and Hogg sang to him many songs and dictated to him many ballads. Sir Walter was greatly pleased, but he was astonished to find that this song-loving shepherd was unable to read or write. Hogg increased this surprise by repeating to Scott a number of poems which he "had composed in his own head," without being able to write them down. Sir Walter Scott wrote them down. They were very fine, and a poet who could not write was a great discovery. Hogg was taken to Edinburgh by Sir Walter, and partly educated under his patronage; and he became a famous man of letters,—writing excellent prose as well as many fine songs which are still sung. The best of his prose appeared in a collection of Scotch traditions and legends called *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, over the name or pseudonym of "The Ettrick Shepherd." Many famous men of letters contributed to this collection; and the editors of the *Edinburgh Review* may have helped Hogg with his English prose. But nobody helped him with his verse; and such songs as "When the kye comes hame" ranks only second to the songs of Robert Burns. Hogg was essentially a natural poet.

The greatest scholar of this minor group — perhaps the greatest scholar among all of the early 19th century poets — and one of the strangest figures in the history of English letters was Walter Savage Landor.[1] Landor is much greater as a prose writer than as a poet; but it is here impossible to separate his poetry from his prose, for he himself mixed the two together — writing a large proportion of work in verse. Landor resembled Byron and Shelley in one respect, — namely that he refused to obey English conventions—indeed he refused to obey any laws or customs; and he was consequently obliged to pass nearly the whole of his life in Italy. His terrible temper rendered it impossible for him to remain in England. But he never did anything very bad, and never hurt anybody except himself. He was a man who when angry was really dangerous; yet he had a most generous heart and was just as ready

[1] Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864).

to help people in every possible way as he was ready to get angry with them. He was a giant in stature and strength; and even as a schoolboy his athletic feats were astonishing. Also he proved himself an excellent student, mastering Latin so perfectly that he could write in Latin verse quite as easily as in English verse, and mastering Greek to almost an equal degree. In English literature, as distinguished from English scholarship, there have been only two Latinists of this class — Landor and Calverley. Calverley, a fellow of Cambridge, who died only a few years ago leaving behind him two wonderful volumes of poetry, could immediately, without any study at all, readily read Wordsworth or Tennyson or any other English poet into Latin verse—I mean that he would take up an English poet read a page of the book and then repeat the meaning of the page, line for line, in Latin verse. Calverley was a better Latinist than Landor; but Landor came very near-by. Such a man ought to have taken the highest honours at Oxford; but the University was obliged to send him away after he had been there only one year and a half. Then he tried to enter the Army, but he was refused an officer's commission because of his radical opinions. Every opinion contrary to the opinions of the time he loudly championed and was always therefore in "hot water." An interesting fact is that he was the first student at Oxford who wore his hair contrary to the custom of the time. Students then powdered their hair white, tying it behind with a little ribbon: they wore a kind of queue. But Landor, sympathizing with the French Revolution, which had abolished the same custom in France, cut his hair short in spite of University protest. Afterwards Southey did the same thing. You may imagine how reckless Landor was from the fact that he was able to remain married only for a few months—he chose the wrong woman of course; and although not unkind to her, it was impossible for the two to live together. He remained unmarried for the rest of his life, which was very long; for he was born in 1775 and died only in 1864—thus being close upon 90 years of age. He devoted the best part of his long life, not to folly or pleasure, but to patient, unceasing study, and pro-

duced an immense mass of scholarly work dealing chiefly with classical subjects.

Classical—but this master of classics was a pure romantic at heart. He wrote in severe prose; but he felt and expressed his feelings in the rich emotional tone of his age. The largest part of his work appeared in the form of dialogue[1]—dialogues supposed to have occured between great characters of different age—Greek, Roman, Egyptian, also Mediæval and Italian. I suppose you know that a famous Greek author known as Lucian wrote a book called *Dialogues of the Dead*—this perhaps inspired Landor. Every personage of antiquity whom he loved in a literary way he made to talk in the same manner. This is the finest kind of severe prose; but it had a tenderness in it, a gentleness of spirit—rather Greek than Latin. And mixed with prose there is a great deal of poetry. It does not rise to the highest class as the prose did, but some of it is very beautiful and I want to read to you on some future day one composition about a Greek tree spirit:[2] it will remind you of some old Japanese legends about tree-spirits, which are quite as beautiful and quite as sad as the Greek story. The chief trouble with Landor's work is that you must be a very good scholar to understand him without explanations and he never condescended to explain anything. Besides the dialogues of which I have told you, he wrote a long romantic poem called *Gebir*,[3] which first made him widely known in the world of letters. The poem is founded upon a mediæval romance, and contains one Greek episode which he treated very prettily. It is the story of a shepherd who used to keep his flocks by the seashore. One night a beautiful nymph rose up from the sea and came to him and said, "Will you wrestle with me?" The shepherd answered, "Why should I wrestle with a woman, and especially so fair as you?" The sea nymph answered, "If I win, you must give me a sheep; and if you win, then I will belong to you." So they wrestled and the shepherd lost. Every

[1] *Imaginary conversations*. Vols. I, II. 1824. 2nd edn, enlarged, 1826. Vols. III, IV, 1828. Vol. V, 1829. *Imaginary conversations of Greeks and Romans*, 1853.
[2] See *On Poetry* ch. xviii "On Tree Spirits in Western Poetry."
[3] *Gebir* 1798. 2nd edn, Oxford, 1803. Latin version, Oxford, 1803.

night after that the maiden came and wrestled with the shepherd and overcame him and took away a sheep—so that at last the whole flock was lost. You can see what a very good subject for a poem is furnished by this queer old story, and Landor treated the scene very beautifully. Also he wrote a great number of short poems upon different subjects, and some of his shorter things are famous. Before he died he made a quatrain upon himself—a kind of epitaph which really tells us the story of his life:—

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
> Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Thomas Hood,[1] who was born almost at the same time that Johnson died, is a very strong and original figure in the early 19th century literature. He was a very extraordinary man in a very different sense from Landor. And he possessed one of the sweetest characters ever given to a human being. Of course you know that Hood is the greatest of all English comic poets; but he was not merely a comic poet. In no other mind, perhaps, has there ever been so strange a mixture of tenderness with humour. Observe also that Hood is never cruel, never a satirist, never a mocker in the real meaning of the word. His fun is only happy or grotesque; it is never unkind. Hood was born in London and educated for business; but various reasons caused him to adopt the profession of letters instead; and he became a journalist. A journalist he always remained, never being able to make enough money to devote himself to more serious literature. Toward the end of his life he got a pension of about £100 a year; but even that help, in view of a large family which he had to support, scarcely kept him above want. Now these circumstances are important to remember because they had a most serious influence upon Hood's literary work. He never could do the best of which he was capable;—he never was allowed sufficient time. Readers

[1] Thomas Hood (1799-1845).

of newspapers discovered that he had a real genius for fun; and they wanted him to amuse them as often as possible; and he was obliged to produce a fixed quantity of fun every week in order to make a living—or, as he put it himself, he "had to be a lively Hood in order to make a livelihood." That, you know, is what is called in English a pun; and Hood was the greatest punster that ever lived. Hundreds of things which he wrote—ballads, stories, stories in verse, mock odes, etc.—are simply masses of puns; yet the playing upon words never spoils the interest of the tale or the theme. But to give one's life to this sort of thing means, of course, that a man cannot do his best. There is another thing—a most extraordinary thing to remember about this wonderful man. Hood was sick from boyhood with consumption, always sick, always unhappily situated—and, in later years, always tormented by the greatest of all fears that a man can have, fears for the sake of his children. Perhaps he never had a single happy day after he began to work for a living. Yet never in his life did he once complain, or allow himself to look unhappy, or speak of his sickness to friends, except when much spitting of blood obliged him to delay his work a little. And then he only apologized for his weakness and made a joke about it. He joked even when he was dying.

We must consider his work as naturally dividing itself into two parts—the comic and the serious; but there is also a half-way region of production between these—a collection of things half serious, half comic. So we may better say that Hood's productions represent three different classes of composition. We cannot include the comic among his best works—simply because it is comical; but it is the cleverest work of the kind ever done in English, and I should recommend the students to read a number of comic ballads merely to acquire a new knowledge of the value of words. These funny ballads ought to be of much greater use to Japanese students than even to English students—they teach you certain things that cannot be taught in any other way. As for the half-way poems—those partly comical and partly serious—several take a very high

place in English literature. They are mostly terrible and ghostly subjects. They represent what is called "grimmum" or what Professor Saintsbury would call "grotesque-tarfit"; such is the long mock romance of *Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg*,[1] — a story about a young woman who had a leg made of solid gold to replace the leg which she had lost by accident, and who was married first and murdered afterwards by a man who wanted to steal the leg. Such also is the grim poem of *The Forge*,[2]—a tale of some wicked iron workers who threw a man alive into a furnace, but presently discovered that the man was the devil himself. Such also is the celebrated *Haunted House*,[3] — the most "creepy" poem ever produced in English. Certainly it is a little too long; but it ought to delight anybody who can feel horror. No ghost really appears; but as we look, with the poet, through all the lonely mouldering rooms, and the long deserted garden, or, as we ascend with him the groaning stairs which have not been trodden for years, we experience a thrill of fear such as any real ghost experience would give. Only a genius could have written that. As for the third class of poems—the purely serious and these are very great in most cases. I do not indeed refer especially to such studies of classical mythology as *Lycus, the Centaur*, with its never-to-be-forgotten account of living trees, whose branches shed blood when broken, and whose flesh-coloured fruits cry out when eaten. Any other clever poet might have written quite as well on the same subject. But no other poet could have written *The Song of the Shirt*,[4] — picturing the mental and physical agony of the poor woman obliged to sew for a living — the poor sewing girls so touchingly afterwards described by another poet, Rossetti, as having their strength proclaimed by hollow cheeks and faded forms: he means, of course, their moral strength. No other poet could have written *The Bridge of Sighs*,[5] the story of the poor outcast girl who drowns herself in despair: — the name of the poem is the name of a

[1] Printed in *New Monthly Magazine*, September 1840.
[2] *The forge, a romance of the iron age* 1844.
[3] Published in *Hood's Magazine*, January 1844.
[4] Published in *Punch*, Christmas Number, 1843.
[5] In *Hood's Magazine*, May 1844.

bridge in Venice, but Hood gives this name to London Bridge, from which many unhappy girls have committed suicide. And no other poet has given us more touching bits of natural sentiment than have been expressed in such light sweet verses:—

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

* * *

I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy.

Some day I should like to read with you parts of the less familiar works of Hood. For the present we must leave him, with reminding you that the best pieces are preserved in every anthology of the 19th century poems.

Coupled with the name of Hood we often find the name of Praed.[1] Praed also was a humourous poet, but his specialty was light "society verse"; and he will be remembered only by a few pieces. He was as fortunate in his career as Hood was unfortunate, but he occupied a much smaller place in literature. We cannot notice him well except in a special lecture upon society verse — on which occasion something may be quoted from him. Very little can be said here of Peacock—Thomas L. Peacock.[2] Peacock as a prose writer is very important indeed, and we shall have to consider him among the novelists.

[1] Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839).
[2] Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866).

In this place I only mention him to you as a poet; and here his chief claim to merit is as the author of a drinking song. Perhaps no other modern Englishman has done so well in the same direction—though we must remember that the best of all drinking songs is not modern: it is that old "Back and side go bare, go bare!" which dates back to before the time of Elizabeth. Peacock's drinking songs are humourous mostly, but the fun is of a strange ironical kind—making us laugh by the exposition of extraordinary facts with mock indifference of feeling. Sometimes he even puns. Here is an example:—

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met a host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

* * *

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us:
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars;
And, ere our horse we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

These two stanzas give a good idea of the general tone of Peacock's rolling fun. It is always, however, more ironical than comic, and we can only call him very clever — nothing more.

Something must be said about Mrs. Felicia Hemans,[1] who had so great a popularity in that time, and now has no popularity at all—although the poem of *Casabianca* is still read and recited in children's schools. Mrs. Hemans was a very pretty woman and a very good woman who married a decidedly bad

[1] Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835).

man and found herself obliged to support her own children in consequence of his practical desertion. She wrote an immense number of poems, rather pretty always, and sentimental; — never very strong. But it was an age of sentiment; and thousands of people who could not care for Wordsworth, and who did not want their children to read Byron, found Mrs. Hemans both charming and soothing. Her books sold by tens of thousands; she became a successful author, and remained successful just long enough to be able to fulfil her duty as a mother. You need never trouble to read her; but you should always think of her generously. Her best poem is said to be the little piece entitled *England's Dead*. But you will find two or three pieces by her in the anthology. I may close this notice of the minor poets with a brief mention of Beddoes.

Thomas Beddoes[1] is very little known, except to the lovers of something rare and fine in verse. He was altogether unknown until a few years ago when Mr. Gosse revived him and brought out a new edition of his works. He was an English doctor who studied and settled in Germany, and there produced a most phantastic kind of literature, not published in complete form until after his death. His death was a suicide,—a most curious and horrible suicide, effected partly by poison, partly by cutting his veins. The bulk of his composition is represented by a drama in the Elizabethan style called *Death's Jest Book;*[2] and we need not say much about it as drama. But, scattered through that gloomy composition, there are about half a dozen—perhaps a dozen—songs of the most exquisite beauty and feeling. These little songs are not comparable with anything of the second rank—they are comparable only with the best work of Shelley and Keats and other great masters. Some day we can read them. But now we must turn to the prose writers of this period.

[1] Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849).
[2] *Death's jest book, or the fool's tragedy* 1850.

PRE-VICTORIAN PROSE—FICTION

THE GREAT NOVELISTS

IF there had been any great—any really great 19th century drama before the Victorian period, we should consider drama before considering fiction because it represents a higher form of literature. But there was no drama of consequence—nothing better than the plays of Sir Henry Taylor,[1] which cannot be put into the front rank by any means. On the other hand the really great prose event of the 19th century was the sudden development of fiction in almost every advanced form. During the 18th century the novel had, indeed, been invented, but perfectly; and English literature has never surpassed the best work of Fielding. But you will remember that there were very few novels of the first rank produced during the 18th century —perhaps fifteen titles would cover everything worth remembering. On the other hand the 19th century was the great century of novel writers; and between 1800 and 1900 there have probably been on an average about 100,000 novels produced. Of this vast number, not 100 have been really great; but the fact is striking. As the greatest prose movement of the century was in the direction of fiction we are quite right in taking up that subject next to poetry. If you attempt to get from the many different literary histories a clear account of this period in fiction, you will be probably disappointed. Every authority makes a different classification. Some arrange the history of production chronologically only; others arrange it evolutionally only; others again make periods varying from 15 years to 25 years, according to the colours and tones of literary change, literary fashion. The best of the grouping is certainly that of

[1] Sir Henry Taylor (1800-1886).

Professor Saintsbury; but I do not think that it is the best form for the lecturer.

It requires a strain upon the memory of students which ought to be avoided as much as possible. According to this system—evolutional system, I ought to begin the history of the 19th century fiction with an account of several female novelists who preceded Scott, and one of whom, Miss Jane Austen was among the very greatest of English novelists. But I think a better way to arrange the matter for lecturing purposes will be to consider the female novelists in a group by themselves, and to begin the history of the pre-Victorian novel with the group of the very greatest only,—the first peerless four or five who followed in the steps of Fielding.

Therefore I will say in the simplest way, that the history of 19th century fiction begins with Scott and that Scott was followed by Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, and Thackeray. If you can remember the names and something of the work of these four you will be able to establish a good foundation for clearly remembering all the other groupings related to this principal one. The first four great novelists, then, were Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray—and each one of four represents an entirely different order of literary art.

SCOTT

First of all, we must speak of Scott, whose first great novel *Waverly*[1] appeared in the year 1814. We have already spoken of Scott's life when considering him as a poet: our duty now is to consider his relation to fiction. This is very easy to state in a few words. Scott made modern *historical* romance; and what he did in this direction was never surpassed. It would not be correct to think of him as a novelist in the strict sense of the word, although some of his books come very near to what we call novels. A novel, as I told you before, is essen-

[1] *Waverly, or 'tis sixty years since.* 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1814.

tially a story of human society,—a story of life as it is, contemporary life; and it is customary that such a story has its principal motive, the emotion of love. But a romance is not confined to any particular period or place, nor to any particular form of social existence; and it is not necessary that it should contain any story about love, nor even so much as the figure of a woman. That is the great difference. Now the most popular of modern story-tellers, Stevenson, was, strictly speaking, not a novelist. The best of his books, although true stories of human nature, do not reflect the life of society and in a number of them there are no female characters at all. Scott was, like Stevenson, a romance writer; and as a romance writer, the greatest creator of the century, not only in Great Britain but in Europe.

You know that he became immediately famous by reviving in his early books the ancient life of Scotland – a theme which he had previously been dealing with in poetry. One reason why there had not been any great historical romance before Scott is that there had not been any great knowledge of history. Such history as existed of Scotland or of England before the 19th century had been of the very driest kind—it was the kind of history that told men the dates of accessions, of battles, the nature of new laws passed, the change of political party. But it was not the history of human habits, manners and customs. It could not help a man to imagine how his forefathers ate and drank, and slept, loved and fought, and diverted themselves, dressed and visited and worshipped. Scott knew this; and he did not go to printed histories for his material, but directly to old documents, archives, museums, collections of weapons, dresses, old-fashioned furniture. To know exactly how people lived in feudal castles, he studied the castles themselves, as carefully as any architect; and to understand the emotions produced by famous tragedies or victories, he thought out and read all the old family records that he could find. This was a very great innovation. And it was so successful that it tempted him into other fields where he again succeeded by the same means. With almost equal charm he

wrote of old Scotch highland life, Border warfare, the times of the Puritans, the times of the Crusades, the times of the greatness of Constantinople, and curiously enough of modern life as well. It would be quite wrong to suppose that these novels are especially Scotch; — they are simply European and Oriental subjects from the early Middle Ages up to Scott's own time. Scott's influence could not have been what it was if he had written only about Scotland. But he wrote about matters which interested all Europe, and all Europe read him and still read him.

You can imagine what an influence he exerted from the simple fact that his novels alone brought him in commission no less a sum than £15,000 every year. Multiply that by ten and you will see the value represented in modern Japanese money. And this did not represent at all his foreign readers, who paid him nothing for the privilege of reading him in translations in German and in many other languages. Comparison can be justly made only when two writers happen to treat of the same subject from the same point of view; and of the four great novelists whom we are now considering, no one can justly be compared with any other. It would be absurd to say that Scott is better than his successors, or that any one of the successors exceeds him in general excellence. The excellence of each is a thing quite apart. For the student it should be sufficient to understand the position of Scott as that of the greatest European writer of historical romance — the man who influenced, and still influences, all Europe by his stories, just as Byron influenced all Europe by his poetry. Another thing to remember is that Scott is still read in all countries;—new editions of his works are announced almost every year; and it will soon be a hundred years from the time that he began his wonderful narration. When novels or romances give such proof of vitality as this there must be something in them far beyond mere merit of style or ingenuity of plot. What characterizes them is life—the dramatic power of animating imaginary figures with real human character. To say more about Scott than this will not be necessary—no greater thing could be said of any

literary creator. As for reading him, I think that every student ought to read three or four of Scott's romances. If you should ask me to make a selection I would suggest *Ivanhoe*,[1] as a picture of mediæval life; *The Talisman*,[2] which is a tale of the Crusades; *Rob Roy*,[3] as a picture of old Scotch life. If you read any of these three, and like it, you will feel impelled to read more. If you don't like the stories—then you had better leave Scott alone for the time being and try again at a later date when the result may be different.

LYTTON

The next great figure is that of Lord Lytton[4] or Bulwer-Lytton as he is more generally known. Except Macaulay, no more extraordinary man of letters achieved a more extraordinary success during the first part of the century. Whatever he did he did very well—except, perhaps, poetry. He was a good statesman, a great man in society, a fine dramatist, and a prince among story-tellers. The date of his birth is disputed—some say 1800, others 1803:—at all events his life begins or almost begins with the century; and he lived to be quite old, never ceasing to produce literature of some kind, up to the time of his death. His existence ran always smoothly with the exception of some domestic quarrels, an attempted quarrel with Tennyson, who crushed him at once, as a wheel might crush a fly. He had no power in poetry. But as a story-teller I do not think that he has ever been equalled in certain directions, and he greatly influenced literature by the creation of a new style, —a florid style full of ornament and colour and force: a little extravagant, no doubt, but, on the whole, very attractive and very beneficial to the development of a new kind of prose.

Bulwer-Lytton must also be classed rather as a romance

[1] *Ivanhoe. A romance. By the author of Waverley.* 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1820.
[2] *Tales of the Crusades.* [Vols. I and II, *The betrothed;* vols. III and IV, *The talisman*], Edinburgh, 1825.
[3] *Rob Roy. By the author of Waverley.* Edinburgh, 1818.
[4] Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton (1803-1873).

writer than as a novelist in the true sense. His novels proper such as *The Caxtons*,[1] *Pelham*,[2] *My Novel*,[3] etc., have a certain unreality which deprives them of the right to be called great. They are the works of a dreamer and of a dreamer who did not have the power to make his dreams talk and move like real people. But his attempts at the novel represent but a small part of his works; and in other departments of story-telling, his very defects become merits. In his historical romances we do not mind the unreality, especially when we are carried back to ancient Roman days or early Saxon times, or to the Italic of the Middle Ages. For instance, such books as *Rienzi*,[4] a historical romance, requiring extensive scholarship to write; *Harold*,[5] the tale of the last Saxon king; *The Last Days of Pompeii*,[6] with its wonderful description of the eruption of Vesuvius —are among the most brilliant historical romances ever produced. A great deal of their excellence is, however, due to the nature of the subjects, which allowed of great display of colour in words. As to actuality these books are not better than the romances of Scott: they are the reverse. But there is a charm about them, a charm of strange beauty, not to be found in Scott. Yet the third class of books written by Bulwer-Lytton seem to me to give him a place that nothing can ever take away—a supreme place in the world of imagination,—I mean his stories of magic, of the supernatural, and of fancy, future possibility,—such as *Zanoni*,[7] *A Strange Story*,[8] *The Haunted and the Haunters*,[9] and *The Coming Race*.[10] The first of the four is the weakest. But any one of the other three would be enough to make any man famous in literature for all time. Almost everything which had been written on the subject of mesmerism, of magic, of the elixir of life, of wraith, of haunting, appeared to be mere child's play, mere dullness, compared

[1] *The Caxtons, a family picture.* 3 vols. 1849.
[2] *Pelham; or the adventures of a gentleman.* 3 vols. 1828.
[3] *My novel.* 4 vols. 1853.
[4] *Rienzi, the last of the tribunes* 1835.
[5] *Harold, the last of the Saxon kings.* 3 vols. 1848.
[6] *The last days of Pompeii.* 3 vols 1834.
[7] *Zanoni* 1842.
[8] *A strange story* 1862.
[9] *The haunted and the haunters: or the house and the brain* 1859.
[10] *The coming race* 1871.

with the astonishing power of *A Strange Story.* The characters, I acknowledge, are not always the best possible; but the book is the weirdest thing in European literature—nothing else gives so extraordinary a thrill. It does not matter whether you believe in the supernatural or not;—belief has nothing to do with the effect of the narrative, to read it. You have here the belief of the Rosicrucians; the belief of the ancient North; the belief of the individual as to witchcraft and magic, all combined together into one astonishing fiction, having every appearance of a scientific truth. The art is worthy of the scholarship. This is the story of a man—a very wicked man who has discovered secret means of prolonging his youth and strength and preserving his life through a period of hundreds of years. In order to do these things, however, he occasionally needs human help. His knowledge, the acquisition of centuries, gives him power to obtain all that wealth or society is capable of giving him, but the wonderful elixir by which he can live beyond the mortal term, that he cannot make without assistance. The tragedy of the book is the story of his failure to accomplish this—a failure caused by selfishness and cruelty. But the book is worth reading for much more than the mere romance of it: it is a masterpiece of romantic style often rising to the highest possible grade of poetical prose. *The Haunted and the Haunters* is simply the best ghost story ever written in any language or in any country. It is very short and ought to be read more than once. When I say the best ghost story, I do not mean that the narrative is more beautiful or more strange than any other ghost stories. Some of the old Greek ghost stories,—such as that about the girl whom her parents obliged to become a Christian, coming back after death to take away her lover, and to declare allegiance to the ancient Gods—are more beautiful and more strange. The merit of Bulwer-Lytton's story is in the quality of the thrill produced. It gives you, in a way, the same kind of fear as a bad dream; and it does this whether you happen to believe in ghosts or not. As for *The Coming Race* I think you know all about that book, and that you must have remarked how wonderfully well it

predicted the inventions and discoveries of things unknown in the author's day;—for example, there was no electric lighting when *The Coming Race* was published. There is yet one more thing to notice about the book;—namely that it is written in a very different style from any of the rest. Here Bulwer-Lytton adopts the plain clear prose of the 18th century, and drops his florid manner altogether.

You will see that it is rather difficult to decide the exact position of a man who writes so many different kinds of books, and changes his style in the most magical way to suit his subject. But as his best work is certainly the ghostly, I think we may say of him that he is the greatest writer of supernatural romance. Moreover he influenced literature very considerably in weird directions. Edgar Poe, on whom I lectured to you last year, is one of the very greatest creators of supernatural romance; and Edgar Poe was undoubtedly a pupil of Bulwer-Lytton. Those who attempt to study Bulwer-Lytton's work do not seem to have noticed this. Lately a whole series of strange stories by Poe have been clearly shown to owe their inspiration to Bulwer-Lytton's short story, *Monos and Daimonos.* In this story the style is so much like that of Poe that it is almost impossible to detect a difference.

DICKENS

As Scott was the great writer of historical romance, and Bulwer-Lytton the great creator of supernatural romance, so Charles Dickens[1] was the cultivator of what we may call the fantastic novel. You know that the fantastic means fanciful or whimsical, — and yet something more, something illusive, reality distorted. Fantastic art is an art in which a reality is depicted not as it is, not by those features which everybody knows, but by the exaggeration or application of some feature that especially strikes the artist. For example, a statue of a

[1] Charles Dickens (1812-1870).

lion that exactly represents the real form of a lion would be simply a work of art; but a statue of a lion in which the head and front feet would be made disproportionately and startlingly large for the purpose of exciting fear or wonder—that would be a fantastic work of art. Now when I say that Dickens wrote fantastic novels, I mean that he wrote stories of real life, in which the truth is always presented in a strange, exaggerated, whimsical way. All that he wrote is true, is real—and yet it is real only in the way that shadows in a concave mirror are reflections of real objects. Look at your face in such a curved mirror and you will find that it will become long or broad, accordingly as you turn the mirror, in the strangest goblin way. Yet it is you: you can recognize your face even though your nose appears three inches longer than it really is.

So much for the definition. Dickens, unlike the other great story-tellers mentioned, was not an educated man. He had but very little schooling, — he could read judiciously, and write charmingly; but there was nothing of the scholar in him. He began life as a newspaper reporter—a short-hand writer,—and he remained a journalist throughout a great part of his life. As to the upper circles of society he never really knew anything. He had friends even so aristocratic as Lord Lytton; but the friendship was only literary and Dickens never understood and never could have understood the existence of the leisure class, — the really refined class. But he understood exactly, marvelously, the life of his own class—the great middle class of London; and he understood what was below that—the life of workers, the artisans, the clerks, the poor,—lastly even the criminal classes. This was the life which he painted in his books, and he painted it as no one else had done before him. He looked at it as a caricaturist looks at things—most often, though not always, a gentle caricaturist who laughs without malice.

Please remember that I do not mean to depreciate Dickens in the least, when I tell you that he did not know the aristocratic in the literal sense. I only want to impress you with the fact that he was especially a painter of middle class life. That

is his especial position among novelists. And in referring to his methods as that of a caricaturist, I do not mean to speak disparagingly in any way; that was his particular genius,—the genius of the caricaturist: no other man in English literature ever possessed the same kind of genius in the same degree. And finally it is well to say that no more healthy, joyous, good moral books, were ever contributed to the literature of fiction than the novels of Dickens. Nevertheless I must tell you that they are not to be recommended in a general way to Japanese students. On the contrary I should advise you to read very little of Dickens for the present. Dickens can only be properly understood by a person who has lived a long time in England, and lived there from childhood. To understand the scenes and the characters one should have been especially in London. Having read Dickens in London I could feel the charm of him in a very vivid way; but I doubt extremely whether you could find any charm in his whimsical English middle class life. It was for some time a custom to read *The Cricket on the Hearth*[1] in Japanese schools; but I doubt whether a worse choice could have been made for the sake of Japanese students. Simple as the story appears to an English mind, it is utterly impossible for a Japanese student to understand it. No matter how much it may be explained, every paragraph in that little story treats of matters which do not exist in this country; even the picture of an English kitchen cannot be understood unless you have seen the real thing. Infinitely better would have been such stories as the wonderful railroad stories, collected under the title of *Mugby Junction*.[2] Those could be tolerably well understood by any one familiar with railroad life. I shall mention those of Dickens' novels which I think the best for general readers; but there is only one of them which I would strongly recommend, and that is a story of the French Revolution. I think that *Oliver Twist*[3] might be found enjoyable in part; if you can get it illustrated, so much the better. *Nicholas Nick-*

[1] *The cricket on the hearth. A fairy tale of home* 1846.
[2] *Mugby junction* 1866.
[3] *Oliver Twist or, the parish boy's progress. By Boz.* 3 vols. 1838. 2nd edn. 1838. Also 1839 and 1841.

leby[1] the famous satire on a certain class of English schools, deserves notice for reasons altogether independent of the subject. Finally *A Tale of Two Cities*[2] appears to me the only one of all the novels that could really fill us with a sudden passionate admiration for something noble and good. The story is very beautiful as well as very horrible—the story of a man who gives up his own life in order to save that of a friend condemned to the guillotine. But should any of you go to England, then it would be almost a duty for you to read Dickens right through with the life of London all about you. You would find Dickens better than a guide book; he would prove for you the great psychological interpreter.

THACKERAY

Each of the three writers spoken of, as we have seen, represents something entirely unique in literature. The next, and the greatest, is not unique in the same sense. He was rather the direct descendant of Henry Fielding; and he was the greatest novelist of the 19th century exactly as Fielding was the greatest novelist of the 18th century. It is hard to say that he was greater than Fielding—perhaps there is no greater novelist than Fielding. But of course the society of the 18th century and the society of the 19th century were vastly different, and the work of Thackeray probably excels the work of Fielding only in so far as it depicts different and superior conditions.

William Makepeace Thackeray[3] was not born in England, but in India, about the year 1811. He was of good family and his father who had long been in government service was able to give him an excellent education. He passed through public school, and attended the university, but did not take a degree.

[1] *The life and adventures of Nicholas Nickleby containing a faithful account of the fortunes, misfortunes, uprisings, downfallings, and complete career of the Nickleby family. Edited by Boz. With illustrations by Phiz* 1838. *Also* 1839.
[2] *A tale of two cities. With illustrations by H. K. Browne* 1859.
[3] William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863).

He had a very small fortune—just enough to keep him from want; and he turned to literature in order to increase his income without any idea of his own astonishing talents. These were first discovered when he was writing for the famous comic newspaper *Punch;* but he was much more than a comic writer. Later on, when he began to produce his wonderful work, literary men knew that the greatest of all English novelists since Fielding had appeared. The public did not know; that talent was too far above them. An ordinary genius quickly becomes known; — the extraordinary requires a long time to obtain general appreciation. Of course Thackeray as a novelist had a respectable sale and brought in some money; but Charles Dickens had fifty copies where Thackeray could sell only one. Probably Thackeray made more money by his comic writing which he never entirely gave up. He was not only the greatest novelist of the time, but in the highest sense the greatest humorist of his time. And this amazing faculty was also duplicated in his verse. At one time he would write poems that drew tears from all English eyes; the next moment he would write a comic song that would make people shout and scream with laughter. And there was nothing slip-shod about any of his work. It was always perfect in form. I hope to read a few of Thackeray's poems one of these days; and you will see what a very excellent poet he was. But whenever we find a talent of this sort we may be sure that it cannot prove very fertile—I mean that a man with such abilities must exhaust his nervous system very quickly through the exercise of his prodigious faculty; the higher the class of work, the more nervous cost of it; and the more likely it is to take away or shorten the life of its possessor. As a matter of course Thackeray died young. He produced about half a dozen novels, better than anything of the century: and he left behind him volumes of many other different kinds of work which will always be found delightful reading. But compared with the productions of Scott and Bulwer-Lytton or Dickens, Thackeray's work is small. It cost too much — probably shortened his life by at least 20 years. There is a strange and terrible law in artistic creation—a law

that even Shakespeare could not escape from. You may give life to your conceptions, to your dreams;—you can make them walk about the room and utter voices. But the life that you put into them must come out of your own life; and the operation of creating is dangerous.

As I said, the place of Thackeray is not unique, in the sense of establishing a new school or a new method. But he is the greatest literary artist of 19th century prose; the prince of 19th century fiction. He is this for exactly the same reason that Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist, because every figure which he creates has real life and force. But we may say that he was particularly the novelist of the upper class—the gentility and the aristocracy. Although a poor man, comparatively speaking, he was admitted to the highest and best society; and he knew society perfectly. For this reason it is astonishing that he should be so well able to write about the life and character of servants. Here again is the proof of astonishing versatility. Another astonishing thing about the work of this man is that,—no matter how varying the subject, whether comedy or satire, or history, or fiction,—the style is always the same; the finish is always exquisite. Of no other English novelist of the century can this be said: perhaps it cannot be said of any novelist of any century. At the age of 26 years he began to write; and he wrote for exactly 26 years—dying at the same age as Shakespeare: 52. Now during the whole of those 26 years his style never changed. It was just as good when he produced his first story about *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*,[1] as when he stopped in the middle of the last uncompleted book, just after writing the words "And his heart was filled with the most exquisite bliss."

Of the twenty-seven volumes into which Thackeray's work has been collected we need only mention a few titles, for a large part of his work consists of journalism,—charming funny things contributed to *Punch*, comic verse and delightful parodies—for Thackeray was the best parodist in all English liter-

[1] *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* Ptd in *Fraser* (4 nos.) Sept. — Dec. 1841. As *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* New York, 1848. Under original title 1849. Rptd in *Miscellanies* vol iv, 1857.

ature. (He would write a little story imitating the style of Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Disraeli, and others, so perfectly that from these parodies a student can learn more about the peculiarities of the original authors than from any amount of learned criticism.) However, excepting the parodies, the fun of Thackeray could scarcely interest you without an intimate knowledge of English life. For example, *The Book of Snobs*[1] or *The Yellowplush Papers*,[2] — you could scarcely hope to understand without a long acquaintance with mental vices of English society on the one hand, and of the eccentricities of English servants on the other. But the more serious work—the great novels and the great essays—these you should read and try to understand; for they represent the highest possibilities of plain prose, and the highest art of the dramatic presentation of life in the form of narrative and comment. I do not mean that it is necessary to read them all: read any of them which can most interest you. The great novels are *Vanity Fair*,[3] *Esmond*,[4] *Pendennis*,[5] *The Newcomes*,[6] and *The Virginians*;[7] — there are others, much lighter, of somewhat comical kind, which we need not dwell upon. But the five named are the greatest novels of the century. Two of them are historical — not historical *romances* in the style of Scott, but historical novels in the sense that they picture the social life of the past as vividly as if it were the present, and that they deal with the passions and emotions of the people, not with heroic events. Of these—*Esmond*, *The Virginians* — I think you would like *The Virginians* the best. The scenes are laid partly in England, partly in America,

[2] *The snobs of England, by one of themselves.* Ptd in *Punch*, 28 Feb. 1846-27 Feb. 1847. *The book of snobs*, with seven chapters, viz. XVII-XXIII, omitted 1848. New York, 1852.

[2] *The Yellowplush correspondence.* Pdt. in *Fraser's Magazine*, Nov. 1837—Aug. 1838. Philadelphia, 1838.

[3] *Vanity fair, pen and pencil sketches of English society.* Ptd in 20 serial nos., Jan. 1847 — July 1848. *Vanity fair, a novel without a hero*, 1848. Also 2 pt. New York, 1848. Revised edn. 1853. 2nd revised edn. 1863.

[4] *The history of Henry Esmond, Esq.* 3 vols. 1852. New York, 1852. Revised edn. 1858.

[5] *The history of Pendennis, his fortunes and misfortunes, his friends and his greatest enemy.* Ptd in 24 serial nos. Nov. 1848 — Dec. 1850. 2 vols: vol. I, 1849; vol. II, 1850. Also 2 vols. New York, 1850. Revised edn. 1863.

[6] *The Newcomes, memoirs of a most respectable family, ed. by Arthur Pendennis, Esq.* Ptd in 24 serial nos. Oct. 1853—Aug. 1855. 2 vols: vol. I, 1854; vol. II. 1855. 2 vols. New York, 1855. 1860, Last revised edn. 1863

[7] *The Virginians, a tale of the last century.* Ptd in 24 serial nos. Nov. 1857—Sept. 1859. 2 vols: vol. I, 1858; vol. II, 1859. New York, 1859.

in the time of George Washington, who figures in the story, not as an ideal hero, but as a very real human being. If you only study the way in which Thackeray treats the character of Washington, you will be able to perceive how very much more vivid and sincere his art is than that of other novelists. The other three books deal with English society, English life as Thackeray saw it in his own time; and he saw it as clearly as a philosopher, and as impartially as it is possible for the thoroughly good man to see what is bad, or weak or foolish in human nature—sometimes pitying, sometimes laughing, but always just and true. I am not sure whether you would care as much for *The Newcomes* as I do; it refers so much to particular conditions of English life. I think that you would like better *Vanity Fair;* and that is the greatest book. It is Thackeray's masterpiece, so far as any distinction can be made among so splendid a mass of work. Try to read that. You will find it curiously illustrated with little pictures. Thackeray used to illustrate his own novels; and though he was not a perfect artist in the matter of using the pencil, he was a very great artist indeed by the method in which he could present comical ideas, or satirize a foible in the expression of a face.

There is yet another division of Thackeray's work which you cannot afford to ignore,—the great essays. Any one who reads the historical novels of Thackeray must see that he had the same extraordinary kind of natural ability for historical work as Macaulay. And indeed it would be difficult to say which of the two men wrote the most brilliant historical essays. Thackeray's are less well known; but that is all the more reason why you should read them. I need only to give the title of one matchless book,—the history of *The Four Georges.*[1]

Minor Novelists

The above four authors represent the great group of the

[1] *The four Georges: sketches of manners, morals, court and town life.* Ptd in *The Cornhill* (4 nos.), July–Oct. 1860. New York, 1860. 1861.

pre-Victorian era—one of them being the greatest of the century. As for the other three we shall find equals for them in the next period. Here I am not speaking of Scott who properly belongs to both centuries. As about four suns might circle a host of planets, so about the great group revolve to their mood a host of lesser lights. For the novel once developed, the blossoming was multitudinous, amazing,—the great century of the novel was beginning. It would be waste of time and study even to memorize the names of all. But a few secondary names are scarcely less important to the history of this period of literature than are the names of the first class. As Scott and Thackeray and Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens each represented a kind of fiction, so do certain secondary names; and the fiction is not the same. There remains to be noticed the romance of horror, the military novel, the naval novel, the philosophical novel and various works of fiction difficult to class under any one.

Last year I traced for you the history of the early development of the romance of horror; but we have some reason to dwell further upon the subject in treating of this period—which witnessed the close of this particular movement. The highest expression of the terrible in a supernatural way was given by Bulwer-Lytton in those astounding romances of which I spoke the other day. After that the literature of terror temporarily ended. It was impossible to do anything further. But before Bulwer-Lytton wrote *A Strange Story*, two very dreadful books had been published, which will always be remembered. One of them has become a classic, I mean the *Frankenstein*,[1] of Mrs. Shelley,[2] — the second wife of the poet, and the daughter of William Godwin. During their sojourn in Italy, Byron, Matthew Lewis, Shelley, and Mrs. Shelley, meeting together, agreed that each member of the party should write one dreadful story. But only two of them kept their words; Lewis and Mrs. Shelley. Her story is the story of a young student called "Frankenstein," who has discovered how to make a man by chemistry: he tries

[1] *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus* 1818.
[2] Mrs. Percy Shelley *nee* Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1797-1851).

to make a very beautiful man, but he only succeeds in making a very frightful monster. The story has been especially successful as a moral tale; and by its moral it can never die. The other story by Charles Robert Maturin,[1] is chiefly important as an influence; it furnished inspiration to a host of writers, and is said to have affected even the work of the poet Rossetti. At all events the best critics judge it to possess literary merit of a strange kind. This book is called *Melmoth, the Wanderer* — it was originally published in 1820 in four volumes. It is the story of a man who has sold his soul to the devil in return for the gift of long life in this world; that is to say, he agrees to be burned forever in hell, provided that he is enabled to live for some centuries in this world, young, and strong, and rich. Very probably Bulwer-Lytton got several of his ideas from this book. But the devil and the man make their bargain this way: —if the man, Melmoth, can find within the time of 150 years any human being willing to exchange places with him, then he can escape his doom. Naturally he endeavours to save himself by finding such a person, and he wanders all over the world looking for very unhappy people and offering them relief, wealth, whatever they want on condition of going to hell in his place. But the friendship and gratitude of men, the love and devotion of women, are not sufficient to produce the willingness to make such a sacrifice. For example, a mother sees her child about to be strangled and is told that she can save it by taking Melmoth's bargain off his hands: she prefers that the child should die. There are many faults of construction in the story—extraordinary faults. But there are very strongly and finely written pages of descriptions; and the chapters devoted to the subjects of the inquisition and of convent life are strangely powerful. The book is an instance of what mere false imagination cannot accomplish without any real knowledge of the art of telling a story. Maturin wrote many other books, but none of them need be noticed. He was an Irish clergyman; and he wrote stories only to make a little money, because his salary as a preacher was not sufficient to support him.

[1] Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824).

The military novel and the naval novel were represented in this period by two men of considerable fame, respectively Charles Lever and Captain Marryat.

Lever,[1] a very well-educated man, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and welcomed in the best society, became a doctor by profession, much as Fielding became a lawyer. There was much resemblance in the vigorous, life-loving, joyous disposition of both; and both turned away from the profession which they had studied for the love of literature. Lever had a great many college friends in the army;—he knew the life of regiments—at least the life of their aristocratic officers; and he set to work to write about it much in the style of Fielding —though with less genius. Three of his books may be mentioned: *Charles O'Malley*,[2] *Harry Lorrequer*[3] and *Tom Burke of 'Ours.'*[4] The first and the third are the more remarkable; and though all are good, *Charles O'Malley* is by common consent the public favourite. I fear that you would be disappointed, however, in trying to read these — especially if you imagine that they would tell you much about active military life. It is not the active side of military life which Lever relates, but the social side,—the relation of the army to Dublin and London fashionable society. I could not recommend Lever's books for literary study; but they must be mentioned as they prepared the way for thousands of military novels. Lever was the founder of a school; and the military stories of to-day continue to show his influence. It is otherwise with the naval novels of Captain Marryat. Captain Marryat[5] was really a captain—a commander in the English Navy; and he was engaged in the wars with Napoleon;—afterwards he was in China and in the Malay campaigns of the first part of the century. Promotion, however, is very slow in the English Navy; and Marryat preferred to write books. He left the service when already a middle-aged man, and produced a great number of sea-novels

[1] Charles James Lever (1806-1872).
[2] *Charles O'Malley, the Irish dragoon* 1841.
[3] *The confessions of Harry Lorrequer.* Ptd in *Dublin University Magazine,* Feb. 1837.
[4] *Tom Burke of 'Ours'* 1844.
[5] Frederick Marryat (1792-1848).

which have always been popular and are still extensively read by the young. The English boy who does not read Marryat may be said to miss an opportunity of education. Although written for grown-up people, the novel became so popular with the young that the publishers persuaded the writer to write some adventures particularly for boys. And these sell as well as they ever did. The subjects of the novels are, as might be expected, of very great variety—dealing with sea-adventure in almost every part of the world. Of the very numerous works of Frederick Marryat the most famous perhaps is *Peter Simple*;[1] and it is perhaps the best to begin with—as a test for the question whether you like him. If you like him—and he is a splendid story-teller,—then I should advise you to read also *Jocob Faithful*,[2] *Japhet in Search of a Father*,[3] and *Mr Midshipman Easy*.[4] To a great extent the four books above mentioned represent personal experience. This is not the case with *The Privateersman*;[5] but that powerful narrative might interest you in quite another way; it is a thrilling book. As for the juvenile work, the best of Marryat's books beyond question is *Masterman Ready*,[6]—I don't hesitate to say that I think it is a better book than *Robinson Crusoe* which it partly resembles in plan. If you can get this book in the Bohn edition, which is interestingly illustrated, I think you ought to read it; the fact that it was originally written for boys, makes no difference--the English is an excellent example of narrative style. Moreover the book is now interesting for other reasons than those which once made it famous; the conditions which it describes are impossible to-day, and it so represents almost historically the possibilities of 60 or 70 years ago. There is but one other thing to say about Captain Marryat,—that he perfected what Smollett had begun. Smollett, you know, was the first who wrote sea-stories from personal knowledge of the sea, and Marryat, writing from much larger and longer experience and with a more than equal gift of narration, far surpassed Smollett in this direction. He is the greatest novelist of the sea to this very day—notwithstanding all that has since been done by writers

[1] 1834. [2] 1834. [3] 1836. [4] 3 vols. 1836. [5] 1844. [6] 1841.

like W. Clarke Russell. Indeed there is only one person with whom I should like to compare him; and that is Mr. Frank Bullen[1] who is writing sea stories at this very moment. Bullen has a strange history. He went to sea as a little rugged boy, who saved himself from starving, gradually worked his way up to the position of first mate; — then left the sea in order to marry, and successfully attempted to make a living for his family by writing of his experiences as a sailor. He now writes for the London *Spectator* a good deal—proof positive that he is a master of style; and his books are published by Macmillan. But there is this difference between Bullen and Marryat, that Bullen is not a novelist, but only a story-teller, and that he has not yet given any sign of his ability to write a novel. If he ever manages to do so, he may become a rival of Marryat: but otherwise I should say that Marryat still remains without an equal in his particular field of fiction.

Two other kinds of novels remain to be noticed. The philosophical novel is one of them—perhaps I had better say the satiric philosophical novel; in any case the kind is hard to class. The man who fairly introduced it was Thomas Love Peacock. Before Peacock there was Lawrence Sterne about whom we talked last year; and Sterne came very near to writing a philosophical novel. But nevertheless he did not actually give his work that shape;—Peacock was the first to do it well. There is no other writer in the whole world of English fiction exactly like Peacock. He was a man of great gifts, large scholarship and a strong tendency to consider all things human as more or less contemptible at times. He had the satirical temperament—not of the gloomy, but of the joyous kind; and all his novels are satires of social conditions of some sort. They are rarely ill-natured, though always very sharp. They seldom touch on persons in particular, and treat of things in general. But once at least he caricatured a friend in one of his novels and that friend happened to be the poet Shelley. Shelley does not seem to have been much hurt, nevertheless—perhaps because he was too sweet-tempered to show it; anyhow he always

[1] **Frank Thomas Bullen (1857-1915).**

remained a good friend of Peacock. The favourite plan of Peacock was this: he assembles together a great number of different characters, at the beginning of the story—characters of the most various kind, representing the most opposite opinions; —then he makes them argue together through the book, and the end of the whole thing proves very clearly, for the reader, the vanity of human knowledge and the stupidity of human opinion. In *Headlong Hall*,[1] for example, we have a story of a wealthy Welsh squire who wants to be a patron of literature and learning, and therefore assembles in his house men of many different professions and scholars of different schools. There are Christian clergymen, and there are atheists. There are positive philosophers of the Hobbes kind and there are sentimentalists. And every day when these meet at dinner, they argue furiously together. At the end of the story you more than laugh; for the book forces you to think in a new way about the relative worth of doctrines and of philosophical systems. Everything has been proved ridiculous—the right as well as the wrong. Not because the right in itself is not always right and the wrong in itself not always wrong, but because the men who argue for either side are very apt to argue without knowing the subject. Another book of the same kind is *Gryll Grange*.[2] Here it is quite astonishing to observe how English prejudice and English cant are ridiculed. But I am not mentioning these books as being necessarily the best. You ought to read everything that Peacock wrote if you can. He wrote nothing bad and he is always a master of 18th century style. There is his peculiarity. He detested the romantics—had no sympathy whatever with the new movement in literature; but he invented a new kind of novel, and he wrote with the grace of Gray and the force of Swift. He lived to be a very old man, dying only in 1866. I can remember when a boy buying one of his freshly issued publications.—The principal of his works, excluding mention of short stories and occasional poems—are *Headlong Hall, Nightmare Abbey*[3] (this is the work in which Shelley was caricatured), *Gryll Grange, The Misfor-*

[1] 1816. [2] 1816. [3] 1818.

tunes of Elphin[1] and *Maid Marian.*[2] All of his work can now be obtained in half a dozen neat volumes; he was not a prolific writer;—he was much too careful to produce much. Another kind of novel was invented, never to be imitated, by George Borrow.[3] Borrow to-day is again in favour, new editions of his are constantly coming out; and his life in two large volumes has lately been published. But I think that the interest attaching to Borrow himself is the chief cause of interest now felt in his books. It is exactly opposite in the case of Peacock. The work of Peacock so much interests us that we can enjoy it very well without knowing anything about his personality, but you will care for Borrow's work only, I imagine, when you have heard the extraordinary history of the man, one of the most eccentric Englishmen in the whole history of literature.

George Borrow was the son of an English army officer, and, although fairly educated, does not appear to have enjoyed the highest advantage of university training. But he has an astounding natural faculty for languages; and from an early period he took up subjects of linguistic study which were at that time strange to most Englishmen,—languages of Eastern Europe, of the Turkish province, of Persia, and he also studied and mastered the Celtic languages. His natural tastes were thus in the direction of philology; but his character was the very reverse of that which seems to be necessary for success in scholarship. He was by nature a wanderer, a man who hated to remain long in one place, and who would not submit to control of any sort. Moreover he detested society and all its conventions,—preferring to associate with common people, and to associate especially with gypsies. Perhaps you know that this strange people of gypsies, who first appeared in Europe in the early middle ages, and who may have originally come from India, constitute a very singular society of their own, in the midst of civilized society. They have no religion, no class conventions, and no fixed places of residence. They refuse to live in town; and even when they own houses they prefer to rent

[1] 1829.
[2] 1822.
[3] George Borrow (1803-1881).

them, and seldom or never stay in them. Like the birds they go south in winter, and north in summer. You see them often camping by roadsides in England, America, Australia, and in almost any country of Europe; and they seem to you, unless you have an experienced eye, just like ordinary poor people — vagrants, or travelling artisans. Artisans many of them are; travelling blacksmiths and tinsmiths; but they are better known as horse dealers. Their women tell fortunes, and often appear as dancers or female gymnasts in travelling shows. But, really, these people are of a very distinct race; they can speak the language of the country in which they happen to be; but they have also a language of their own called the Romany. Among this class there have always been a great number of famous athletes —especially boxers, wrestlers, professional acrobats. In short this wandering race has almost always lived "by its wits."

These are the people who particularly fascinated Borrow, as indeed they fascinated many men just as clever as Borrow himself. As far back as the 17th century we have a story about an Oxford scholar, who ran away from his university to become a gipsy: Matthew Arnold made this story the subject of a very celebrated poem: *The Scholar-Gipsy.* In quite recent times we had the "scandal," as it was called, of an English nobleman marrying a gipsy—a match which ended unhappily for both parties. I mention these things out of hundreds merely to show that it was not strange that Borrow should have been attracted by this people—by their freedom of life, their outdoor existence, their strange customs, strange language and strange arts. He learned their language and their occupations —sometimes working as a blacksmith, sometimes bargaining as a horse dealer, sometimes appearing as a thinker. Perhaps it is curious that he never married among them, and that he always found himself able to return to city life when he pleased. Even while playing gipsy, he was writing essays and looking for publishers. His work was good; but he had no university influence, no scholarly friends to help him with publishers; and he almost despaired of getting into print, when he was offered some work by the Bible Society. This work was simply to

distribute Bibles in Spain, and to act as agent there for the Society. That was just what Borrow wanted. Of all countries in Europe, Spain was then, as it still is, especially the country of the gipsies. Borrow went to Spain, distributed plenty of Bibles, satisfied the Society; but he lived most of the time with the Spanish gipsies, studying matters that had nothing to do with the Bible at all. When he came back he had no difficulty in finding a publisher for his new book, *The Bible in Spain*[1] — one of the most romantic books of travel ever published. You must not be deceived by the title; it is merely a book about the gipsy. Borrow had discovered the affinity of their language with languages of India; and he had prepared a dictionary of gipsy. After this he wrote many curious books about his wanderings, the most personal of which is perhaps *Lavengro;*[2] another of his books *The Romany Rye*[3] has been dramatized. It would not be quite correct to call any one of these books a novel; but two of them very closely approach the form of the novel; and we have to class Borrow with the novelist, because we cannot class him with anybody else. Of course as a philologist, he might have a particular place, but only a very small part of his philological work, which was enormous, has ever been published. Late in life he returned to civilization, married, and, as the English call it, "settled down"; but he always remained a somewhat solitary person, and was considered a dangerous man to talk with. His gipsy manners always clung to him and, if anybody offended him in conversation, he would immediately knock the man down without explaining why. Eccentric as he was, he is now fairly acknowledged to be a genius in many directions—only one of which concerns us here. He had a great art of simple and vigourous narrative—romantic narrative couched in the purest and strongest English. Any one of the books which I have mentioned would be good to read; to-day *Lavengro* is the most highly praised.

And now must be said a word about Benjamin Disraeli,[4]— the Jew who afterwards became Prime Minister of England,

[1] 1843. [2] 1851. [3] 1857.
[4] Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881).

and one of the greatest Tory Ministers that England ever had. This many-sided man was clever at literature in a particular way; his family was a literary one. The best known of his work in fiction belongs to a later time; but his first novels appeared before the Victorian era, and we may as well speak of them here. They are wonderfully clever books; but none of them could be recommended to you in point of form.

Really Disraeli cared much more for what he had to say than about the way in which he should say it. He was careless and extravagant about his style and even about the structure of his novel; but he could write novels of a kind unlike anything else. His later novels, of which *Lothair*[1] is perhaps the best, are interesting politically and socially. His early novels take almost the character of romances, but are founded always upon some knowledge of facts. One of his mighty novels is *Venetia*,[2] and the reason that it interests you, is that it is really the life of Byron.

The Female Novelists

In the case of the masculine novelists, we could make easily three divisions or ranks instead of two. But in the case of the female novelists of this time we need only to dwell upon names of the first class. And the reason is this. Women had not been sufficiently educated in former centuries to figure much in the class of persons who wrote for a living; and after education had given them the necessary capacity, still it was considered somewhat unbecoming for a lady to write novels. The poorer class of women were very slightly educated. Still precedents in the 17th century had not been in favour of the female novelist. There were women in the time of the Restoration, for example, who had written shameless things; and we can well imagine a parent in the second half of the 18th or the first half of the 19th century, asking a literary daughter in alarm,

[1] 3 vols. 1870. [2] 1837.

"Do you want to become like Mrs. Aphra Behn?" [Mrs. Behn who wrote plays and novels was a very licentious writer (1640—1690)]. Even in the early part of the 19th century there lingered a good deal of prejudice of the same kind. In short the taking up of this branch of literature successfully by women properly belongs to the pre-Victorian era. Female novelists then appeared as a new phenomenon of social development. During the Victorian era, they were in number not hundreds, but thousands. However, before that period, there were not a dozen names of note; and of these we need not mention half a dozen. First, however, let me say that we must go back to the 18th century for the root of the new growth. It began with Miss Frances Burney;[1] and we should have no right to count her but for the fact that she actually published a novel in 1778. She lived to be very old and she is known generally in literature by her married name of Madame D'Arblay. The name you perceive is French; and her husband was a French refugee. She was the daughter of a great friend of Dr. Johnson,—namely Dr. Burney, who wrote a history of music. At an early age she brought out a comical novel—the first good comical novel written by an English woman—*Evelina.*[2] This book which immediately made her famous is still read; it is a very good novel describing the first entrance of a young girl into society, and gently ridiculing the follies of the time. It was a time, however, in which success had its dangers. Queen Charlotte took notice of Miss Burney, and offered her a situation as waiting-maid in the palace; and her father forced her to accept it. She kept the position for nearly five years; and it nearly caused her death, as well as ruined her talent. Place a person of imaginative genius in a position of such awful constraint as the conventions of a palace require, and the faculty is certain to be destroyed. But, in the court of Queen Charlotte, the conditions were exceptionally neat and even cruel. After she left her place as attendant upon the Queen, she really did nothing more of any importance for literature proper. But she left be-

[1] Frances Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay (1752-1840).
[2] *Evelina, or the history of a young lady's entrance into the world* 1778.

hind her some volumes of memoirs,—a kind of diary, which had great interest at the time, and was the subject of a celebrated essay by Lord Macaulay. If you want to know more about the story of her life you will do well to read that essay; but it is only necessary now to remember that Miss Burney was the first of the great line of female novelists which continued all through the 18th century down to the present time.

Miss Burney married; but her great successors remain all maids. There were three and you will easily remember their names,—Miss Edgeworth, Miss Ferrier, Miss Austen. The last named was the greatest. When I say the greatest I must also tell you that you must not think of her as a minor novelist. There is no English novelist greater than Miss Austen. She had a talent which has been compared to that of Shakespeare. She was certainly the equal of Fielding—although the nature of her life, and the range of her experience was much smaller. But we must take these three female writers in their natural order.

I shall first speak of Miss Edgeworth,[1] — because her relation to literature, through Scott, precedes, in respect of influence, that of the others. She might be called the first female Irish novelist;—all her books of this class relating more or less to Irish life. She was the daughter of a strange gentleman, tolerably rich, and very eccentric, who married no less than four times; in other words, Miss Edgeworth had three step-mothers, one after the other, and she must have had extraordinary tact and sweetness of temper to pass her whole life under such conditions without serious trouble of any kind. In spite of all the step-mothers she remained ever her father's best-beloved confident and friend; and he really sympathized with her literary tastes and cultivated them as much as he could. Miss Edgeworth made her first success with a book called *Castle Rackrent*,[2] a novel describing the troubles and follies of an Irish family, reduced by their own fault from wealth to beggary. The book might still be taken for a faithful paint-

[1] Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849).
[2] *Castle Rackrent: an Hibernian tale*, 1800.

ing of certain conditions in Ireland of to-day. Another very successful book was *Ormond*,[1] — also dealing with Irish life. *Belinda*,[2] on the other hand, treats of London society: but the Irish characters in it are sufficient to justify its classification as the work of an Irish novelist. These three novels are her best; she wrote about eleven in all, not to speak of volumes of short stories, some of which you probably know. And besides all this fiction, Miss Edgeworth wrote a great many books for young people—juvenile books, as we call them. These were all composed with a didactic purpose; they do not rise to the first rank—perhaps for that very reason; but they became a part of English standard moral literature. All children were at one time obliged to read Miss Edgeworth's story about "Good Boys and Good Girls."

But the only fact about Miss Edgeworth which is more important in English literature than all her own productions put together, is that she first inspired Sir Walter Scott to write his wonderful Waverley novels. It was after reading her stories of Irish life that Scott first obtained the idea of writing novels of Scotch life. And the authority for this statement is Sir Walter Scott himself. He printed the statement very nobly and generously, that it was she who had inspired and taught him. We must always remember Miss Edgeworth in relation to Sir Walter Scott.

The next of the female novelists to be mentioned is Miss Suzan Ferrier (1782—1854). Miss Ferrier did for Scotland very much what Miss Edgeworth did for Ireland—but in a different way. She was also a great friend of Sir Walter Scott—indeed she took care of him in his last years. She was the daughter of an Edinburgh lawyer, an old friend of Scott's family. She wrote only three novels, — long novels, — respectively called *Marriage*,[3] *The Inheritance*,[4] and *Destiny*.[5] These novels are very good of their kind — though their kind is restricted to the particular society with which Miss Ferrier was perfectly

[1] *Ormond, a tale* 1817.
[2] 1801.
[3] *Marriage, a novel* 1818.
[4] 1824.
[5] *Destiny; or the chief's daughter,* 1831.

familiar. Good judges think her work is better than the novels of Miss Edgeworth; but I doubt whether such a comparison can justly be made. Miss Ferrier does not write at all in the tone of Miss Edgeworth – she is much more ironical; she satirizes with great skill and nevertheless without being ill-natured. Perhaps the novel *Marriage* is the best book to test your liking for her—if you like that, you will read the rest. But, for Japanese students, her work is less suited than that of Miss Edgeworth: it is very Scotch; and I doubt if you could understand the manners described in certain chapters — manners of old-fashioned Scotch country people, who must be known to be really understood. Miss Ferrier died unmarried. She is not much read to-day except by men of letters.

The last of the female novelists whom I am now mentioning, as belonging to the early part of the century, Miss Jane Austen (1775—1817) was as markedly English as Miss Edgeworth was Irish and Miss Ferrier was Scotch. She was the daughter of a country clergyman; and she lived all her life in the country, knowing only and seeing only a very small part of the world. She herself compared her work to a fine engraving made upon a little piece of ivory only two inches square;—and the comparison is really true. The ivory surface was small enough; but the artist was one of the greatest that ever made drawings of human life. Indeed as I said before, Miss Austen is only inferior to Fielding or Thackeray by the mere fact that her life was narrow. The daughter of an English clergyman was of course very strictly brought up, and she was obliged all her life to obey a whole round of conventions—religious conventions, aristocratic conventions, and purely local conventions of a multitudinous kind. She could only write about what she saw; and she was not allowed to see many things. Moreover there was a prejudice, even in her own family, on the subject of the writing of novels by a lady. Some people say that it was chiefly for this reason that her first novels were not published for more than 20 years after they had been written; and that the last three of her novels were not published until after she was dead. There may be some truth in this. But it is equally

true that publishers to whom the novels were offered, would not publish them; they were too fine. Indeed, even to-day, it requires good literary training to appreciate the extraordinary merits of her books. No common vulgar person could understand at all, that is, at all below the surface. She wrote altogether six novels: *Northanger Abbey*,[1] *Sense and Sensibility*,[2] *Pride and Prejudice*,[3] *Mansfield Park*,[4] *Emma*,[5] and *Persuasion*.[6] To say which is the best of these were just as hard as to say which is the best of Thackeray's novels; all are good; but *Pride and Prejudice* is thought by various critics to be the best. It is the story of a young girl who rejects an offer of marriage simply because the noble person who makes it has been rude to her family. That is all—and certainly the statement suggests a very thin plot. But the plot is really no thinner than that of some of Shakespeare's plays, and the dramatic truth and vividness of the characters is really Shakespearian. I imagine that you would better like *Sense and Sensibility*—a story of two sisters: one is sensible, that is to say, hard and practical, with the shrewd knowledge of the world; the other is emotional, full of sensibility (sensitiveness), and of course has a great deal more to bear. *Persuasion* is also a novel that might interest you: it shows the character of a girl who has the virtue of patience even to the degree of fault,—who allows herself to be perpetually imposed upon by her family, by her friends, by almost anybody who is allowed to obtain access to her. Still I am not sure whether you could like Austen or not. You ought to try to read at least one of them. But the kind of life described, the kind of people described, the suffering and the follies described, would probably seem very strange to most of you. Really, unless we can feel some sympathy with the people of the fiction that we read, we can get only small benefit from the reading. If you can like Miss Austen, I think it will be chiefly because you are able to find in certain phases studies of really sweet characters who may remind you of Japanese girls. Above all things remember that Miss Austen is especially the novelist of the young girl—not that she ever wrote

[1] 1797-1803-16. [2] 1797-1811. [3] 1796-1812. [4] 1811-13. [5] 1814-15. [6] 1815-16.

for young girls, but that she understood them astonishingly well, and knew how to paint their characters, and to show exactly how they would act under almost any conceivable circumstance. Now she does not paint a girl merely by saying that the young person had such an appearance and such a disposition—never! She paints her by making her act and talk; and from what the girl says and does, you are obliged to know the character. Now the really good girl, the sweet girl, is, in all countries, very much the same in the best respects; and in spite of the fact that Miss Austen's girls are very English, I think that you would find out that they are also at times very fine Japanese. Now the best way to remember this group of three —here we need not count Miss Burney—is by the nationality of their work. We can tabulate them:—

Miss Maria Edgeworth . .	Irish.
Miss Suzan Ferrier . . .	Scotch.
Miss Jane Austen	English.

The Graver Prose and its Great Masters

So far we have been dealing with the prose of fiction only; and it is now time to speak of the forms of prose which better express the literary movement of thec entury. The romantic triumph, as it is called, was no less marked before the Victorian period in prose than in poetry. Stated in the simplest possible way, the important fact for the student to remember is that 19th century prose attempted to do what had formerly been done in verse only—or almost only.

For, be it observed, there is truly no such thing as a sudden invention, a sudden change in literary production. All things are growths, which develop gradually and which can be traced back to their earliest simple beginnings. It would not be quite correct to say that the 19th century gave us any kind of prose which had never been written before. There was poetical prose in the time of Elizabeth. There was magnificent romantic

prose in the 17th century—of which the finest example is the work of Sir Thomas Browne. In the 18th century it is true that the tendency of prose was to severity. And this tendency lasted well into the 19th century. But it would not be right to say that romantic prose begins with the 19th century. It does not;—and yet we can boldly state that the 19th century is the English age of romantic prose—because the tendency to this form first dominated in that century.

A word now about romantic prose. Romantic prose differs from other prose not only in the fact that it breaks the classic rules of severe composition, but also in the fact that it attempts to do almost everything that verse can do. It appeals at once to the ear as well as to the eye;—it produces very nearly, if not quite, the same effects of colour that poetry gives, and also much of the effect of sound. Also, like poetry, it expresses individual feeling, *personal* emotion. You know that the tendency of all classic composition is to the *impersonal*—to the suppression of all peculiarities, eccentricities, individualisms, by which the work of one man can be readily distinguished from the work of another. If the classic idea could be perfectly carried out (which is impossible owing to the imperfection of the language itself) every person who wrote classic prose would write like every other person who wrote classic prose. But in romantic prose, on the other hand, the individual expresses himself—his peculiar emotion, his particular sense of beauty, whether in form, sound or sense. In other words he has even more liberty than the poet—since he is not confined by laws of meter.

So much for introductory observations. One thing more only remains to tell you; the classic prose continued into the century, in modified form; and we are not going to treat only of romantic prose writers, but of both kinds. Of the greatest prose masters of the century three belong to the period before Victorian; and each of the three represents something different. These three were Macaulay, Carlyle, and De Quincey. If we should take them in the order of their birth, we should not take them in the order of their influence, nor in the order of

their literary relation. The literary relation is the most important one; and for that reason we shall take Macaulay first, though he was five years younger than Carlyle. He best represents the link between 18th century and 19th century prose.

MACAULAY

Thomas Babington Macaulay[1] was born exactly in 1800—so that it is very easy to place him; and as he died in 1859, you know from the date of his birth at once that he had not yet reached his 60th year at the time of his death. You know a great deal already,—must know a great deal about Macaulay as a writer. I presume that you also know how very fortunate and brilliant his life was. Privately educated, he entered Cambridge University at the early age of 18, and there distinguished himself in the very same direction in which he afterwards became famous. So matured were his powers in early youth that even some of his poems and other compositions contributed to a college magazine are still worth reading. We can trace even in his university work of that time all those characteristics which afterwards marked his prose. Immediately upon leaving the University he found that his father was ruined; and he at once announced his resolve to restore the fortunes of the family. Then he began writing; and in those days writing was well paid under particular circumstances. Politics helped a little, of course. The editor of *The Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey, wanted a young man of liberal tendencies—"Whig"—to help him; and Macaulay was recommended. His essay on *Milton* first made him famous; and he was famous at 25 years of age. The Government looked for clever men of good character to further its own interest; and Macaulay was soon called to a good position. Next we hear of him in Parliament—the most brilliant speaker of his time; next he was sent to India, to occupy the important post of President of the Council, to frame

[1] Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay (1800-1859).

a new code of laws for India, and to direct the system of Indian education. It was in India that he obtained himself the material for those wonderful essays upon *Clive* and *Hastings* which you have all read. He returned from India with enough money to restore his family to wealth and position and live independently for the rest of his life. But the Government and the public would not let him rest—nor did his own nature incline to a life of ease. He continued to write for the great review; he published his *Lays of Ancient Rome*;[1] he laid the plan for his wonderful *History of England*.[2] Again he was member of Parliament; he was Post-master General. Eventually he became a peer,—Lord Macaulay, perhaps the most highly respected person of his time; and his *History* alone would have made him rich. The *History* has been translated into eleven European languages; and in German alone there are no less than six different translations of it. Facts of the kind are too large not to demand attention. Unfortunately he died before the last volume was completed.

Now for some brief consideration of his literary influence. It was enormous, educational, far-reaching, enduring, to a degree difficult to express in a few words. It is still very great; but there has been in this period of literary degradation, some reaction against it. Shallow minds have tried to decry it, and also, I am sorry to say, some brilliant, but narrow minds. Perhaps the greatest name among those who have spoken ill of Macaulay, as a poet, was Matthew Arnold; but Matthew Arnold was very often mistaken in his judgment and Matthew Arnold also at one time declared that Tennyson was not much of a poet. One must not be deceived by criticism of this kind. The judgement of the whole English race for half a hundred years still is that Macaulay is their greatest writer; and the judgment of a whole race, thus tested by time, is not likely to be altogether wrong. I am glad to read, in so cautious and so conservative a critic as Professor Saintsbury, the plain statement that only a vulgar and uncultivated person can belittle

[1] *Lays of ancient Rome* 1842 and many later edns.
[2] *The history of England from the accession of James II.* 5 vols. 1848-1860. (Vol. V, ed. by Trevelyan, Lady.) Many later edns. 8 vols. 1858-62.

or try to belittle Macaulay's merit from the literary point of view. You will find that all the highest English critics are on the same side. The reaction against Macaulay merely implies want of culture on the part of those who read it. Still his *Essays*[1] remain the best of their kind ever written. Still his *Lays* remain unapproached in the vigour and strength and brilliancy of their clear verse—remember that they were offered only as ballads,—and, no matter what historic criticism may choose to say about the defects of Macaulay's *History* as history, it has taught a whole generation of historians how to write history; and it is the most brilliant monument of vivid history, from a literary point of view, ever produced in the language. Partisan? Yes. But remember that every attractive history is partisan—if you find a history that is not, you will also find a history that is not literary. The only other European historian whom we can fairly compare with Macaulay from a purely literary point of view is Taine. And Taine is not less valuable because he happened to be conservative. Another brilliant historian Michelet was very partisan on a liberal side; but everybody must read him. You might as well say that a statesman is a partisan as to say that a historian is a partisan; — both necessarily represent party to the same degree that they represent active force. But we are here concerned with the history as literature; and as literature it ranks very high indeed —perhaps there is nothing higher in the whole historic produc- which can be qualified as romantic in method. I do not mean to say that Macaulay is superior to Gibbon. But the two cannot be compared at all. You can only compare Macaulay with men who have written history in the romantic way; and there, he has not, in England at least, any equal.

But, although I call Macaulay a literary romantic by his methods, I do not mean to call him romantic by his style. He is romantic only because he believed that his history should be as interesting as any romance without imagining anything improbable, and because he taught people how this could be

[1] *Critical and historical Essays contributed to The Edinburgh Review,* 3 vols. 1843, and later edns.

done. That he was right, the judgment of all Europe justifies. But in style, Macaulay departed only a very little from the classical tradition. He was a most excellent classical scholar; and he wrote on classical lines with a profusion of classical forms—chiefly modelling them upon Gibbon. What he really did was to modify Gibbon's style to lighter usage: he took the solemnity out of it, made it less impersonal—warmed it with a certain quality of personal feeling—rendered it more flexible and more modern. Also he used a little, a very little, romantic leaven at times—when he could do so without breaking rules. His main purpose was clarity; and there is not even any French writer who is more clear. But we must place Macaulay among the classical writers—a very classic of classics. He loved everything in the classic form—the rolling peal, the antithesis, the perfect balance, the law of contrast, the law of unity. A great classic master, wielding a perfectly beautiful classic style, but altogether romantic by his method of appealing to imagination — that is Macaulay. Of his particular excellencies, none is more striking than his clearness. More scholarly English was never used — only a great scholar could write such English. But who ever found Macaulay obscure? Even to the Japanese student of an ordinary middle school, Macaulay is comparatively easy reading—easier than many a badly constructed text in some popular reader. But it would be a most unhappy mistake to think that he is not worth study because he is easy to understand. On the contrary it is just for that reason that he is supremely worthy of study; for his astonishing clearness is entirely the result of purity of English and perfect knowledge of expression. But never try to imitate. No man has been able to do that successfully—though it has been tried for fifty years in England. To write like Macaulay one must have a mind like Macaulay; and minds of that kind are likely to appear less than half a dozen times in the course of a thousand years.

I suppose that I need not cite to you what to read in Macaulay;—you know his books: if you did not, the best advice in any case would be simply this,—"Read anything—ex-

cept his purely political essays." But in the case of the next great writer, it would not be possible to advise in the same generous way. Carlyle can be read to advantage by you only under direction, and it would be very unfortunate to imagine that all his work is of excellence.

CARLYLE

Thomas Carlyle[1] was born in 1794 or 1795, in the little Scotch village of Ecclefechan—the son of a peasant, as Burns was, but of a well-to-do peasant, as Burns was not. His father at one time was a stone-mason, and afterwards did a good deal of house-building work on contract. But there was not enough money to educate the boy as the family could have wished. In certain cases, however, the church gives help in the case of clever boys — assists them towards university training in the hope of their becoming clergymen of talent. After having been educated at a common school, Carlyle was sent to Edinburgh in the idea that he would become a preacher. At the University he studied very well; but his studies did not result in strengthening the hope of his parents. He did not even think of becoming a clergyman after his mind had sufficiently matured. On leaving the University he took to teaching instead, and he combined literary work with this teaching. But it is very doubtful whether he could ever have obtained distinction by literary work performed during the time of being burdened with the duties of a country schoolmaster. Fortunately for him, he married a wife who had property of her own, and who encouraged him to live with her, and at her expense, on the little farm, so that he might devote himself altogether to literary work. He did this for seven years. I must tell you that it is contrary to all custom to do such a thing in England or Scotland among respectable people. The fixed idea is that no man should accept help from any woman, least of all from

[1] **Thomas Carlyle** (1795-1881).

his wife; and that no wife, with any spirit, should allow her husband to live at her expense, except in case that the man should be incapacitated by sickness or injury. I say that such is a social idea; and both Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle ran social risks by breaking it. But in this case, the wisdom of Mrs. Carlyle was fully justified by results. At the end of those seven years, Carlyle had not only made a literary reputation,—had not only written *Sartor Resartus*, — but had greatly developed all his mental powers, and completed his literary training. After that, the two could easily go to London without fear, and enter upon the literary struggle there. Carlyle succeeded in London. He never became rich—he always remained respectably poor; for he was a most independent, outspoken person, who would never flatter any human being, and who would not do those things in journalism and literature by which other men easily make money. It was thereafter almost entirely to history — philosophical history that he devoted himself — producing in succession his wonderful *History of the French Revolution* (the first manuscript of it was burned by John Stuart Mill's servant girl and had to be written all over again), his *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, various volumes of essays, nearly all historical, and last, his *History of Frederick the Great*, which occupied fourteen years. He died a very old man, in the '80s. Before his death he had become known throughout Europe and America as a great man, a great thinker, a great teacher, and a great literary artist. We are chiefly concerned here with his relation to literature; but we cannot possibly understand without some reference to the character and ancestry of the man.

I told you before that university training had not strengthened Carlyle's disposition towards the church. To be still plainer, I might say that it made him something of a freethinker — this higher education. But in a certain way, the same training developed prodigiously within him a kind of religious emotionalism inherited from his stern and homely ancestors. I suppose you know that the Scotch peasantry are the very sternest and most earnest—perhaps I may say the most bigoted and fanatical of Protestants, non-conformist Protes-

tants. Carlyle inherited all the severity, all the ascetic inclination, all the supernatural awe, which his class were distinguished for throughout centuries. University teaching might make him different to small dogmas and doctrines; but it only strengthened his more profound religious feeling. All his faith might be summed up as belief in the moral order of the universe, and in the great general laws of right and wrong, as established by the consensus of human experience, and so embodied in all great religions. With this most simple doctrine, and a knowledge of all modern philosophy, he was able to treat historical problems in quite a new way. He wrote to prove what he believed; and what he believed was that Conduct is everything, even in history. All great historical facts were susceptible, he believed, of ethical explanation. And his conception of Law and Duty was very noble, very grand;—and it was immense, tolerant, profound, in many respects at harmony with the highest teaching of science. But at the same time, in opposing what he believed to be wrong, Carlyle could show and did show all the bigotry and roughness and asperity of his harsh ancestors. When he struck, he struck very hard and sometimes cruelly or needlessly. This does not detract from his greatness. I mention it only because I want you to observe the fact that Carlyle's faults were all faults of inheritance, while his astonishing merits were altogether his own. No man presents such an antithesis to Macaulay. Macaulay always cool, tolerant in the consideration of evidence, always obedient to law, always preaching order and arrangement,—always telling people why they should be perfectly content with the condition of things as they are. Macaulay—hating metaphysics,—altogether practical, detesting mere theories almost as Napoleon did. And Carlyle on the other hand seeing everything in the light of metaphysics and morals—telling people that it was their duty not to be content with things as they are,—telling people that what the world called respectable and satisfactory was immoral and wrong—telling people in fine that all history proves it the duty of man not to seek for pleasure in this world, but to seek for soul strength, intellectual power, moral force.

More extraordinary contrast never existed, for you must remember that the two men were writing at the same time living under the same modern influences.

Macaulay, as I told you, might be called the last of the great—the really great master of classic style. Carlyle may not have been the first master of romantic style, but he was certainly the first great romantic in prose of the 19th century —the first great master of a new, strange, stout and purely personal style. The style shocked and repelled all preceding notions of literary law and custom. Jeffrey who loved Macaulay for his style, and wanted to befriend Carlyle for other reasons, was obliged to refuse him employment—or, more correctly, to discharge him—because of his style. *Sartor Resartus* found a home at first between the covers of a magazine; and it was the historian Mr. Froude who had the courage to print it. But many persons said the book was not the English at all. It was abused, it was ridiculed, it was parodied. And nevertheless it proved to be one of the greatest literary masterpieces ever produced—one of the strongest books ever written. What was ridiculed at the beginning of the century was prized extravagantly before the end. This is a good instance of the truth that a literary man must not be afraid of offending against literary fashion. Literary fashion must change like all other fashions; and a strong thinker may have the honour of changing it by even one powerful book.

It was not so surprising, however, that some critics should say that Carlyle's English was not English, or that it read like a translation from German, which indeed it pretended to be in the case of *Sartor Resartus*. When Carlyle first wrote for *The Edinburgh Review* he wrote plain English like everybody else. It was not until after his studies of German philosophy and German literature that he developed his very curious and forceful style. Undoubtedly he was influenced by German writers. But by whom? I think I can read to you some sentences from a German author, translated into English, which will make you think immediately of Carlyle. Take the following, for example, —a little account of the neighbourhood of Vesuvius :–

As in a burnt-up, smoking city, I went along by hollows, around hollows, mountains around mountains, and over the trembling floor of an everlastingly active powder-mill up to the powder-house. At last I found the throat of this land of fire,—a great glowing, smoke-valley, containing another mountain within it,—a landscape of craters, a workshop of the last day, full of fragments of worlds, of frozen, burst hell floods,—an enormous potsherd of time, but inexhaustible, immortal as an evil spirit, and under the cold, pure heaven bringing forth to itself twelve thunder-moths.

FORMER ASPECT OF VESUVIUS

(See Huxley's *Physiography*)

This little bit from Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's *Titan* is so much like Carlyle, that it might easily be mistaken for one of his paragraphs. Notice the studied effect of compounded words, the forceful metaphors, the extraordinary picturesqueness of the whole thing, and the strange mixture of the sublime with the grotesque in the phrase which compares the volcanic crater to a monstrous potsherd. All this is altogether contrary to classic rules: that is the German romantic method at its best. Take another little extract:—

Now hast thou ended thy course here below, stern, steadfast spirit! and into the last evening-tempest on thy bosom there still streamed a soft, playing sun, and filled it with roses and gold The earth-ball, and all the earthly stuff out of which the fleeting worlds are formed, was indeed far too small and light for thee. For thou soughtest behind, beneath, and beyond life, something higher than life; not thy *self*, thy *I*,—no mortal, not an immortal, but the Eternal, the Original One, God!

Anybody could mistake this for Carlyle—it contains almost every trick of Carlyle. It represents prose so cultivated as to produce the highest effects of poetry. There can be no doubt that Carlyle was enormously influenced by Richter. Richter taught him how to make a new style. But you would be wrong, nevertheless, in supposing that Carlyle merely imitated Richter. No: what he did was only to adopt the German romantic method into English because it suited his purpose better than any other method; and he remained original in spite of this adoption. Another feature of his style he may have got from Sir Thomas Browne,—the splendid use of capitals. You know that in German, capital letters are used in far greater profusion than in English; and it was supposed that Carlyle got the idea from the Germans of capitalizing every word that could appear more forcible with a capital. But this does not follow; because English writers of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries used capitals almost like the Germans still do in prose; and even many books of the 18th century capitalize nouns in the most seemingly unnecessary way; still you will find in these old books that some words look very much more startling and strong with a capital letter; — the old meaningless habit of capitalizing whole classes of words really contains an artistic suggestion of no small value. Carlyle followed the suggestion with extraordinary results;—and so, for that matter, did Fitzgerald at a later date in his wonderful translation of *Omar Khayyám*. Generally speaking, we may say that in spite of its German affinities, the style of Carlyle is the most original and forceful prose style of the English romantic movement. I must also observe that it owes not a little of its extraordinary strength to the use of Biblical language, in which Carlyle was a mighty master.

A word now about his books. *Sartor Resartus* (a Latin title which signifies "the tailor repatched," and which professes to treat of the philosophy of clothes) is really a psychological autobiography, disguised under German names: Carlyle him-

[1] *Sartor resartus; the life and opinions of Herr Teufelsdrockh.* In three books. With Preface by R. W. Emerson. Boston, 1836. First English edn. 1838. 2nd edn. n.d. 3rd edn. 1849. (It originally appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833-4).

self, his birthplace, the events of his childhood, and the trials of his struggle with the world, are here introduced to us. We are told about how the mystery of life weighed upon him from the first—how he learned to work and think—how he learned to view society—how he fell in love for the first time, and was bitterly disappointed—how the world after that became dark for him — so dark that he doubted the existence of a divine power—how, after the loss of early faith, he found a larger faith, and learned to regard even the follies of the world in their relation to eternal things. If there be in this book any one particularly original conception, it is that of the Necessity of Illusions. There is a Buddhist proverb to the effect that even from that which is not true, truth may be learned. And that is the whole spirit of *Sartor Resortus.*

Sartor Resartus is not, I think, a book for the young — although one of my students some years ago actually had the courage to attempt a translation of it. It is extremely difficult reading even for English students — difficult, not merely because of the tremendous style, full of unfamiliar suggestion, but because of the peculiar thinking, full of unfamiliar philosophical suggestion. A certain knowledge of Western religious feeling (I don't mean sect feeling) seems to me partly necessary to an appreciation of the book; and a large acquaintance with the poetry of Biblical expression is also to be desired. Furthermore, this is one of those strange books which seem quite different every time that they are re-read. Read it at the age of 25; and if you can fully understand it, you will be partly pleased and partly surprised by the result—you will then think that you have "read it." "Have read" in the ordinary use of the term, really means not read at all; but I am speaking of the right sort of reading. Read it again at the age of 30; and you will find that means much more than you supposed the first time you read it. Read again at 40, at 45, at 50 — always the strength and beauty seems to grow. Of course that is partly because the reader's mind has been growing and strengthening through the years; but it is also proof positive that an ordinary young man cannot fully comprehend the force

of the book. I would say this: Do not read *Sartor Resartus* unless you have a strong natural taste for that kind of philosophy which deals with the problems of life in itself. If you delight in that kind of intellectual exercise, then you can read the book with profit; but you will not be fully able to enjoy it until you become an old man.

For all literary purposes I think it would be better to read *The French Revolution*[1] — which you can easily obtain in one neat volume. There you have all of Carlyle's beauty and wonder of style, and all his power of thinking and painting. It is a little hard reading; but it is worth the trouble. Or, if you cannot spare the time necessary for this task (and it is not a small one), and want to have only some examples of the best parts, let me suggest to you to read just one chapter of it—the first chapter of the book entitled *Terror*. This chapter is entitled "Charlotte Corday,"—tells the story of the grave, beautiful, and heroic girl, who mistakenly or otherwise made her way to Paris alone to kill Marat, and killed him. If you can feel the terrible beauty of that chapter—with all its irony, with all its tenderness—then you will know Carlyle.

I could not recommend anybody to read the whole of Carlyle's *Cromwell*[2] for merely literary reasons, but there are famous pages in it which you can easily pick out and study and admire. Remember that this book is little more than a collection of letters — state letters — with comments between the letters, and it is in the little comments that the preciousness of the book is felt. As for the vast life of *Frederick the Great*,[3] you need to think about reading that only when you have a great deal of time as well as a great deal of inclination. The essays are better for purposes of literary study. Some of them, no doubt, you have already read. All the earlier ones have some value.

[1] *The French Revolntion. A history.* 3 vols. 1837. 2nd edn. 1839. 3rd edn. 1848. Also 1857 and 1871.

[2] *Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches. With elucidations.* 2 vols. 1845. Also, New York, 1845. 2nd edn., enlarged. 3 vols. 1846. Also 1866.

[3] *The history of Friedrich II of Prussia, called Frederick the Great.* 6 vols. 1858-65. Tauchnitz Collection of British Authors. 13 vols. Leipzig, 1858-65. 7 vols. 1869. 10 vols. 1872-3.

De Quincey

The romantic prose was exemplified in another way — very, very different from the way of Carlyle by the writing of Thomas De Quincey. De Quincey was born in 1785 and died in 1859. He was the son of a wealthy merchant in Manchester —the great, dull, gloomy, manufacturing town. It is not surprising, that even as a boy, De Quincey hated Manchester. Indeed, he hated it so much that he ran away from it at last, and hid himself in London, where he had many strange and some touching adventures. He was well educated and studied long at Oxford, but never took his degree—though regarded as an exceptionally fine scholar. After leaving the University he did not think of returning to Manchester, but settled in the Lake country at Grasmere where Wordsworth lived, and remained there for 20 years. After that he went to Edinburgh where he died – a very old man.

Although the son of a wealthy man, De Quincey wasted his own fortune so quickly that he had to write for a living. However, he wasted a good deal of his money in giving help to literary friends and to needy persons—if that can be called waste. Generosity was one of his characteristics. He was not capable of leading a very active existence, being extraordinarily small, weak and delicate, and, what was still worse for him, he contracted at an early age, the same bad habit of Coleridge— that of eating opium. Nevertheless, in spite of all these disadvantages, he produced a great deal of work—representing at least 16 volumes of between four and five hundred pages each. This does not mean that he "wrote books." He only made one or two books—very small books. The great mass of his work consists altogether of essays, which he wrote for the leading magazines. It is a most extraordinary fact that he supported himself and his family entirely by writing for the magazines, and that he never had time to write books even if he had the inclination, after he had reached middle age. You must think of him as a magazine writer by profession, but he carried

English prose to a point of luxurious perfection, never heard of or imagined before his time. As an essayist his importance has been immense as a literary force and is still very great. It is not the influence of Macaulay—not a power directed towards hard clarity and vivid strength of expression. It is quite otherwise. But the style of De Quincey has much in common with the style of Macaulay,—that both were the result of extraordinary scholarship. Macaulay represented a classic form; and De Quincey represented a classic form—yet the two are worlds apart from each other. Though inspired by Greek and Latin study, the style of De Quincey is romantic prose rising to the highest heights of poetical expression.

Perhaps you will think the above statement paradoxical. How can a man be a classic and a romantic at the same time? Unless you understand how this is possible, you cannot understand the place of De Quincey's style in English literature. I think I can best explain the matter this way. There were two great kinds of classic prose – not merely one. There was the severely correct written style—the style of narration used by the best Greek and Roman writers. There was also the oratorical style,—the style used for direct speech, for addresses, for political harangues. This oratorical style allowed larger liberties than the other: it was especially intended to excite emotions; and the Greeks excelled in it. Now De Quincey founded his most splendid effects upon a study of the oratorical style, especially the Greek—and thus without leaving his classical models at any time, he was able to produce purely romantic effects, — emotional and imaginative effects, — of the most startling kind. We must rank him the very highest place in romantic prose, but we must never forget that this prose is never romantic in the meaning of any breaking rhetorical rules. De Quincey's first book, the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*,[1] immediately gave him a wonderful reputation as a master of style. But, curiously enough, it was also popular; for De Quincey's scholarship, like that of Macaulay, never suf-

[1] *Confessions of an English opium eater* 1822. 2nd edn. 1823. New and greatly enlarged edn. Edinburgh, 1856.

fered him to become obscure. People who could not understand the beauty of his work at all, could nevertheless understand and delight in the story part of what he wrote. The vice of eating opium was but little known in those days; and De Quincey's revelation of his own addiction to that habit created a morbid curiosity. The book had, and still has, a great circulation. It is an account of the strange influence of opium upon the author's mind especially in dreams. Opium affects the ideas of space and time, less than some other drugs, such as hashish, but very markedly; and De Quincey tells us in the most wonderful way how, in one night, he seemed to live through a period of hundreds of years. His dreams were sublime, terrific, monstrous by turns, but always characterized by extraordinary suggestion of length and depth. Thousands of people who read that book bought opium and ate in order to enjoy dreams of this kind. But of course they were very disappointed; and most of them had no dreams at all. What made De Quincey dream so wonderful was the vast scholarship of the mind upon which the opium acted. If you have a perfect knowledge of Greek literature, Greek and Roman antiquities, ancient and modern history, German and English philosophy, and perhaps a hundred other subjects—then if you eat opium and dream you may have extraordinary dreams. But the man who is ignorant and dull will not be able to have anything but stupid dreams under the influence of opium. The rest of De Quincey's work almost entirely consists of essays —there is one novel *Klosterheim*, but it is not worth reading. There is also a single volume of connected essays upon Roman history, forming a real history of one period;—this book *The Cæsars* may also be counted an exception. But nearly all the work is built up of detached essays — essays afterwards collected under different heads, grouped so to say, as historical, literary, narrative, philosophical, historical, etc. It is necessary for the student to be on his guard, and know beforehand what to read of De Quincey. There is a good deal of poor stuff, of dull stuff, tiresome stuff, in all these volumes; and if you should happen to read a dull essay first, you would not learn to love

De Quincey as he deserves to be loved. So I will attempt to suggest certain subject to you. The most extraordinary of De Quincey's papers, and I think the best, are the two astonishing narratives respectively entitled *Flight of a Tartar Tribe*[1] and *The Spanish Nun.*[2] Although historians have tried to pick holes with the first of the above, it will always remain famous as a piece of literary magic—marvellous and terrible. I think you know the historical fact—how in the 16th century (?) a whole tribe of Tartars, numbering many hundred thousand souls, fled from Russian rule, right across Asia into Chinese territory, seeking the protection of the Emperor of China. The paper of De Quincey is an account of the horrors accompanying the enormous emigration. The other essay is founded upon a Spanish record—the true story of a young girl who escaped from a convent to become a Spanish soldier, and to make such a reputation as no European woman ever had made before in feats of arms. Here there is a wonderful mixture of the pathetic with the strange. I should also advise you to read *The Cæsars*,[3] from beginning to end. You will find it a delight, even if you are not familiar with Roman history; while if you *are* familiar with Roman history, you will discover an entirely new conception of it through reading De Quincey's extraordinary essays upon that period. After having read those things, you will be better able to pick out for yourselves the beauties of De Quincey. But some of them are scattered through dull pages—like bags of gold dropped in a desert; and it is some work to find them. There is one, for example, at the end of the long essay entitled *The System of the Heavens*[4]—an old-fashioned dissertation upon the wonders of astronomy. Since that essay was written we have learned infinitely more about astronomy than De Quincey could have dreamed. We know now even what metals exist in the farthest visible stars. So the essay has no astronomical value now. But it contains some astonishing beauties of style, and some sublime thoughts

[1] *Revolt of the Tartars; or, flight of the Kalmuck Khan and his people from the Russian territories to the frontiers of China* 1837.
[2] *The Spanish military nun* 1847.
[3] 1832-34.
[4] *System of the heavens as revealed by Lord Rosse's telescopes* 1846.

about the enormity of space and the mystery of the suns. And it ends with a most astonishing dream. Now De Quincey was one of the greatest dreamers that ever lived—I mean of those who dream upon their feet; and this is the very best of his dreams. I want to dictate it to you: it is scarcely a page long; and it contains the best possible example of De Quincey's splendour.

> God called up from dreams a man into the vestibule of heaven, saying, 'Come thou hither, and see the glory of my house.' And to the servants that stood around his throne he said, 'Take him, and undress him from his robes of flesh; cleanse his vision, and put a new breath into his nostrils: arm him with sail-broad wings for flight. Only touch not with any change his human heart—the heart that weeps and trembles.' It was done; and, with a mighty angel for his guide, the man stood ready for his infinite voyage; and from the terraces of heaven, without sound or farewell, at once they wheeled away into endless space. . . . Then, from a distance that is counted only in heaven, light dawned for a time through a sleepy film: by unutterable pace the light swept to *them*, they by unutterable pace to the light: in a moment the rushing of planets was upon them: in a moment the blazing of suns was around them. Then came eternities of twilight, that revealed, but were not revealed. To the right hand and to the left towered mighty constellations, that by self-repetitions and answers from afar, that by counter-positions, that by mysterious combinations, built up triumphal gates, whose architraves, whose archways,—horizontal, upright,—rested, rose,—at altitudes, by spans,—that seemed ghostly from infinitude. Without measure were the architraves, past number were the archways, beyond memory the gates. Within were stairs that scaled the eternities above, that descended to the eternities below: above was below, below was above, to the man stripped of gravitating body: depth was swallowed up in height insurmountable, height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. Suddenly as thus they rode from infinite to infinite, suddenly as thus they tilted over abysmal worlds, a mighty cry arose—that systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy — other heights, and other depths—were dawning, were nearing, were at hand. Then the man sighed, stopped, shuddered, and wept. His overladen heart

> uttered itself in tears; and he said, 'Angel, I will go no farther. For the spirit of man aches under this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God's house. Let me lie down in the grave, that I may find rest from the persecutions of the Infinite; for end, I see, there is none.' And from all the listening stars that shone around issued a choral voice, 'The man speaks truly; end there is none, that ever yet we heard of.' 'End is there none?' the angel solemnly demanded. 'Is there, indeed, no end? and is this the sorrow that kills you?' But no voice answered, that he might answer himself. Then the angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of heavens, saying, 'End is there none to the universe of God? Lo! also, there is no beginning.'

No person could for a moment question the immense romanticism of this splendid passage,—said to have been inspired by listening to a lecture by Richter, the same great German who inspired Carlyle. Nearly every phrase is a classical phrase, nevertheless: and Greek and Latin words predominate: indeed, it is the Greek words especially and the Latin words which give to those sentences their extraordinary sonority. So I think that this passage will clearly explain to you how De Quincey was at once the greatest of romantics in feeling among the English prose writers, and yet also, perhaps the very first of classics in his management of style. Oratorical the style certainly is; but the subject amply justifies the form. As for the fancy, — the dream, — we have to go to Oriental literature to find anything comparable to it—anything which impresses the mind with a right idea of vastitude. There is an ancient Indian story that once the two Gods, Brahma and Vishnu, disputed together, which was the mightiest — Brahma as Creator, or Vishnu as Preserver. But while they were disputing in heaven, suddenly Siva, the Destroyer, came between them in the form of a pillar of fire. Immediately Brahma flew up to find the top of the pillar; and Vishnu flew down to find its base. Each of them flew for myriads of years; but they could find neither the beginning of the pillar nor the end,—and a great fear came upon them. Perhaps this is the only literary story that can be compared with De Quincey's dream in the sense that I referred

to; yet, though rendered into verse — into English verse by Southey, it does not really leave the same feeling of sublime awe in the mind. Now it is no exaggeration to say that there are many pages of De Quincey as splendid as this—though the subject may be less tremendous.

These were the princes of prose; and it is noteworthy that the tendency of all was in the direction of history. Macaulay was, even in his criticism, primarily a historian. So was Carlyle. A large part of De Quincey's work is history; and what is not history is chiefly biography, or autobiography, both of which are closely related to history. But history is not necessarily literature—nor is science, nor is philosophy. There were many other great writers — historians, philosophers, men of science; but I shall not dwell upon them because they did not influence literature in the literary sense. For example there were such historians as Milman, Grote, Alison, Freeman, Mitford, Lingard, and of no one of these could it be said that he was a literary force in the same sense that we can say this of Gibbon or of Macaulay. Yet in the case of Kinglake,[1] another historian and a very fine writer, we have something to notice which connects him with the best literature of the age in a small way. Kinglake wrote a little book of travel in Egypt and Palestine, called *Eothen*,[2] which promises to become a classic by reason of its extraordinary beauty of thought and style. I could quote a page from it—the close of a chapter recounting the impressions of a visit to the great Sphinx—which could be compared with the fine work of De Quincey. This little book has passed through a great number of editions; and it has had a very great influence upon the future writing of books of travel.

Again there were essayists, of a purely literary kind, whose names will always be remembered in English literature because of the relation of their bearers to the greater literary celebrities of the epoch. Such were Charles Lamb,[3] a good critic and a

[1] Alexander William Kinglake (1809-1891).
[2] *Eothen, or traces of travel brought home from the east* (anon.) 1844.
[3] Charles Lamb (1775-1834).

charming essayist in a light vein; and Leigh Hunt,[1] somewhat larger as a critic, and also somewhat a poet. I suppose that all of you have read Lamb's essay *On Roast Pig* and Leigh Hunt's *Abou Ben Adhem;*[2] — they live in literature by little things like these, neither great nor strong, but pleasing and delicate. Much more do they live by the part which they took as journalists in the romantic movement;—Leigh Hunt, for example, went to Italy to edit a paper in partnership with Byron and Shelley and after these writers were both dead he long remained the friend of many men of letters,—especially of Carlyle. On one occasion when he brought some good news to Carlyle's house, Mrs. Carlyle whose name was Jane (familiarly Jenny) jumped up and kissed him out of sheer joy. It was then that he wrote one charming little song which you will now find in most of the good anthologies:—

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
  Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
  Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
  Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
  Jenny kiss'd me.

Even if Hunt has written only this pretty little thing, he would probably be always remembered for it—just as we all remember one quaint English poet Oldys simply because he wrote a pretty poem about a fly. But both Lamb and Hunt were only good small influences. A larger influence was that of Hazlitt,[3] whose name almost everybody knows, through its connection with Shakespearian criticism.[4] Hazlitt was a fine writer, and one of the first to do justice to Shakespeare; but his influence is almost gone; — we have got very far beyond Hazlitt to-day; and the great German critics, especially, have made his essays useless. Even the astonishing literary labour

[1] James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859).
[2] First appeared in S C. Hall's *Book of Gems* 1838.
[3] William Hazlitt (1778-1830).
[4] *Characters of Shakespear's plays* 1817, 1818. 3rd edn. 1838.

of Hallam[1] has also become old-fashioned now; and we need not give him any space in this connection, further than to say that he pointed out the way for a new comparative study of European literature. This is the plan that is now being carried out very successfully, under the supervision of Professor Saintsbury. When the new series of books entitled *Periods of European Literature* will have been completed, nobody will be likely to consult Hallam for an opinion about any modern author.

And here we may turn to the next division of our subject —the Victorian Era.

[1] Henry Hallam (1777-1859).

THE VICTORIAN ERA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

STRICTLY speaking, the Victorian period signifies the greater part of the 19th century, — from 1837 to 1900. The period is only just gone—though the great force of it began to decline at least ten years ago. Before the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne Tennyson had begun to write. But the first work of Tennyson was so very bad, that it exerted no influence at all—you will be astonished to see how bad it was when I read to you some quotations from his earliest verse. However it was after 1837 that Tennyson and all the greatest poets who succeeded the first romantic group did their great work; and we may say that the reign of the Queen coincides almost exactly with the greatest development in English literature since the Elizabethan age. This development was especially marked in lyric poetry and in fiction. It was not marked at all in drama. But in lyric poetry and in fiction it is unsurpassed. Also it was remarkable for one or two facts. For instance, one poet was universally recognized during all that time as Lord and King—Tennyson. A literary king he was, though not at all in the sense that Johnson was or that Dryden was. Tennyson hated society, lived almost entirely alone, — notwithstanding the special favour shown him by the Queen who often called him to see her; — and visitors to his house were comparatively few. Only by thus isolating himself could he have found time to accomplish the work he did. He was not on terms of intimacy with his contemporaries to any extent. Yet all of them, or nearly all, swallowed their jealousies, and openly acknowledged him their chief. This was quite a new occurrence in the history of poetry; and it says a great deal for the strength of Tennyson's art. The other extraor-

dinary fact in regard to the Victorian period was the introduction of a new mode of thought, which influenced, in a greater or lesser degree, the whole literary production of the age. I mean the evolutional philosophy.

As a little boy, I remember having been taken upon the knees of a very wise person, as I then thought, who told me that a wicked man called Darwin had written a book in which it had been declared that men were descended from apes. I suppose that millions of little boys were being told about the same thing at that time. This really represented the popular and ignorant idea of evolution. You know that Darwin, who is now as much honoured as he was then despised, never said anything of this kind. He had only classified Man, just as Cuvier and others had previously classified him, as belonging to the great family of quadrumana; and no man of science had ever objected to this classification. Darwin's offence was in saying that, according to scientific evidence, man had at one time been in a much lower condition than that of a savage—that he had been an animal in his habits, and had gradually worked his way up, through lower forms, to the highest place of intelligence and power. But really this had been said long before;—the real evolutional philosophy was teaching that all higher forms whether suns or men had had their beginnings in very simple form—that the whole world was, in fact, a development.

The contest was between the two interopposed religious ideas of East and West—only now the Eastern thought had entered Europe clad in scientific armour from head to foot, and not as the champion of any creed, but only of truth. Western religion declared, "All things were made, just as they are, by the hand of God—worlds, men, animals, trees." Science answered, "There is no evidence for any such belief. On the contrary I find that all life is one, and that all forms have been slowly shaped, through immeasurable time, under varying influences. I find that life, upon this earth, before becoming man, existed in a hundred thousand other forms. I find that not only the life, but even the ultimate structure of the substance

of the plant, the animal and the man is the same. I find that all life in this world originally came from the sun, and the world itself from that sun, and that sun from other suns which existed long before. I find that before this universe there must have been myriads of other universes; and I find that after this universe shall have vanished away, other millions of universes will reappear in their order. You say that there was a beginning of matter—that some god made it out of nothing. I answer that nothing produces nothing; and that what is must always have been. What we call Form and Name have begun. But these are not realities;—they go and come only as waves upon the surface of a sea. Substance—the essence of all things—never began,—nor did life ever begin: it always was; it always will be; and what we call mind and what we call matter are but two different appearances of the same Infinite Reality." You can perceive how great a shock a philosophy like this must have produced upon the Western mind—because it was new. Its great exponent was Herbert Spencer. But the people could not understand Herbert Spencer; to master him signifies a strong mind and years of hard study. On the other hand they could understand Darwin—who only contributed one chapter to the subject, because he wrote about animals, birds, insects, and plants, which they have seen. Darwin received the public abuse; but the real shock was given to the intellectual classes by the philosophy of Spencer, Huxley, Galton, Maudsley, and half a dozen others. The mathematicians, the great men of science were mostly, though not all, on the side of the new thought. This is not the place for a lecture upon evolution; but some mention of the matter is necessary for a comprehension of certain literary changes. Now it is interesting to look back at what has happened.

The much abused Darwin is now justly counted among the glories of English science; and his teachings have been accepted by the very Church that once opposed him so bitterly. In fact his teaching in its fundamental principles has been accepted by all but the oldest and narrowest Christian sects. You may ask whether the whole evolutional philosophy has also

been accepted. One may say yes—except with regard to the psychology. Every book now written, which has any value, on the subject of astronomy, botany, geology, natural history, ordinary history, even literary criticism, is written from the standpoint of the evolutional philosophy. Even the scientific work of the great conservative universities is all done upon this foundation. Any book written against this mode of thought, any book of science which even attempts to ignore it is sure to be forgotten within a few years. And yet there is still a great remnant of the opposition to the psychological part of the teaching, especially as expounded by Spencer. For he said and proved that what is commonly called the Soul or Self had been developed like everything else — that thought was but a compounding and recompounding of sensations. What is sensation? That is infinite mystery—no man can answer. Now to the Oriental student there is nothing at all strange about this thinking. What is commonly called the Self is not, to the Oriental thinker, the real Self — the inner principle of all things. Very different seemed the same teaching to Western minds accustomed to think of the soul as a kind of Inner Man, — an immortal ghost. At the universities the shock of the new teaching was such as to provoke a religious reaction. Men fled away in fear from the new thinking—many into the Catholic Church. The excitement is now past; and it is very probable in my opinion, that within no distant time even the psychology, so long opposed, must triumph in every intellectual centre. But you must try in thinking of the literary movement between 1850 and 1900 to understand what a mental revolution was accomplished, to sympathize even with those who earnestly and sincerely strove on both sides. As I said the struggle reflected itself a little in most of the great work of the time. Perhaps it also accounts for present intervals of silence. No more very great poets are likely to sing until the new philosophy has become a part of the intellectual life much more than it is now.

Tennyson and the Great Poetry

TENNYSON

The first and the greatest of the Victorian poets—and the first in whose writings the new modes of thought were more or less imperfectly reflected—was Tennyson[1] unquestionably, and quite apart from the consideration of the popular verdict. Tennyson was born in 1809—the son of an English clergyman, and a descendant of poets. Poetical genius "ran" in the family; and Tennyson's two brothers inherited poetical faculty only in a slightly lesser degree than himself. Alfred was educated at Cambridge, where he obtained the Chancellor's prize by his poem of *Timbuctoo.*[2] There was nothing particularly remarkable in the history of his college life; but in 1827 he first put something into print — the joint work of himself and his brothers, entitled *Poems by Two Brothers.*[3] It attracted no attention, and deserved none. In 1830 another volume appeared, *Poems by Alfred Tennyson.* This attracted scarcely any attention, and deserved but little. In 1832 appeared another volume,[4] containing the best of the old poems and several new ones. This did attract attention, and did deserve it, but the attention given was not of the sort that Tennyson wished for. The book was very severely criticized, and the beauties in it did not appear to compensate for the defects. Let me read you an example of the defects; it will be quite as obvious to you as it would be to any English student:—

THE SKIPPING-ROPE

Sure never yet was Antelope
  Could skip so lightly by,
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
  Will hit you in the eye.
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!

[1] Alfred Tennyson, 1st Lord Tennyson (1808-1892).
[2] *Timbuctoo. A poem which obtained the Lord Chancellor's medal at Cambridge commencement* 1829.
[3] *Poems by two brothers* 1827. [By Alfred, Charles and Frederick Tennyson]
[4] *Poems by Alfred Tennyson* 1833 [1832].

How fairy-like you fly!
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
And hang yourself thereby.

I fancy that you will be astonished enough to ask, "But is it really true that Tennyson wrote this?" Yes, it is quite true. It is a young girl who is supposed to be speaking sarcastically to a lover who is showing himself a little too attentive and too affectionate. So far as that goes, the verses are real enough. But this is not poetry: it is prose. And the following is not much better:—

O DARLING ROOM

O darling room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,
With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

Is this poetry? I do not think it is; and it was very well for Tennyson that other people did not think so—or he might have gone on writing such nonsense for a much longer time. And the other poems in his first volume were not at all in the shape that we have them now. Even *A Dream of Fair Women*, to-day one of the glories of English literature, one of the most perfect poems in any language, ancient and modern, first appeared in a very crude state. For instance you know that beautiful verse describing the death of Iphigenia as related by her own ghost:—

The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more.

Now in the edition of 1832 the 3rd and 4th lines run thus:—

> One drew a sharp knife thro' my tender throat
> Slowly,—and nothing more.

This is flat stupidity; and it is not wonderful that Lockhart, the great critic, spoke most sarcastically about this line, remarking ironically; "What touching simplicity, what pathetic resignation—he cut my throat, nothing more!" Wilson, the great critic of *Blackwood*, was equally severe. All the big critics simply tore the book to pieces. They were cruel—too cruel, even unjust. But they did good to Tennyson; and it must be acknowledged that Tennyson deserved to be severely criticized. Now appeared the reserved strength of the man's character. Instead of allowing himself to be discouraged, or vexed by such criticism, he thought coolly over the matter, recognized that his critics were partly right and set to work to correct his faults. Then for ten years, from 1832 to 1842, he did nothing but cultivate himself, study hard, correct his bad lines; and when, after ten years, he again printed his poems, the book was well received as the work of a true poet. The difference was enormous. From that time he remained triumphant. Even Wordsworth, a very jealous man, early acknowledged his genius. I need not go into any details about his after life, his death, or his splendid funeral at Westminster Abbey. Enough to say that for more than fifty years he remained the undisputed king of English letters.

I have mentioned the fault of the earlier poem only because the statement suggests a grand moral lesson. Even genius requires labour—though it is not, perhaps, exactly defined by the statement that it is "only the faculty for taking infinite pains." It is much more than that; and one must be born with it, or else no pains will serve to develop it. But even the genius must work hard; and Tennyson's greatness was really due to the fact that he worked harder than any English poet who ever lived. Everything that he produced was written over again and over again, and corrected and recorrected, and proved and added to, and touched, and retouched, until human intelligence

could imagine nothing further in the way of improvement. So extraordinary was the work thus done, that we can scarcely hope to have a critical edition of Tennyson within another 50 years. It will require the united labour of many patient scholars in order to publish an edition of Tennyson that will show an evolutional history of every poem and the character of the labour bestowed upon it. The earliest poems have been thus edited by Mr. Collins;[1] and even this was a work of years. A number of the *Idylls*, and other pieces have been edited for school use, but only for school use; and the editing relates only to the final text. As I said a critical edition of Tennyson will take at least 50 years to make.

But what was the result of this astonishing industry? It was this, — that Tennyson became the greatest influence in English literature since Shakespeare. No other man, since the time of Elizabeth, so greatly influenced the language itself as Tennyson. Since Pope, no poet enriched the current speech with so many familiar quotations. No writer, of any age, in his own lifetime, became so widely studied as a model of perfect poetical expression. And no man obtained during his lifetime such supreme authority on the subject of poetry. Yet there is one thing more to remark about Tennyson as an influence. He did not simply reflect his age. He called back to life hundreds of beautiful old English words—old Saxon and Scandinavian words—that had long been dead and buried. He gave them new souls — filled them with such strange vitality that they have become certain of living again as long as the language lives. A philologist only could not do this; but Tennyson was very much more than a philologist: he was a mighty artist, and now, what of his place in poetry?

In speaking of any poet, who has been made the subject of a lecture, the student ought to be able to clearly define the position of that poet in a few words. I mean that he should be able to say what distinguishes such a poet from other poets. Now to define Tennyson within a few words, it is only neces-

[1] *The early poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.* Edited by John Churton Collins, 1901.

sary to say that he represents the supreme perfection of the romantic movement. There were other poets who might deserve the name of the romantic king. But Tennyson was their acknowledged Emperor. After him the romantic movement in poetry had little left to do. All that it had attempted to do, in giving to poetry new charms of music, form, and colour, Tennyson did better than anybody else. Remember that he is the greatest of the romantics—though in certain directions others may surpass. But in a general way, in consideration of the mass of excellence he displayed in a hundred forms, there is no question as to his being the greatest. There is one characteristic of him, which is not perhaps quite satisfactory—he was especially weak in regard to imaginative construction. Even the *Idylls of the King*[1] do not really form an epic: each of the 12 parts is quite distinct, and does not really fit into any other. *Maud*,[2] although suggesting a complete story, is not complete: it is a series of studies separately written, and so arranged together as to form a whole. *In Memoriam*[3] represents the collocations of about 130 different poems into a single frame; but the relation of part to part is not at all perfect. Indeed Tennyson has given us only two really complete stories in verse (I am not speaking now of his drama);—those two pieces are *Enoch Arden*[4] and *The Princess*.[5] He was most successful as a lyric poet. But the whole tone of the romantic movement was lyrical, even in its epic; and we cannot criticize Tennyson too much on this account. The fact is only worth mentioning because it shows the only point at which Tennyson cannot be compared with the very greatest poets of every time. He wanted the faculty called architechtonic. But so did most of the romantics and most of the English poets of other times. Otherwise, remember, that what is best in Milton, best in

[1] *Idylls of the king. Enid* (renamed *Geraint and Enid* in 1870; divided into two parts, *The marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid* in 1886), *Vivien* (renamed *Merlin and Vivien* in 1870), *Elaine* (renamed *Lancelot and Elaine* in 1870), *Guinevere* 1859; *The Coming of Arthur, The Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre, The Passing of Arthur* 1870; *The Last tournament, Gareth and Lynette* 1872; *Balin and Balan* 1885. Complete edn 1889.

[2] *Maud, and other poems* 1855.

[3] *In memoriam A.H.H.* 1850.

[4] *Enoch Arden. Idylls of the hearth* 1864 ff.

[5] *The princess; a medley* 1847.

Keats, best in Shelley, seems to be all united in Tennyson. As a nature poet he surpasses Wordsworth; as a lyric poet he often reaches the celestial height of Shelley; and he has given a hundred manifestations of the same rare sense of beauty, sensuous beauty, that is the spirit of Keats. In the evolutional history of poetry Tennyson may be said to "derive," as they call it, especially from Keats and Wordsworth—retaining, however, many marks of the influence of Milton.

A word about Tennyson as a thinker. It has been said that he reflected the 19th century thought without adding anything to it. This is but partly true; for the man who is able to present the thought of his time in the precise way that it affects his own sentiment and sympathy, certainly adds something to the intellectual wealth of the age. But it is true that Tennyson did not attempt much preaching beyond the simple reiteration of this thought—that the innate desire of a future life is in itself a kind of proof that we ought to believe in it. And of course this position will not stand philosophical criticism—not even as it is put in the splendid verse, the immortal verse of *In Memoriam*. Otherwise Tennyson may be said to have reflected the new idea of evolution, and the half religious hope of a future spiritual evolution which was suggested as a compromise when the new science began to make its presence strongly felt. At the same time Tennyson had a certain amount of religious conservatism in his nature—in his very bones—so to speak; for was he not the son of a clergyman and a descendant of a clergyman? His philosophical position was tolerably broad; and well defined as that of "Liberal-Conservative"—liberal in the acceptance of new scientific ideas, conservative in his clinging to the faith of his fathers in regard to a soul, God, and an established code of ethics, and the hope of Heaven. Still, there was nothing sectarian in Tennyson's idea of the Supreme. Here he very much reminds us of Shelley, who thought of Infinite Love as the creating and ruling power of the universe.

Another thing that every student ought to be able to say about a great poet is to answer the question, "What is his

'best work'?" In Tennyson's case the question is particularly difficult; and you must not forget that there is something poor in the great mass of it. But the weightiest critics, the best scholars, have pronounced *The Princess* to be Tennyson's supremely perfect creation. Why? Because, while it contains every form of poetical beauty which he knew how to create, it has none of the shortcomings to be detected in other compositions. It tells a complete story; each of the seven parts is perfectly interlinked with every other part. And, finally, it is essentially the most romantic production of the Emperor of the romantics. One has to go back to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in order to find anything approaching the romantic spirit of *The Princess*. Yet *The Princess* is essentially of the 19th century, could not possibly have been written in any other time. I think that reasons given by Mr. Saintsbury for thinking *The Princess* Tennyson's greatest production cannot really be questioned at all. Other critics have preferred *Maud*—that is to say, *Maud* in its last and best form. But *Maud* wants unity; and that is a serious want. The same thing may be said of the *Idylls of the King* considered as a whole—although these poems made Tennyson "popular." But in any of these greater compositions there are lines that must live as long as literature lives. I should think it better to take this position; —all Tennyson's poems are precious, with few exceptions; but *The Princess* is his most perfect work and the most perfect expression of the romantic movement.

It only now remains to mention his dramatic works; and you know that so well that it will be unnecessary to say much on the subject. There is beauty all through it; but it has the defect inherent to all drama produced in English since the 18th century—or nearly all,—that it cannot be acted. Some of the shorter work has been acted; but it is not work which ever can succeed to more than a small circle. Tennyson's drama, like Swinburne's, must be considered as grand literary work—not work for the stage. I imagine *Harold*[1] to be the best of the dramas, because of the very remarkable characterization of

[1] *Harold: a drama* 1877 [1876].

William the Conqueror. But some persons prefer *Queen Mary*;[1] and it is a fact that *Queen Mary* contains a greater number of successfully managed characters. However, I may add that the exact place of Tennyson in literary drama has not yet been determined; because the dazzle of his other work has attracted the critical attention away from it. In the meantime, if you wish to read his plays, I shall recommend *Harold* especially, for you could scarcely find interest in the politico-religious historical part of *Queen Mary*.

As when the sun shines the stars remain invisible, so, while Tennyson lived, the work of his brothers was scarcely noticed. It is being noticed a good deal now; and perhaps this is the best place for a very brief mention of it—because neither of the brothers is great enough as a producer to justify separate treatment. The two older brothers of Tennyson were respectively named Frederick[2] and Charles[3] — the latter, later in life, took another additional name, so that you will find him mentioned as Tennyson Turner. The great poet of London life, Frederick Locker, did, you know, the same thing—taking another name on the occasion of a second marriage when he became "Locker-Lampson." It is only necessary to say of Tennyson's brothers that both were by nature exquisite poets, inheriting the same faculty as Tennyson only in a slightly less degree—but never devoting themselves seriously to poetry as a profession. If they could have determined to be only poets, they would probably have come very near to the high place won by their younger brother. But, as a matter of fact, they wrote poetry only at occasional moments—producing so little that the work of the two would occupy only a small volume. It is, however, work of such delicacy and beauty that some of it is nearly certain to last for a long time. Here we cannot consider it in detail, and must turn our attention to the second of the great poets of the Victorian Age.

[1] *Queen: a Mary drama* 1875.
[2] Frederick Tennyson (1807-1898).
[3] Charles Tennyson Turner (1808-1879).

Browning

Robert Browning can rank only after Tennyson, though possessing gifts greater than any possessed by Tennyson. He was born in 1812, and like Tennyson lived a long time, dying only in 1889. Much of his life was passed in Italy. He was always of independent means—rich enough to live where he pleased, and to do very much as he pleased. He was sent to school when very young by his father, who had been employed in the banking business in London; but after that time Browning had no regular education. His father himself taught him, taught him Greek, Latin, a good deal about modern languages, a great deal about art, music, pictures and laws of æsthetic taste. Happy is the man who has so cultivated a father for teacher and trainer; yet in one way the result may be a little unfortunate. Tennyson's perfection of work was chiefly due to the very severe literary training which he underwent at Cambridge University. Browning was never put under such discipline. He was loved and petted, and had courage to follow his own way to develop his individuality to the utmost possible extent. And it is scarcely possible to doubt that this is partly the reason why he wrote so obscurely at times, and needlessly broke almost all the rules of classical composition—not only of classical composition, but of syntax, but of grammar, but of taste. He had very much greater natural powers than Tennyson; but he never would have dreamed of working as Tennyson worked, of submitting to law as Tennyson submitted. There is a saying that a man best able to command is the man best able to obey; and this was certainly true of Tennyson. But in spite of the faults of Browning one is obliged to doubt whether it would have been good for him and for English literature to have worked like Tennyson. If he had been able or willing to maintain the same perfection of form, he would probably have been less strong in his extraordinary power of dramatic presentation. It was not that Browning could not equal Tennyson. His lyrics prove that he could equal Tennyson whenevre

he pleased; but he very seldom "pleased." I could quote to you lyrics of Browning not only as fine as anything of Tennyson, but finer. Still it was only at rare moments that he condescended to care for form. As a general rule Browning considered the question of form as altogether subordinate to the question of feeling, and substance of expression.

So much for the artistic side of the two, comparatively criticized. Now about Browning's method. It was a most extraordinary and novel method — almost purely subjective, — almost entirely psychological. One single method is to be found all through the work of Browning—not two or three; only one. Yet the variety of the work, as to subject, is far beyond the variety of Tennyson; and even the variety of forms of verse is greater. What then is this extraordinary system which unites the whole of Browning's work — orbs it within the circle of a single artistic conception?

It is this: — Browning expressed everything, described everything, felt everything "from the inside." He was supremely subjective. He was also supremely psychological. Everything that he relates is related as if another person were speaking, and speaking always in the first person — "I." So that every one of his poems is a monologue, a monodrama. For example Browning wishes us to understand an Italian story about a wicked man who killed his wife simply because she was good—because she did not know how to be wicked enough to please him. How does he tell this horrible story? By making the murderer speak to us,—by making him exactly express to us the state of his own wicked mind so that we can perfectly understand him. Or Browning wishes that we should understand the feeling of a fanatic who delights to see a man of another creed being burnt alive before his eyes. He makes the fanatic talk to us, tell us all his heart. So again he makes hundreds of people talk to us — Greeks dead for 2,500 years; Romans of the Empire; Arabs from the desert; English country gentlemen who died fighting for their King; grim Puritans who slew them; rough scoundrels who become suddenly converted to religion; men of the world who pride themselves upon their

skill in mastering women; women who poisoned their rivals in the time of the French Regency; patriots and heroes of many countries—Italian, French, English; Russian peasants who take the law into their own hands and kill for a moral purpose;—these are only a few of the people that Browning makes talk to us. And there is no sameness in all this work. These hundreds of souls each and all have distinct life, intense personality, vivid actuality. What astonishing power is this? It is the very same faculty as Shakespeare's—the dramatic faculty in its very highest, though not in its most vividly comprehensive form. In the creation of individual personages, Browning is like Shakespeare. But he has not Shakespeare's faculty of making these personages play tragedy or comedy in combination. He takes them singly—makes them each perfect—one by one. But he does not make them talk to each other. They talk only by themselves; and they speak directly to us "I—I—I." It is always "I." Yet though Browning be so far short of Shakespeare, how wonderful is the thing which he does! It is as if we were walking with a magician, through all the cemeteries of Europe—and that this magician were to strike grave after grave with his wand, calling up the ghosts of the dead to talk to us. And they talk so much as if they were really alive, that we forget they are ghosts.

So we may say that the whole of Browning's work consists of "soul-pictures" as they have been called. And remember that all his work (excluding regular drama) is monologue. You know that the word dialogue means the speaking together of *two* persons. The word monologue means the speaking of *one* person only. This is the general rule; and although there are some exceptions, this is important to remember when you are asked to characterize Browning.

Perhaps the most extraordinary example of monologue is furnished by the enormous poem of *The Ring and the Book*,[1] which contains more than 20,000 lines. As this vast composition gives us the psychological portraits of a great many characters,—as it is, in short, a great drama,—you might be in-

[1] *The ring and the book*, 4 vols. 1868-9.

clined to question whether it does not form an exception. But, if you examine it closely, you will find that it is only a series of monologues attached together, so as to form one perfect whole. It is, indeed, a drama; but a drama composed in an entirely different way from what is usually called drama. The characters never speak to each other;—they speak only to us—one at a time. And this method is so unique, so extraordinary, and so effective that I wonder why other writers have not since attempted it to any extent. Perhaps only a very great poet would dare to attempt it in England. But I see no possible reason why it should not be attempted in Japan;—I see no reason why some gifted student of the present generation should not attempt to make a book in the same way. The book need not be in verse at all. The very same thing might be done in prose. Only, the person who does it must have a great knowledge of human nature. Now let me tell you how the book is made.

Browning picked up in Italy, at a second-hand bookshop, a little volume containing the history of a terrible murder which had occurred some hundred years before,—with all the facts of the trial of the murderer, his condemnation, and the arguments of the lawyers on both sides. Remember the book was very small—only a mass of dry reports—the history of a law case likely to interest lawyers chiefly. But as Browning read the story, the life of the old dead century revived for him. In a moment he understood the whole history of the case. Here is the case in brief. A wicked nobleman, in want of money, marries a girl of people, in the belief that she is rich, and that he can get her wealth from her. But he soon finds that he has been deceived. She is not rich; she is only the adopted child of rather poor people; she has nothing but her beauty and her virtue. For her beauty he cares nothing, being too old to feel that kind of attraction; and as for her virtue, that is something which he can only detest. Being a thoroughly wicked man, only a thoroughly wicked woman could suit. And she has no money. So he must get rid of her. He might poison her or stab her, or hire a man to stab her or poison her. But that

might cause troublesome enquiries by the police; and he must have at least a good excuse for killing her. He must be able first to make her do something wrong. If he can do that, public opinion will support him, should he kill her. But her extraordinary innocence, her childish virtue are in the way— insuperable obstacles. He tries to corrupt her mind, and can not. Then he tries by extraordinary cruelty to make her run away from him—that would give him an excuse to follow her and kill her under particular circumstances. Her life becomes so hideous, so unendurable, that she has to beg assistance from the church. She first goes to a bishop: he is afraid of the aristocratic family, and will not help her. Then she seeks the help of a good priest —a young and brave man—who is afraid only of doing wrong. He helps her, takes her away from the horrible house, to restore her to her foster-parents. Now comes the opportunity for the wicked husband to kill the woman. Has he not seen her run away with a priest? He follows the pair with his armed retainers, overtakes them,—but this time his plan failed. The young priest is not a coward; but a strong man, skilful with the sword, and it would not be safe to attack him without caution. So all the husband can do is to create a scandal—to bring a charge against his wife and the priest of adultery, and to hand over the two into the charge of the law. The law is partly religious, however; the charge might affect the honour of the church. To prove the woman an adultress might not have been so difficult, were it not that this proof would involve the proof of adultery on the part of the priest. The church people very carefully examined the evidence, and they cannot find any truth in it. But the priest is punished by banishment,—simply because he created a scandal. And the woman is restored to her parents. In her parents' house, her child is born. When the husband hears that he has a son, he determines to kill her at all hazards. For, now, since a son has been born, the property must pass by law to that son, and he cannot then hope to break his connection with the detested family. In the night he goes to the house with a crowd of ruffians, kills the old mother, the father, everybody in his way, and stabs his

wife through and through, till all her body is but one wound. But, strange to say, he does not kill her, though he thinks he has killed her. The young life is very strong. She lives for three days more, just long enough to tell the truth. The murderer is then arrested, tried, and condemned to death.

Then all the social powers moved their machinery in order to save the life of the wretch. The powerful nobles, the high magistrates, the princes of the church — all these are on his side. No doubt he is a wicked rascal, they said;—but then, think of his family, the disgrace to the nobility. The case is appealed and appealed. At last it is appealed to the Pope himself. Now the Pope happens to be a good Pope — a sincere, keen, wise old man, who, on examining the evidence, understands it better than the lawyers, better than the victim, better than the murderer himself. For the occupation of that old man, through many scores of years, has been only to study human hearts and human minds;—to comprehend human souls. The courts might be bought; the judges might be terrorized; society might be duped in favour of that wicked man. But the Pope is not to be bribed or terrorized or duped; and he immediately sends word that the man shall die. And he died, like a coward; and the story ends. Now let us see how Browning tells it.

He makes each of the personages, or, if you like, the ghost of each person, come back and tell their story in succession.

First the murdered wife speaks. Her monologue is entitled by her own name only—"Pompilia." She relates the history of her childhood and married life—a history so horrible that it reads like a nightmare. We are filled with indignation and loathing by the history of the cruelties, the atrocity of moral torture inflicted upon her. She is telling her tale to us as she would to a judge. And nevertheless — how sweet the woman is! Even in this frightful story, she never speaks unkindly of her husband: she has tried in all things to be a good wife to him, even when he did all that he could do to torture her body and to terrify her mind. But she would not commit sin for him. If he wanted her to commit a sin, it must have been because he had not yet learned to be a good Christian.

Now comes the priest's turn—the brave young priest, who ran away with her to save her from worse than death. Frankly and boldly he tells the whole truth. But we feel that he does not make a good impression upon the audience. He is very handsome, very young, evidently a man of powerful passion; — and it seems quite possible that the beautiful young wife might have loved him. It is just possible. We find that her evidence seems less touching now than at first. Yes, either she must be a supremely cunning woman, or a woman as simple as a child. Did she tell the truth? That is what people are now beginning to ask.

Guido Franceschini, the husband, the Count, the murderer, now appears. An old man, hideous, venomous looking, with evil eyes and a wicked mouth. We know this, because he describes himself. But when that wicked mouth opens, it seems to tell a very straightforward story. "Why," he says, "look at me!—do you think that a young woman could love me in a romantic way? No! but look at that handsome priest there — that is the kind of man women fall in love with." Then he tells us why he married, how kind and good he tried to be to his wife, — and how she mocked him, because he was old and grey,—and how she maligned him,—and how she wrote love letters to other men (he produces the love letters in the court room)—and how, finally, she ran away with the priest. "Now," he says, "I know I may have shown too much anger; but think, how a man of my name and rank, must have felt at such an outrage!" Guido's story is good, though his face is bad. People probably begin to think that the young wife was lying.

The next book is entitled "Half-Rome." It is a monologue spoken by one person, expressing one side of public opinion about the case. The man talks like a towngossip, who knows a great many things. He tells us the real history of Pompilia's childhood, without sympathy. A pretty girl, married for money to a bad old man—how could she be happy with him? No doubt the old man was mean to her. But as for writing those love letters—Pompilia never knew how to write. Very pos-

sibly the letters were forged. The priest — well, could you blame a priest for liking such a pretty woman as that?

Now "The Other Half-Rome" speaks. The other half of Rome is on the side of the husband. What a disgraceful attempt upon the honour of a noble house! Yes, that woman has the face of a child; but she has the cunning of ten devils. All that she said was a carefully studied lie. All the priest said was a lie. If the count had killed them both, he would have been quite right. They married the girl to him, these vulgar people, in order to get money out of him. O! all those people were very bad.

Now comes the lawyer for the prosecution. He gives us all the facts in the case; and argues about them most learnedly, half in Latin, half in Italian, until we are tired of listening to him. Nevertheless he makes us understand that the count was a very badly treated man. Chiefly, however, we know that he is arguing in the hope of obtaining promotion for himself, and does not care a bit on which side the truth may happen to be.

Then we have the speech of the lawyer on the other side —he is supposed to defend Pompilia. But really he defends her so badly, that we feel as if he thought it a hopeless case. He is afraid. He dare not offend the great aristocracy, the princes of the church, by arguing too strongly against them. Moreover, he is thinking of promotion — wants to show how worthy of it he can be. To use an American phrase, "we may suspect him of having sold the case."

So much for the first part of the tragedy. Now for the second part,—after the killing of Pompilia the case comes before the Pope. This chapter is simply entitled "The Pope." It is one of the most beautiful in the book—probably the most beautiful; for it shows the highest beauty and strength of character. The Pope tells of the world of Rome as he sees it, the hundred thousands of intrigues going on about him, his perfect knowledge of every attempt made to deceive him, his facile penetration into the cowardly mind of the bishop that was afraid to help Pompilia, and he tells us also of his honest admiration and love of the young priest who did try to help her.

Also he tells us in a certain way the whole signification of the book. What is the signification of the book? Simply this,—that nothing is so difficult in this world as to proclaim the truth for the obtaining of justice. Only by the merest chance has it happened that the scoundrel Guido has been condemned and the memory of Pompilia purified from all blame. The chances were all against virtue, against truth, against justice; — the whole world actually appeared to be combined against that poor brave innocent woman.

The next book, I think, gives the dying confession of the murdered Pompilia. Even dying, she prays for that wicked husband.

The last book gives us the secret thought of that wicked Guido before his execution. He is in prison, and men are sitting there with him, to whom he pours out the horror of his soul. For the first time, he tells us all he thinks, and all he feels; and we know, as we never knew before, how profoundly wicked a wicked man can be. This is the evil spirit of the Renaissance that speaks to us, the spirit of the Borgias,—the spirit of the Italian despot and tyrant. Now he abuses his wife to us. And why? Because she was innocent—which he hates; because she was pure—and he despises purity; because she was unwilling to commit a sin for him—and he wanted a woman like Lucrezia Borgia. He tells us frankly, that he thinks that a good wife ought to help her husband to deceive, to murder, to gratify lust, to do anything that he may command. But as the moment of execution comes this would-be Borgia becomes what the real Borgia never were, — afraid; he trembles, he screams—last of all, involuntarily he calls out the name of his wife, asks her to help him! The real villainy of the man is not of the grand kind — not the rascality of the tigerish or leopardish kind. It is utterly base.

So is composed this great poem. It is not until we have read all the monologues that we fully understand the case. Is not this exactly true to life? We can only know the whole truth about any event by listening to all evidence, by hearing every side, and we must never trust evidence simply because

of the emotional effect that it produces. Only the wisest man can know the truth. But perhaps you will ask in what way is this method superior to the ordinary dramatic method.

It is not intrinsically superior, of course. The dramatic form must be considered the highest form of literary art in a general way. But there are particular ways and conditions in which better effects can be obtained by the use of another form. The dramatic monologue may have an adventitious value beyond the true dramatic form under particular circumstances. I want you to understand clearly the meaning of the word "adventitious" in this connection—it has the sense of "occasional" and also the sense of "accidental." In landscapes, in scenery, there is often what we call "adventitious beauty." For example, a certain mountain, and a certain village, on the slope of the mountain, may appear very beautiful at a certain season of the year, when the weather happens to be particularly bright, or when morning mists happen to take a particular colour in the light of the sun. The beauty we then see is not a mere beauty of form or line or colour; it is a combination made up of light, vapour, colour, form, and a great many other things; —it is a chance beauty, and *adventitious* beauty. So we may say that the dramatic monologue may occasionally have an adventitious value beyond that of the true dramatic form which is nevertheless superior to it. Why? *Because the dramatic monologue can sometimes be made more suggestive.* In the true drama you must finish the action: the whole thought must be expressed; the whole incident must be completed. It is quite otherwise with the monologue. In that you have only one person speaking his thought and expressing his feeling; and no matter how sincerely both be expressed, they leave room for much thinking by the listener. It is just as when a living man gives us his account of something felt and seen. Then we say, "Yes, he believes that the thing happened this way; and he feels very angry about it. But he may be mistaken. Perhaps he does not know all the facts; perhaps there were extenuating circumstances; perhaps he is wrong to be angry. However, we must ask somebody else." A dramatic mono-

logue makes you think in this way. But a real drama can very seldom do so, because the whole story is told, and there is nothing left to imagine after the telling is done. I know that there are a few astounding dramas of which this cannot be said — some of Shakespeare's, for example. After having read *Othello* you feel in regard to the worst character in it, that of Iago, just as if he had been presented to you only in a dramatic monologue. *His* story is not all told;—the mystery of his atrocious wickedness always remains. But, as a general rule, drama tells everything; and dramatic monologue tells only one side of the many sides of a fact. There lies its adventitious value.

Well, as I have said, most of Browning's work is in this form; and he produced effects with it, and taught lessons with it, such as had never been produced or taught before except by Shakespeare. He was a great teacher and a great innovator as well as a great poet. To the student, his worth ought to lie chiefly in the suggestion of method. Or often he was very, very careless about his language, which has been compared, not inaptly, to the language of the telegraph, and to the hurried compression of shorthand reporting. And this was not because he could not do better: it was because he would not. When he wanted to be fine like Tennyson, he could be and was; but if he had been asked to give an honest opinion about Tennyson's method of revision, I think he would have said that the Poet Laureate was wasting valuable time. And the older he grew the more careless he grew. It is rather in his earlier work than in his later work that he is great both as a musician and as a charming colourist. By his short pieces, he is much more likely to live than by his long compositions—though his method, as exemplified even in the long compositions, will never die: the influence will continue. But the short pieces are, after all, the most wonderful, especially those which have the lyric quality. I may therefore say that you will find the very best of Browning's in such volumes as the *Dramatic Lyrics*,[1] *Bells and Pomegranates*,[2] *Men and Women*,[3] *Dramatis*

[1] 1842. [2] 8 nos. 1841-6, [3] 2 vols. 1855.

Personæ.[1] In those collections there are things so supremely beautiful, and so original, that it is difficult to praise them enough. There was a good deal of passion, robust, healthy passion—as well as thinking, in Browning; and you will find the best examples of his sensuous charm as well as of his ethical suggestiveness in the volumes which I have named. But to name particular poems were almost a waste of time—the variety is so astonishing and so rich. However, for an example of the sensuous element, combined with the tragical, there is nothing among the briefer poems of English literature to equal *In a Gondola*;[2] and as for the graver side of the poet's power, the splendid metaphysical fervour of *Abt Vogler*[3] is not only unmatched in English literature but in any European literature whatever. Yet remember that these two extremely opposite phases of expression are but two out of hundreds. Like Shakespeare, Browning touched almost every aspect of human nature, both good and bad, happy or wretched. And, unlike the greater number of deeply thinking poets, Browning himself was very much of an optimist. Even after telling you the most frightful story of wickedness, he will add a reflection or two that comes like a sudden consolation, to restore our faith in the goodness of mankind.

Two New Schools: Spasmodic and Pre-Raphaelite

Browning did not found a school in the proper sense of the word. But he expressed a particular faith of the romantic movement which is worth considering, and which has numerous adherents. It was thought or felt that Tennyson was a little too reserved, too cautious, too strict, too conventional. Tennyson had brought romantic poetry to the highest possible perfection in regard to form and music. But poetry required more freedom, it was thought, in regard to emotion, passion, free-thinking. Browning was the astonishing proof of what

[1] 1864. [2] 1842. [3] 1864.

could be done in a psychological direction with romantic poetry. A number of lesser poets also attempted monologue work, and tried to put into their compositions the originality and the passion which seemed to be wanting in Tennyson. Two new schools sprang up. One of these was called the Spasmodic School. The other was called the Pre-Raphaelite School. This is not the place to tell you much about them: I shall do that later on.[1] Enough to say that the Spasmodic School consisted chiefly of men who attempted originality in the same direction as Browning, but chiefly through violent appeals to sentiment, to pathos, and to passion. They could not exactly be called imitators of Browning; for they could not imitate what was best in him;—and they produced no single first-class poet. This school died young, and accomplished almost nothing in the way of change. But the Pre-Rhaphaelite School, which produced some poetry quite as good as the best of Tennyson, and quite as original as the best of Browning, did not die young; and it accomplished something that never had been accomplished before.

I must say a word to you about the names given to these two schools; it is very necessary that you should understand them. The name "Spasmodic" is a name given in mockery, of course; you know that the word "spasm" means a nervous climax of any kind; but especially a climax of pain, a hysteric or violent nervous condition. The poets called Spasmodic were especially writers of extravagantly emotional poetry: their name is a satire. But you must not suppose that they did no good work. Some of them did beautiful work — though not of the first class. The name of the other school is an artistic name; and a very good one. It means "The Persons of the Time before the Painter Raphael." It is a name that refers therefore more to painting than to literature, and what is known as the Pre-Raphaelite movement in English art was altogether a movement of artists as distinguished from men of letters. But some of these artists were men of letters: two of them were very great men of letters; and they wrote poetry into which they put exactly the same pictorical qualities as they

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. xiii "The Victorian Spasmodics."

put into their pictures. Hence the name, as applied to the school of poets which formed about them. But what were the qualities? Unless I were able to show you in this class-room several hundred pictures representing different periods of artistic development and feeling, I could not perfectly explain what Pre-Raphaelite means. I can only suggest it to you. The great painter Raphael Sanzio represented in his time a new tendency in art—a Renaissance development of the *Ideal.* He made his figures and forms a little more beautiful than nature; he idealized a great deal; and even in his religious paintings the supreme characteristic is beauty rather than religious feeling, or feeling of any kind. But during the Italian middle ages, before Raphael, there were very wonderful painters who idealized very little—who rather belong to the school of Realism than to that of Idealism — who knew nothing or cared nothing for classical convention, and attempted only to picture beauty as they saw it, in connection with religious or other sentiment. There was a simple truth and charm about their work of quite a particular kind; I might say the simplicity of the middle ages blended with the tender side of the religion of the middle ages. For a long time these older painters had been forgotten or ignored. But in the Victorian period various English artists, and men like Ruskin, the great critic, suddenly perceived the strange beauty of this older work; and began to imitate it in their paintings, and to advocate the study of it. Next, the romantics of literature began to take it up. It suggested to them the possibility of a new subject for poetry. The great Tennyson had written about the middle ages without having really studied the middle ages. The writers of historical romance had not really studied the middle ages. There was a great virgin field there, still to be cultivated. What wonderful romance there was in the religious superstitions of the middle ages, the emotionalism, the chivalry, the tragic, and the ideal facts, of mediæval life. At that time, even in England the study of Old and of Middle English was only beginning. Whole branches of philology whose best results are to-day within the reach of every Japanese student in the shape of Skeat's diction-

ary, for example, had been utterly neglected. Then literature as well as art suddenly turned itself, with extraordinary fervour, to the study of mediæval things; and the work of the painters, and the work of the poet, in this new old direction, got the name of Pre-Raphaelite, which it still keeps. To sum up, the word Pre-Raphaelite is almost, though not exactly, synonymous with mediæval.

ROSSETTI

The greatest of the Pre-Raphaelite poets next demands our attention here – I mean Rossetti.[1] His name was Charles Gabriel Dante Rossetti; but for literary reasons he changed the order of the names and signed himself Dante Gabriel Rossetti, by which name he is still known. He was called Dante in honour of the great Italian poet; his father having been a passionate admirer and a student of Dante. That father was a distinguished Italian refugee. Driven from Italy, because of his sincere patriotism, he found a refuge and a welcome in England: and being a very learned man, he easily obtained a professorship of Italian in London. He married in England, but married a girl with Italian blood in her veins. Of this marriage were born four children—two boys and two girls—all of whom were artists and poets. The boys were William and Gabriel Rossetti (William is still alive, and has just completed a new edition of his brother's works.) The two girls were Christina and Maria Francesca. I think you have probably seen the excellent little book by Maria Francesca called *The Shadow of Dante*.[2] As for Christina, she is now acknowledged to have been the greatest English female poet in the 19th century, greater than Mrs. Browning, greater than George Eliot, greater in fact than any woman of the time in the art of her perfection. Now this is a remarkable family history. But it is also remarkable that one of the greatest of the English

[1] Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882).
[2] 1871.

Victorian poets was not an Englishman, any more than his sister, the greatest female poet of the Victorian period, was an English woman. And, indeed, through all the work of these wonderful two there is a particular quality—a something indescribably delicate, graceful and caressing in its charm, which one feels is not English, and could not be English. It is the charm of an older and a finer race—a something inherited from a much ancient civilization.

Dante Rossetti was born in 1828, in London, and had some education at one of the great public schools there; but he left school while still a boy to study painting, and had no university training, indeed, no literary training of any kind. He had what was better, inherited genius—a doubtful genius that branched off in two different directions. As a boy he was writing poetry; but he never thought himself intended to be a poet until already he had become one, almost unconsciously. As a painter he met with an easy success, in spite of bitter opposition: he became the acknowledged chief of the Pre-Raphaelite School of art. Then came the romance of his life, very strange and very sad. Among the girls who sat for him as models, was a young girl called Elizabeth Siddall, who was very beautiful. He became interested in her, not only because of her beauty, but because of her love of poetry and painting. She had great natural talent; and one of the first persons to notice her talent was John Ruskin, who treated her very generously, helping her with considerable sum of money. She was a young person of good family, not at all of the common class. Rossetti fell in love with her; and married her. It was while they were married that he made a little book of poems to please her. She died within a little more than a year after the marriage (poisoned herself, by accident, it was said) and the book had not yet been offered to a publisher. Rossetti said that as it had been written for her sake it should be buried with her. So it was put into her coffin. But within ten years after Rossetti began to regret having buried the poems. He had seen other men become famous by doing much inferior work. He wanted to get the poems back again. But, in order to do this, a great many legal

formalities had to be gone through; and probably, if he had not had influential friends he could not have recovered his book so easily. It is said that, when the coffin was opened, the dead woman appeared almost as fair as during life;—the book was lying on her breast, covered by her long golden hair; and the MS. had been but little damaged by its long interment. The poems were immediately prepared for the press; they appeared in 1870, under the title of *Ballads and Poems*,[1] — and the success was immediate and very great. Rossetti did not have to wait for public approval like Tennyson: he conquered the approval at once; but, then, you must remember that he did not give immature work to the publisher. He had waited many years, and had finished poems just as carefully as he finished his pictures before putting them upon exhibition. There were, however, some mean criticisms—the outcome of private jealousy. The meanest was from the pen of Robert Buchanan,[2] published anonymously and entitled *The Fleshly School of Poetry*.[3] The criticism was intended to hurt, to give pain; and as Rossetti happened to be superatively sensitive, he was very much hurt, and thought himself obliged to suppress one of the poems criticized in future edition of his work. The poem especially attacked was called *The Nuptial Sleep*,[4] a very delicate subject and difficult to touch without morally offending. But Rossetti touched it so beautifully, that it might very well have been left alone; and there is no doubt that in future time it will reappear in the English edition of the sonnets, just as it now reappeared in the American. Rossetti's answer to the critics was dignified, but strangely gentle. However, he had a powerful helper in the person of Mr. Swinburne, who had also been attacked, and who withered the attacking party in a pamphlet of extraordinary invective power. As for Buchanan, it may be said that his literary reputation never recovered from the consequence of his foolish outbreak of jealousy. He died without producing anything noteworthy, except *The Ballad of*

[1] *Poems* 1870. New [3rd] edn [with alterations and substitutions, 1881].
[2] Robert Williams Buchanan (1841-1901).
[3] *The fleshly school of poetry and other phenomena of the day* 1872. [Originally ptd in *The Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1871.]
[4] Composed 1869; published 1870.

Judas Iscariot,[1] which I read to you last year.[2] But the fame of Rossetti is now not less secure than that of Tennyson.

His own death in 1882 was probably the result of mental rather than physical sickness—the reaction of the mind upon the body. He had never really recovered from the shock of his wife's death, and he had got into the bad habit of taking a powerful and dangerous medicine in order to get sleep when grief made him sleepless. The habit grew, and destroyed him. But he had already done his best work both in poetry and painting — work that will endure. His paintings are now of very great value; and his poems have become a part of the inner treasure-house of English literature. Both as a poet and as a painter, he was what is called "a great lover." Love, and the love of one woman, inspired and coloured all his work. The same fair person who figures in the poems of *The Blessed Damozel*,[3] *The Staff and Scrip*,[4] *The Portrait*[5] and the wonderful *House of Life*,[6] figures also in his painting of mediæval heroines and the saints and angels and virgins. She was Beatrice in his pictures of Dante; she was the Blessed Damozel in the celebrated picture of that name; and her portrait is recognizable in hundred pictures and sketches which the artist left behind him. That is the romance of Rossetti—at once strange and sad.

There is not much to say otherwise about his life; but there is much to say about his character, his temperament. It was Italian, and therefore even for that reason only different from anything English and more sensitive, more refined than anything English; but it was more than Italian. It was absolutely mediæval. It has been said that Rossetti had no more relation to the 19th century than if he had been a spirit returned from the 12th century, or a man of the 12th century reborn into the 19th century and able to remember his former birth. I do not mean that he was simply religious, in spite of his Roman Catholic ancestry and blood-sympathies; he prob-

[1] 1869.
[2] See *On Poetry*, ch. xxxiii "A Note on Robert Buchanan."
[3] Ptd in *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art*, No. 2, Feb, 1850.
[4] In *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, No. 12, 1856.
[5] 1870.
[6] In *Poems*, 1870, and *Poems and Sonnets*, 1881.

ably believed in no religion at all. His art left him indifferent to the subject—even when he was painting the Virgin. But he was mediæval otherwise—especially in his total indifference to modern science, modern philosophy, modern social and political questions. He detested all such matters. The roaring world of London in which he lived never really existed for him. There is a beautiful old Spanish song with a burden :—

My body's in Segovia;
My soul is in Madrid!

It might be said in the same way of Rossetti, that his body was in London, and in the 19th century, but his soul was always somewhere in the 12th, 13th, or 14th century — now in Palestine, now in the chambers of some old French castle, now in the Florence of Dante's day, now in some Border keep in the far North of the 16th century in England. He knew and felt the past so exactly and so vividly, that he gives you the shock and the surprised delight of actually seeing and feeling it yourself. He does this quite as well in his poems as in his pictures—perhaps the poems are even more of pictures than the paintings are. There is nothing artificial about his mediævalism: it is real mediævalism; and he left nothing more for any other poet to do in the same direction when he had finished with it. Even when he touched a mediæval poem, translated it, it took a life, which it did not have before. You know that the history of French poetry properly begins with Villon—that reckless student-poet, who is still loved in spite of his faults after all these hundred years. Some day I want to read to you the quaint French of Villon's *Ballad of Dead Ladies*,[1] and then read to you Rossetti's English rendering of it, in order that you may feel for yourselves how much better Rossetti's English translation is. Swinburne, matchless artist though he be, when translating the best poems of Villon, left that ballad alone — observing that after Rossetti's translation, no mortal man need ever hope to do better. And this was a simple truth.

Having thus spoken of Rossetti's life and temperament, you

[1] 1869.

might expect to hear that there is a great deal of sameness in his work. But that would be quite a mistake. There was a wonderful variety of a particular kind in Rossetti, notwithstanding his mediævalism. He could write modern psychological poem quite as well as Browning when he tried to — witness the singular monologue of *Jenny*. He could write a meditative poem upon an experience of London life as well as Tennyson—observe the poem upon *The Assyrian Bull in the British Museum*. Then his ballads, his sonnets for pictures, his romances,—fragmentary or otherwise—represent a range of subjects remarkably great. And when I say that he was the greatest of all English sonnet writers since Shakespeare, you will understand better his real importance as a poet; for the sonnet is the most difficult of all the forms of short poetry.

A glance at the subjects of his poems is necessary;—for the student should be able to answer readily such a simple question as, "What did Rossetti write about?" You may say in a general way that his subjects were Love and Mediæval Romance; and that in either direction he was primarily the most artistic of love poets. The great collection of sonnets, entitled *The House of Life*, treats of Love, Birth, and Death,—all in relation to one intense personal emotion. But even here the feeling is not modern,—it is old Italian. The sonnets for pictures—exquisite compositions written as inscriptions to be engraved under pictures—are in themselves perfect paintings, truly pictures in words. But the subjects are not of to-day—they are shadows of vanished centuries. The longer poems are all mediæval. *The Bride's Prelude* is mediæval French: *Rose Mary* is mediæval English; so is *Stratton Water;* so is the terrible ballad of *Sister Helen;* so is *The White Ship*. In regard to such ballads as *Eden Bower* and *Troy Town* you might say that the subject of the first is an old Hebrew or Talmudic legend, and that of the second, Greek. That is true; but in both cases the subject is treated according to the method and the feeling of mediæval writers;—both are excellent imitations of mediæval feeling. There are only two or three poems in the collected works which really touch modern life at all, and

they do so in a strange far-off way—as if to this singular mind the present reality had all been a dream, all the dead past the only actual existence.

What is Rossetti's place in literature?—Is he inferior to Tennyson? No: he is even superior to Tennyson in several directions. We cannot put him behind Tennyson under any circumstance. As I have told you, Tennyson was a great poetical force of the century,—the man who influenced English feeling, and changed the English language more than anybody else. But after all we cannot call him superior to Rossetti as a workman, nor equal to him in certain directions of emotional expression. Yet everybody knows something about Tennyson; and only a class really appreciates Rossetti. But there are excellent reasons for this. Remember that Tennyson, with all his scholarship, was really a simple-minded man, something like Wordsworth, who worked in one direction prodigously, and never tried to get away from his own time. He reflected the best of his age—the *English* of it. He wrote about things which everybody could understand. Everybody can understand the *Idylls of the King*. Everybody can understand poems like *Enoch Arden*, *The Princess*, or *Maud*. So Tennyson could become as popular as he really deserved to become. With Rossetti the case was entirely different. He never wanted to be popular;—he never even thought of poetry as a profession; for his profession was painting;—and he cared only to be understood by the select circle of painters and men of letters. He wrote for them. Probably he will become more popular every year for many years to come, but never popular like Tennyson. His subjects were not comprehensible to the uncultivated class of readers. It required very considerable culture—including some knowledge of old French and old Italian literatures—to appreciate Rossetti. He was too fine and too far away to be a literary force in the popular sense. Great his influence upon literature will be; but it will affect chiefly the higher forms of complex expression, not the bulk of the English language, not the speech of everyday; and it will be slow. Or if you ask me to speak more plainly, I would say that it is rather the artist

and the emotional poet who will go to Rossetti for inspiration, and not the ordinary reader. But everybody goes to Tennyson, with good reason, as a great authority on English expression. The specialism of Rossetti's work is the only cause of his occupying a minor place. He did some things that Tennyson could not possibly have done.

What were those things? The principal of them was the perfect development of mediæval feeling in the romantic movement. Tennyson's mediævalism was, after all, artificial: he did not understand, nor care about the middle ages; he made no particular study of them. But Rossetti and his circle left nothing for anybody else to do in the same direction. They revived the past so perfectly that no one will attempt, with any chance of success, to do anything in the same way. Also it may be said that Rossetti brought into English poetry a new emotional exquisiteness, a delicacy of feeling such as had never been expressed in English forms before. This was Italian and personal, it is true; but it gave much to think about, and thousands will study it with profit.

A critical edition of Rossetti may be expected before many years. He is a poet who will give very little trouble to those who undertake such an edition. For, with the exception of a few lighter poems, Rossetti did not revise his work after publication. He perfected it first to such an extent that it needed no after-retouching. But he did this because of being an artist by profession, careful never to consider anything finished until he had done his very best with it; and he was already past middle age when he put into print the compositions begun when a boy of nineteen.

For the experienced critic, who has given the better part of a lifetime to the study and discovery of literary beauty, a single reading of a poet may be sufficient for the perception of the best in the book. A single reading may also have a small value for some student of extraordinary genius. But I think there can be no question that, to the ordinary student, a single reading of a great poem means just the same thing as no reading at all. In fact it means worse than no reading; because

the student who thinks that he has read the poem after one perusal, will be a student so satisfied with his own judgment that he will never take the trouble to read the poem a second time. A perfect poem is something to be read fifty times, a hundred times; it cannot be read too often. Remember that the single volume into which the work of any great poet may be collected represents the best thinking and the best experience of one exceptionally gifted human life. You cannot learn much about the whole life of a great man by looking at a book for half an hour; — you must live with the book to get any benefit from it. Now these remarks are particularly applicable in the case of Rossetti. If you want to know what to read in Rossetti, I would say, "Take a few of the shorter poems, read them over a great many times, try if possible to translate one of them into your own language (you cannot do it: but it is worth trying to do), and if the charm of the work then really impresses you, attempt to study the whole of him. It is a work of years; but if you like him, you will not find the time wasted. As to the short poems, I recommend especially *The Staff and Scrip, Sister Helen, The White Ship, The Burden of Nineveh.*[1] But you can choose others for yourselves, if you do not like the subjects — remembering only that when you really learn the charm of a poet, the subject makes no difference. As for the longer poems, you might begin with the magical story of *Rose Mary*, and then try the marvellous fragment of *Bride's Prelude.*

SWINBURNE

The last of the four great poets now demands attention;— Swinburne. Algernon Charles Swinburne[2] was the youngest of the group, and is now the only surviving member of it. He was born in London, in 1837,—the son of Admiral Swinburne of the English Navy, and is a descendant of nobles, being re-

[1] Printed in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, No. 8, 1856.
[2] (1837-1909).

lated to the family of the Earl of Ashburnham. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, but did not take his degree at Oxford—notwithstanding that he was certainly the best classical scholar of his class, and one of the finest Greek scholars, considering his age, that Oxford ever taught. His literary career began even during his student life; and there is not any occasion to dwell much upon it now. The time has not yet come for a good biography of Swinburne. We need now only to speak of the work and the man in the relation of both to literature.

In speaking of Rossetti I said that Rossetti appeared to his contemporaries much as might appear a man of the 14th century reborn into the 19th. Of Swinburne it has been said that the ghost of Shelley seems to have been reincarnated in him. And certainly there are some curious points of resemblance in the history of both men. Shelley, you remember, was a young nobleman by blood, filled with the spirit of revolt against the religious and social conventions of his time. Swinburne is the very same thing—a gifted and wealthy descendant of princes, yet filled with a spirit of revolt against conventions, intellectual and moral. However, there were differences. Shelley was a rebel both in act and thought—both as man and poet. Swinburne, as a member of society, behaved himself perfectly well: he did not get himself into trouble at school; he did not get expelled from Oxford; and he did not make anybody unhappy through a mistaken estimate of the value of the social laws. But in his poetry he has been even much more of a revolutionary than Shelley ever was—much more of a scorner of Christianity—much more of a rebel against modern idea of literary morality, which Shelley was not. Shelley was very chaste as a poet;—the ghostly beauty of his song has not one note of sensualism. Indeed the poetical chastity of Shelley was something unique—something that reminds us of the passionlessness attributed to disembodied spirits. But Swinburne sang the song of the senses as it never had been sung in English before, and very seldom, if at all, in French. In fact, after the work of Tennyson, of Browning and of Rossetti, the neo-romantics had

broken down every convention in the way of literary freedom except one. Swinburne determined to break down even that one; and he did it. It was the unwritten convention that certain matters concerning the sexual relation ought not to be uttered in English poetry. Swinburne simply asked, "And why?"—and he made the utterance. As he was then very young and very aggressive, he uttered a little too much for his own good and too much for an example. Nobody is likely to go quite so far as he went in this direction; and nobody could go any further—unless he ceased to be a great poet. That is why Swinburne is not now the poet laureate of Great Britain. That is why there are even foolish prejudices against him. And that is why some people who ought to know him well even try to degrade him to the standard of a second-class poet. They cannot do it: he stands easily first and he will always remain one of the glories of English literature in spite of the "sins of his youth."

It is necessary that I should tell you these things at the outset, lest others should tell you in a less generous way. At no time was Swinburne an inferior poet; it is true that he has done some things which were needlessly unconventional, and perhaps a little foolish. But on no account are we to despise him, or try to belittle the splendour of his work in view of such mistakes. If Swinburne is less important to Japanese students of English literature than Tennyson or Browning or Rossetti, it is not because he is an immoral poet at all, but simply because his work represents studies of form rather than studies of thought and feeling. That is all. To Japanese students the least important thing to study in an English poem is the form; and the most important thing to study is the thought and feeling. Although there are a few objectionable poems (and only a few) in the great mass of Swinburne's work, the majority of it would be just as important for you as the work of Tennyson, if it were an expression of thought and feeling rather than of perfect form. But, unfortunately it is not. Swinburne is the greatest poet of the Victorian era, the greatest poet in English literature, the greatest poet in all modern liter-

ature—whether French, English, German or Italian—in respect to form. I am not now expressing to you only my personal opinion:—I am expressing the opinion of the most competent critics of poetry. Since the time of the Greeks no such mastery of form has been shown by any poet in any language than by Swinburne. In this respect his genius is one of the greatest wonders in literature. But as I have said before, form is not the all-important thing for our study; and Swinburne's transcendent genius appears chiefly in that direction.

But in order to understand the measure of the spread of the wings of that genius—in order to estimate what the French would call the *envergure* of the man—it is necessary to give you some notion of the extent of his work. No poet of the Victorian era has written more (with the possible exception of one minor poet, Morris); and the bulk of this work comprised in poetry alone, not to speak of prose, the best drama of the 19th century, the most perfect imitation of Greek tragedy ever written, the most perfect lyrical poem, in point of form, ever produced in modern time. Surely that is something astonishing in itself. But the man is altogether astonishing. Swinburne can write poetry equally well in Modern English, or in Old English; in Modern French, or in Old French; in Latin, or in Greek. No other Englishman ever lived who was even remotely capable of this. Landor could indeed write admirable Latin poetry; and so could the wonderful Cambridge scholar Calverley. But that a man should be able to produce the most difficult verse equally well in a half dozen different languages is almost a miracle. Remember that this is a very different matter from what we call "knowing half a dozen languages." There are many men who know half a dozen languages: some of your professors very probably know as many. But to compose poetry of the first class in any one language besides your own is a great feat. It is no feat for Swinburne. The greatest pleasure of his life has been to study poetical construction in all languages which have a representative literature; and I am underrating rather than overrating his abilities. I have not the slightest doubt that he is quite familiar with the different

forms of Japanese verse; and I have often said that, if any living foreigner could adapt Japanese form to English or French verse construction, that man would be Swinburne. In addition to the extraordinary power which I have indicated, you must remember that Swinburne is also a scholar in the scientific sense—a man who knows as much about old Greek life, old French life, old Roman life, as if he had actually lived in past ages. He has the archæological vision. And that is why a great deal of his work can really be appreciated by scholars only. I must frankly tell you that I am not competent to make a proper estimate of Swinburne for you, in a brief lecture. Only a first-class classical scholar — a great master of Latin and Greek—could properly do that. So Swinburne's position is rather an unfortunate one. His greatest merits can be understood only by scholars; while his faults, in a moral sense, can be understood by vulgar people. The vulgar reading-public is large; the class of real scholars is very small. Accordingly it is no wonder that the prejudice against him is still strong; for the masses can but half understand him.

What has he done for English poetry? He has done this, —he has taught a whole generation new and wonderful things in regard to poetical form; and his work will continue to teach many generations more. It is quite true that some of his poems have more sound than sense, as ungenerous critics have observed; but this does not mean that they are without any value. They were not written with an idea of telling a story, or expressing an emotion, but for the sake of teaching the possibility of new effects in rhythm and rhyme. And remember the criticism does not affect the great mass of his work, but only a part of it, which was merely experimental. Even Tennyson made experiments in the same way, as in the little fragment entitled *Catullian Hendecasyllables.* We do not ask a poet for sense when he makes experiments like these; and it ought not to be demanded of Swinburne simply because his experiment had been conducted upon a larger scale than Tennyson's.

In what is he above all other poets in respect to form? Not in rhyme; for we have had quite as clever rhyme-makers.

Not in colorific effects; for either Rossetti or Tennyson could produce pictorial miracles of equal brilliancy. Only in music, — in rhythm. Of course you know the difference between rhythm and rhyme; and that rhythm belongs to prose as well as to poetry. It signifies only the musical flow and cadence of words. It is the art of music applied to expression. Now in rhythm Swinburne is so supreme that even Tennyson falls far short of him. We have to go back to the poetry of the Greek to find rhythmic effects like Swinburne's; and if Swinburne does not always equal the Greeks, it is because he has to write in a much less perfect language in order to obtain audience. Very possibly he might have written in Greek, but who could then have read except a few professors of philology?

Now just for the reason Swinburne's superative excellence lies in rhythm, I do not think that you can hope to understand the best side of him. Even Englishmen not gifted with a truly musical ear were unable, in spite of learning, to appreciate some of the measures of Rossetti; how much less can the ordinary ear appreciate Swinburne? But still there are parts of Swinburne so delightfully musical that their melody cannot be altogether missed by you—though your own language possesses no possibilities of like rhythmical effects. Again there are beauties in Swinburne of exultant speech—utterances of the joy of life, the splendour of nature, the beauty of women, the sublimity of the sea, which you can very easily appreciate, and even learn to love. Things that he has written are learned by heart without effort, because they force themselves through ear and eye upon memory with a vividness and a force not belonging to any other poet. Such is the splendid chorus in *Atalanta in Calydon* beginning:—

> When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
> The mother of months in meadow or plain
> Fills the shadows and windy places
> With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain.

Such also is the wonderful poem in hexameters beginning:—

Out of the golden remote wild west where
the sea without shore is.

That is Greek measure in English — the thunder-roll of Homer's verse. Selections from Swinburne may be a very great pleasure as well as a very great profit for you; but the selection must be judiciously made, and you need not think of trying to read the whole of Swinburne. Indeed the whole of his work is only readable for accomplished students of prosody, who analyse his method merely for the sake of form.

A word now about his work, by titles. There are three volumes all named *Poems and Ballads*,[1] first series, second series, and third series. These contain the most wonderful part of his earlier lyric poetry. They contain also some of his objectionable poems; but even the objectionable poems ought not to be objectionable to grown-up students of literature. They are not things which could be explained to children; but I can see no reason why a student of poetry should fail to read them, because they contain some music and many thoughts of beauty that are simply astonishing. Besides, I must tell you that the so-called objectionable parts of Swinburne are objectionable for peculiar reasons. When he writes about things which other English poets would not dare to write about, he does so in such a learned way that only a scholar can really understand the character of certain allusions. Therefore, it would be impossible to say that his language is ever inelegant or unrefined. Other poets have written about certain things in the same veiled way, and no objection has been made. For instance Rossetti has a famous passage upon sexual lust, which everybody knows and admires, and which no critic ever was foolish enough to find fault with. Swinburne, taking the very same subject, scandalizes everybody, except the scholars and a few really great critics. Why is this? Simply because Swinburne treats those questions not from the standpoint of modern moral, as Rossetti does, but from a purely Greek and pagan point of view. All the powers of nature were personified by the ancients; and Swinburne speaks of passion as mysteriously divine, apotheo-

[1] 1866. Second series, 1878. Third series, 1889.

sizes it, sings hymns to it, and—like some pagan of the later Empire—attacks and mocks the Christian idea at the same time. Unless the reader can perceive the real art of Swinburne's position, the attempt to represent emotionally old pagan sensualism in the 19th century poetry,—he is likely to be shocked. The scholars knew perfectly well what Swinburne meant. But the ordinary reader could only see that he was praising lust and mocking virtue. Now the correct way to look at Swinburne is to leave the moral question entirely aside, and consider only the artistic aspect of the work. I do not think that the subjects are always undeserving of blame; but if Swinburne had been more conservative in his choice of themes, it is very probable that we should have missed some of the best poetry ever written. And that is the way that the good critics look at the matter. In spite of the fact that the subjects are at times reprehensible, the poems are among the glories of European literature. At the same time a large number of them could not be explained in class; they are not adapted for public commentary. But some of them can; for example the splendid hymn to the sea-gull in the third volume, and the wonderful poem about the sun-dew.

Besides these volumes entitled *Poems and Ballads*, there are the *Songs before Sunrise*,[1] *Songs of the Springtides*.[2] In one of these you will find a celebrated philosophical poem certain to live as long as the English language lives: the glorious poem of *Hertha*. That you ought to read;—indeed I intend, if possible, to give you a little lecture upon it. Then we have the *Century of Roundels*,[3]—a hundred poems illustrating the sweetness and power of a particular form of old French verse adapted into English with astonishing success. These volumes represent most of the miscellaneous poems. But the works of Swinburne already comprise no less than twenty-three volumes, — not counting the volumes of selections. Half a dozen of these are critical prose — mostly essays upon pictures and books. The remainder is drama.

We have nothing to do here with Swinburne's prose, —

[1] 1871.
[2] 1880.
[3] *A century of roundels* 1883.

though it is prose-poetry. But his drama represents the very greatest of his work in sustained verse. The most perfect thing in it is undoubtedly the *Atalanta in Calydon*,[1] — the most successful attempt ever made to reproduce in English tragedy the spirit of Greek tragedy. Every student must read parts of this: they cannot be ignored. Great in another way is the vast trilogy of dramas on the subject of the life and death of Mary, Queen of Scots. Here we have three great plays, forming one great tragedy. I believe this is the grandest piece of dramatic writing on a large scale done in England during the century. It is not, perhaps, actable; but that has nothing to do with its relation to poetry. In order to be able to enjoy these plays (they are of course much easier for you to understand than *Atalanta* with its Greek allusions), you should first read the history of Mary by the historian Froude; not only because the history of Froude is as interesting as any novel, but because Swinburne has closely followed Froude in his historical treatment of the subject. I believe that the strongest part of the triology is *Bothwell*.[2] These are not all the dramas of Swinburne; — there are also *Erechtheus*, *The Queen Mother* and several others; but I cannot attempt to give you details about them. One more department of Swinburne's poetical work may be referred to,—English epic. He has, like Tennyson, taken up the study of the old Arthurian romance; and even after having read Tennyson's *Idylls* on the same subject, Swinburne's *Tristram af Lyonesse*[3] will appear to you quite as fine and strong as Tennyson's, but in a different way. It is altogether a passionate treatment of the subject– emotional to a degree, which Tennyson would never have ventured.

There is one more observation about Swinburne that it may be necessary to make. You may ask why, since he is in some respects superior to Tennyson, has he not been able to influence the English language to the same extent. It is necessary that the student should understand the nature of Swinburne's influence very distinctly.

[1] *Atalanta in Calydon, a tragedy* 1865. Kelmscott press edn. 1894.
[2] *Bothwell; a tragedy* 1874.
[3] *Tristram of Lyonesse, and other poems* 1882.

Swinburne has not influenced the English language to the same degree as Tennyson for two reasons,—first, that his work has been much less in English directions, but rather in old classic, in French, and in Old English directions; and partly because his work never could obtain the same great popularity as Tennyson's. It is too scholarly.

But, in poetry Swinburne's influence has been very much greater than Tennyson's. Almost every English poet of any consequence, since Swinburne, has been influenced by Swinburne. He provoked or produced an altogether new tendency in taste, especially as to form and rhythm. But remember that this influence has been exerted mostly in directions which are beyond the range of popular taste. To give you any good and just idea of Swinburne by a merely critical notice is quite impossible. I could only illustrate him by means of copious examples; and such examples would require the time and space of a very considerable lecture.[1]

SUMMARY

This ends our historical notice of the four greatest poets of the Victorian age. Let us summarize very briefly the most important facts about them:—

I. Tennyson perfected the romantic style in those directions already followed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats, but especially Keats; and even while remaining the king of the romantics, he gave to his romantic verse the classical perfection suggested by the work of Milton. He became the most popular, and still remains the most popular, of all English poets in spite of this great perfection; and he influenced the English language as no other poets had done before him since the time of Pope.

II. Browning introduced into English poetry a new form of monodramatic art, and dealt especially with psychological

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. iii "Studies in Swinburne."

reality. More than any other English poet he resembles Shakespeare by his power of giving life to dramatic personages. He has great faults of obscurity and of construction; but he has also astonishing splendours of verse. But for his faults, he might be called the greatest of modern English poets in regard to emotional expression. Indeed, I am inclined to think that it would be very difficult to class him otherwise.

III. Rossetti gave to English verse an artistic quality of delicate feeling, rather Italian than English; and he advanced the romantic movement a stage further than Tennyson in the domain of mediæval sentiment. He best represents the mediæval feeling so much studied by the painters of the pre-Raphaelite School; and of that school he was at once the greatest painter and the greatest poet. Remember also the pictorial quality in his work, which makes his poems impress the imagination exactly like powerful paintings.

IV. Swinburne carried the art of English verse to the highest point ever reached in the direction of musical effect;—he is undoubtedly the greatest master of rhythm that has lived in modern times. Also, he did a great deal to introduce into English, beautiful forms of old French verse which had never been successfully handled by English poets before him. Of all English poets he is the most scholarly; and it will be well for you to remember that he has written perfect poetry in many different languages. As Tennyson best represents the genius of Keats, expanded and perfected in a new direction, Swinburne rather descends from Shelley than from any other poet of the past. But he is a very much greater poet in certain directions than Shelley, while he lacks the ghostly and impressive beauty of that singer. It will not be necessary in this summary to consider him outside of purely artistic limits.

The Minor Singers

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

No fact better exemplifies the importance of Victorian poetry than the extremely high rank of many of those who must be called its minor voices. The minor poets of the Victorian period are really greater, in certain ways, in very many ways, than the first-class poets in the time before this period. Moreover we cannot make two simple divisions of Victorian poets; we cannot simply class them as major and minor. On the contrary the very extensive groups of minor poets give us at least three distinct sub-classes; and below these again are classes which we shall have no time even to consider. As I told you before, the outburst of poetry in the time of Victoria was much like the outburst of song in the age of Elizabeth. There have been so many poets, and so many good ones, that we cannot treat of them all in a lecture. We can only try to group a few of the best in each principal group, as illustrating the tone and methods of that class.

Now we have to observe at the beginning that the romantics did not have everything in their own way: there was a reactionary class of poets who attempted a return to classical severity; and some of these were great forces. I might call them the classical school. The romantics again must be divided into the old romantics and the neo-romantics; and neo-romantics were divided, as I told you before, into the spasmodics, and the pre-Raphaelites. Again outside of these groups are a multitude of singers, not belonging to any one class alone, but often showing the influence of two or even three different groups. What are we to do in such a case? I am sure that whatever course might be adopted of grouping by schools, it could only tend to confuse the student's mind, unless attempted in a special lecture. I shall give a special lecture on the spasmodic poets, and on the pre-Raphaelite poets; but for the minor poets in general, I think it will be best to class them simply by order of importance. This will make it

easier to remember their place in the history of English poetry.

Now I should place in the first group of Victorian minor poets, first of all, Miss Rossetti; secondly, George Meredith; thirdly, Robert Bridges; fourthly, William Morris; and fifthly, Matthew Arnold. I know that this arrangement is somewhat different from arrangements previously made by distinguished critics, and by myself, following the guidance of those critics. But the new arrangement which I give you now is fully supported by the best judgment of the day. And you must remember that every few years literary estimates have to be revised. It requires a very long time to understand perfectly the merits and the demerits of really great poets, especially those who have lived in our own time; and it is not surprising to find that a distinguished critic will change, after the lapse of five or ten years, some judgment previously made.

Miss Rossetti

Let us now consider these five names in their literary significance and order. I have already made a special lecture[1] upon Christina Rossetti;[2] — therefore I can be brief in her regard. You know that she occupies now the highest place of any female poet in English literature. If she is not classed with the very greatest men poets also, it is not because she is inferior to them in exquisiteness, but only because she is weaker than they in respect to the force and volume of her work. Were it otherwise, we should be face to face with a miracle; I mean that we should find ourselves confronting the phenomenon of a woman capable of the same amount of intellectual nerve-expenditure as that of the strongest man of genius, for, after all, remember that literary work of any kind means nervous work,—means expenditure of force. The astonishing thing is that any woman should have been able to come

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. xxxii "Note on Christina Rossetti and her Relation to Victorian Poetry."

[2] Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894).

so very close to the place of Tennyson, of Browning, of Swinburne, and of Gabriel Rossetti. Like her brother, Christina was a leader of the pre-Raphaelite movement. Her work was much too fine to be fully appreciated in her own day—particularly in an age when people imagined that Mrs. Browning was the greatest female poet that ever lived. Such talent had to wait for appreciation. And now everybody knows that Christina almost reaches the very highest place in poetry, and that Mrs. Browning must take a very low place in all future histories of 19th century verse. She has scarcely written a single poem without faults, and very bad faults; whereas Miss Rossetti cannot be said to have written a single poem that is bad. And a remarkable fact is the variety of her work. Whether a fairy tale, a mystical romance, a symbolic poem or a religious parable, a ballad or a song, the work is always perfect of its kind—and perfect with that severe beauty, born of perfect self-control, which we should expect to find in the work of a man rather in that of a woman.

George Meredith

George Meredith[1] I have put second to Miss Rossetti, because he has faults which Miss Rossetti has not,—the same provoking faults as those of Browning: obscurity, fantasticality, eccentricities that offend against all canons of perfect taste,—that is, occasionally; at his best Meredith is not surpassed by anybody; but his best does not represent the bulk of his work by any means. He comes closer to Browning than any other English poet, though he certainly never attempted to imitate Browning; it is an extraordinary case of like minds appearing and developing about the same time. Like Browning, he is a psychologist; and like Browning he deals a great deal with abstract questions. But as a thinker (by a thinker, I mean one who expresses the profoundest thought of the time in the most

[1] (1828-1909).

original way) he is greater than Browning. Where Browning would have hesitated to express an idea or a conviction, Meredith never hesitated. He has not Browning's dramatic faculty in poetry—although he has that faculty in his novels; for you must remember that Meredith is chiefly known as a psychological novelist. But he expresses the scientific philosophy of his age after a fashion that Browning never attempted. He is particularly the poet of evolution. His work is very largely didactic: it represents an application of ethics to evolution. The teaching, in brief, is this:—Effort is the great law of the universe, and the highest of moral duties. Whatever a man attempts, he must do his best in—his very best, and untiringly. The greatest sin is weakness. There are two kinds of weakness; and both are crime. Physical weakness is, however, much less contemptible than moral weakness. Moral weakness represents failure in the purpose of life. Man can progress only by fighting against the common impulses of nature —against his own passions, which are natural, against his own likes and dislikes which are natural, against even all conventions which have become, in a certain sense, a natural part of social existence, and are nevertheless wrong in the same degree that they are false or represent falsehood. And the great virtue is courage—moral courage for the man, as physical courage for the young. If you are afraid of nature, she will devour you, or stamp you out of existence. If you fight her nobly and unselfishly, she will love you, and lead your feet to the path by which you can become a god. When? Not in this world. But after the universe has passed away you will still exist in many other universes; and if you are wise and brave, you will constantly rise to higher and yet higher things. This is the summary, in a very few words, of Meredith's teaching; and in these days of fantastic philosophy it is certainly worth studying and thinking about. Moreover it has extraordinary charm of form; for Meredith is a wonderful poet at certain times, when the inspiration comes upon him.

You must observe that this view of man's relation to the universe is exactly the opposite to that of the German thinker

Nietzsche whose ideas have been temporarily attracting some attention. Meredith, as an evolutionist, is supremely moral, and supremely an optimist. He believes in the tendency of all things to good: we might say that he shows a belief in what is called "the dramatic tendency" of the universe. But we cannot call him either a deist or a pantheist or an atheist. He simply expresses the great mystery of things and his belief in the future evolution of all towards the highest good. You might say that this is Herbert Spencer in verse. Well, some of the best of Spencer's thinking is to be found in Meredith; but Meredith is much more than Spencer in verse—for he does not stop at the line drawn by agnosticism. The scientific agnostic, whose position is more clearly defined by Huxley than even by Spencer, draws a circle representing the horizon-line of exact human knowledge of relative experience, and says: "Beyond this you have no right to go." Mr. Meredith takes the right and goes—just as religion must do in order to exist. Indeed his work is a kind of nature-religion, best expressed in such compositions as *The Woods of Westermain*, and *Earth and Man*. Swinburne's greatest metaphysical poem, *Hertha*, is on the very same subject as Meredith's *Earth and Man;* but, magnificent as that pantheistic poem of Swinburne's is, the treatment of the idea by Meredith is nobler and vaster and much more in real accord with scientific thought.

But it is not only as a thinker that Meredith is a great poet. He is a great poet in representing terrible passion or moral pain. There is no poem in the English language more terrible in its picturesqueness and in its stormy emotion than *Nuptials of Attila*, and there is no more terrible ballad in any language than *King Harold's Trance*. Indeed the student who would study Meredith chiefly for sentiment and literary method would do well to confine himself to the splendid shorter pieces entitled *Ballads and Poems*.[1] Besides philosophical poetry, and narrative or lyrical poetry, there is yet a third division of Meredith's poetry which is altogether psychological. His worst faults appear in this division; but that is not the reason why I

[1] *Ballads and poems of tragic life* 1887.

advise the student not to trouble himself about such compositions as *Modern Love*[1] and *The Empty Purse*[2]—to mention only two out of numerous examples. The fact is that Meredith's psychological poetry treats of conditions of Western society which do not exist in this country—and treats of them by allusion and hint, so that only those who have had a particular social experience can understand. But I want you to read, very carefully, at least two of the narrative poems, and two of the metaphysical poems. The best of Meredith is probably immortal; but a large part of his later and more obscure work must perish.

Bridges

Robert Bridges[3] presents us with a curious phenomenon of a classic poet in the midst of the romantic triumph. I do not mean that Dr. Bridges thinks always like a man of the 18th century; but his forms of verse and his choice and treatment of subjects are nearly all classical. But this classicism has a plain beauty, a simple strength, a cool, clear colour, that are simply delightful. You must try to imagine a classical poet with all the faults and conventions of classical school left out. So there is a charm about the poetry of Bridges which is old-fashioned, because it reminds us of the style of a hundred years ago, and yet new, because it reflects the sentiment and feeling of a man still alive and writing at the opening of the 20th century. I have lectured to you upon Bridges;[4] and I need not say much to guide you in reading him. Excepting the delightful dramas, founded upon Greek mythology or classic history, most of his poems are very short; and you may pick and choose for yourselves. Most of the reputation acquired by Bridges, after long years of waiting, was first won by his love poems; but I do not think that you may care so much for these; my par-

[1] *Modern love and poems of the English roadside* 1862. Portland [U.S A.], 1891.
[2] Boston, 1892.
[3] (1844-1930).
[4] See *On Poets*, ch. xxxiii "Robert Bridges."

ticular admiration for Bridges rests chiefly upon his poems about children, and child-memories; and I think that you will share my liking in this respect.

MORRIS

Inferior to any one of the foregoing at their best, William Morris[1] nevertheless will always be a rather important minor poet. If he never did anything of the greatest, neither did he do anything that could be considered bad. Nor was he only mediocre; he was always just a little above mediocrity, and sometimes very much above it. To understand his place in Victorian poetry you must try to think of him as a man who had exactly the same kind of a natural gift for verse as Walter Scott: that is, a man able to write verse as easily as other men write prose, and producing enormous quantities of verse almost without any effort. It is very surprising that this verse should be all good, considering the quantity of it; but it is more astonishing to discover that none of it is bad, and that some of it is more than good. I have lectured about Morris to you, and read you his best pieces;[2] here we need only to talk of his literary position. Next to Rossetti he was the greatest of the pre-Raphaelites, as an influence in the new movement. You know that nearly all his subjects were mediæval subjects, most carefully studied, just as a painter studies. For, like Rossetti, Morris was a painter, and an excellent artist. (He was also a great manufacturer of furniture of quaint and beautiful forms, —a maker of stained glass window,—and a master painter, who tried to bring printing back to the beautiful perfection of the early Italian publishing days.) It was natural that the example of Chaucer should have had particular influence upon Morris; and he undertook successfully a work planned after the style of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,—The Earthly Paradise.*[3] But

[1] (1834-1896).
[2] See *On Poets*, ch. vii "William Morris."
[3] *The earthly paradise: a poem*, 3 vols. in 4 pts. 1868-70. Kelmscott press edn. 8 vols. 1896-7.

there is a peculiar thing in this monstrous, yet beautiful work, —the mixture of Scandinavian and Greek legends. You know that Chaucer used Latin and Greek stories in his *Canterbury Tales.* But the introduction of Norse material into Morris' collection created quite a new effect. It is remarkable how well these two very different forms of imagination blend harmoniously together. Morris could not affect the form of English poetry; he was not quite great enough for that; but he taught poets a great many things about the value and the comparative value of subjects, and of their treatment. If you want to read stories in good verse, perhaps you will find Morris even more interesting than Walter Scott. If you want to read the best of his work upon a Norse subject, read his splendid translation of the *Volsunga Saga.*[1] But if you want to read the best of his work in the sense of *fine* poetry, then turn to his shorter poems in *Poems by the Way*,[2] and other volumes. Some of the shorter pieces in the collection entitled *The Defence of Guenevere*[3] I quoted to you last year, as representing his treatment of mediæval life in its tragic aspect.

Matthew Arnold

Matthew Arnold,[4] the last of this group, in one way must be classed with Robert Bridges. Miss Rossetti and George Meredith and William Morris were all of them romantics—two of them pre-Raphaelites. But both Robert Bridges and Matthew Arnold are not neo-romantics, but neo-classics. Both kept to certain classic forms and also to certain classic rules concerning choice of subject. They wrote in direct opposition to the whole romantic movement: they produced a new classic spirit, and sought for plain, severe beauty where others sought for colour and sound and novelty of every kind. Matthew Arnold is a grave poet, like Robert Bridges; but he is even

[1] *Volsunga saga . . . translated . . . by E. Magnusson and W.M.* 1870.
[2] *Poems by the way* 1891. Kelmscott press edn. 1891.
[3] *The Defence of Guenevere and other poems* 1858. Kelmscott press edn. 1892.
[4] (1822-1888).

more grave, more cool, more calm. I am afraid that we must confess he is also less finished and less perfect. He had a particular theory of his own, which he preached, and which he tried to practise with only imperfect success. It was a classical theory, scarcely modified,—the theory that the first thing to be considered in poetry was the subject. This, you know, had been a classical position for hundreds of years. It used to be taught that only certain classes of subjects could be properly chosen for poetry, and that these subjects were classifiable by grades. Now the romantics utterly denied such restriction. They claimed with good reasons that any subjects (except subjects condemned by all human moral experience) were good subjects for the poet who could find inspiration in them. No doubt this romantic position is the true one, and never will be again overthrown. I suppose that Matthew Arnold was, even in theory, more liberal than the 18th century classics; but it is a curious fact that all his best poetry is written upon lines contrary to his own theories. For example, perhaps his very best lyrical performance is *The Forsaken Merman*—and that is assuredly no classic subject, either in treatment or in conception, as he presents it. It is a most romantic subject, founded upon a mediæval legend about a woman who married a merman. And even the forms of the verse which Arnold uses in that poem are more romantic than classic. But this was the case in which the romantic spirit of the time carried Arnold away in spite of himself. More generally he uses severe and old-fashioned form of verse—especially blank verse. In a lecture[1] which I gave last year, I told you that Matthew Arnold was especially a poet for old people to read;—he is not a poet to attract young readers capable of feeling the beauty of life and the happiness of the world. The whole tone of his poetry is reflective, meditative and melancholy: it reads as if it were written in the grey twilight of life, in the time when a man has known all disappointments, all sorrows and all doubts. It is not pessimistic poetry exactly; but it comes very close to pessimistic. It expresses especially the trouble in an age of

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. xxxi "Matthew Arnold as Poet."

doubting—the trouble expressed by the question, "What is the meaning of the universe, and what is the meaning of pain?" But it is not, on any of these accounts, at all contemptible. Some of it is majestic enough to be worthy of Milton; and some of the lyrical pieces are as good as almost anything by Wordsworth. Unfortunately all of the poetry is not of the same quality. If it were, Matthew Arnold would have to be placed in the first and not in the second rank.

Now let us consider the third group, or the second group of the minor poets. Here we may place Mrs. Browning, Edward Fitzgerald, Lord de Tabley, William Bell Scott, Charles Kingsley, William Johnson (Cory) and Arthur O'Shaughnessy. All of these persons did beautiful work; but scarcely any of them did beautiful work on such a scale as to be classed higher than we are placing them. In another century several of them would have been counted first-class. In the Victorian era we can group them no higher than in the third grade. But remember that among their compositions there are numerous pieces which belong to the first grade,—pieces which could be ranked with the compositions of the very greatest. Here we must estimate by quantity as well as quality.

Charles Kingsley

For example Charles Kingsley[1] wrote three or four of the very best songs not only in English literature, but in European literature. Yet it is not possible to put him with the group of great poets like Tennyson and Browning who made poetry the only occupation of their lives. Kingsley wrote poetry at rare intervals only: he was more of a novelist than anything else. But his songs are immortal, and there is nothing to surpass them—though you can put all of them upon one page of ordinary octavo print. The rest of his poetry is unequal—though

[1] (1819-1875).

it is true that he made the best English hexameters ever written. However, he wrote these hexameters successfully only because he took a Greek subject, the legend of Andromeda, which allowed him to use many Greek words. It must be still confessed that perfect hexameters in pure English are almost impossible.

FITZGERALD

Then there is Edward Fitzgerald.[1] He has been a great force in literature; and his translations of *Omar Khayyám*,[2] of *Calderon*,[3] and of some other things are classics. Also the little romance *Salaman and Absal*[4] is worthy of being called a classic. But these compositions are really only translations from the Persian and from the Spanish, translated with the art of a man who had a genius in verse worthy of Tennyson and a romantic taste scarcely inferior to that of Rossetti. Still we cannot honestly place the translator upon the same rank as the original poet.

MRS. BROWNING

Mrs. Browning[5] almost belongs to the spasmodic school; for she has all the faults of the spasmodics, and some merits which they had not. Her faults in versification and rhythm and rhyme have been very severely criticized by Professor Saintsbury and others: I need not even try to point them out to you. But what is much worse than faults of form, are her faults of sentiment,—exaggerated sentiment, or sentimentality, —tiresome diffuseness,—total incapacity of emotional control. There is scarcely one of her poems (except the *Sonnets from*

[1] (1809-1883).
[2] *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, the astronomer-poet of Persia, rendered into English verse* 1859. 2nd edn, completely revised 1868. 3rd edn. 1872, 4th edn. 1879.
[3] *Six Dramas of Calderon freely translated* 1853.
[4] *Salaman and Absal: an allegory translated from the Persian of Jami* 1856.
[5] Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861).

the Portuguese[1]) which would not be improved by shortening it at least two-thirds. They are too long by far, too emotional, too tiresome. Yet there are exceptions. One of them is the splendid thing entitled *A Musical Instrument* that has become, and will always remain, one of the gems of English literature. Thus the greater part of Mrs. Browning's verse will soon be forgotten; and we cannot give a high place to the author of scarcely half a dozen good poems.

W. Johnson

More than half a dozen good poems were produced by William Johnson (or William Cory)[2] — the Eton school-master, about whom I gave a lecture last year.[3] His little book *Ionica*[4] —perhaps the smallest book of poems in Victorian literature which has an established place — is a perfect delight to fine judges of poetry. It is the work of a scholar as well as a man of feeling; and its chief defect, if defect it can be called, is that it happens to be too scholarly. The classic allusions compel the ordinary reader to study classical dictionaries in order to get at the meaning; and the meaning is sometimes so learned that even classical dictionaries do not help. But I have read to you some beautiful pages of *Ionica;* and you will be able to remember that this delicate poet, though a great classical scholar, was a supreme romantic in feeling.

Tabley

Lord de Tabley (Leicester Warren)[5] was the subject of a lecture last year.[6] He was an exquisite poet in the same fine way as Cory, but with less originality, and with less tendency

[1] *Sonnets by E.B.B.* Reading, 1847. *Sonnets from the Portuguese* 1850.
[2] William Johnson Cory (1823-1892).
[3] See *On Poetry*, ch. xxx "Ionica."
[4] *Ionica* [*Poems by W.J.*] 1858.
[5] John Byrne Leicester Warren, 3rd Lord de Tabley (1835-1895).
[6] See *On Poetry*, ch. xxxiv "The Poetry of Lord de Tabley."

to deal in scholarly subjects. He was greatly influenced in his work by honest admiration of Swinburne and of Tennyson; and there are passages in his best pages which equal the splendour of both poets. But he was no mere imitator. In proof of the fact you need only to turn to his poem of *Astarte* which I quoted to you last year, and which was certainly inspired by reading *Dolores* of Swinburne. But here you have no repetition of Swinburne: though you can recognize echoes of him in the verse. On the contrary the subject has been taken out of the earthly and merely sensuous plane and elevated to the same height to which it was lifted of old by the Roman poet Lucretius,—with just enough of modern mysticism to etherealize it. Very beautiful too, and quite original as well, are the poems entitled *A Woodland Grave*, *The Two Old Kings*, and various other pieces. One of the most astonishing things in the book is a poem about a spider, which I quoted to you on a former occasion. If you are interested in the personality of Lord de Tabley — one of the most shy and modest men that ever lived—you would do well to read a beautiful essay about him, written by Professor Edmund Gosse. All his work is represented by one very small volume, simply entitled *Poems*.[1]

O'SHAUGHNESSY

Arthur O'Shaughnessy[2] must also be considered a fine poet when at his best; but he had neither the scholarship nor the power of fine workmanship characterizing either of the two preceding poets. He was a clerk in the British Museum, who found time to study old French, and to produce four volumes of poems, two of which are only translations from Mediæval French. O'Shaughnessy's great merit is passional; it is due rather to the melodious expression of strong emotion, sincerely uttered, than to mere art of verse. But there is more than sincerity in him; he had a very original fancy,—producing at

[1] *Poems dramatic and lyrical.* 2 series 1893-5.
[2] Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy (1844-1881).

times things so strangely beautiful that they have been committed to the treasure-house of lyrical poetry for all time. If you look at Palgrave's *Golden Treasury Series of Poems*, (not the first volume, but the second) you will find it prefaced by a poem on poets by O'Shaughnessy. It was Palgrave who first made him famous; but Palgrave's high estimate of him has been sharply criticized. It is true that this poet is at times very weak, and very unsatisfactory. He must be classed, by his faults, among the spasmodics—though, by his merits, he ranks with the best romantics — we may say, with the pre-Raphaelites. The two volumes of original poetry which he wrote are entitled respectively *Music and Moonlight*,[1] and *An Epic of Women*.[2] In the first you will find most of the pieces quoted by Palgrave, but not all of them—not, for example, the beautiful composition entitled *Three Silences*, which I quoted in a lecture about love poetry.[3] But you will find there *Palms*, a marvellous tropical fancy; *The Fountain of Tears; Greater Memory*, a poem on the remembrance of love after rebirth; and a great many other jewels. Unfortunately you will also find some bad prose poetry, and some uninteresting sentimentality. *An Epic of Women* contains a like mixture of beauty and weakness. It is now out of print, but must soon appear in a new edition. The two other volumes, *Songs of a Worker*[4] and *Lays of France*,[5] being only translations, do not rank very high; for O'Shaughnessy did not have the genius required for great translation. All his fame rests upon a score of lyrical poems of curious and beautiful emotion and fancy. He appears to have been very unhappy in life—particularly in regard to some love affair; and it is interesting to study the way in which he has transformed this unhappiness into lyrical song.

Yet another group of poets remains to be considered in regular order, and one group of poets in irregular order. By reason of the excellence of the work of this special group in a special direction, I shall consider it first, by itself.

[1] *Music and moonlight: poems and songs* 1874.
[2] *An epic of women, and other poems* 1870.
[3] See *On Poetry* ch. xv and xxviii.
[4] 1881.
[5] 1872.

Light Verse

This group of poets represents the light verse of the Victorian era — light verse of several kinds. One kind of light verse is called "Society Verse"; several other kinds are hard to define. But all, in master hands, must rank high. I shall first speak of the society verse as represented by Austin Dobson, Frederick Locker, Andrew Lang, and Calverley.

It is necessary to define clearly for you what is meant by society verse. The term was adopted into English from the French who called the same kind of poetry *Vers de Société;* and the French practised it very successfully long before the English learned to imitate them. But it is not especially a classic form of verse—though first practised with power and grace in classic times and classic forms. There is not any particular form to be insisted upon, nor is there any particular limitation of subject. The limitations of society verse are only those relating to restraints upon the expression of emotion and thought. Of course there is a preference for classical forms of lyric but the real meaning of society verse is only this:—It is verse that faithfully represents the tone of fashionable society in expressing its ideas and emotion.

I need scarcely remind you that almost everywhere in the world cultivated society has its particular ways of speaking and acting—in Japan just as in England, the differences are only on the surface. You know that among the common class of people, among the peasants, for example, there is a tendency to be very frank in speech, and in the expression of emotion. A little higher up in the social scale, where there is more education and training of the young, considerably greater restraint is placed upon the expression of sincere feeling. Go still higher into the upper classes, and there you find that the educational tendency is to control the expression of ideas and emotions in all *personal* directions. In the highest class impassiveness is especially aimed at — all expression of self is studiously repressed except in those directions which conduce to social hap-

piness and elegant tastes. I may remark that there are countries in which society, as the word is understood in England, does not exist—democratic societies, such as that of America, where any educational efforts to form a social *manner* must either fail altogether, or produce results of very different kind.

Now consider to yourselves for a moment how aristocratic society acts in regard to the expression of ideas and emotion. There must be restraints of a great many kinds upon both — because there are a great many conventions to be supported — social conventions and religious conventions, wherever there is a national religion, moral conventions and conventions relating to particular forms of conduct whose rules are imposed upon the privileged class. Instead of enjoying most freedom intellectual or otherwise, an aristocracy in any part of the world enjoys least freedom. The English peasant is a much freer man than the English duke.

Therefore literature produced by an aristocracy, merely as a pastime, for the purpose of expressing only aristocratic ways of feeling and acting, would be under extraordinary restraints in all directions. It is not to be wondered at that aristocrats who also happen to be authors very seldom write anything resembling society verse in these times. I need not explain why. The highest classes remain silent on merely social subjects in their poetry. But a little below, there is an elegant class less fettered, which can tell its story in verse. To-day society verse relates mostly to the upper middle class rather than to the very highest class.

What are the rules, generally speaking, about the expression of personal opinion and personal emotion in fine society? I think they are everywhere in a general way about the same. You must not speak too seriously about your own joy or pain; you must not speak violently or harshly upon any subject; you may mock, but you must not be a cruel or a brutal mocker; you may be cynical, but not to the extent of insulting good feeling. Where other forms of society would allow and expect sentiment or passion, you must at most only suggest the sentiment, and altogether suppress the passion as a vulgar tendency.

I need scarcely tell you that such poetry never can be great; for literary greatness requires absolute freedom. But such poetry, thought it cannot be great, can be very dainty, very pretty, very refined, quite exquisite in a small way. And the best of English society verse is all of this. But it is not great. It can only have a special and rather narrow value.

LOCKER

I think you now understand clearly what society verse should be, and that it cannot escape from being artificial under any circumstances. The best modern example of this kind of verse in English is the work of Frederick Locker, or Locker-Lampson,[1] as his name afterwards became on his second marriage. He wrote very little; but that little is precious, and is contained in the tiny volume entitled *London Lyrics*.[2] The subjects are mostly of the day—though there is to be found here and there an imitation of French forms. But usually the poems are inspired by such commonplace events as the sight of a muff, moth-eaten and old-fashioned,—or by the sight of a little girl running up and down stairs with her doll,—or by the vision of a pair of lady's shoes,—or by some old family painting, or by some incident of the ball-room or the banquet table. Each of these themes happens to be one which, under the circumstances, naturally invites deep feeling. We feel the emotion, and expect the poet to express it. But he does not. He suppresses it; and he suppresses it with a quiet laugh. What is the result? The result is this,—*that the emotion is suggested by its suppression.* And the effect thus becomes strong. For example, here we have a young man looking at the picture of his dead grandmother, when she was a beautiful young girl. That is a subject for emotion. How does the poet treat it? He bids you notice the old-fashioned way of dressing the hair, the old-fashioned ornaments, and he laughs at them, *gently.*

[1] Frederick Locker, afterwards Locker-Lampson, (1821-1895).
[2] *London lyrics . . . With an illustration by Cruikshank* 1857.

He does not laugh at the beautiful young face—he only compliments it in a formal and polite way, and remarks that he hopes his grandmother was able in heaven to make herself as pretty and as innocent-looking as that—for the sake of grandfather! But you can feel that you are very close to the source of tears behind this light fun. I think the poem *On an old Muff* is one of the best in the collection; but every one is good, and I should like you to read all of them, if you can be interested in this class of poetry. I need scarcely remind you that "muffs" are now coming into fashion in Tokyo,—so the subject of Locker's poem cannot be any longer strange to you.

Locker was essentially an aristocrat; and we may doubt whether better society verse will ever be written by a man of the same class.

Dobson

The next most significant writer in the same direction is Mr. Austin Dobson,[1] who still lives, and has made a very high reputation in several varieties of what we may call *elegant* literature. Mr. Dobson passed most of his life in official work; but it was official work which allowed him ample leisure for two favourite pursuits, old books and poetry. The great difference between his society verse and the society verse of Mr. Locker is that it is less modern: it is quaint; it is an imitation of English and of French 18th century forms, with occasional studies of still older forms,—17th century, for example. You will find in his beautiful little books very curious and dainty verse-pictures of the aristocratic French life of the time of Louis XIV; — you will also find delightful sketches of the English conventional life of the times of Pope and Johnson. Occasionally these poetical studies take the form of little dramas; sometimes, again, they are dialogues. You will also find ballads and *ballades*. Ballads of old English life; *ballades* of old French

[1] (1840-1923)

life;—and I need hardly remind you that the forms indicated by these two kindred words are altogether different. The French *ballade* is a very complicated form of verse, regularly divided according to unchangeable rules. As these facts might suggest to you, the value of Mr. Dobson's work is much more than that of light verse, or the expression of fashionable sentiment. He is much more of a poetical word-smith than of a society verse writer; and it is especially through his studies of old French forms and his revival of sundry old English forms (I mean especially 18th century work) that his production will continue for some time to influence English verse.

I may remark that he has carried his abilities, in the same direction, into the field of prose. No man has made a closer study of the best tradition of 18th century style; and no man has more successfully imitated it. Dobson is the very prince of imitators in one particular way—the quaint way;—it is not too much to say that his imitations are often quite equal to the originals. Of his poetry, perhaps the very best things are to be found in the little volume entitled *Old-World Idylls;*[1] but there are nearly half a dozen volumes of his poems, as originally issued; and he is one of the exquisite writers who never produced anything bad. Still it requires a particular taste on the part of the student to become fond of him. It all depends upon the way in which you are able to feel the life of the 18th century in England or the old life of French society in the time of Louis XIV and XV. The best advice that I can give you is to read a little of the *Old-World Idylls;* and if you like that and understand the beauty of it, you can read the whole of Dobson's poetry with pleasure and profit. I must also tell you that he is a good classical scholar; and that his translations or imitations both of Greek and of Latin poets are among the very best of their kind. He is worth a special lecture; and perhaps I shall attempt one during the last term.

[1] *Old-world idylls and other verses* 1883.

LANG

The third name in this group is that of Andrew Lang,[1] whom I am now considering only very briefly as a writer of light verse. He comes much closer to Dobson than to Locker; and most of his light verse has actually been done in the very same direction. But he is less exquisite than Dobson, less delicate, altogether less satisfactory. Moreover the touches of humour, which form an essential part of all this kind of verse, are never so lightly and naturally managed as they are by Locker and by Dobson. However, to expect anything really great from Andrew Lang is almost impossible; while it is also almost impossible to expect anything bad. The name of Andrew Lang is altogether one of the most formidable in existing literature. Although by no means yet an old man, Andrew Lang has either written or edited about five hundred different books, numbering between six and seven hundred volumes. Since the days of Southey, no such literary production has been heard of — not at least in relation to work of the same steadily good quality. There is a writer of whom you have heard, the Rev. Baring-Gould who is credited also with an enormous power of production; but I believe that Andrew Lang has now considerably surpassed him. Among these hundreds of books, there are actually some of very great value—for example, the beautiful prose translations of Homer,[2] which he made in conjunction with several other scholars. These are the best prose version of Homer in the English language; and they are incomparably better than any English poetical translation from the Greek. But it must be obvious to the student that no man can turn out five hundred different books and maintain a high average of work. I imagine that a general criticism of the mass of that work would be justified in these terms: "A little better than the common, but in nothing

[1] (1844-1912).

[2] *The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English prose by S H. Butcher and A. Lang* 1879. *The Iliad of Homer. Done into English prose by Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers* 1883.

reaching the highest, and rather clever than excellent." I have praised the *Homer;* but that is really the work of a group. This is why, I firmly believe, that while Andrew Lang has never done anything bad in poetry he has never done anything quite so good as a page of Austin Dobson. But he is worth mentioning here, as a writer of light verse, because he did a great deal to bring into fashion the form of culture best exemplified by the work of Mr. Dobson.

CALVERLEY

Two more writers of light verse remain to be considered—Charles Stuart Calverley and Thomas Barham. Calverley[1] was a Cambridge scholar—and by the word scholar I mean all that is properly attached to that name by the learned. He was a man who could compose Latin poetry, correctly and elegantly, more quickly than anybody else could compose English poetry. To give you an example of his powers in this direction I may quote a well known story about him. He used to ask people to take up a volume of Wordsworth, or some other poet, and read a page—at random—anywhere. Then he would repeat, in Latin verse, the whole substance of what had been read to him. His Greek powers were also considerable; but as a Latinist, he was perhaps the most wonderful man that Cambridge produced in modern times. And he is a matchless and delightful translator of Latin poets. His version of Horace especially is famous. But to the ordinary public, he is better known by work in another direction—poems satirical or humourous. He was very clever and very terrible in satire and in parody. He was also very clever in jocose narrative. His light verse is not society verse: it is the verse of a university wit;—it altogether lacks the lightness that must qualify true society verse. Nor does it deal with society life at all. It rather deals with certain common aspects of human nature; and the humour, the

[1] (1831-1884).

mockery, if not exactly rough, always come very near to being cruel; there is something acrid about it.

I can best express Calverley's peculiarities by a quotation: it is very difficult to explain his acrid humour, and his peculiar irony, in any other way. And as he is very little known outside of the circle of scholarship, I may very well cite from him here,—for his relation to light verse could not very well be made a subject of a special lecture. I shall choose a little piece ironically entitled *On the Brink*—telling the story of a man who was very nearly asking a pretty widow to marry him, but did not ask her. The reason that he did not ask her was that he heard her speaking angrily to her little child. The curiosity of this narration is the extraordinary mixture of fine poetical expression and feeling with cutting colloquial phrases and a snap-fire of jeering mockery.

I watch'd her as she stoop'd to pluck
  A wildflower in her hair to twine;
And wish'd that it had been my luck
    To call her mine.

Anon I heard her rate with mad
  Mad words her babe within its cot;
And felt particularly glad
    That it had not.

I knew (such subtle brains have men)
  That she was uttering what she shouldn't;
And thought that I would chide, and then
    I thought I wouldn't:

Who could have gazed upon that face,
  Those pouting coral lips, and chided?
A Rhadamanthus,[1] in my place
    Had done as I did;

For ire wherewith our bosoms glow
  Is chain'd there oft by Beauty's spell;
And, more than that, I did not know
    The widow well.

[1] Rhadamanthus—A man in Greek mythology noted for his strict justice—*Author.*

So the harsh phrase pass'd unreproved.
  Still mute—(O brothers, was it sin?)—
I drank, unutterably moved,
    Her beauty in:

And to myself I murmur'd low,
  As on her upturn'd face and dress
The moonlight fell, "Would she say No,
    By chance, or Yes?"

She stood so calm, so like a ghost
  Betwixt me and that magic moon,
That I already was almost
    A finish'd coon.[1]

But when she caught adroitly up
  And soothed with smiles her little daughter;
And gave it, if I'm right, a sup
    Of barley-water;

And, crooning still the strange sweet lore
  Which only mothers' tongues can utter,
Snow'd with deft hand the sugar o'er
    Its bread-and-butter;

And kiss'd it clingingly—(Ah, why
  Don't women do these things in private?)—
I felt that if I lost her, I
    Should not survive it:

And from my mouth the words nigh flew—
  The past, the future, I forgat 'em:
"Oh! if you'd kiss me as you do
    That thankless atom!"

But this thought came ere yet I spake,
  And froze the sentence on my lips:
"They err, who marry wives that make
    Those little slips."

[1] "Finished coon." An American slang phrase. The racoon or coon, as it is commonly called in America, is a little animal, very cunning and very difficult to catch and kill. A person in a desperate situation, in spite of his natural cleverness, is sometime called a finished coon—"finished" meaning that all hope is lost.—*Author.*

It came like some familiar rhyme,
  Some copy to my boyhood set;
And that's perhaps the reason I'm
    Unmarried yet.

* * *

Be kind to babes and beasts and birds:
  Hearts may be hard, though lips are coral;
And angry words are angry words;
    And that's the moral.

This is both pretty and cruel—sometimes a little too cruel. But how perfectly true is the painting of the two characters; and how excellently even the use of slang phrases and colloquial is managed! A whole book of this kind of verse would be a wonderful thing; but Calverley did not often thus amuse himself. A much harsher example of his method is the famous piece entitled *Gemini and Virgo*,—the story of two schoolboys who had been great friends, until they both fell in love with their school-mistress. They were about eleven or twelve years old; and she was about thirty; the boys had a fight and she plastered up their wounds—after which she married the writing master. The incident is very probably true—although told with exaggerated irony; and clever as the piece is, we feel that the romantic fancies of the innocent boyhood are a little too savagely mocked. The whole of Calverley's work is comprised in two thin volumes of verse — one volume of original composition being entitled *Fly Leaves*;[1] and the other, consisting entirely or almost entirely of English renderings of Latin and Greek poets, and of renderings of English poets into Latin, being entitled *Verses and Translations*.[2] Calverley might have done wonderful things if he had lived; and, being one of the strongest athletes ever at Cambridge, he appeared to have a long life before him. But an accident, which happened during skating, produced concussion of the brain; as a result of which he died in 1884 while only in the prime of his powers.

[1] 1871.
[2] 1862.

R. H. BARHAM, "THOMAS INGOLDSBY"

Of the Rev. Thomas Ingoldsby[1] I need to tell you little;—I think you all know something of the famous *Ingoldsby Legends*[2] —the most popular book of humourous verse that ever was written in modern times. Barham was a clergyman of the Church of England; but he found plenty of time to amuse himself with literature; and his success was immense. He is now much less read than formerly, but that is only because fashions have changed. There is the danger for any kind of humourous literature. All that we call comic must be the fashion of a time;—things that appeared very funny to our forefathers cannot make us smile, because we have learned to think about the matter in a different way; and what amuses us at the present day may seem a very serious thing to those who will come after us. Therefore, unless humourous verse happens to be executed with the highest literary art, it is certain to become old-fashioned within a few years. Barham's verse is always good; but it is not of the very best—so Barham has become old-fashioned. Yet what is old-fashioned for English readers need not be so for Japanese readers; and I should recommend anybody who can like *The Ingoldsby Legends* to read them, not for the mere story, but for the good vigorous English, many times over. The verse has the same kind of sturdy clarity as that of Macaulay; and the humour is easy to understand and enjoy. A curious thing to notice is that this book, which appeared in the early days of Tennyson, and which made fun of mediævalism and mediæval tradition, had no effect at all in checking the neo-romantic tendency. On the contrary it rather tended to make mediæval subjects more popular. This is probably due to its good-natured tone, as much as to its cleverness. Men who could appreciate the tragic and solemn sides of mediæval life as expressed by Rossetti or by Morris, could equally well appreciate the humourous sides as rendered by Barham,—and

[1] Richard Harris Barham (1788-1845).
[2] *The Ingoldsby Legends* 1840. Second and Third Series 1847. (First appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany* and *The New Monthly Magazine*).

the enjoyment of one did not at all interfere with the enjoyment of the other.

AYTOUN

Such was not the case with the work of Aytoun,[1] who in *Firmilian*[2] satirized the spasmodic poets, and who also wrote comical ballads to make fun of them. His work really helped to kill the spasmodic school; but it did not interfere with the serious work of the pre-Raphaelite school. I do not think that mere satire has much value in literature; and I mention Aytoun chiefly because he was the author of something much superior to satire,—the strong and animated ballads, or narrative poems entitled *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*:[3] a collection of incidents of heroism shown by Scotchmen in many parts of the world.

THE LAST GROUP

BAILEY

Now, leaving unmentioned less important writers of light verse, let us turn to the fourth and last group of minor Victorian poets—at least to the most significant names. Among these I will place the writers of the spasmodic school and some others — at least the less important rhapsodists, as the spasmodics were also called. The first, who made a reputation in this direction, was Philip James Bailey,[4] who wrote a romantic tragedy in verse, called *Festus*,[5] — which at one time was very popular indeed. To-day nobody reads it: it was the study of the Faust-legend in a new way;—in *Festus* the demon triumphs by his intelligence and power, but he is touched by the simple

[1] William Edmonstoune Aytoun (1813-1865).
[2] *Firmilian: or the student of Badajoz. A spasmodic tragedy. By T. Percy Jones* 1854.
[3] *Lays of the Scottish cavaliers and other poems* 1849.
[4] (1816-1902).
[5] *Festus, a poem* 1839.

devotion of the woman, and exhibits a certain amount of human tenderness. Byron had treated the subject also, in a kindred way; but there were some new ideas in *Festus* which should please as long as they were new. When the novelty wore itself out, people saw that there was no great art in *Festus;* and the book rapidly dropped out of sight.

Dobell and Smith

Sydney Dobell[1] did better work in some of his lyrical pieces, especially when treating of the sorrows of humble lives. Alexander Smith,[2] with his *Life Drama,*[3] had a temporary success like that of the author of *Festus;* but when his *Life Drama* proved a failure, he did not drop out of sight like Bailey. On the contrary he took to lyrical work with great success, and in his *City Poems*[4] achieved a reputation that caused many to believe he would become as great as Tennyson. Unfortunately he died of consumption while still young. Others of the spasmodics are not worth even mentioning. But there is one name that will probably live longer than any of the rest—except in the direction of the short lyrics.

Thomson

I mean James Thomson.[5] I class James Thomson at least partly with the spasmodics. He is the second poet in English literature called James Thomson; and it is impossible to imagine any greater contrast than is offered by the work and thought of the first James Thomson and those of the second James Thomson. You know that the first James Thomson

[1] Sydney Thompson Dobell (1824-1874)
[2] (1830-1867).
[3] *A Life Drama* 1854.
[4] *City Poems.* Cambridge, 1857.
[5] James Thomsnn, 'B.V.' (1834-1882).

marks an epoch in English poetry—the 18th century movement of returning to nature. That Thomson was a most cultivated gentleman, a great poet, a lover of beauty and light, an optimist in feeling. The second James Thomson was a common, uneducated man—or almost uneducated,—a thorough pessimist, the gloomiest and darkest of poets, the one remarkable English poet who wrote a sort of Gospel of Despair. But, for all that, he is a poet, and a very remarkable poet. He has been called "the English Poe"; but the comparison is not good,—except in so far as the lives of the two men are concerned. Both were addicted to drink; both died in consequence of drinking. Both were unhappy. But the supernatural element in Poe is totally absent in Thomson.

Thomson was the son of a sailor, and probably inherited the tendency to drunkenness. He had an ordinary country school education — that was all. Afterwards he became an army schoolmaster; but he was discharged from the army for breaking certain rules. After that he tried to do a great many things with indifferent success, and finally became a journalist. When his poems appeared, they attracted attention and got him the friendship of influencial men—among others, of the historian Froude, and of a number of English men of letters. If he could have kept away from drink, his future would have been secure. But it became impossible even for those who most loved and liked him, to help him efficiently; and he died very suddenly through the bursting of a blood-vessel, caused by excessive drinking. Nearly always without money, nearly always in desperate straits, his life was horribly miserable; and he put the expression of that misery into his verse in a most strange and splendid way. There are two volumes of Thomson's poems;[1] and the second volume is scarcely worth looking at. About two-thirds of the first volume are not worth looking at. But the remainder will probably live. Three things, at least, are worth reading and remembering: *The City of Dreadful Night*,[2] *Insomnia*, and *To Our Ladies of Death*. Some persons

[1] *The poetical works of James Thomson. Edited by Bertram Dobell.* 2 vols 1895.
[2] First appeared in *The National Reformer* 22 Mar. to 17 May 1874.

praise *Vane's Story*. But I am quite sure that they are wrong. There is nothing great in *Vane's Story*, and very little that is good; while there is much that is bad, vulgar and commonplace. But there is nothing vulgar about *Insomnia* nor about *The City of Dreadful Night;* and because of those two compositions in special, Thomson will never be quite forgotten. *The City of Dreadful Night* is a horrible allegory of human existence, under the conditions of modern civilization; and the verse is as grand and sonorous and gloomy as anything of the kind in modern English literature. I am going to give examples of it in another lecture.[1] The poem *Insomnia* — that means, you know, the disease of sleeplessness, — is described as no other poet ever described it,—the horrible suffering of sleeplessness, caused by the habit of drinking. Pain, moral pain as well as physical pain, truly inspired Thomson: he wrote some great poetry because he suffered a great deal. What is obvious even in his finer poems, however, is a certain want of literary training;—with literary training there is no saying what such a man might not have been able to do. But we must all the more respect the rude talent which reaches the grand result rather by instinct than by teaching; for the struggle is one of unspeakable difficulty.

Owen Meredith

There are two other poets in this fourth group that are very hard to classify. One is "Owen Meredith,"—by which pseudonym the younger Lord Lytton[2] is known to literature.

He was the son of the great novelist Bulwer-Lytton, about whom I have already spoken; and he was trained by his father especially for diplomatic service. Certainly his career was singularly successful. I think you know that he was made Viceroy of India, and in the later years of his life, Ambassador at Paris,—which is the highest position that England can pos-

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. vi "Pessimists and Their Kindred."
[2] Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Earl of Lytton (1831-1891).

sibly give to any diplomatist outside of her own borders. Indeed, I do not know but that such a position is even greater than that of Prime Minister. Notwithstanding his very busy life, Lord Lytton found time to write a great deal of poetry, under the name of Owen Meredith—perhaps, because, owing to his very high position, it would not have looked exactly right for him to figure as a singer of love songs, or as a composer of rhymed satires (for such many of his poems really are) on the vices of fashionable society. The mass of his poetry is not altogether commendable. A great deal of it reads only like a weak imitation of Tennyson and of other poets. His long novel in verse *Lucile*,[1] is a little better than an imitation; but it has the serious defect of being scarcely more than the clever paraphrase of a French novel. There is a great deal of variety in his work; and yet there is very little to be said for most of it. Only in one direction was he really a very remarkable poet; and his poems in this particular direction are few in number. To put the matter in as few words as possible, he was a great master of ironical narrative. I suppose the word "narrative" will remind you of ballad poetry; and Owen Meredith's best narrative poems are actually cast in ballad form. They are chiefly stories of fashionable society, sometimes strangely imaginative, often qualified by a want of moral tone which might be called immoral if it were not so distinctly French, and always full of bitter humour,—a cold, icy mockery that is difficult to parallel with any other poet of the time. Of course there is tenderness to be found; but the tenderness of expression nearly always precedes some cynical allusion or statement that surprises and shocks us after the manner of Heine. Only we always feel that Heine is human, warm, lovable, sincere: before this fashionable man of the world, this supremely clever diplomatist who made himself Viceroy of India, we never feel warm: we feel disquieted, suspicious, uneasy. And it is very difficult to persuade ourselves that the man was not in character very much like his poetry. He comes very close to our hearts occasionally; but that only puts us upon our guard. It is mere

[1] 1860.

diplomacy. Here is a part of one of his very best narrative pieces. It is only a dream, a mockery—but there is a queer splendour about it.

AUX ITALIENES

Of all the operas that Verdi wrote,
  The best, to my taste, is the Trovatore;
And Mario can soothe with a tenor note
  The souls in Purgatory.

The moon on the tower slept soft as snow:
  And who was not thrill'd in the strangest way,
As we heard him sing, while the gas burn'd low,
  "*Non ti scordar di me*"?

The Emperor there, in his box of state,
  Look'd grave, as if he had just then seen
The red flag wave from the city-gate
  Where his eagles in bronze had been.

* * *

Meanwhile, I was thinking of my first love,
  As I had not been thinking of aught for years,
Till over my eyes there began to move
  Something that felt like tears.

I thought of the dress that she wore last time,
  When we stood, 'neath the cypress-trees, together,
In that lost land, in that soft clime,
  In the crimson evening weather;

Of that muslin dress (for the eve was hot),
  And her warm white neck in its golden chain,
And her full, soft hair, just tied in a knot,
  And falling loose again;

And the jasmine-flower in her fair young breast,
  (O the faint, sweet smell of that jasmine-flower!)
And the one bird singing alone to his nest,
  And the one star over the tower.

At this point of the poem he reminds us that the girl is dead: he tells us how much he wishes that he had been more kind to her,—that his love could bring her back to him from the grave. Remember he is thinking all these things in the theatre while watching the play and listening to the music:—

And I swear, as I thought of her thus, in that hour,
  And of how, after all, old things were best,
That I smelt the smell of that jasmine-flower
  Which she used to wear in her breast.

It smelt so faint, and it smelt so sweet,
  It made me creep, and it made me cold!
Like the scent that steals from the crumbling sheet
  Where a mummy is half unroll'd.

And I turn'd, and look'd. She was sitting there
  In a dim box, over the stage; and dress'd
In that muslin dress with that full soft hair,
  And that jasmine in her breast!

So his love comes back to him: she is there in the theatre; —he has only to go over to the other side of the house to speak to her. But he is sitting with another woman, to whom he is engaged to be married. Without a moment's hesitation, he leaves his betrothed, and goes across the theatre to speak to his old love, who has come back from the dead:—

I was here; and she was there;
  And the glittering horseshoe curv'd between:—
From my bride-betroth'd, with her raven hair,
  And her sumptuous scornful mien,

To my early love, with her eye down cast,
  And over her primrose face the shade
(In short from the Future back to the Past),
  There was but a step to be made.

To my early love from my future bride,
  One moment I look'd. Then I stole to the door,
I travers'd the passage; and down at her side
  I was sitting, a moment more.

My thinking of her, or the music's strain,
  Or something which never will be exprest,
Had brought her back from the grave again,
  With the jasmine in her breast.

What a splendid opportunity might a true romantic have found in such a story, — such a romantic, for example, as Gautier, who produced those two matchless stories of love after death, respectively entitled *La Morte Amoureuse* and *Arria Marcella?* But Owen Meredith is not a true romantic;—he awakens a romantic fancy, a romantic emotion, only to mock it, to trifle with it. Now what I have read to you is very pretty, as it stands;—the sensuous beauty of some verse is almost unmatched. But the reason of the pleasant effect produced is that I have given you only the beautiful verses, and have left out all the sarcastic and ironical ones. If you read the whole of the poem, you will find that the effect is very different: you will feel a sense of disappointment, of depression that is difficult to define, but that certainly means that you know you have been tricked, duped. It is not exactly the same thing with another and very famous narrative poem entitled *The Portrait* which I quoted to you some years ago.[1] There is a frankly immoral story about a frankly immoral phase of fashionable life, apparently told in scorn of all human emotion and trust. It is the story of a rich man, overcome with grief at the death of his mistress. While weeping for her, he suddenly remembers that she wore round her neck a portrait of himself, set in diamond: as she is going to be buried in the morning, it will be better to take the portrait from the corpse at once. He goes upstairs to the death chamber, gropes for the portrait on the dead woman's breast and suddenly finds his hand touching the hand of another man. He looks: that other man is his best friend,—who acknowledges that he also came to take away a portrait. This means a confession of betrayal. The two men are ready to quarrel; but first they agree to look at the picture in order to see whose face is in the jewelled locket. And then

[1] See *On Poets*, ch. vi "Pessimists and Their Kindred."

they find that it is the face of a priest to whom the woman had shown much confidence. So there is a third betrayal: love, friendship, religion, all mocked in the same incident. The art of the poem is simply wonderful;—nobody can read it without expressing a shock of admiration as well as a shock of moral feeling. But have we not right in such a case to ask ourselves whether this is not to put art to a base use? No doubt such horrible things do happen. But art is surely not intended for the depiction of the horrible rather than of the beautiful. A line must be drawn somewhere. Otherwise we might as well say that putrefaction is a good subject for art.

Even in the lightest narratives of Owen Meredith there is a certain discomforting suggestiveness. Let me quote one of the very simplest of his studies in this direction, entitled *The Castle of King Macbeth*:—

This is the castle of King Macbeth.
  And here he feasts, when the daylight wanes,
And the moon is abroad o'er the blasted heath,
  His earls and thanes.

A hundred harpers, with harps of gold,
  Harp thorough the night high festival:
And the revelling music thereof is roll'd
  From hall to hall,

While the wassailers shout till the rafters rock
  O'er the ringing board: and their shout is borne
To the courts outside where the crowing cock
  Is waked ere morn.

But there is one room of that castle old,
  In a cobwebb'd turret,—a dismal room,
For in it a corpse sits crown'd and cold.
  There are four know whom.

One of those four the king must be:
  But the secret is his, and he keepeth it well.
The others that know are the witches three;
  But they are in hell.

You may ask, What does this mean? Of course the poet is referring to Shakespeare's tragedy; and we all know that the cold crowned corpse must be the corpse of Duncan. That is not what the poet wants to tell us—not at all. What he means to tell us really is this:—that only one person can keep a secret, —that nobody in this world can be trusted. If the witches do not tell the secret, it is only because they happened to be inhabitants of hell, and rarely able to communicate with human kind. Well, an experienced diplomatist may be obliged to believe this, or to act upon it; but the expression of the belief does not make us feel comfortable. I imagine that some of the extraordinary narrative poems of Meredith cannot die: the workmanship is too fine, and the mockery too profound to allow of their being forgotten. They are triumphs in a particular direction; and we cannot help admiring. But they are morally unhealthy, depressing, and not at all the kind of work which a student should allow himself to think of imitating. Of all kinds of light verse this Mephistophelian kind is the least commendable.

Coventry Patmore

One more minor poet to mention—and I leave the subject. Coventry Patmore[1] has given to anthology some beautiful work, and deserves more than slight attention. He did something that nobody else had tried to do before him, and made a popular success. This was to treat romantically the subject of his own courtship and marriage in a kind of narrative poem, divided into a number of books. In no country, is a man expected to make his own love affairs the subject of his poetry, overtly and boldly; and it requires a great deal of courage to attempt such a thing. I do not mean that he used his own name, or his wife's name in his verses: he changed the names, but acknowledged the fact in his prologue. Yet, somehow or other, the poem

[1] Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore (1823-1896).

was so thoroughly sincere, and so marked by passages of real eloquence and beauty, that the public were greatly pleased instead of being greatly shocked. The book went through seven different editions at an early date;—Ruskin quoted from it, and highly praised it; other men of letters did the same; then the anthologists made excerpts from it. The name of this book is *The Angel in the House*,[1] — the angel being woman in the abstract as represented by Mrs. Patmore in the concrete. But although I speak lightly, just to give you an idea of the extraordinary undertaking, do not understand me to speak lightly of the book itself. It has great faults; but it has beauties that will live for generations: and Ruskin's praise was not undeserved. Nevertheless I cannot recommend you to attempt to read the whole volume;—the story reflects pictures of a particular society in which you could scarcely be interested. Read only the extracts chosen by good judges.

But, better than *The Angel in the House*, in almost every way — that is, considered as poetry — was the collection of poems entitled *The Unknown Eros*,[2] which appeared a few years before Patmore's death. A number of the poems are mystical and religious; — Patmore undertook nothing more than to adopt the Greek story of Eros and Psyche to the framework of Christian mysticism. Probably you would not care to read the mystical poetry. But there is much more than mysticism in the book: there are several beautiful and very tender lyrical pieces relating to domestic lives. Through these in particular Patmore will live in English poetry. From this book was taken that exquisite child-poem entitled *The Toys* which I quoted to you some time ago.[3] Perhaps you will remember the measure in which that poem was written. It is a very irregular measure; and the whole book is written in the same measure, which is called catalectic verse. This big word is from the Greek: the Greek word "catalexis" meaning "pause." So catalectic verse would seem to mean only verse that is regulated by pause. But the true meaning of catalectic verse is

[1] *The angel in the house. The betrothal*, 2 pts 1854-6.
[2] *The unknown Eros and other odes, I-XXXI*, 1877.
[3] See *On Poetry* ch. xi "Poems about Children."

iambic verse in which the poet can make the pause fall whenever he pleases, and make the lines as long or as short as the emotion of the moment may justify. It is really written according to artistic rule, though it seems to be without any rules at all. Some of the lines are only one foot long; some of them are eight feet long: but the average is six iambic feet, if there is an average. Southey, you may remember, wrote a good deal in catalectic verse; and Patmore appears to have been influenced by Southey; but we might say the very same thing about Matthew Arnold. At all events Patmore did very finely in this measure; and I have talked to you about it thus long simply because I think that Japanese poets can obtain some future inspiration from the study of English catalectic verse. I imagine that a Japanese form of narrative poetry might be invented in which the poet could alter the length of his lines, the number of his accents, to suit the emotion of the moment. The fact that you cannot make with Japanese words anything exactly corresponding to iambic feet makes no difference at all. It is not a question of feet that I would insist upon, but a question of liberty to lengthen or shorten the measure according to emotional circumstance. If any of you be interested by this suggestion of mine, it would be well to look at *The Unknown Eros* and observe the great liberty afforded by this rhymeless verse. For you can have catalectic verse without any rhyme at all.

SUMMARY

This is all that I think is necessary now to say of the history of Victorian poetry. It reached its first perfect form in Tennyson; its second, or neo-romantic form, in Rossetti, Browning, Swinburne and their followers. The progress from Wordsworth to Rossetti has been sufficiently traced, I think: you must have recognized that the whole course of the movement has been towards greater freedom as well as towards

greater perfection. In the pre-Victorian romantic period neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge had been able to allow themselves the freedom that after poets fought for and won. The first fighters, except Shelley, were considerably hampered by old traditions: even Byron had classic leaning of the stiffer kind. And then neither Byron nor Shelley could, in their role of revolutionists, immediately bring about a wholesome change; —indeed they could not very well have defined what changes were really desirable. No changes of any importance can be made suddenly and with good result in literature. All progress must be gradual. The greater part of a century had to pass before the romantic movement could do the highest of which it was capable. You must understand that it has now exhausted itself — no man knows for how long. All the great poets, or nearly all, are dead; and the three old men who survived from the neo-romantic period, have ceased to create. English magazines are full of trifling poems by trifling singers; but there is no great verse. It is now winter in the fields of poetry;—the birds have ceased to sing, or have gone away, all except the sparrows, which keep chattering and chirping to no purpose. Except one singer of ballads, there is no name worth mentioning to you. Some people think that the changes of thought caused by scientific discovery and by evolutionistic philosophy have brought this about. If that be true, we may hope to see a revival of poetry before many years—poetry expressing the new thought of a larger scale. I very much fear that the cause is not so simple,—that it is much more due to the growth of individualism in society, and the ever increasing harshness of social condition. If this be true even a hundred years or more may pass before another really great English poet arises in England. We can now turn to the second period of prose,—the second period of the novel.

VICTORIAN FICTION

PRODIGIOUSLY, during the second half of the 19th century did the art and practice of novel writing increase; and now the annual production is probably in the thousands. Twenty-five years ago there was an average issue of about eight hundred novels; but now novel writing has become a regular trade—to which men and women serve a sort of apprenticeship. It has become a common saying that "anybody can write a novel, with a little training." I need scarcely say that novel production of this kind threatens to kill good literature. A really great man of letters who should now give four or five years to the writing of a masterpiece of English fiction, would be only wasting his time, his strength, and his money. A cheap novel, written to order, in three or four weeks, by some half educated person, would pay very much better for the time being, and obtain a great many more readers. Only for the time being, it is true. But that is all that the publishers care about. And great minds are discouraged from competing in such a book-market. There are now being produced no really great novels. We must go back to the early part of the Victorian period to find the names of them. Of course, in speaking to you of English novels, I am not giving much attention to the question of the story itself, but to the question of the book as a work of art and ideas. I need to speak only of eight or ten novel writers; —the others need to concern you very little, if at all.

Now these names of which I shall talk to you will represent only particular types of fiction. You will remember that in our study of the pre-Victorian novelists I told you to be sure to bear in mind that each of the great novelists mentioned either perfected, or brought into being, a particular kind of fiction. We need not now concern ourselves about the host of Victorian novelists: for the literary student the greatly important names

can be those only of masters, of teachers, or of new discoverers in the art of story-telling.

Miss Brontë

The first noteworthy name of the new group of novelists is perhaps that of a woman,—Miss Charlotte Brontë.[1] Miss Brontë was one of three sisters, all literary, and all more or less talented. They were the daughters of a country clergyman in Yorkshire, who was probably of Irish descent. Charlotte herself is, however, the only very important one of the three; Anne and Emily needing only a passing mention here. Miss Brontë was educated for a governess, or private teacher; and passed several years in Belgium studying for her profession. Her life was, outside of literature, rather uneventful; she married somewhat late, and died within a short time after her marriage. I suppose that these facts may seem to you scarcely worth mentioning in this short lecture; but unless you know them you cannot very well judge of Miss Brontë's literary invention. She was one of the first to put her own experiences into the form of enduring fiction; and by experiences I do not mean the extraordinary or the exceptional in any way, but the common facts of everyday life of a teacher. It was this that gave to her books the astonishing charm which the public found in them, and which have placed them in the front rank of great novels. People who read these stories, and sorrowed with the sorrows expressed in them, or rejoiced with the hopes uttered in them, understood that real life was portrayed in those pages. I do not mean that they, or anybody else, at first knew what the source of the stories really was; nobody then knew much about the private life of Brontë. Only a great critic could have been sure that the author had taken those chapters out of her own life,—written them, so to speak, with her own life. This was a different kind of literary work from the fiction of the

[1] (1816-1855).

preceding era. It was not the work exactly of a great genius, —not purely creative work in the sense that Thackeray's novels were; yet it produced a very similar effect upon the reader. Also there were several novel characteristics in those stories. Other novelists had made their heroes and heroines handsome and brave, or in some sort typically superior to ordinary mankind. I do not mean that all did so; but this was a general rule,—a romantic tendency. Or, writers of fiction, like Dickens, would characterize their principal figures by some exaggeration of traits. Miss Brontë, on the other hand, not only made her principal characters ordinary people, but even somewhat unpleasant or ugly people. There was no exaggeration about the ugliness nor about the disagreeableness: it was real warm life that she was painting, but the life of people about whom romantic novelists of a former time would not have thought it possible to write. Nevertheless, Miss Brontë hit upon a great truth,—that the value of character in the art of fiction means imcomparably more than the value of circumstance. Or, to put the thing still more plainly, I should say that it does not matter in the least whether her heroines be rich or poor, old or young, genteel or common, ugly or beautiful, if she has character. Miss Brontë's women had character, — intense character, and plenty of it, because they represented really the true women whom she best knew in this world: herself and her favourite sister. Also her men,– at least the principal male characters in her books—had great individuality, or rather personality, because she studied them and drew them after certain teachers whom she had every opportunity to observe in all their moods and tenses. Though in her four novels there is a considerable variety of incidents and of names, the real persons depicted are few. It was said that all Byron's heroes were representation of Byron himself. It may be said of Mis Brontë's heroines that most of them are pictures of herself; but we must give her credit also for the picture of her sister.

Two things about Miss Brontë's work I have mentioned: — that she drew her fiction out of her own experience altogether,—and that her personages were principally remarkable

for force of character. The third fact remains to be mentioned. There are many kinds of what we call strong character. Strong character may be irresistibly attractive; it may also be intensely repellent. Miss Brontë's strong characters are not of the attractive kind. Now here is the wonder of her books. We have placed before us certain perfectly truthful figures of men and women, physically unpleasant and morally harsh. Or, shall I say ugly and cross and hard? But presently these harsh, disagreeable men and women become slowly attractive each to the other. Then new phases of character come into playing. There is a tremendous struggle against Self on both sides, as well as a tremendous struggle in favour of Self. The heart, the deeper and tenderer hidden nature, wants to love; but the cold, harsh, cautious and intensely proud intellectual nature resists. The woman and the man seem a moment as if their own emotions were about to tear them to pieces. It is impossible not to be deeply moved by this wonderful representation of mental and emotional conflict. The woman loves,—yet she would not, on any consideration, allow the man to suspect that she loves; the man loves,—yet he would not, for anything, allow the woman to imagine that she has any power to move him; and therefore he treats her with studied harshness, and sometimes with remorseless cruelty. At last they find each other out, and the strange drama comes quite naturally to an end.

Most critics agree in calling *Jane Eyre*[1] the best of Miss Brontë's novels; but I venture to say that I think this judgment may yet be changed. It appears to me that *Villette*,[2] of which the scenes are laid in the French schools of Belgium, is a better novel,—more natural, and quite as emotionally intense. But some of the characters, being *very* French, are not so likely to interest English readers. *Shirley*[3] and *The Professor*[4] complete the list of Miss Brontë's successes—if *The Professor* can be called a real success. *Shirley* is the book in which Miss Brontë's sister, Emily, is said to have been drawn. I should

[1] *Jane Eyre, an autobiography, by Currer Bell.* 3 vols. 1847.
[2] *Villette.* 3 vols. 1853
[3] *Shirley, a tale.* 3 vols. 1849.
[4] *The professor, a tale, by Currer Bell.* 2 vols. *c.* 1845 (1857).

not venture any further comparison or comment, as to the respective merits of the four books. All are good; and the influence of all has been very great in English fiction.

Miss Brontë is generally said to have invented the "ugly heroine" in fiction; but it would be quite as true to say that she has invented the ugly hero. Neither her men nor her women are attractive otherwise than by their character. As I have told, this was not really an invention at all;—it came to pass only through the fact that her own life had not been "cast in pleasant places," and that she drew the material of her novels from her own life. But she unintentionally set a new fashion in literature. After her a multitude of writers began to write novels with ugly heroines and ugly heroes in them. Few writers have had more imitators; but none of the imitators could compare with the original. Literary sincerity has this value,—that no matter how much it is imitated, no imitation can reproduce the effect which it is desired to repeat. It has been said that in every life there is the material for a novel;—that "any clever person can write a good story out of his own experience." There is truth in this saying. But it is also true that if a person depends altogether upon personal experience for the material of fiction, that individual cannot help soon exhausting his or her literary possibilities. The very great novelists and dramatists do *not* depend upon their own life-history for inspiration: they are guided rather by intuition. On this subject I shall give you a separate lecture later on. For the present, I shall only say that Miss Brontë's novels rank below those of Thackeray just because she only had her own life to furnish the material of her stories; and that she really exhausted that material before death.

Of the other two sisters, Anne[1] and Emily,[2] the second was much the cleverer. Anne wrote a novel called *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*[3] which is not now much read. But Emily who wrote *Wuthering Heights*[4] had a particularly weird imagina-

[1] (1820-1855).
[2] Emily Jane Brontë (1818-1848).
[3] *The tenant of Wildfell Hall, by Acton Bell.* 3 vols. 1848.
[4] *Wuthering Heights, a novel, by Ellis Bell.* 3 vols. [in one] 1847.

tion, and critics have given her so much attention lately that it is probable she may eventually obtain a new vogue. For the present, however, we had better turn to a more imposing figure.

GEORGE ELIOT

The very greatest woman novelist of the Victorian period was certainly that famous Mary Ann Evans[1] who wrote under the name of "George Eliot," by which name she is generally known. In that time there was a certain tendency among the English public to doubt the ability of women to write good novels. Therefore women-novelists used to write under men's names; and some of them do so even at this day. Miss Brontë wrote under the name of "Currer Bell,"—which left the sex in doubt. George Eliot might have adopted her pseudonym in imitation of that great French female author who disguised her personality behind the name of "George Sand." But even to-day, as I remarked, we have the case of "John Oliver Hobbes," — whom everybody now knows to be a clever woman. Gradually, however, the English public have learned that a woman is quite as capable as the average man of writing a good novel, and that in certain forms of the novel, she has even many advantages over the man. This ought to have been known from the case of Miss Austen who can almost compare with Thackeray. But Miss Austen was never really popular; and a prejudice dies hard.

Mary Ann Evans was a very different person from Miss Brontë — having much greater educational advantages, and an intellect rather musculine than feminine in its depth and range. Look at her face in some one of her later portraits; and I doubt whether you will be able to discover anything feminine about it. It is anything but an attractive face, —long, strong, strange face, bony and queer, that makes you think of the face of a horse. This comparison is not original with me; every-

[1] George Eliot (Mary Ann *or* Marian Evans) 1819-1880.

body who saw George Eliot in her later years was impressed by this singularity. All you can say of good about the face is that it is kindly and intelligent; but it certainly is not womanly. And there was nothing very womanly about the girl who became so famous. She was the daughter of a land steward, able to educate her well; and at an early age she had mastered several European languages. At an early age also she translated into English Strauss's *Life of Jesus* from the German: a work which in those days caused a great deal of anger to religious people. This would imply that Mary herself was rather liberal in her opinions; and this was true. Although a young girl her talents and her liberal opinions soon attracted notice in intellectual circles, and she was given the position of an assistant editor of the *The Westminster Review*,—a publication requiring no small scholarship on the part of those directing it. Herbert Spencer was at that time writing for the *Westminster Review;* and he there made the acquaintance of this extraordinary young woman, whom he helped, so far as he was able, with advice and sympathy. It was he who introduced her to George Henry Lewes, whom you may know as the author of an excellent history of philosophy. Lewes was one of the brilliant positivists of the time,—a circle of English thought now chiefly represented by Mr. Frederick Harrison. But Mr. Lewes was much more than a writer of scientific essays and a critic of sociological ideas. He had an excellent taste in literature; and he soon perceived that Miss Evans could do something much better in literature than she could ever hope to do in philosophy or science. He advised her to write stories; and she became, under his direction, one of the greatest of English novelists. I think you have heard that she afterwards became companion of Mr. Lewes without being actually married to him. The circumstances were very peculiar. Lewes had an insane wife, from whom he could not obtain a divorce under the English law. In view of this unhappy difficulty, society—or at least the intelligent part of it—overlooked the fact that Miss Evans and Mr. Lewes overrode the law. After the death of Mr. Lewes she married a Mr. Cross; but she died within a

short time after her marriage. An uneventful life, but filled with wonderful work—work which we can only consider in a general way, because a detailed study of it would occupy many hours of lecturing.

In speaking to you of Bulwer-Lytton, I told you that one of the most remarkable things about that great writer was his ability to produce stories so different from each other in subject and style that they might seem to have been written by different persons. This power of writing in different ways is called versatility. Now George Eliot possessed this versatility to still greater degree than Bulwer-Lytton,—though in a different direction. You can divide her works into groups of novels; and each group of novels is so completely different from every other group, that without positive information, we could scarcely believe all those books to have been written by the same woman.

In the judgment of most critics the first group is the best. It consists entirely of stories and sketches of country life in England. It began with the collection of the sketches entitled *Scenes of Clerical Life*,[1]—small bright pictures of the everyday existence of a country clergyman and his parishioners. Then came such wonderful books as *Adam Bede*,[2] *The Mill on the Floss*,[3] and *Silas Marner*,[4] — which last I think you have read, as it used to be a textbook in the middle schools. The value of this early work is very great, — both as to novelty and method. As to novelty, George Eliot made a new departure by treating of the life of common country people, — farmers, artisans, weavers, etc., — instead of making only ladies and gentlemen, or members of the middle class the subject of her stories. And the style of these books was delightfully simple and pure. There was nothing at all in those books to suggest that the woman who wrote them had studied Comte and Spencer, and all the great German thinkers of the age. There was no sign of scholarship; there was only a display of the

[1] *Scenes of clerical life.* 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1858. (First appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Jan.—Nov. 1857).
[2] 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1859.
[3] 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1860.
[4] Edinburgh, 1861.

purest simple English that had been written since the time of Goldsmith.

The next group of novels was of quite another kind. The subjects were drawn from higher class life, — the life of the gentry and aristocracy. The style became elaborate and learned,—too learned at times. And the treatment of the characters became intensely psychological. Everything said or done was explained in astonishingly minute detail. The effect was wonderful; but it was the kind of effect that only select readers — only a cultivated class—could appreciate. The greatest of the novels of this class is *Middlemarch*,[1]—the story of a charming girl, full of ideas of duty and self-sacrifice, who throws her life away by devoting it to a selfish, crotchety old man of letters. In short the book is the story of a woman's martyrdom, — a lifetime of suffering for the sake of duty. But all this group of novels is not of the same kind. There is one novel so different from the rest that, only by reason of its psychology, can it be classed with them. I mean *Romola*,[2] It is a historical novel,—a novel of the Italian Renaissance. In order to write that novel the author had to study more than five hundred books and documents relating to old Italian history — not to speak of the study that she had to make in relation to art, antiquity, old MSS., bronzes, and Greek gems. It took her many years to write it. She said that she was a young girl when she began, and an old woman by the time that she finished it. Nevertheless most critics have spoken badly about this book —they say that it is somewhat artificial. And here I might venture to express my own conviction,—that it is the best and greatest of all her books. I do not think the criticism just which calls it artificial, because any historical romance, written about life in another century and in another country, must be a little artificial. It is impossible otherwise to make such a romance at all. But if it be claimed that the principal characters are artificial,—then criticism is foolish; for they live intensely, so that you never can forget them. The principal

[1] *Middlemarch. A study of provincial life.* 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1871-2.
[2] *Romola* 3 vols. 1863. (First appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, with illustrations by Sir F. Leighton. July 1862—Aug. 1863.)

male character in the story is not Savonarola as careless readers have said: it is Tito, the handsome, gifted, selfish, and ungrateful Greek. I cannot help thinking this a very wonderful study of a personality that is at once intensely charming and thoroughly bad. Tito is not a man who would speak unkindly to a woman or a child; but he is a man who would betray any woman, or any friend, or his country, for the sake of personal gain or pleasure. He is supremely gentle, supremely refined, supremely an artist; but of self-sacrifice he is utterly incapable. And we feel a sense of satisfaction when the benefactor whom he has so shamefully deserted strangles him at last. The woman, the daughter of the old antiquarian, is altogether sweet and human—quite as real as the girl in *Middlemarch.* Psychologically *Romola,* though a historical romance, is exactly the same kind of novel as *Middlemarch;* and its dramatic part is composed with the same motive,—showing us the sorrow and the beauty of a fine character making every sacrifice for an unworthy object. Also I think that in this novel the style of George Eliot reaches its highest in the direction of coloured prose. There is a dream in the book—the dream of a strange marriage, in which the priest is Death—which is one of the weirdest and most unforgettable pages of English literature. We must go to Ruskin to find another bit of prose worthy to compare with this, or else to De Quincey. Moreover it is educating to read *Romola.* Many a young man has obtained his first clear idea of Italian Renaissance from this book.

The third group of George Eliot's work is best exemplified by the extraordinary novel of *Daniel Deronda.*[1] But when I say that this novel represents the third stage of her literary evolution, I do not say that it represents a group of novels. It stands, as a novel, entirely by itself; she wrote no other novels after it; and it belongs by its psychological part rather to that class of work which we might call her psychological essays. You know she wrote a book of essays, half philosophical, half psychological, entitled *Impressions of Theophrastus Such.*[2]

[1] 4 vols. Edinburgh, 1876.
[2] Edinburgh, 1879.

Perhaps I am not quite right in calling these impressions essays: they resemble more the notes of a commonplace book. I do not mean to say that *Daniel Deronda* is like the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such.* It is really a novel,—a story; and there are splendid pages in it. But a very large part of it is written in the style of the *Impressions*, and shows that George Eliot was tending to become more and more philosophic and less and less romantic as she grew older. It is rather a *heavy* book,—this *Daniel Deronda.* And it did not please the English public; for it made the hero of the book a Jew, and expressed much enthusiasm for the great dream of the New Judea, a new Land of Israel. You must not imagine that the English public have any foolish prejudice against the Jews—quite contrary; it might even be said that a great number of the most aristocratic families in England have been more or less allied with Jewish blood. But everybody knew that the author of this novel was practically married to George Lewes, who happened to be a Jew; and everybody was aware that he influenced her work. The anger or disappointment was less directed towards her than towards him,—because people thought that he had badly used his power over her, making her write a novel "for a purpose,"—a hopeless purpose,—and spoiling her talent. There was perhaps a good deal of truth in this suspicion. The intellect and the genius of this great woman could have been put to a better use than that of championing the dreams of a particular sect or the ambitions of the particular race. But in spite of whatever the critics have said—even in spite of what Professor Saintsbury has said — the finer chapters of *Daniel Deronda* really represent the very best of George Eliot's work to my thinking. Cut out from it everything relating to the Jews, Jewish religion, and Jewish custom; and still you have a great novel. The extraordinary power in this book is that displayed in drawing a particularly disagreeable man. Daniel Deronda himself is a gentleman, a Jew and a very attractive person; but though he gives his name to the book, he is not the real hero of it—he is only a minor figure. The strong character is the English lord, his rival, cold, selfish, calculating, and

pitiless. A more disagreeable character had never been more strongly drawn. I am quite sure of one thing, that when you have seen his picture,—I mean when you have read all about him, you will never forget that book; you will forget almost everything about Daniel Deronda, you will forget the philosophical chapters, and the psychological chapters, and the sociological chapters. But the face and the voice and the character of that cold hard nature you never can forget. This is what gives the book its extraordinary dramatic excellence as a portrayal of life.

There is only one of George Eliot's novels of importance which I have not mentioned,—*Felix Holt.*[1] This is a little difficult to class. Some critics put it in the same group as *Middlemarch;* and I feel tempted to do the same thing. But upon further reflection I believe that I can safely call it a *transition* book—a novel which half belongs to the earlier style, and half to the second period. It was in this book that the psychological tendency first showed itself in a marked way; but it was not then obtrusive—I mean that there was not too much of psychology, and a great deal of the book was charmingly simple and strong. It represented the struggle of a good brave man, for a new ideal, against the condition of English society. It made the nearest approach to a novel of middle class life which George Eliot attempted. Really she was not a novelist of a middle class life at all, but of country life, and of certain phase of aristocratic and cultured life. She saw and painted the depth and the heights—not the middle.

What did she do for literature in the way of fiction? Two very great things. The first was to interest the public in the life of the honest working classes of the country. Before her nothing really great was done in the same direction. The other thing that she did was to prepare the way for the psychological novel. I have told you that she was too psychological,—that she spoiled her work by it. But she spoiled her work with psychology only because her real genius did not lie in that direction. She saw what was to be done; but she did not have

[1] *Felix Holt the radical.* 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1866.

the particular kind of genius to do it.

She could only show the way to others. She showed the way especially to George Meredith. The greatest of all English psychological novelists beyond all question is George Meredith; and George Meredith learned from George Eliot. I need scarcely tell you that to-day the psychological novel represents a separate and distinct branch in English fiction. I am sorry to say that it cannot interest you without a knowledge of English society life; and even if you had the knowledge I doubt whether you would like the psychological novel. I say so because I detested it myself. However, I know that it is a very great and a very difficult work of art when well executed, and that it deserves the praise which it has received. But I think that the only purely psychological writer of fiction to-day in whom you could find interest would be Henry James, an American, though long residing in England. His master-work consists almost entirely of short stories, each of which is a psychological study. Some of them are so extraordinary that I imagine you would like them. At all events, try to remember that all this branch of literature derives from George Eliot.

Besides her novels and essays, she produced one volume of poetry. Probably she did so owing to the pressure of literary friends. The name of the book is *The Spanish Gypsy and Other Poems*. *The Spanish Gypsy*[1] itself is a drama in verse. It is not favourably judged, although the verse is good. One remembers Longfellow's drama on a similar subject; and one feels that George Eliot here goes a great deal below Longfellow. The only other important poem is entitled *Jubal*,—I think you know that Jubal is said in the Bible to have first invented music for mankind. Here is an example of George Eliot's verse —a little song chosen from that book of poetry:—

Day is dying! Float, O swan,
Down the purple river,—
Requiem chanting to the Day,
Day, the mighty Giver!

[1] Edinburgh, 1868.

Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
    Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
    Earth and heaven blending,—

All the long-drawn earthy banks
    Up to cloudland rifting:
Slow between them floats the swan
    'Twixt to heaven drifting,—

Wings half open, like a flower
    Inly deeper flushing
Neck and breast as virgin's pure,—
    Virgin proudly blushing.

The first stanza which I have quoted is here repeated at the close of this hymn to the sunset. I have always thought these verse pretty and pleasing because of their colour and imagery. But it must be confessed that the narration is not consecutively clear, and that the verse is plainly artificial. George Eliot could not be a great poet; she could only write correct verse, making an agreeable use of colours and sounds. But as a prose writer she was indeed one of the greatest, if not the greatest, among English women.

Charles Kingsley

Perhaps the third in order of the typical novelists of this period is Charles Kingsley—though, in order of merit, it would be unfair to classify him in the same way. His life was not very long: born in 1819, his career comprises a total period of scarcely fifty-five years. We may say that the working part of it covered a period of scarcely twenty-five years; and the amount of work that he managed to do in twenty-five years was prodigious. Very probably it shortened his life. Charles Kingsley was a clergyman and a son of a clergyman; and the ancestral history of the family is largely clerical. Not only is the same thing true of Tennyson, but of a great many others

of English people of letters: it is worth while to remember in this connection that a very large proportion of English literature was produced by men and women belonging to the established church. This is worth thinking about. It is not that the belief in itself needs to interest us here;—it is that the difficulties of producing literature have been in a vast number of cases overcome only by the help of the Church as a profession. This English Church is, as you know, something of a vast official institution: it is liberal in a very considerable degree, so far as dogma is concerned; it is enormously wealthy; and any person who obtains an appointment in it is certain to enjoy considerable amount of leisure. If it should be disestablished, as it is likely to be in the future, I am not sure but that literature will in consequence suffer a good deal. In that event, it is, however, likely that the great literary work will thereafter be chiefly done by men to whom the various branches of professional teaching allow a certain amount of spared time. To make a living merely by literature has long been almost impossible: it is a fact that the student will do well to bear in mind. Most of English literature has been written by men engaged in some other occupation.

Kingsley had a good education: that was one of the advantages of being a clergyman's son. He left Cambridge to obtain the rectorship of a little country town, Eversley, and he kept that place until the time of his death. But he also obtained several lucrative positions. He had a chaplainship to the Queen. He was also for some time a professor of modern history at Oxford. How he managed to become a great novelist, and yet satisfactorily fulfilled all his duties is somewhat wonderful. Personally he was a very shy man, apt to stutter a little in talking; and he was quite a failure as a public speaker. To see him and to hear him, you would have imagined a man of decidedly weak and unsteady character. But when you read his books, you find in them a generous piety, a noble enthusiasm for everything good, a force of expression, and a sense of beauty of romance that are altogether unique. There is no other English novel writer exactly like Kingsley—though his

brother Henry Kingsley sometimes came very close to him. What Kingsley did for English literature was to give it three new kinds of romance; for, strictly speaking, Kingsley's novels are much more romances than they are novels.

Even as a student he was much given to enthusiasm; and one of his first great enthusiasms was what is called Christian Socialism. There are many kinds of Christian Socialism. Ruskin, you know, was a Christian Socialist—with a socialism all his own. The great Russian writer Tolstoi was also a Christian Socialist. But these two great names especially represent a Christian sentiment that has left dogma out of the question. You cannot find much of church dogma neither in Ruskin nor in Tolstoi; the preaching of both is simply a religion of love and equality in the sense in which these were understood by the primitive Christian. Kingsley could not go so far away from existing dogma as either of those freer minds: he was held fast within the circle of those conventions established by the church to which he belonged. But within that circle he expressed himself very freely indeed. And, on the whole, very generously. The man who most influenced him, in those young days, was the famous friend of Tennyson, the clergyman named Maurice to whom the poet addressed some beautiful verses. The great teaching of Maurice and his circle was a kind of new Christianity to be proved less by dogma than by action,—than by effort, by genuine sympathy with the forms of human suffering inevitable to industrial existence,—and by a certain democratic spirit not inconsistent with the existing institution. To put the matter very plainly, these men held it a duty to assist the right under all circumstances, — whether the right happened to be on the side of poverty and ignorance or not; and to fight the wrong unquestioningly under all circumstances —even if the wrong were on the side of government, church, and all the powers combined. I do not mean that they actually preached revolutionary doctrines; but they came very close to it. And as for the individual the rule of conduct was to be strong and to act. Ruskin said that life without effort is crime. That was about the teaching also of the Christian Socialists

represented by Maurice and Kingsley. Their doctrines were made fun of in a good-natured way by the English press of the time: their ideas were qualified as "Muscular Christianity." Kingsley was the great literary prophet of "Muscular Christianity."

I have had to tell you all this, in order to enable you to understand many allusions that you are likely to find in Kingsley's books to the social enthusiasms of his day. But these matters are chiefly treated of in two of his earlier works, respectively named *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*[1] and *Yeast.*[2] These two books were written to represent the struggles of generous natures against the social evils of the time; and they were written especially under the literary influence of Carlyle. For Kingsley was one of the earliest and most energetic converts to Carlyle's philosophy. I am not sure that you could care for the story-parts of either *Alton Locke* or of *Yeast*—because they refer so particularly to the agitation of a special period of English social history. But, in the matter of style, it may be doubted whether Kingsley ever surpassed certain pages of these early books. For example, in *Alton Locke* there is a wonderful dream,—the dream of a man, who in a time of fever, imagines himself to behold the entire history of the migration of the Aryan race from India westward into Europe. He takes part in the migration,—recalls the battles, the terrors of the unknown, all the trials of the journey. I believe that today this series of an Aryan migration is no longer supported by the best scientific authority—Professor Huxley himself gave it a blow. There was more than one migration, of course; but the imaginary movement of a whole race from India to Western Europe, as it was described fifty years ago, would be laughed at now by competent thinkers. Nevertheless no discoveries, ethnical or philological, will ever in the least diminish the literary value and the strange beauty of the dream in *Alton Locke;* if you do not read anything else of those books, do not fail to read that.

[1] 1850.

[2] *Yeast: a problem* 1851. (First published in *Fraser's Magazine,* July — Dec. 1848).

Kingsley did not do much more in the way of romances, modern or historical, embodying his social theories, except in the novel *Two Years Ago*.[1] Tom, the hero in *Two Years Ago*, represents Kingsley's ideal of what a Christian gentleman should be in modern society. The book is a sort of "gospel of action" in the guise of a modern novel. But you must not think that any of the books are religious books: they are simply stories with some expression in them of new social ideas. Putting those three books together you have Kingsley's first group of novels—romantic novels embodying his particular enthusiasms and hopes in the direction of social reform. They are noble books: if I do not ask you to read them, it is only because they treat so particularly of English life that you would find much in them hard to understand. Observe only that they all represent a new kind of work in fiction. Novels they seem to be, because they reflect the social life of Kingsley's day;—romances nevertheless they are,—because their characters are pictured as acting according to ideal motives and heroic impulses,—because they act somewhat differently and better than such person would act in real life. Suppose we call this group of novels the Social Romances.

Much more widely is Kingsley known by his historical romances. There were plenty of historical romances before Kingsley's time; but he made two new kinds—new in quality—new in conception. No two of these are exactly the same in character, — all represent widely different periods of history, And yet I think that we can put two of them in a group apart, because they deal with certain race ideas that Kingsley was the first to grandly express in English fiction. I think you will remember that I told you, in the course of our lecture on the 18th century, that the poet Gray was about the first to introduce Norse subjects into English poetry,—and that the work of Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, first gave the 18th century public some general idea of the deep and strange poetry of the Northern myths. Before that time the English people did not know very much or care very much about the Northern liter-

[1] 3 vols. 1857.

ature. Sir Walter Scott helped them to know by translating some of the Sagas. But it was not until after the middle of the 19th century that Norse studies began to take a wide range in England. Now, just about Kingsley's time, new English historians began to insist with great force upon the Scandinavian element in English history, upon the blood relation between the English and the men of the far North, and upon the trace of that relation left in the current speeches, in the names of places and even in the character of people in certain sections. Then a new enthusiasm began among literary men. Remembering the grand qualities of the old Norse men, rather than the cruel and bad ones, English readers everywhere began to feel proud that in their blood something of Northern blood probably existed, and many traits of English character were explained by references to Northern characters as exhibited in Norse literature. No one carried this new enthusiasm,—this new sense of kinship with Scandinavian,—further than Kingsley. You will find that feeling splendidly expressed in his noble *Ode to the North-East Wind*, and you will find sparks of the feeling glittering here and there through all the body of his poetry. But it was especially in two romances that he represented his ideal of Northern character. One of these romances is *Hereward the Wake*,[1]—the other is *Hypatia*.[2]

There was really a great English warrior called Hereward, who was one of the last Englishmen who opposed the Norman conquerors after their cause had really become hopeless. Very probably as his name suggests, he was rather Danish than English in blood. Kingsley represents him to have been a typical English Viking, — makes him the associate of Norse men in their forays all over Europe,—gives him all the experience of a Norse berserk and hero. After passing his youth in wild adventure he came back to England to defend her against her enemies. Hereward, in this romance, is the strong man—the man who uses his strength and courage to protect the weak against the powerful, and who succeeds always in his battles

[1] *Hereward the wake, 'last of the English.'* 2 vols. 1865.
[2] *Hypatia, or new foes with an old face.* 2 vols. 1853. (First published in *Fraser's Magazine.* Jan.—Dec. 1852; Jan.—April 1853).

while he continues to fight only for the right. But at last this strong man makes a mistake,—commits a weakness, yields to the witchery of a bad woman; and from that day the power seems to depart from him. But he repents, and dies a glorious death. This is a very great romance. It is the book of all Kingsley's books that I should especially like you to read. Nowhere does Kingsley's prose display greater strength and beauty. Besides, there is nothing in this book which you cannot quite easily understand. You will find in Hereward nearly all those fine qualities which belong in Japanese romance to the *samurai;* and the few weaknesses of the hero only serve to make him appear more human and less impossible. This book has inspired many English artists. A great many pictures have been made representing the principal themes of the romance; and there is a fine marble statue representing Hereward carrying a woman out of a burning castle. But remember that this book is especially typical as a romance of Northern character.

It is much more difficult to speak to you adequately of *Hypatia.* In this book, too, we have a Norse ideal; but it is only used as a foil, as a contrast, as a relief to the other part of the book. The scenes are laid in Alexandria, in the period of the moral decay of the Roman Empire, and the great bloody riots of the Christian monks in that city. Hypatia, you know, was about the last great teacher of the Greek philosophy in Alexandria. She was a beautiful and learned woman; she attracted to her college all the young men of the time attached to the older learning, and she taught them the neo-Platonic philosophy. You can find the horrible story of her murder by the monks in Gibbon, or indeed in any standard history. She was hated as a pagan—because she represented the old learning, the old god, the old religion. The monks tore her limb from limb, and scraped her flesh from the bones with oyster shell. This is the episode of church history which Kingsley took for the subject of his novel. I need scarcely suggest to you that it is a noble attack upon ignorant bigotry and fanaticism. But how does the Norse idea come into the story? That has been managed in a wonderfully clever way. At the his-

torical period in question, the Norsemen had already began to ravage the coasts of Northern Africa, and to plunder cities all along the Mediterranean, even to the vicinity of Constantinople. At Constantinople many of them were actually engaged by the emperors to serve as a bodyguard — and this famous bodyguard is known in history as the Varangian guard. (It is known that there were several Englishmen in it.) To the Romans of the West these terrible sailors and robbers were chiefly known by the name of Goths and Vandals; but the names are misleading; for the early marauders appeared to have been largely from Scandinavia and Denmark—not true Goths in the later historical sense of the term. Kingsley imagined a strong body of these men to have forced their way up the river, and fortified themselves in Alexandria, notwithstanding the presence of a small force of Roman soldiers, who would have had no chance at all with them in battle. The fancy startles; but it is at least historically possible that at the time of which Kingsley speaks there might have been a force of these men in the African capital. By introducing them in his romance Kingsley is able to make a magnificent contrast between the luxurious and effeminate corruption of the South, and the fierce, hard heroism and the force of the North. The principal figure among these Goths is not the young leader Amalric;—it is the true Scandinavian warrior, old Wulf, the gray-bearded fighter who reproaches his younger companions with their weakness for the pleasures and lusts of women, and sings to them old heroic songs in order to keep them awake from women and wine. He is the one who constantly urges them to return to the North, for fear of corrupting their moral. But they do not listen to him until several misfortunes have come to them in consequence of indulgence with women. Then they go. But first they amuse themselves by slaughtering the monks who murdered Hypatia. These, not knowing with what kind of men they had to deal, attempted to force their way into the castle held by the Goths. The Northern leaders immediately ordered his men to open the doors wide and let the whole mob come in. But after they came in the doors were

shut, and they never came out again. This is not historical; but the description of the slaughter is so strange, and gives the reader such a sense of moral satisfaction that he really wishes it were. Besides this contrast — so cleverly managed — of luxurious South and heroic North, we have another contrast scarcely less finely represented: I mean that between the corrupt Rome of the age, and the last expiring splendour of Greek learning and Greek philosophy. For there was, even in the most corrupt age of decaying Rome, a circle of learning and of art as morally pure and good as any that ever existed; and this little band of whom Hypatia was a kind of priestess as well as teacher, strove as well as it could against all that was ignorant and cruel and wicked in that time. So we have four elements of history mingled in this wonderful book—Greek art and thought; Northern heroism; Roman corruption and vice; monkish fanaticism and brutality, unconsciously helping the wrong instead of the right. With such a subject any clever man could make a good romance; Kingsley made one which is more than good—it cannot be qualified by any weaker word than splendid. This is a book that you certainly ought to read; and, except a few pages on the subject of Platonic philosophy, I think that you will find in it nothing heavier than the narrative of *Hereward.*

I am not able to understand why nearly all the English critics have called *Westward Ho!*[1] Kingsley's masterpiece. I do not mean to imply that I do not think it a great romance; but I much prefer either *Hypatia* or *Hereward.* However, you can judge for yourselves. *Westward Ho!* is a story of the time of Queen Elizabeth, — a story of the sea-kings who wrested from Spain her maritime power, and really established English power in America. You can best get at the real history of those times, in a small compass, by reading Froude's *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century*—or you might read his chapter on the same subject in his splendid *History of England*, which has all the charm of a romance, and almost the

[1] *Westward ho! or the voyages and adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, of Burrough, in the county of Devon, in the reign of Her Most Glorious Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Rendered into modern English by Charles Kingsley.* 3 vols. 1855.

same enthusiasm and force of style as that of Kingsley's own books. The hero of the story is one called Sir Amyas Leigh, very much the same kind of hero as that real Sir Richard Grenville of whom you have read in Tennyson's stirring poem of *The Revenge.* The incidents are mostly founded upon the actual chronicles of those times,—chronicles of buccanneers, captures of Spanish galleons full of jewels and gold,—heroic sea fights, — struggles against Spanish military power, and against the hideous cruelty of the Inquisition. There are plenty of horrors in the book; — perhaps that is one of the reasons why I cannot like it quite so well as I do the others. But there are certainly chapters in it which are veritable prose epics; — poems of great deeds,—which make every Englishman's heart beat quicker when he reads them. I should prefer to class this book by itself: it is quite different in a certain way from the others.

Nevertheless there is a certain linking of the sentiment in all the books. Some have thought it didactic; but I think this is a shallow judgment. It is much more likely to have been the natural outcome of Kingsley's own character and feeling. In nearly all of his books you find that monkish religion always appears on one side as the enemy of culture and enemy of freedom; — and there is no doubt that when Kingsley thus denounced monkish religion he was thinking of Roman Catholicism. On the other hand we always find him championing and praising the old spirit of the North,—the spirit of heroism and freedom and force; and when he sings or proclaims the praises of the North we know that he is thinking especially of the Protestant England with her Scandinavian traditions, with her legacy of freedom obtained through the Reformation by the great religious revolution which the North certainly made. (It is now believed that the next great moral and intellectual revolution in Europe will also come from the North.) I think this is why Kingsley wrote as he did;—I think he felt exactly as he wrote. But I need scarcely tell you that Roman Catholics do not speak well of his books, and they are apt, if speaking of him at all, only to refer to his unfortunate controversy with

Newman. Everybody who knows everything about the matter, and who is capable of judging impartially must be aware that Newman was wrong and that Kingsley was thoroughly right. But Kingsley was a bad logician, and argued clumsily for a good cause; while Newman argued cleverly in a bad cause — much after the fashion of what has been called "intellectual burglary." And at that time, many took sides against Kingsley just as many took sides against Froude. But now nobody except Roman Catholics ever reads Newman; and Charles Kingsley has become a classic, and the more that we learn of his honest and earnest life, the brighter his memory becomes.

Besides his novels proper, Kingsley wrote another book that has become a very great classic: I mean his *Greek Heroes*, or, *Greek Fairy Tales.*[1] This little book written for his own children has passed through an enormous number of editions. It still remains the very best book in the world as an introduction to the study of Greek mythology. There is nothing else to compare with it for children in any European classic. And, as for style, we have here almost, if not absolutely, the most beautiful prose that can be produced with very simple English. Kingsley himself thought that he got his inspiration for this style from the English Bible; but the truth is that only genius could have made such a style.

Moreover no man that has not made a very careful study of such Greek poets as Pindar could have made this book. As for simple practical prose I am not afraid to say that it is superior to anything else in English except the prose of certain part of the Bible. Long ago I tried very hard to interest students in the beautiful language of this book: I believe that I was the first to cause its introduction into Japan. But I am sorry to say that my attempts were quite unsuccessful: the students complained that the English was too easy — a complaint which proved that they could not understand the emotional beauty of the book at all. But, surely, university students ought to know better. Let me quote to you a few bits from this beautiful book: it does not really matter much at

[1] *The heroes; or, Greek fairy tales for my children* 1856.

what page we make the choice, — but I think that the boy's vision of gods by the sea-shore is perhaps particularly striking:—

> Then he saw afar off above the sea a small white cloud, as bright as silver. And it came on, nearer and nearer, till its brightness dazzled his eyes.
>
> Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky; and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched, it broke, and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athené, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a young man more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.
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> They looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes; and they came up the cliffs towards him more swiftly than the sea-gull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir the robes about their limbs;—only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man.

Of course every boy who has read a little of Greek stories and seen a little of Greek pictures knows at once who the young man is, "more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire." That is Hermes, messenger of the Gods, and guider of the ghosts of the dead. But what other English writer ever gave us the feeling of this mythological figure in such few simple words? Or listen to the paragraph describing the song of the Sirens:—

> And now they could see Sirens, on Anthemousa, the flowery isle; three fair maidens sitting on the beach, beneath a red rock in the setting sun, among beds of crimson poppies and golden asphodel. Slowly they sang and sleepily, with silver voices mild and clear, which stole over the golden water, and into the hearts of all the heroes, in spite of Orpheus's song.
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> And all things stayed around and listened; the gulls sat in

> white lines along the rocks; on the beach great seals lay basking, and kept time with lazy heads; while silver shoals of fish came up to hearken, and whispered as they broke the shining calm. The Wind overhead hushed his whistling, as he shepherded his clouds toward the west; and the clouds stood in mild blue, and listened dreaming, like a flock of golden sheep.
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> And as the heroes listened, the oars fell from their hands, and their heads drooped on their breasts, and they closed their heavy eyes; and they dreamed of bright still gardens, and of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of their renown no more.

If this is not true poetry, in every sense of the word poetry, except only that of division into feet, there is no such thing as poetry. Its colour, the sound, the vividness of the images, the rise and fall of the sentences in musical waves, and the bright emotion communicated through the appeal to the senses of the reader represent everything that poetry can do. You will not find any prose like this in any other modern English writer. You will only find it in some beautiful translations made from Pindar and from other old Greek poets into melodious prose. Moreover, nearly all the images and similes used in the book are taken from the Greek, — though you could not possibly suspect the fact, unless you had read the Greek poets and Greek dramatists. For example, the Greeks spoke of the mother of the gods, as the "Ox-eyed"—an expression which would seem strange to any English reader who had not noticed how beautiful and gentle the eyes of a young cow sometimes are. Kingsley takes all these strange expressions and modifies them so as to give in English the exact effect intended by the Greek comparison:—

> And as she looked she grew fairer than all women, and taller than all men on earth; and her garments shined like a summer sea, and her jewels like the stars of heaven; and over her forehead was a veil, woven of the golden clouds of sunset, and through the veil she looked down him *with great soft heifer's eyes*, with great eyes mild and awful, which filled all the glen with light.

So beautiful may an epithet become when properly understood. And notice the description of the garments and the jewels—suggesting that this mother of the gods is clothed with the summer sky, and decorated with the stars of heaven.

Books which please us as children are apt, for obvious reasons, to disappoint us when we turn back to them as men, —because our minds have changed. I think that it must be a very great book indeed which can please us even more in our old age than in childhood. I read *The Heroes* first at the age of thirteen,—in a great hurry in a railway carriage; I bought it at a railway bookstall, on my way home from school. Since that time I have read it over every few years; and now it seems to me even much more beautiful, and much more wonderful, than it seemed in my boyhood, so I cannot help thinking that it is one of those books which the Japanese student ought to become fond of and to read many times over—not for the story, but for the beauty of the language and generous emotion of the thought.

I need not say much more about the work of Charles Kingsley: almost everything he wrote is good and worth reading. But you must not be ready to think that it is all equally good. For example *The Water-Babies*[1] has lately been very much praised and popularized, — but not for a good reason. Certain churches have taken interest in it chiefly because of various, and rather stupid, sneers in it on the subject of modern science. Probably if Kingsley had lived a little longer, he would have changed this. Also I must warn you that a greater number of his scientific lectures, especially those in books for children, though once very good and amusing, are now old-fashioned and now "out of date." This is not true, however, of his splendid book on the West Indies, entitled *At Last.*[2] In that book there is really the best popular description of a tropical forest that has ever been made. I went myself to the very places in Trinidad where Kingsley made these studies,—and I went partly in order to see if what he said was exactly true;

[1] *The water-babies. A fairy-tale for a land-baby* 1863.
[2] *At last: a Christmas in the West Indies.* 2 vols. 1871.

and nothing half so good has since been written of the same kind in a popular way.

HENRY KINGSLEY

I think that it is better to classify Henry Kingsley[1] with his brother instead of putting him in any other group. He had exactly the same kind of talent and the same generous character as Charles; but he did not have the same opportunity to cultivate them. Still his work astonishingly resembles that of his brother's in all its best qualities. He was a young son, and had nothing to help him through the world except a good education,—a common fate of a younger son in England. He went to Australia to try his fortune and there he wrote an excellent and very successful novel called *Geoffrey Hamlyn.*[2] After many years of indifferent success in Australia he came back to England and there he wrote his masterpiece, *Ravenshoe.*[3] *Ravenshoe* is almost equal to anything written by Charles Kingsley. It is the story of an English gentleman of high degree, reduced by painful circumstances to become a common soldier, and to act as servant to an officer belonging to the same social rank which he had formerly occupied. The position is a bitter one; but tact and kindness smoothed the way. Eventually the young man recovers his social position and wins high rank as well. I am telling you the merest thread in the general weaving of the novel. Two characters in it have become really famous. One is the type of the English officer described under the name of Hornby,—a splendid character whose life and death offer stirring examples of self-control and duty well done. The other character is a typical aristocrat Welfer: at first in his youth not particularly moral, but keeping in the profound of him a good heart that makes us esteem him at last. And there is in this book a wonderful description of the famous charge of the

[1] (1830-1876).
[2] *The recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn.* 3 vols. 1859.
[3] *Ravenshoe.* 3 vols. 1861.

Light Brigade at Balaclava. It is difficult to believe, when you read this, that it could have been written by any man who had not actually been engaged in the battle; — you have all the sensation of the soldiers in danger and death. This is Henry Kingsley's great book, — the one which I should like you to read. He went back to Australia again for the subject of his third novel *The Hillyars and the Burtons.* With *Hetty* he returned to English life, and wrote for a living until his death. All his work is good; but it is only in *Ravenshoe* that he rises to the height of his brother's art. This might also be called a novel of "Muscular Christianity" — for its main teaching is that of Effort as Duty. On the whole the two Kingsleys were a little too fine in their art to become as popular as they deserved to be.

TROLLOPE

I think you will remember that Kingsley gave us the socialistic romance,—the historical romance written to illustrate or embody certain heroic social ideas,—and, thirdly, the romance of Northern character. The work of the both brothers was in the one direction. A new direction was taken by Anthony Trollope.[1] Anthony Trollope invented a particular kind of middle class novel. He was one of the first realistic novelists, in the true sense of the word realism. There was nothing heroic or ideal in his books at all: his aim was to "reflect" the life of the well-to-do middle classes, — "the respectables," as some writers ironically say. This, of course, particularly represents the class of conventions and of humbug, though it also represents the common good qualities of English life. It was not a subject likely to tempt any emotionally imaginative person; —it required a particular character, and particular opportunity, and particular experience to do such work at once agreeably and truthfully. Trollope had all the faculties necessary. He

[1] (1815-1882).

wrote so many novels that it would tire you even to write down the names of them. And you may think it strange that he did this prodigious work in the capacity of a government official. He began life as a clerk in the post office; and he remained a post office clerk during the whole of his existence. That is the proof of two things: one, that a man who wants to find time for literary work can usually manage to find it;—the other fact is that government positions in England, not above the class of small clerkships, allow the incumbent a great deal of leisure. Four or five hours a day represent the average work in many departments—though in the post office the position is not quite so easy. But here is something still more extraordinary to observe, — Trollope, in spite of his post office duty and his novels, found plenty of time for hunting, fishing, pleasure trips to all parts of the country and even outside of it. How did he manage it? I do not know; and nobody else was ever able to understand. All we know is that when this extraordinary person was travelling in a railroad car, or on a steamer, he had with him a little portable table and wrote his novels in the rush of the train or the swaying of the steamboat. We need not expect great *literary* art from anybody who works in that way, —like a steam engine or an electrical machine. But we may expect exactitude and some interest. Trollope was able to give both of these. We may say that he was the realistic novelist who, taking actual life for his subject, composed his work with the aid of vast multitude of notes. He wrote down notes about everything, and used them well. I think I told you that Defoe in the 18th century used to do the same thing; but you must remember that Defoe was really a picaroon romancer; that he did not deal with the life of his time: he was not a true novelist. There was no true novelist before Richardson,—perhaps we might even say, before Fielding; for there is a great deal of mere romance in Richardson. Well, Trollope made a modern study of real life as minutely as Defoe made his studies of adventure with the help of innumerable notes. It would not be just, notwithstanding, to think of Trollope as depending entirely upon notes. He really had a great deal of dramatic im-

agination; and his conversational passages, which form the very best part of his work, could not have been made by the help of any kind of note taken. He knew the middle classes well; and he knew perfectly well all the fashions, conventions, and prejudices of his times. He painted these as he saw them. It has been said of him that he was the first English novelist who would not hesitate to tell the public what a bishop said to his wife in bed. Other novelists would have stopped the conversation of the bishop and his wife at the bedroom doors and have told us simply that they went to sleep. But Trollope knew that even in the case of a bishop, the real time for an important conversation in regard to some private social matter could best be carried on in the privacy of the bed chamber: therefore he allows us to hear the conversation of the bishop and his wife until they fell asleep. I mention the fact as intensely characteristic of Trollope's way of looking at life. In everything and everywhere and everybody he saw the human first of all, — the convention only afterwards, as a matter of secondary consideration. There is a proverb to the effect that "No man is a hero to his lackey,—to his body-servant." Trollope looked at men of all ranks just as truly and simply as the body-servant of the Duke of Wellington might have observed the habits of his master. But, just as a good servant is able to see and to know everything, without ever giving offence, so Trollope could always paint the small details of human life without making anybody angry. Bishops did not in the least object to those novels in which the bishops were represented as ordinary human beings. The perfect truth of Trollope's books delighted everybody; and there was much good, strong character pictured in them. The books were not great mines of literary style—very far from it: they only chronicle the truth of middle class life as sharply and as clearly as photographs. And just there was their weakness. Photographs only give us surfaces; and the surfaces of society are constantly changing. The surfaces of society are conventions, are fashions; they change like fashions. A fashion changes in England every twenty five years a great deal; in fifty years, a great deal more.

I do not know any better proof of this than what you will find in the volume of that famous London journal *Punch*. There you can study how quickly English fashions change — how much they have changed in ten, in fifteen, in twenty-five, in forty years. The pictures that I saw in *Punch* when a boy and that made me laugh very much because I knew the truth veiled under the fun of them, would not make anybody laugh now: they represent what has utterly passed away. They have now the interest only of records. So it is with the novels of Trollope. He pictured life exactly as he saw it on the surface; —and, lo! the surface has completely changed; and Trollope is not read any more! What he described has ceased to exist. Yet I think that any man of letters can still like Trollope, for the man of letters finds an interest in the past even exceeding that of the present. It is only the public who neglect Trollope.

The best of his books, to my thinking, is *Doctor Thorne*;[1] I am not sure whether you would care for it. *Barchester Towers*[2] is considered by many people at least equally good. Unfortunately I cannot advise you to read much of Trollope because you have so many other things of more importance to read, and because Trollope does not go deeply into human nature. Again, I cannot think that you would find pictures of English middle class life very interesting. Nothing in English literature which is not capable of interesting you, can do you any good. If a poem or a story in English cannot touch your emotion, or please your fancy, it cannot be of any real use to you; so I shall not recommend Trollope. You ought to know his place in literature, however; and, if by any chance you want to know more of him, then try to read *Doctor Thorne*.

READE

The next typical novelist is Charles Reade.[3] Charles Reade was certainly one of the greatest of all English story-tellers;

[1] 3 vols. 1858. [2] 3 vols. 1857. [3] (1814-1884).

he came very near to Thackeray;—he was much more clever in treating human nature than Trollope was. But he always fell somewhat short of Thackeray. Still, he made some great innovation, influenced literature in a new and very healthy way, and therefore must be remembered as a typical novelist. He was not educated at a public school, but he went to Oxford very young, was able to pass a satisfactory examination, took a degree, and then won a Fellowship, which made him independent for the rest of his life. In those days a Fellow was not allowed to marry, and Reade never married. He kept to his Fellowship and wrote novels until his death. Some people have thought him insane,—just a little bit insane; and there is no doubt that he was what we usually call queer. But the charge of insanity was probably inspired by Reade's peculiarly irritable temper. Upon no condition would he allow anybody to criticize him with impunity; and people who wrote him kind letters, suggesting something which they hoped that he would not do, were astonished by the ferocity of the letters which he sent them in return. I remember, for example, that when Reade once wrote a novel treating some musical matter, a professional musician ventured to send him some exact information on the subject of the violin. The reply of Reade to that unfortunate musician was published at that time in the papers as a curiosity of literary ill temper. No one who read such examples of Reade's correspondence could have wished to make his acquaintance. But he did not want anybody's acquaintance: he only wanted to be let alone, that he might do his work in peace; and there really was some reason for his vexation. People in England will not let a successful author alone; and Reade was determined to be let alone. Hence these charges of insanity. Insane or sane, however, there is no question at all of his power in the world of letters. I said that he was an innovator; and I must tell you in what way. Before the time of Charles Reade people were afraid to talk much about natural character,—about inherited ability,—about inherited tendency of any kind. Writing of that kind seemed to attack the theological idea of free will. Even Thackeray

would not have felt inclined to say much about characters as an inevitable result of inheritance. Reade did just exactly the opposite. He wrote his novels to show that men are good or bad, under certain conditions, not because they can help it, but because they cannot possibly help it,—because their characters have been made for them long before they were born.

Besides these that we may call novels of heredity, the novels of Charles Reade must also be considered as early examples of another kind of novel, — that novel of experience and observation which was at later days in France to be so highly developed by Zola, and the school of naturalism. The art of working with notes and facts collected in vast quantities, grouped, systematized, and used to illustrate a theory, was carried to much greater perfection by Reade than by anybody before him. For example, if he wanted to introduce into one of his stories the character of an athlete, he would read everything to be found on the subject of athletic training, athletic capacity, the opinions of the doctors at the effect of training upon muscle, the peculiar disease called muscular atrophy; — then he would visit an athletic training school, observe for himself, fill note-books with his observations. To-day we have what are called "clipping agencies"—that is great companies which employ a multitude of persons to read all newspapers and magazines, and to cut out from these newspapers and magazines all articles of interest on specialized subjects. To-day if you want to know anything about almost any subject — say, for example, photography with the Röntgen rays, you have only to write to a clipping agency; and, in exchange for so much money, they will send you envelopes full of printed matter on the subject clipped from newspapers and magazines, each clipping dated and credited. Reade worked in the time before such agencies had come into existence; but he did his own clippings quite as well as it could have been done for him by a company. He was a tremendous worker. Please remember these two facts about him; because they prove that the so-called naturalistic novel was produced in England long before Zola made it famous in France. And also please to observe

that Zola's novels are essentially like Reade's novels of heredity. Zola, though very great, did his work in a much more brutal fashion than Reade,—in a way that would not be tolerated in England by those laws which regulate public morals; while Reade never offends the moral sense, or represents humanity as worse than it really is. But essentially the work of the two men is alike in principle,—if we except the single, and quite unimportant, fact that Zola pretends to write his novels according to the philosophy of positivism: that is to say, according to the system of Comte.

Among the many novels of Charles Reade, the best known, perhaps, are *Griffith Gaunt*,[1] *Hard Cash*,[2] *Peg Woffington*,[3] *The Cloister and the Hearth*,[4] *It is Never too Late to Mend*[5] and *A Terrible Temptation*.[6] Critics say that the best are *It is Never too Late to Mend* (this title is a common English proverb turned to literary account), and *The Cloister and the Hearth*. I do not think that either of them would prove to you particularly attractive;—the first is largely a story of Australian life, and deals with the conditions of prisons; the other is an extraordinary historical novel, in which the chief character is Erasmus. I best like the novel called *A Terrible Temptation*,—chiefly the story of a woman who having lost her social position through a moral fault finds it very difficult fo regain and to keep it. This is a powerful and a very pathetic story; but unless you can understand the cruelty of English society in moral matters, there are parts of it that will puzzle you. In the same book illustrating the hereditary tendency, there is a remarkable account of the fruitless attempt of bringing up a gypsy child according to the rigid English habits; the wild nature of the boy rendering this impossible. But all of Reade's novels are really good—good both as to style, as to plan, and as to verisimilitude. The student will do well, I imagine, to choose for himself in this case.

Speaking of gypsies, I may mention here very briefly the name of a writer contemporary with Charles Reade, who wrote

[1] 1866. [2] 1863. [3] 1853. [4] 1861. [5] 1856. [6] 1871.

the best gypsy story in English language if we except the work of Borrow;—J. Sheridan Le Fanu.[1] Le Fanu wrote very little, but the little that he did write possesses extraordinary excellence. It is hard to class him—perhaps he cannot be classed at all. His single powerful novel, *Uncle Silas*,[2] one of the most terrible stories ever written, deals with the consequence of entrusting a daughter to the care of a guardian, with the dangerous condition that her property will pass to the guardian in case that she should die before him. Naturally the guardian wants her to die; and being a thoroughly wicked man he has no scruples as to the method of making her die. She escapes, after a series of adventures that make anybody shudder to read. The value of this book is not, however, in the story; but in descriptions of character — horrible characters. An interesting chapter is that describing some feats of a professional boxer —an expert. The author appears to have known a great deal about athletics. But it is in his gypsy story that he shows this knowledge; and to my thinking his gypsy story is a real masterpiece. It is quite short and is entitled *The Bird of Passage.* This is a history, founded on fact, of a wealthy English country gentleman falling in love with a gypsy girl, and wanting to marry her. She runs away from him—not because she does not love him but because she does love him—too much for his own sake. She knows that to marry him would eventually cause him great sorrow—so she sacrifices her life, practically speaking, for his sake. That is the subject of the book—a very simple subject; but the extraordinary mixture of tenderness and force with which the tale is told, touches every heart.

COLLINS

We now come to a writer whose work represents something of retrogression as well as innovation,—Wilkie Collins.[3]

[1] Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873).
[2] *Uncle Silas: a tale of Bartram-Haugh* 1864.
[3] William Wilkie Collins (1824 1889).

By his novel of heredity, his experimental fiction, Reade made a very marked advance upon really scientific lines. But Collins, instead of effecting any progress, went back to the oldest and worst form of the novel, — the form adopted by Richardson and called epistolary. I suppose you know that the epistolary novel is a novel all written in the form of a letter. We get very tired of reading this kind of book to-day; but Collins had certain great qualities as a story-teller which held the attention and charmed the imagination of the readers. Bad though the form certainly was, the story was always good. With Collins the story is almost everything; the form absolutely nothing. And the story depends for its great attractiveness upon the ingenuity and the novelty of the plot. For this reason the novels of Collins proved especially adapted to dramatization; and a number of them were dramatized for the English stage with great success. I think that something of Collins has even been translated into Japanese: in this case the story itself was the attraction. No Englishman has imagined better stories than Collins—though the manner in which he presents them, the use he makes of his materials, is more than open to question. He has been savagely criticized; but criticism never lessened his popularity, nor did it in the least diminish the value of his stories to the English stage. There is no other English story-teller just like Collins—to find a good comparison for him we must contrast him with a great French story-teller Émile Gaboriau, who resembles him in a number of ways.

All this does not in the least give you any idea of his influence as an innovator. It was not by inventing new plots that Collins especially brought something new into fiction. It was by a curiously sympathetic treatment of wicked characters. Here Collins did something entirely new—and also something true to life. You must remember that wicked people who are able to succeed in life, or very nearly to succeed by "sheer wickedness," cannot be, as a rule, very unpleasant people. Especially they cannot be brutal. The world very soon disposes of men who try to break their way by violence to power and position. The difficult people to deal with are those who at-

tract us by an apparent refinement and gentleness and kindness—though secretly watching for an opportunity to do us all possible injury. In the hypocrisy of wickedness women are likely to be much more successful than men: they have the terrible charm of sex to help them. Now, before Collins, it has been the rule to make bad characters in fiction appear as bad and hateful—just as in the time of the old Mystery plays, vices were represented upon the stage by hideous or grotesque figures, and virtues by handsome people beautifully dressed. How easy it would be to go smoothly through the world, if such were the real stage of things! If vice were really ugly, and virtue really beautiful to the common eye—who would be deceived? Now Collins deals especially with the charming side of bad character. I do not say that his novels mark an immoral advance on that account: he is not quite true to life even in this. Nor do I say that the influence of his novels is morally good—it is not very good. But he gave impulse to a new and true idea. One defect, I think, is this—that he makes us like his bad characters too much. We fairly fall in love with them: and when they get into terrible trouble at last, we are not glad as we ought to be, but shamefully sorry. However, the book makes us think about things. For example, the wicked Count Fosco in *The Woman in White*,[1] and the red-headed governess in *Armadale*[2] both attract us a great deal—in spite of their thorough badness: and we have to ask ourselves why. Then the answer comes, of course, that it is by the power to deceive and by a certain quality of real attractiveness that such people are able to do mischief. It would be no use to give you the names of all of Collins' novels: the best, I think, are *The Woman in White*, *Armadale* and *The Moonstone*.[3] Perhaps it is not quite correct to call all of these books novels—some of them are much more romances than novels. Certainly *The Moonstone* is a romance; and such a book as *Antonina*[4] must be called a historical romance. For the sake

[1] 3 vols. 1860 [First appeared in *All the Year Round*, 1860].
[2] 2 vols. 1866.
[3] 3 vols. 1868.
[4] *Antonina; or the fall of Rome. A romance of the fifth century.* 3 vols. 1850.

of the story almost any of Collins' books are good readings; but they are not models of pure style; and, as to construction, they mark a bad reaction against progress.

We are now coming to contemporary writers; and about these one must be very careful in pronouncing judgment. However, a few must be mentioned; and I want you to notice that those whom I can mention are romance writers rather than novelists. Towards the close of the Victorian era, a great revival of romance took place. This did not at all interfere with the production of the novel proper, but continued side by side with it. Many writers of novels attempted both forms with success. For example, George Meredith, the greatest living English novelist, who carried the art of psychological novel to the highest possible perfection, also attempted a romance in the style of *The Arabian Nights;* — and this is perhaps his greatest book. For Meredith's novel, like Trollope's, reflects social fashions which must change and pass away—some of which actually have passed away in their author's lifetime. But his romance, *The Shaving of Shagpat*[1] contains a truth not likely to pass away in less than another million years. The teaching of this wonderful book, written in the most poetical and wonderful prose, is simply the difficulty of destroying errors in the world. Many persons, having themselves a sincere love of truth, are apt to imagine that, if you prove something to be false, then people will acknowledge that it is false. But no greater mistake could possibly be made. Most men will not acknowledge an error because it is proved to be an error—not at all; they will rise up to defend it against all reasons, with the most desperate effort, and the most unpardoning malice;—because this world of ours is not ruled as yet by reason, but by emotion. The work of destroying even one little bit of popular ignorance may require more than the strength of twenty governments, and cost more than the blood and money of fifty wars. That is the moral of *The Shaving of Shagpat;* and the marvellous Sword of Aklis in that story represents the power

[1] *The shaving of Shagpat, an Arabian entertainment* 1856 [1855].

of truth. While on the subject of Meredith, I may mention to you that his greatest novel is said to be *The Egoist*,[1] a wonderful story of English characters in the highest society. But I shall not talk to you about Meredith as a novel writer for the present: his work could not impress you in this direction; and his attraction for you should rather be in his single romance and his wonderful poetry.

R. L. Stevenson

The greatest romantic writer, almost of the century—if we except Sir Walter Scott—was a man who lived and died in our own time, contemporary with us, representing both in his thought and sentiment the best that the later Victorian period had to give. I mean Robert Louis Stevenson.[2] His recent death, and the appreciation of his work which followed it, enable us to place him very definitely in relation to English fiction. He was the son of a lighthouse architect, and was intended for a more serious profession than literature. But from boyhood, all his tendencies were literary; and to a natural love of literature he added a natural love of travel and adventure. No man could have been better prepared by nature for the career of a great story-teller,—excepting the one too important fact that he had not been given a strong body. Slender, very weak, and developing consumption almost in boyhood, he found himself at the beginning of his career destined to an early death. Nevertheless, his great natural courage, natural cheerfulness, and an unfailing sweetness of temper helped him to face the gloom before him without hesitation and with astonishing success. Should he continue to live in his own country among his own people, it was evident that his life would be very short. By seeking a gentler climate he might prolong it. Though poor, and dependent upon his pen for a living, he did not hesitate to sentence himself to exile; and he went very far

[1] *The egoist, a comedy in narrative.* 3 vols. 1879, 1880, 1890.
[2] (1850-1894).

away indeed—to the island of Samoa in the Pacific, where he passed the latter part of his life. There he became a kind of chief among the natives; and there he wrote the greater number of his wonderful books. He died, quite suddenly, one morning, just after he had sat down to continue the MSS. of an unfinished novel. Considering these facts and his comparatively short life, what he did remains astonishing.

The rich mass of his work is very difficult to group in a definite way — so great is the variety which it exhibits. His work includes romantic sketches of travel, moral stories and parables, fantastic stories dealing with romance in relation to modern life, romances dealing with interesting episodes of history — especially 16th and 17th century episodes, — and again modern stories which, although marvellous as realistic studies, are nevertheless fraught with just enough of the improbable to justify us in calling them romances. Nor does this variety express the whole of his work in fiction. There is a particular part of it, essentially humourous in tone, which he accomplished in partnership with a cousin Mr. Lloyd Osbourne. What parts the cousin wrote, and what parts Stevenson wrote, has not yet been publicly proved—perhaps it does not matter. The result of the partnership was a series of the very best books published in this whole period of fiction, and quite unique in their way. It has always been doubted by literary men, with good reasons, whether the best class of novel, romance, or drama, can possibly be created by a literary partnership. The idea has been that the mixing of two different individualities generally gives a bad result,—that there is a loss of personality on both sides. Even French fiction, as in the case of the famous brothers Goncourt, appears to sustain this opinion. But Stevenson's case certainly proves a surprising exception: the result of his partnership with Osbourne was indubitably gain, not loss.

You see how difficult it is to "group" Stevenson. But I can try to speak of various typical works in their relation to different classes of effort. I need not speak to you about his books of travel, but I will begin with the subject of moral fiction, or rather symbolic fiction.

Stevenson first really attracted great attention by a very short story,—not by a novel. This short tale was entitled *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*[1] I believe that you have heard of it. Everybody wondered at first why the story has such an enormous success. But in this case even the usually dull public felt the symbolic truth underlying the apparently simple story. It is the story of what we might call "double personality." Much more clever stories of double personality have been written—both before Stevenson and after him. But none has produced quite so great and direct an effect. The meaning of the book may be summed up as the struggle within a man of his good and evil nature. A variety of other tales can be classed to this. All of Stevenson's short stories have extraordinary power; but sometimes the power is one of sheer horror. Very horrible, for instance, is the tale of the beautiful Spanish girl who inherits the curse of a thirst for blood—an inclination to cannibalism or to something very like to it. Of course such a story suggests what terrible things may be transmitted from parent to child. Then I think you remember the story about the miller-boy in the little country valley—watching the stream every day flow by, and wishing that he could follow it far away, — down to the great town and the sea. Here, you have, in a short form, the whole story of human dissatisfaction with the actual, and longing for the unknown which, nevertheless, seldom brings us happiness of any kind. I need not follow the subject of symbolic stories further than to tell you that all are good, and that you ought to read them all. Remember that they are models of pure clear English. Stevenson's style has been meanly criticized by jealous people even since his death. It is pleasant to find Professor Gosse call him the writer of the most exquisite English of his time.

But you must not think that all of Stevenson's short stories are symbolic stories. There is quite distinct group of stories which are not at all moral—in fact some narrow-minded people have called them immoral. The plain truth is that they are neither immoral nor moral,—but simply unmoral. They are

[1] 1886.

humorous, extravagant, and represent incongruities of the most amusing kind. It is curious that *The Arabian Nights* should have given, in the later Victorian period, fresh inspirations to minds so utterly dissimilar as those of George Meredith and of Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson did not attempt in any way to imitate the style of *The Arabian Nights* as Meredith did: he only imitated the oriental plan of them. That plan, you remember, is that a number of people are successively brought together by accident, each one of whom has to tell an extraordinary story. Instead of putting the scene of the stories in Bagdad, as the Arabian writer did, and as Meredith did, Stevenson puts them in the middle of London—the London of the later Victorian period. He called this book the *New Arabian Nights*[1] and it is one of the most amusing books in existence. In connection with the series of stories commonly grouped under this title must be mentioned two separately published narratives, both conceived upon the same plan. One of these is the famous story of *The Suicide Club*—this is rather a serious narrative. There is in London a secret society or club composed of persons all of whom are under a solemn pledge to commit suicide under certain conditions. Every year one has to kill himself; but who the person may be is not decided in advance. The tale is a tale of terror rather than of amusement; and it contains some remarkable studies of strange human nature. The other tale is called *The Dynamiter*—a tale of a society of nihilistic people who believed in bringing about reform by the destruction of civilization, and occasionally amused themselves by blowing up parts of London. But the tale of this secret society is only one of a great many stories linked together in the most curious way,—every story being the study of one or two different human characters.

The *New Arabian Nights* is a title sufficiently suggestive of the really oriental plan of the production. But another book called *Island Nights' Entertainments*[2] is not oriental at all—in spite of its title. It is a book of Polynesian stories, collected in Samoa and other South Sea Islands and told with

[1] 1877-82. [2] 1893.

astounding skill. The charm of these stories is partly in their novelty; they deal with Polynesian superstitions, which are very weird, and not like any other superstitions in the world. Perhaps there is no other books of this kind in existence; and the art of it has no superior in English—perhaps no superior even in French. For you must not think, even in the case of Stevenson, that popularity is a test of the best work. It is the least known work of Stevenson that should especially interest the literary student; and this book is an example. The best of the stories, I think, is *The Beach of Falesa.* It is a tale of Polynesian witchcraft,—so wonderfully told that it has all the terror of reality. The most striking page in it is perhaps that of the transformation, when the victim in the story finds himself alone upon the Sea of the Dead, in a small boat, with the wizard, whose body begins to grow larger and larger until the boat bursts. There is no finer page of weird writing in modern literature. Besides this story there is an excellent story of *Taboo,*—a subject better explained by this rough colloquialism than by many volumes of learned explanation. Lastly, I should call your attention to the excellent tale of *The Bottle Imp.* This is not Polynesian in origin; but it represents the engrafting upon Polynesian imagination of a mediæval superstition perhaps learned from Christian sources. The idea of diabolical gift, enabling its possessor to fulfil any wish at the cost of his soul, unless he can induce somebody else to buy the gift at the same terms, is much older than Stevenson. I think you will remember that this is the idea upon which the wonderfully horrible story of *Melmoth the Wanderer* is based. Stevenson had read *Melmoth* in his boyhood, and perhaps drew his inspiration from it. But nevertheless he so transformed the original idea with Polynesian colour that his originality cannot be questioned for a moment.

It is not surprising that such a man should have produced the best boys' book of adventure ever written, *Treasure Island.*[1] Certainly the mere story here would not give the book the unequalled merit which it has. The plan of the story reminds us

[1] 1883.

a little of various tales by Washington Irving. But not even Irving could have written with such wonderful style and realistic colour. You read Irving or Marryat, and remember the story—that is all. But when you read Stevenson you remember the very words: sentences and paragraphs remain in imagination as if they had been burnt into it. That is what the difference of style means. For example, as I speak to you, there comes immediately to memory Stevenson's description of the cunning look of the one-legged conspirator whose eye glittered under his half-closed lids "like a clump of glass." Hundreds of expressions like this, conveying exactly the impression of a picture, cannot be forgotten.

It has been the fashion of critics to say less about the compound work than the solitary work of Stevenson—I mean to pass lightly over such books as *The Wrecker*,[1] and *The Wrong Box*,[2] because his cousin helped him to write them. But I feel sure that this is a mistake. They have no equals in the fiction of the century; and it is probable that the cousin's help gave them certain qualities of excellence which Stevenson alone could not have given. Although this is only guessing, I imagine that the numerous conversations in *The Wrong Box*—which is the story of a man trying to get rid of a dead body by shipping it away in a box to an imaginary address—were produced by the collaborator. And I think that a good deal of the wonderful character of Naves, the American captain, was partly created by the same pen. I should put *The Wrecker* at the head of all Stevenson's modern stories. Every character in it lives with extraordinary life, and every one is typical as well as human. The tale is the wildest of romances—yet you cannot say that anything in it is impossible. Romantic as the story is, the characters are intensely realistic. And for this reason I think that the book best represents Stevenson's effect upon English literature. For the great power of him lay just in this method of combining romance and realism. Nobody did the same thing in exactly the same way before—nobody ever thought it possible. To make a purely romantic plot,

[1] 1892. [2] 1889.

which, however improbable, could not be considered impossible; and to make all the characters of the story purely human, everyday types—so real in all their words and acts that we can touch them and feel them and hear them — that was an extraordinary feat; and Stevenson has accomplished it, not only in *The Wrecker*, but in at least half a dozen books of totally different kind,—historic romances like *The Black Arrow*,[1] extravagances like *The Dynamiter*, 17th century tales like *The Master of Ballantræ*.[2]

As I have said all of Stevenson's stories are worth reading. I am not sure that the same thing cannot be said about his essays, nor about his poetry. As for the stories — the whole bulk of fiction, with its marvellous variety—there is no doubt at all that you can safely assume it to represent the very best reading in which you can indulge. And here we may leave Stevenson—with only last word about his poetry. Elsewhere I have told you that he did not have the art of poetry to any marked degree. His *Songs of Travel*[3] will not live. But his *Child's Garden of Verses*[4] is likely to live for a very long time —not because it is even good poetry as to form, but because it possesses the same qualities of truth to nature and beautiful but simple feeling which distinguishes his other imaginative work. For instance, consider those verses of *The Wind*:—

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass.

* * *

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid,
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

[1] *The black arrow: a tale of the two Roses* 1888.
[2] *The master of Ballantrae, a winter's tale* 1889.
[3] 1896. [4] 1885.

Now this may not be poetry, as form goes; but it represents exactly what a child feels, when he first begins to think about the mysterious and ghostly thing which we call wind. He hears it; he feels it push him—and yet he never can see it. Is it a ghost?—or an animal?—or what is it? There are many charming things like this in the *Child's Garden of Verses* which cannot die.

George Du Maurier

After Stevenson there has been very little romance of a recognizably lasting order; but two names deserve mentioning. One is that of the late George Du Maurier;[1]—the other that of Rudyard Kipling. The first mentioned deserves mention chiefly for the extraordinary originality of his imagination. He was not by profession a man of letters at all; he was an artist, and chiefly a caricaturist. From the humourous artists we should scarcely expect a very high order of novel; but the two faculties of humour and of literary art are not incompatible—Thackeray being a good example. I think you remember that Thackeray used to draw pictures for his own novels—very funny pictures indeed, caricatures of the finest kind. Du Maurier was the leading artist of the *London Punch* for many years; and his drawings during those years are much more than mere caricatures; they reflect the life and the fashions of English society during the Victorian era. What novelists were describing in words, he described in pictures. You cannot find any better way to understand the life depicted in English novels written between 1850 and 1885 than by looking at the pictures of the *Punch*. I suppose you know that the men who draw those wonderful pictures of English life are obliged *ipso facto* to be society men: they must be accomplished gentlemen, able to appear anywhere, and feel themselves respected. And their lives are passed in the study of everything relating to society

[1] George Louis Palmella Busson Du Maurier (1834-1896).

— whether military, religious, artistic, musical, or commercial. Now the artist goes to the theatre for an inspiration; now he goes to a dinner given by military officers; one day he is in the Cabinet of the Ministers: the next day he may be in the cottage of a mechanic. Of course this experience is of the widest and best kind in relation to art; and the man chosen for such work is highly paid. Du Maurier, as his name implies, was but half English; he was much more French than English both by education and character—and the fact gave to his art a particular delicacy. When he had become rather advanced in life, it suddenly occurred to him to write a novel,—or rather a romance of modern life, for which he had obtained some purely original inspiration. This novel, which he illustrated himself in the most beautiful way, was called *Peter Ibbetson.*[1] It is the story of a man who discovered a peculiar secret method of living a *double* life. If you lie down on your back at night, with your hands clasped above your head, and your left foot crossed over the right foot (I am not sure whether it is the left or the right foot),—and then fall asleep thinking of any place in which you would like to be,—presently you will find yourself in that place, and everything will happen just as you desire. Thus you can live *against time.* For example, do you regret your childhood?—would you like to see yourself as a child again, and to see your dead mother, or sister, or brother? If you wish for that, go to sleep according to the rules given in the book, and then you will be able to travel back against time, and to live in the past, and to meet and talk with all the dead people that you loved long ago. That is the main idea of the story. Two things made it intensely interesting—the first was the extraordinary charm of its characters, idealized indeed, but very human and tender; and the other fact was the daring novelty of its ideas about the supernatural world. Evidently Du Maurier had been studying the religions of the East—Brahminism and Buddhism; and the latter part of the book with its notions of pre-existence and its curious suggestions about the relation of every human life to the future and to the

[1] 1892.

past—is anything but English. The whole thing is a wonderful oriental dream, in a setting of modern life partly English, but much more French. The charm is very deep and very strange —the pathetic passages are never to be forgotten. And strange to say, this charming book is not written according to literary laws at all, but almost in spite of them. There is no attempt at style; but the beautiful, passionate, and tender feeling of the artist pours itself out in such effective words that all the effect of style is actually produced.

Perhaps this book was too fine, too beautiful to become immediately popular except with artists. Indeed persons unacquainted with French life could not have been expected to understand all of it. But Du Maurier's next book *Trilby*,[1] which was also very much of a book about French life, had a prodigious — an unnatural success. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of copies were sold; and the English speaking world (except the great critics) simply went mad over the book. And here is a proof that immediate popularity is no test of enduring literary value. For *Trilby* was not nearly so wonderful a book as its predecessor. Its success was perhaps owing to the facts that it contained a sensuous quality more easily understood by the common mass of readers. It dealt with the life of artists and artists' models in Paris—an existence in which morals are somewhat loose; and the story was a story of hypnotism. I suppose you know what is meant by hypnotism to-day, that it is what was called mesmerism in a former generation. A girl is hypnotized by a great musician. She does not know any music; but when he puts her into a mesmeric trance he is able to make her sing as no other human being ever sang before in the history of the world. One night, in the theatre where she is singing, her mesmerizer and master suddenly dies. After that she cannot sing at all; the charm is gone; the magic is past. Men of science will tell you that such hypnotism is impossible. But the story of the impossible is certainly very interesting and it is an omen of the possibility of applying romance to really scientific subject. I think it has some importance for

[1] *Trilby, a novel.* 3 vols. 1894.

this reason. It was probably the first of many scientific romances of a totally new kind that are likely to be produced. But it is not so fine a book, by any means, as *Peter Ibbetson.*

However, Du Maurier deserves to be remembered for these two books—the metaphysical romance of *Peter Ibbetson,* the pseudo-scientific romance of *Trilby.* The astonishing success of the book unfortunately induced him to accept an offer of 30,000 dollars (equal to 60,000 *yen*) for another novel. He wrote it or tried to write it; but he died in consequence of over-work involved by fulfilling the contract. The book was called *The Martian*[1] — it sold well, it was well illustrated, and altogether worthless. It is not even worth speaking about, except in relation to the fact that great books cannot be produced simply by paying the author to write them. Here is an extraordinary case of a man killing himself for the sake of earning money, and quite unable to do anything equal to the work that was done from the pure love of the subject. The artist was greatly regretted. But as for the novelist it is not likely that if Du Maurier had lived longer he could have done any better. The two good books which he produced actually represent the whole experience of his life as an artist in Paris and in London; and he has exhausted those experiences.

Rudyard Kipling

It is not possible to name any other figure of great importance—certain importance—until we come to Rudyard Kipling,[2] a contemporary writer still comparatively young. In the case of so young a man, and one so near to us, popularity is no test whatever; and it is not because of the popularity that I would mention him. Nearly all the leading critics, who make it a rule not to mention living authors, have broken that rule in the case of Mr. Kipling. He has been made the subject of an essay by Professor Gosse; and he has been referred to by

[1] *The Martian: with illustrations by the author* 1896.
[2] (1865-1936).

most of the other English leaders in criticism, as well as by the chief critics of France and Germany. I therefore think that it is necessary to say something about him—notwithstanding the fact that his prose cannot appeal to you like the work of Stevenson. Probably Kipling's ultimate place in literature will be decided by his poetry rather than by his prose. It is yet too early to say much about his poetry. But a great deal may be said about his prose.

Like Thackeray he was born in India; but it was as a writer of Indian stories that he first became well known. He is not a university man; and his work does not show, as Stevenson's does, results of literary training. But it shows extraordinary originality, as well as a very careful study of the methods of the best French writers. Probably it was much better for this extraordinary man that he did not study at university. University study would have deprived him of the invaluable experience which he enjoyed in wandering all over the world as a newspaper correspondent, and it would probably have left him with less courage to attempt original things. Lastly, it would certainly have left him ignorant of the dialects which he knows so well — the speech of working people, of mechanics, of sailors, of peasants—all of which he has put to excellent account in his poetry as well as in his prose. By experience he learned the truth of Emerson's saying that "the language of the street is much more forcible than the language of the academy." Unfortunately his wonderfully clever use of this language is just that which must prevent you from reading his best work with pleasure. Unless you know something about such colloquial you will find pages of Kipling almost incomprehensible.

And it is not for this use of colloquial that I wish to praise him, but for qualities having a much closer relation to great literature. His unsurpassed merit is that of a writer of short stories; as a writer of short stories he is probably the cleverest Englishman that ever lived. But he is great in this direction, not only because he was born a genius, but because he studied to excellent purpose the methods of the best French story-tellers.

Short stories never became really popular in England until Kipling wrote them. But they had been popular for hundreds of years in France; and since the time of the Renaissance, the French have been the best of all writers of short stories. It was thought a few years ago that short stories never could become successful in English literature. Kipling has proved the contrary.

But there are many kinds of short stories; and you know that a number of our world classics are short stories; for example, there was *Undine* by La Motte-Fouqué, *Manon Lescaut* by the Abbé Prévost, *Peter Schlemihl* by Chamisso — not to speak of the stories of Andersen. These are read in every language; but they were not written by Englishmen. If classifiable, we should call them romantic stories. There are thousands of romantic stories in French. Realistic stories are more rare; I could not speak of French romantic stories without giving a very long list; but short stories of the realistic order do not seem to have been successfully undertaken before the 19th century. The 19th century produced several famous volumes of realistic short stories. Perhaps the earliest great writer of them was Prosper Mérimée, whose *Carmen* is already a classic. But even Mérimée fell short of Maupassant, who succeeded him. All the genius of the French race for story-telling seemed to have been concentrated in that wonderful man. I think there is no doubt that Kipling obtained his inspiration chiefly from the study of Maupassant. You must know something about Maupassant; a number of his stories have been translated, I think, into Japanese. The great peculiarity in the work of Maupassant which strikes any reader immediately, is his conciseness. It is not so much what he says that surprises us as what he does not say. He never uses one unnecessary word. He does not make descriptions or give explanations. He draws a character merely by making the character talk; and from the talk you know exactly what the character is. The stories of Maupassant have the vividness of photographs—strongly coloured photographs; but they give us what no mere pictures can give: sensations of hearing, taste,

touch, and smell. As I said Kipling's work is of this kind. But there is one particular in which he differs a great deal from Maupassant,—sympathy. A terrible feature of Maupassant's work is the total absence of all sympathy: there is no indication of human feeling whatever on the writer's part. You read the French stories with intense emotion; but it is the picture, the fact, that stirs you—not anything that the writer says. He remains so absolutely impersonal that you cannot even imagine his presence. In his mercilessness, his supreme indifference, he has been aptly compared to "a force of nature." A force of nature acts; but it has no sympathy.

This standard of realism Kipling could not attain—perhaps it will not be attained again for a thousand of years. He remains very human—a little hard on the surface, but not so hard that we cannot feel the beating of the heart underneath. You feel a very comprehensive and very sympathetic personality behind his stories. He appears to love noble men and noble things, and wish to make us share his affection for them. He is a realist—the best English realist living; but he has a good deal of romantic feeling in his work.

The work—at least the best of it—is represented by about a hundred short stories—chiefly of an exotic and an extraordinary kind. The greater number deal with Indian life, or the life of the English in India; but there are stories also of South Africa, of South America, of London and the English coast, of almost all parts of the world. I might have said Japan also; but Kipling's best story of Japan is in verse, and need not immediately concern us; it is the story of seal-fishing.

His most important work is represented in prose by the short stories; and of these there are several volumes, which appeared in about the following order:—

Soldiers Three; In Black and White; Wee Willie Winkee; The Story of the Gadsbys; Under the Deodars; Life's Handicap; Plain Tales from the Hills; Many Inventions; and *The Day's Work.*

Of these stories the variety is extraordinary, both as to

place and subject. The first, entitled *Soldiers Three*,[1] deals with the experiences of the common English soldiers in India, as related by the soldiers themselves, in their own colloquial manner. One of the soldiers is an Irish type; and two are English—the first representing the peasant type of soldiers, the second the city type. It was the first time in English literature that anything of the kind was effectively done; and as the stories were all of a character to create public sympathy with the common soldier, the success was very great. *In Black and White*[2] is stories illustrating native life and the relation of different types of Indian people to their English rulers. There are not many stories in the volume; but the variety is nevertless very great—each story illustrating the character of a different race in its portrayal of a type. *Wee Willie Winkee*[3] is a title which may be new to somebody. Willie Winkee, or Billie Winkee as he is more generally called, is the name of a household spirit, of familiar goblin, in English folklore—corresponding to the "Golden Dust-Man" of more Northern folklore. When it is time for children to go to sleep, they say that Billie Winkie puts a little dust in the eyes of the little ones—a pinch of magical dust; and then they go to sleep. Kipling has given the name of this spirit to the child hero of one of his stories; and the whole volume is a book of stories of children—English children in India. Some of the children are children of great captains or high officials; others are children of common soldiers —rough and vulgar exteriorly, but possessing fine traits of character which belong to the race. Some of the stories in this book are certainly representative of the experiences of Mr. Kipling's own childhood;—all are thrilling and wonderful as bits of art. But far the most powerful tale in the book is a narrative entitled *The Drums of the Fore and Aft*, — a story about two little drummer-boys who saved an English army from utter defeat by an act of heroism resulting in their own death. It is a very terrible story; and the description of the

[1] *Soldiers three: a collection of stories setting forth certain passages in the lives and adventures of Private Terence Mulvaney, Stanley Ortheris, and John Learoyd.* Allahabad, 1888.

[2] London, 1888.

[3] Allahabad, 1888.

Afghan charge must have been written by somebody who saw the horror with his own eyes. *The Story of the Gadsbys*[1] is the history of the courtship and marriage of an English cavalry officer in India: it has considerable merit; but it is not equal to the other volume; for the writer was too young at that time to depict with full justice certain features of Indian society. A noteworthy feature of the book is that the whole of the book is written in the form of conversation: it is a series of dramatic dialogues. Much more important is *Life's Handicap*,[2] — the first large volume of short stories published by the Macmillans. In this volume the writer showed even greater genius than in anything previously undertaken. The title of the book is a racecourse term;—life being represented as a race in which everybody is more or less "handicapped," that is to say, overweighted. And, as this title implies, all the tales refer to the difficulties of life in India, and how brave men meet the obstacles in their way, while weak men fall by the wayside. In this wonderful book it is not easy to make a choice: all the stories are masterpieces. But perhaps the narrative entitled *Without Benefit of Clergy* is the most memorable. It is simply the story of an English official who has an Indian mistress and a child by that mistress. He loves both of them very dearly; but he must keep his relation with them a secret; and when they die of cholera, he must keep his sorrow to himself. I do not think that Kipling ever wrote a more terribly pathetic narrative than this. The next volume, *Plain Tales from the Hills*,[3] consists of the stories somewhat shorter than those in the preceding book; but the variety is even greater. All the stories are supposed to be Indian experiences; and the title refers to the Hills of Simla, where Anglo-Indian society most congregates in the hot season. I had forgotten to speak of *Under the Deodars*;[4] but this is a good place in which to mention it,—for the two volumes have very much in common. A startling feature of both is the freedom with which the author, himself

[1] Allahabad, 1888.
[2] *Life's handicap, being stories of mine own people* 1891.
[3] Calcutta, 1888.
[4] Allahabad, 1889.

an Anglo-Indian, ventures to criticize and to expose the vices of Indian society. But there are also a wonderful number of pictures of native life,—stories of great crimes discovered by detectives,—stories of magic,—stories of usury, and the hatreds born of usury,—stories of marriage under difficulty, and stories of unions without marriage which result in tragical ways. The next volume *Many Inventions*,[1] may not be able to rank with *Life's Handicap* in certain directions; but it is one of the most startling of all Kipling's books. The most striking story in it is a piece entitled *The Finest Story in the World*—an account of a young man who was able to remember his past lives and to talk about them. His friend, the author, was naturally delighted to get such an opportunity for literary work; and he tried to write a story about the past life of this interesting young man—getting him to talk a little on the subject every evening, as chance allowed. But an Indian friend said to him, "You will never be able to get the whole of that story unless you write it very quickly indeed. That young man remembers his past life only because he has never loved any woman—the moment he will get in love with any woman he will forget everything." And so it happened. Before the story was written the young man engaged himself to a girl and forever forgot all about his past life. All the stories in this book are very strange; and some of them are extremely funny, while others are horrible. The scenes are mostly laid in England. *The Day's Work*[2] was the last volume of short stories published. It is a curious book, because it makes a romance out of purely technical subjects — steam engines, steamships, incidents of salvage and insurance. There is a story illustrating the life of a railway engine, a story illustrating the life of a steamship: inanimate objects are made to talk in the most wonderful way, and they talk about duty and effort and the moral signification of existence. Also there is a story about horses; the horses talk, and tell their experience and their ideas of duty.

Now the power to make inanimate objects, or animals, talk in such a way that the whole thing appears to be perfectly

[1] 1893. [2] 1894.

natural,—that it interests just as much as the talk of real person could interest; that is one of the most magical and most rare of literary faculty. Only a very great genius can do this without writing nonsense. This is the great art of the Fable, the Parable. In ancient times the most famous example of it was the *Fables of Æsop;* in mediæval times, the greatest example of it was a quaint romance of *Reynard the Fox.* In the early 19th century the greatest example of it was in the story of Hans Christian Andersen. But Kipling has proved that he has the very same faculty as Andersen, — only with certain exotic qualities entirely his own. Any man having his power can write extraordinary books for children; and Kipling has written two. These are called respectively *The Jungle Book*[1] and *The Second Jungle Book.*[2] Thousands of children read them; but grown-up people, and great scholars too, also read them and delight in them even more than the children can, because they can see deeper meanings in them. There is something very strange in the qualities of fables written by very great men, such as Gœthe;—the story seems to enlarge their meaning according to the capacity of the reader's mind. A child can find pleasure in it. An ordinary man or woman can find greater pleasure in it. A scholar will find still more pleasure in it. But a very great philosopher and scholar will enjoy it most of all. Now there is really something of this quality in the *Jungle Books.*

I suppose you know the word "jungle" means a wild uncultivated districts in India, where high grasses and brakes and young bamboos hide everything, and where tigers, snakes, and all sorts of creatures live. It has often happened in India that little children, lost in the jungle or carried away by wild animals, were not killed, but were brought up by animals. There may be some truth in the Roman story that the founder of Rome was suckled by a wolf. Wolves have been known to suckle children. If you think this very unlikely, ask yourselves whether a cat will not sometimes suckle a little dog. Deadly

[1] *The jungle book. With illustrations by J. L. Kipling, W. H. Drake, and P. Frenzeny* 1894.

[2] *The second jungle book. Decorated by John Lockwood Kipling, C.I.E.* 1895.

enemies are cats and dogs; nevertheless I have several times known cats to bring up puppies. It is well proved that female wolves have done this in the case of children. Children brought up among wild beasts become very much like wild beasts in many particulars; but they are likely to obtain extraordinary development of certain faculties — sight, smell and agility. Kipling supposes a little boy brought up among wolves in India without altogether losing his human powers of speech and thought,—and able to learn the language of all animals. Of course this is not possible; but in a fable a certain amount of the impossible is quite lawful. Well, these two delightful books tell of the boy's experiences with wolves, bears, tigers, panthers, elephants, and wild monkeys—until the time when he becomes a grown-up man, and goes back to his own race, to marry a wife, and live the life of mankind. Few books in the English language are more interesting than these. But you will find that the interest is chiefly due to the fact that every chapter is a parable of human life, an explanation of duty and an explanation of necessity. And the preaching is of effort and of courage and truth. Everybody should read those books. But I must tell you that besides the animal stories, you will find one marvellous human story in *The Second Jungle Book* entitled *The Miracle of Purun Bhagat*, which is said to be founded on fact. It is a story of an Indian Prime Minister who, in the very hour of his greatest power and glory, suddenly left the King's palace, stripped himself naked, put on the robe of a Buddhist pilgrim, took a begging bowl in his hand, and wandered away into the wilderness never to return to civilization. For in the mountains he settled at last, in a little hermitage, to pray and meditate, and make friends with the wild beasts and monkeys and birds that came to see him. He talked with them, but never again spoke to any man. At last, in the time of a great catastrophe, wild animals saved him, and enabled him to save others. It is a very wonderful story and very touching; and there is no fable about it at all.

Not so successful, I think, are Kipling's long stories, or novels. He was intended apparently for a short story writer;

and his genius best appears in short stories. But his long stories have certain great qualities and exceeding strength in it; and we must talk a little about it. The first is entitled *The Light that Failed.*[1] It has been severely criticized by Professor Gosse on account of the brutality and extraordinarily selfish and disagreeable quality of some of its personages. I do not like it. Briefly it is the story of an English artist who becomes blind at the moment of his greatest success, and who then manages to find his way, blind as he is, into the middle of a battle in the Soudan, where he gets himself killed. The whole thing seems as horribly real as it is painful; but there are astonishing pages in it; and the most striking part of the book is its description of the battle between the English forces in Africa and the Arabs of the Mahdi. These parts of the book seem to have been written from personal experience. The English public forced the publishers to change the story when it was first published in a magazine; but the Macmillan edition gives the original version. Another interesting feature of the book is its account of artist life, especially in relation to publishers.

The next novel which appeared was entitled *The Naulahka*[2] — this is a much finer book; but, like several of Stevenson's best novels, it was written in partnership with another man—the partner being Wolcott Balestier, Kipling's brother-in-law. It is a story of a clever American in India; and its pictures of life in an Indian palace are very terrible, very strange and very touching.

The last of Kipling's novels, if it can be called a novel, was *Kim*,[3] — an extraordinary narrative, picturing the inner aspect of the Secret Service in India. I believe that all critics have agreed upon one point: that the book is not properly finished. Finally I may mention that Kipling wrote a story of English school life which is in every way a failure. It is only as a writer of short stories that he is really of great importance. Very probably you have read the famous book *Tom Brown's*

[1] 1891.
[2] *The Naulahka: a story of west and east* 1891.
[3] 1901.

School Days—and it cannot have left a merely pleasant impression, for it gives us a good glimpse of the brutality of English schools. Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*[1] is a much worse book in this regard, with much less merit in another direction. If it shows anything in relation to educational matters, it only shows that the conditions of English school life had not very greatly improved even since the days of poet Crabbe; and we may doubt, in spite of all declaration to the contrary, whether this kind of education is really the best possible preparation for life.

But as a short story teller, Kipling deserves great literary attention; and I think that it is not possible to read him without learning many new things about the art of story-telling. I should recommend him very strongly—were it not for the fact that many of his stories contain so much dialect as to remain obscure to the Japanese student. Nevertheless, you would do well to remember that all the stories are not in dialect; and you can very easily make a selection for yourselves and study them with advantage. It is but fair to remark, in this connection, that stories of Maupassant include quite a number written in dialect, dialect especially of the Norman peasant, as well as dialects used by fishermen and by peasants in other parts of France. Yet all are worth studying.

Here we may close the review of Victorian fiction. The field is an enormous one,—representing tens of thousands of books; and we have mentioned only a few. But remember that those few are typical of nearly all the rest. The great books, the novels or stories worth reading in the way of study, are those that represent the foundation stones of the great House of Fiction. Every one of the names which I have quoted has been representative in this sense; and all the other innumerable names which I have not mentioned are the names of those who only followed or imitated or compounded the methods of the innovators and the masters. It remained only to say a word about tendencies. Some good judges think that the novel is becoming shorter, and will eventually be supplanted

[1] 1899.

by the novelette or the short story. I do not think that this can be safely predicted as a near event; but for the sake of literature I imagine that it is very desirable. The best of what can be done in the way of romance and in the way of long novel appears to have been done already. It is not possible to imagine any startling innovation, except in the way of scientific romance: and scientific romance is best managed in short stories, not in long ones. In the novel again, it is difficult to imagine anything at all new possible to be done,—except in a psychological direction. Long psychological novels, like those of Meredith, are likely to go out of fashion; they have never been popular; and they can scarcely escape the fault of wearisomeness. Really psychological talent shows at its best in short stories;—Maupassant having given great proof of this in France, and Kipling in England. Except Meredith, nobody has done anything in the shape of a purely psychological novel of a really surprising kind. But psychological stories and novelettes have been introduced with excellent results; and the work of Mr. Henry James is a striking example. However, the short stories of Henry James deal with abnormal rather than with normal psychology—that is to say, his stories, although perfectly true to life, picture to us the strange and fantastic aspects of character rather than the natural ones. To sum up, I think it must be acknowledged that in fiction as well as in poetry there has been a steady decline in quality, notwithstanding an increase in quantity. In poetry we have noticed that great poems have ceased to be written: it is only in short lyrical poems that we find anything very good to-day. Just in the same way great novels and great romances have ceased to appear;—it is only in short stories, romantic or realistic, that we now find anything at all remarkable. During this 20th century there will, no doubt, be a literary revival of some kind; but no mortal man can predict what shape it will take; and we are now most certainly in a period of decadence.

GREAT VICTORIAN PROSE

OUTSIDE OF FICTION

One more department of Victorian literature remains to be treated—the higher prose, *i.e.* the prose of the essay, of history, of elegant criticism,—as distinguished from the light prose of story-telling. Two of the great masters of prose have already been mentioned, — Macaulay and Carlyle. Altogether, there were only four very great masters of prose in the 19th century; —I mean writers of such quality as to be able to influence the entire English language. Those four were Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Froude. We have still to notice Ruskin and Froude;—both belonging to the Victorian era, while their great predecessors belonged to an earlier period.

But besides these two very great names, a number of names representing lesser influences require mentioning. For example, there were Matthew Arnold as an essayist, Pater as an essayist and historian, Symonds as an essayist and historian: all these three influenced English literature very considerably. If I were to divide this course of lectures more minutely—if I were allowed more time for the work,—I should probably follow the example set by the great critics of classing History, Scholarship and Science, separately. But, for obvious reasons I shall not attempt it ; and I shall group all great prose writers together who have affected English literature outside of fiction. Many English historians have no relation at all with literature in this respect. Freeman has none, Green has none — while Froude has a great deal. In science, the influence upon thought of writers like Darwin and philosophers like Spencer has been vast; it has indeed affected all European thinking—the whole of civilization. Yet these great names do not belong to literature in the intimate sense that the name of Huxley and the name of Tyndall belong to it; for the two latter men were wonderful masters of style, each representing an entirely different school of expression. Scholarship, pure and simple, has

scarcely affected literature to any degree during the Victorian epoch; for the great scholars mostly occupy themselves with the matters of classic research, philological research, and comparative linguistics. It is only when the scholar enters the field of literature proper as a translator of a poet or of some great classic, that we can consider him in this relation. For example, I doubt whether there is any greater English philologist than Professor Skeat; and no other one has done half so much for English etymology. The wonderful work of this man had changed the whole art of dictionary-making—completely revolutionizing it. Indirectly his influence on English language can scarcely be estimated in words; and he has given us admirable work on Middle English writers and Old English texts. But in spite of his influence upon language, we cannot exactly consider him as a creator in literature. On the whole the scholars of the period have been busy chiefly with the dead material of language rather than with the living art of it; and we need not trouble about them.

In the department of criticism—which is the scholarship of literature, as distinguished from scholarship of the deeper kind—matters are very different. Immense advance has been made in literary criticism: it has ceased to be a mere science; —it has become the most delicate of arts. Now a very curious fact to bear in mind is this:—Although literary criticism exacts a great deal of classical scholarship,—although no man can be a great literary critic who is not also a man of much classical knowledge, — no department of literature has been more influenced by the romantic movement. The literary critic of to-day must be above all prejudices of schools. He must understand every school; but he must also be able to sympathize equally well with classic and romantic, with realism and idealism, with the creators of poetical prose and the makers of classical verse, with the most elaborate lyrical poetry and also with the natural poetry that may be contained in the commonest street ballad. Such criticism is indeed very different from the criticism of the 18th century, — very different even from the criticism of the time of Macaulay. Macaulay would

be considered incompetent as a critic in certain directions to-day. Nobody would deny his authority in matters of classical form; but nobody would trust him to judge outside of a certain narrow circle. In the latter part of the 18th century, and even in the early part of the 19th, criticism was still regarded as a classical science, governed by fixed rules, and judging by immovable standards. To-day criticism is very much more simply defined. It is only, as Professor Saintsbury has boldly declared, the judicious exercise of "good taste." And the expression "good taste"—as meaning the power to discern what is good in literature—is not now restricted by any conventional ideas of school. You will find Professor Saintsbury equally careful and just in his estimate of a street song or of a Latin hymn. Subject and method are not any longer placed within any restriction, — except those established by human moral experience. You must not offend the deeper moral instincts of men; but otherwise you are free to write whatever you please; and if you have any ability, that ability is sure to be recognized by competent judges. This change of critical opinion, this enlargement of critical methods, has certainly been due to French influence for the most part. Great English criticism after Macaulay dates from Sainte-Beuve, whose first strong English pupil was Matthew Arnold. Sainte-Beuve, the greatest critic of the 19th century, and perhaps the greatest critic that ever lived, may be said to have founded a school: the most generous, and yet also the most rational school of criticism ever produced. He considered that an author's work ought not to be judged merely by pre-existing standard, but much more in relation to the environment and the personality of the man. Why does a man write in such a way? Partly because he has a particular character, different from that of other men; — partly because his life is influenced by causes unlike those influencing the lives of writers before him;—partly because he feels impelled to express the new thoughts, or the chief thoughts of his own time. Therefore, in order to judge a book properly, Sainte-Beuve taught that it was first necessary to learn all about the writer of it—his ancestry, his education, his circumstances,

and his particular character;—secondly to understand all about the history of his literary life, what he read, what companions he had, what pleasures he enjoyed, what philosophy he knew; —and thirdly, it was necessary to know what was his relation to the society of the time at large, what relation his life bore to the general life of the time, what political interests he supported, what ethical or social reforms or antagonism he represented. By this system the duties of a critic became enormously expanded. It was not enough to be a good classical scholar, and to sit down at a desk to judge of a book by the standards of Greek and Latin learning. It was much more necessary to understand history—the social, ethical and political history of the period, as well as the literary history. Only by such knowledge could an author's position be judged. But there was something still more important which it was necessary for the critic to do; he had to be able to sympathize with beauty in every form, to lift himself above all prejudices—religious, social, or political,—and to remain superior to all feelings of class distinction. Thus it not only required immense knowledge to become a good critic; it also required a very fine form of character, with great capacities of sympathy, tolerance, and impartiality, The demand was vast. But the results of the new methods as shown by Sainte-Beuve were incomparably beyond all that had been attempted before. Sainte-Beuve made the authors whom he criticized live again for us in his pages: he was more than photograph-souled; he reproduced all the colours and fine shapes of special characters, explained motives, excused their faults, taught us to love them as well as to understand them. He also effected a great change in the ethics of criticism. In the 18th century criticism really signified a searching for faults. The method of Sainte-Beuve taught it to be the first duty of a critic to search for beauties,—a much more difficult thing to do. It is incomparably harder to explain why a thing is beautiful than to explain why it is ugly. As for himself, he showed a strong disinclination to criticize faults; and in the case of a book in which the faults greatly outweigh the merits, he preferred to say nothing. And this is

really a wise way of doing. It is only a good book that is worth studying and writing about—or at least a book with some good in it. There has never again appeared in European literature quite so great a critic as Sainte-Beuve; he was personally an astonishing genius. Furthermore Sainte-Beuve was essentially French in his artistic feeling and his method—so French that no English critic could easily tread in his footsteps. But all the best contemporary English criticism may be said to derive from Sainte-Beuve; and we shall have to consider at least four names of great living critics in our closing review of Victorian prose.

Now to return from this summary to the subject of the great prose masters themselves, we have first to speak of Froude and Ruskin. These two are the chiefs of the Victorian prose, just as Macaulay and Carlyle were the chiefs of the pre-Victorian period. Observe one interesting fact: — as Macaulay represented classic style, and Carlyle romantic style in the pre-Victorian period, so Froude represents classic style, and Ruskin romantic style in the Victorian period. Thus of the four greatest prose writers of the 19th century, two were romantics and two classics. As for the romantics, they carried prose to the utmost possible degree of ornate perfection. But the two great classic writers are neither of them classical in the sense of the 18th century meaning of the word. Even classicism felt the romantic south-wind of the epoch and broke into beautiful blossom. The colours were not violent and splendidly dazzling, like the flowers of the romantic garden: you can call them white, if you please. But classical prose certainly flowered, became warm, became sympathetic, became capable of thrilling the emotions almost like romantic prose. Macaulay stirs us; Froude enthuses us. It is impossible to deny that both are classic. But, compared with their prose, the prose of the 18th century reads as coldly as an inscription cut in the marble of a tombstone. What is the reason of this? Certainly the reason is only that Macaulay and Froude lived in a freer atmosphere than the men of the 18th century. It is not that they used very different words, or constructed their sentences according

to different rules;—it is because they felt free to express their feelings, their sentiments. The 18th century classcism insisted upon the suppression of personal feeling quite as much as it insisted upon a choice of words or a form of a sentence. Remaining classical by culture and by tendency, Macaulay and Froude were more happily situated. The romantic spirit of their time allowed them liberty to express their emotion; and they did so, with prodigious force.

FROUDE

We shall first consider Froude[1] whom Professor Saintsbury very plainly declares to have been, even as a historian, "infinitely greater" than either of his contemporaries, Freeman or Green. I need not explain to you that the professor means history as literature,—not history as compilation. I need not tell you much about Froude's career. He was at Oxford with Newman, Freeman, Pusey, and many others whose names figured in the story of the great Oxford Movement. He studied for the Church and took orders. But at Oxford he became very much agitated by the excitement of the time, — the struggle between the new liberalism and the old religious conservatism. I am not sure whether you know how violent that intellectual contest really was; but you can imagine something about it from the fact that conservatives like Pusey actually wished to check free thought by legislation. The scientific discoveries of the time had produced a sort of spiritual panic—as I told you before, several of the more devotionally inclined went over to the Church of Rome — such as Newman. For the others there were only two courses open: either to keep with the conservative party or to throw in their chances with the new liberalism. Freeman kept with the conservative. Froude left the Church altogether, after publishing a little book called *The Nemesis of Faith*,[2] — Nemesis, I need scarcely tell you, is the

[1] James Anthony Froude (1818-1894).
[2] 1849.

Greek name of the goddess of vengeance, and has come to signify vengeance in the language of scholars. In the little book Froude confessed very plainly his inability to side further with religious conservatism. For this bold action he was persecuted during the remainder of his life. Freeman, afterwards the famed historian, was especially his enemy; and as Froude had professionally chosen the same subject of study as Freeman—history—Freeman was able to do him a great deal of harm. The influence of the university as well as of society was used against him. His old companions refused to speak to him. I think you have all read Green's history of England —a very good little history, as it goes. But very probably you do not know that the success of that history over here in far-away Japan was chiefly brought about by the hatred of Froude. In order to injure his history as much as possible, all the educational society, and all the social machinery, and all the university machinery pushed Green into temporary success. At one time Froude had not even the money to buy a breakfast. Some of his old university friends (it is supposed) secretly came to his help, sending him the sum of four hundred pounds, to help him for the time being. But such was the feeling against Froude that the names of the persons who sent the money never were known to Froude himself. That help was quite sufficient for a man with such knowledge, such genius, and such determination. With quiet courage he kept to work, —producing his great *History of England*,[1] his wonderful *Short Studies on Great Subjects*[2] and a long succession of historical works and essays which we shall speak of later on. And in spite of prejudices, in spite of the anger which his *History* aroused in the Roman Catholic party, in spite of the social prejudices, in spite of everything, his work succeeded. He made money. He became a power in the world of letters,—editor of a leading magazine,—independent of want. Later on he so far conquered opposition, that he obtained an appointment as Professor of History in his University. This was a remarkable

[1] 1856-70.
[2] Four series. 1850-81.

case of the conquest of opposition. But I need scarcely tell you that Froude always had enemies; and that his memory has its detractors even now.

In regard to the wonderful position which he took in English history—such as his championship of Henry VIII from the moral point of view—the work of Froude is open to discussion. And when in his life of *Cæsar*[1] he concluded by comparing Cæsar with Jesus Christ, and leaving the reader very much under the impression that Cæsar was the greater man in all respects, religious people were not likely to judge the book impartially. There will always be a great deal in Froude for theologians and historians to quarrel over. But when it comes to the question of literature, there is no possibility of discussion. We have here the very greatest master of pure English, severe English, and the very greatest artist in the use of that English, that appeared during the Victorian epoch.

The style is perhaps the most wonderful style of the 19th century,—considering the manner of its application. It is extraordinarily simple. And yet it has every quality belonging to the greatest style. I called your attention before to the distinguishing excellence of Macaulay's style: its clearness. Even a child can understand it. But Macaulay's style is ornate—deals in every classical and rhetorical artifice, especially the antithesis. Froude uses no ornament whatever; his language flows on limpidly as the water, and as colourlessly. And yet every effect of colour is produced by it—just as a pure stream mirrors everything above it or upon its banks. Again it has all the persuasiveness of Macaulay's method, which has scarcely any rival in persuasiveness. Finally Froude can do something which Macaulay could not do—except, perhaps, in his *Lays of Ancient Rome*—fill us with enthusiasm. This pure cold style resembles, as I have said, a flowing of water; but it has the "strength of wine." There is only one other writer of history capable of arousing equal enthusiasm;—and that was Carlyle, especially in his *French Revolution.* No doubt Froude was, in regard to thinking, a pupil of Carlyle; he learned to worship

[1] *Caesar; a sketch* 1879.

heroes as Carlyle worshipped them; and he learned from Carlyle how to judge a hero without paying the least attention to conventional opinions about the man. But Carlyle obtained many of his effects by romantic devices of language; and Froude uses no devices at all. He writes as simply as if he were writing for little children: it is like boys talking to you. Nothing looks so easy as this plain English; and nothing is so difficult to write. That is why Froude will always remain a very great literary master.

Something more than a literary master also—for he teaches us, as Carlyle taught us before him, how to approach questions in a perfectly independent spirit. Both of these men acted very much upon the principle taught by the great German thinker Gœthe. If anybody said to Gœthe that such and such a thing must be true, "because everybody says so," Gœthe would answer—"Except me: I do not say so because I cannot think so. A thing is not true merely because it seems true to other people: unless it also seems true to me, I hold that it cannot be true." Carlyle, for example, set his faith against two great popular misconceptions of men, in the case of the prophet Mahomet, and in the case of Cromwell. Since he wrote, no well-informed person would call Mahomet an imposter, or Cromwell a tyrant. Froude went even further than Carlyle, and in great many different directions. I need only to mention one. It had been the custom of all historians to speak of Henry VIII of England as a monster of lust and cruelty. As Henry had been the great enemy of the Roman Catholic power in the latter period of his reign, it was but natural that Roman Catholic historians should have spoken bitterly of him. But Protestant historians have been quite as severe in their judgment, and some of them even more severe. Froude felt quite convinced that Henry VIII was not a bad man in the direction commonly indicated,—the direction of sensualism. It was not an argument to aver that he had a number of wives in succession, and that he had quarrelled with Rome because of the refusal of the Pope to permit a divorce, which would enable him to marry another woman. The private life of Henry VIII by comparison with the private

lives of other kings was pure. Monarchs in these times and up to the end of the 18th century were apt to indulge in a great many irregularities which Henry VIII had not indulged in. He had had many wives, but only one wife at a time; while other kings who had only one wife, were known to have kept innumerable mistresses. There must have been some other reason for the polygamistic history of Henry VIII, and Froude, by research, tolerably well established this fact. The question with Henry VIII was especially the question of an heir. That was the all-important matter for him—the continuation of the royal line, and he had been singularly unfortunate in two of his marriages. To completely rehabilitate Henry VIII would not have been possible for anybody to do, but Froude has certainly shown that this king was grossly slandered, and that his character was absolutely reverse of what it had been represented. He was not a sensual king at all, but a very obstinate, self-willed Englishman, determined to have his own ways in spite of churches and conventions. After having read Froude we obtain an entirely new idea of Henry, quite independent of the fact whether we accept the historian's conclusion or not. Also we obtain an entirely new idea of the character of Elizabeth. Here also Froude judged and wrote directly against commonly received opinion. Roman Catholic historians had little good to say of this queen; Protestant historians had, on the other hand, praised her to the sky. Froude, although intensely Protestant in all his sympathies, had the courage to show that neither judgment was correct. He has painted for us the real Elizabeth with all her faults — and with certain classes of faults that other historians had not noticed at all. And yet we do not like Elizabeth less for this new estimate of her as a woman: on the contrary we like her much more. It was especially in painting the character of Mary of Scots that Froude offended the Roman Catholics; but, here again, although he may be convicted of some historical inaccuracies, his general portrait of the woman is likely to be accepted throughout the future time as the most correct ever presented. I have touched on these points only to call your attention to the extraordinary

independence of Froude's judgment. In all his books you will find the same characteristic; and in all his books you will find the same matchless style.

Though his great history will remain his chief monument, his literary value can be quite as well studied in his other books. The *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, comprising four volumes of compositions upon a great variety of subjects, shows his power in a number of phases. Besides the historian, you will here find the dreamer, the writer of parables, even the story-teller. As a story-teller, a philosophical story teller, I do not know anybody to compare with Froude except Gœthe. It is true that Froude wrote only a few philosophical stories; but these are like nothing else in English; it is only in German that we can find parallels for them. Professor Saintsbury thinks that the story of the cat, entitled *The Cat's Pilgrimage*, is perhaps the best; and it is a very wonderful thing—for it treats the whole moral problem of human society within a few pages. But I may dare to express my own preference for the dream entitled *At a Railway Siding*—which is a parable never to be forgotten by men who read it. A man dies and is brought up for judgment before the power of heaven. After a careful examination of the various acts and thoughts of his life, he is permitted to enter heaven, on condition that no evil testimony can be brought against him by any of the witnesses present. But suddenly a curtain is withdrawn at the end of the judgment hall;—and there appear thousands of cattle and myriads of sheep and pigs and birds—also innumerable fishes; and all these cry out for vengeance upon the man, because he killed and ate them in the time of his life. So a new question came up to be decided,—namely, what excuse could a man offer for so vast a destruction of life? The fishes, the birds, and the beasts said: "He has done nothing but write books, stupid books: is it an excuse for killing us and eating us?" If I remember rightly, the man was forgiven, since it appeared that the value of his books was sufficient to counterbalance the destruction of life charged against him. Of course, the moral of the story is very much that of Ruskin's teaching, — that life

without effort, without production, is crime. The world offers us many good things; but it is our duty to pay for them by doing work which will prove of benefit to mankind. You will find several other very remarkable things in these four volumes of miscellaneous studies.

Before Freeman died, and before Froude succeeded to the chair of history at Oxford, so long occupied by his great enemy, he had been able to obtain sufficient credit with the Government to obtain several missions. He was thus enabled to travel over a good part of the world,—visiting South Africa and the West Indies among other places; and he produced several books upon the English colonies of great interest. His book on the West Indies was entitled *The Bow of Ulysses*[1] in the first edition; the title being afterwards slightly altered. If you remember the old Greek epic, you will remember that the bow of Ulysses was a bow which nobody else could bend except Ulysses himself. The problem justifying this title was that brought into existence by the condition of former slavery in the islands. The book was a very good one, and will always remain a standard authority in regard to the state of the islands at that time. Besides works of travel Froude produced a wonderful life of *John Bunyan*,[2] and a life of *Cæsar*—subjects so widely different that it is rather surprising to find them treated by the same pen. The life of *Cæsar*, a result of wide classical study, is perhaps the most romantic book ever written about a period of Roman history; yet it is only a biography. This is one of the books that every student should read. It is not necessary to accept the historian's opinions *in toto;* but not to have read *Cæsar* is to have missed one of the great sensations of Victorian literary art.

Another subject upon which Froude threw a new and most romantic light, was the history of English seamanship during the reign of Elizabeth. It was an original idea, when undertaking a history of the destruction of the Spanish Armada, to seek his authority not from English, but only from Spanish

[1] *The English in the West Indies, or the bow of Ulysses* 1888.
[2] *Bunyan* 1880.

sources. Doing this, he produced the volume called *The Spanish Story of the Armada*,[1] and he followed it up with a volume of essays on the great English seamen of the period,—Hawkins, Drake, Howard, &c. This volume was entitled *English Seamen in the 16th Century*.[2] Both of these books are admirable reading. You will find in one of them also a record of a journey to Norway, which is a delightful chapter of travel. Finally must be mentioned Froude's historical work on Ireland—books of a character entirely different from anything ever produced before his time: *The English in Ireland*,[3] and *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*,[4] — the latter a kind of historical romance, the nearest approach to a novel ever attempted by Froude. It was not very successful; a historian's novels rarely are. But one of his publications which had an immense sale, in spite of the fact that it excited immense indignation, angering even Tennyson, was his *Life and Letters of Carlyle*.[5] Carlyle had entrusted Froude with the document necessary for the writing of a biography, after his death. Froude considered the MSS. placed in his hands exactly as he would have considered any historical MSS.:—he published the whole thing with scrupulous exactitude, not omitting many letters which showed the weak side of Carlyle's character. For this he was very severely criticized. But there is no doubt that he believed himself performing a literary duty; and the best judges now are inclined to think that he was right. We need not consider the biography of Carlyle especially in the light of an original worker. But the history, the *Short Studies*, the life of *Cæsar*, the volumes of travels, and the two volumes of essays relating to the history of the Armada and of English seamen—all of these should be read. Not read once only: they should be in the hands of any lover of English literature who wishes to study the purest of simple style, and should be read over and over again many times, independently of the subject discussed.

[1] *The Spanish story of the Armada, and other essays* 1892.
[2] 1895.
[3] *The English in Ireland in the 18th century*, 3 vols. 1872-4; 1881)
[4] 1889.
[5] 1884.

JOHN RUSKIN

John Ruskin,[1] born in 1819, was as directly opposite of Froude in style and sentiment as it is possible for any writer to be. He represents for us the most ornate style, the most poetical English of the epoch. He is a prose poet—so much of a prose poet that conservative critics have declared some of his methods illegitimate. Much, for example, as Saintsbury admires Ruskin, and praises certain of his pages, the professor alleges that a good deal of Ruskin's prose is too much like blank verse. We need not, however, make any such fine distinction as the professor would wish to establish between what is legitimate poetical prose and illegitimate poetical prose. He is almost alone in his opinions. Sufficient to say that even he concurs in the general decision that Ruskin's prose is the greatest romantic prose of the Victorian era, and perhaps of any period before it.

Ruskin has to be considered in three different aspects:—as a teacher of art, as a poet and great master of expression; finally, as a social reformer. One might lecture upon Ruskin daily for the time of a full year without exhausting the subject. Ruskin is almost too large a figure to treat of properly in this brief summary. But I shall try to condense the most important facts about him into as short a compass as possible.

Ruskin was the son of a wine merchant,—a very respectable business in England: partly because it requires a great capital to carry on in the higher branches; partly because it requires a great deal of knowledge in regard to foreign countries as well as in regard to qualities of stocks; and partly because a great wine merchant is especially the adviser of the aristocracy in regard to choice of wines. He had thus a very wealthy father, and was born to inherit a fortune. But like Browning's father, the father of Ruskin would not put his boy to school. Like Browning he was taught at home; and like Browning he enjoyed the advantages of travel. As a little boy

[1] (1819-1900).

he seems to have been very severely treated; his mother being a rigidly religious person, who thought it was wrong for a child to play with toys. Instead of letting him play with toys, she made him read the Bible every day, until he actually learned the whole of it by heart. Cruel and senseless as this seems, it nevertheless had a good effect upon Ruskin in after-life,—not because of the religious intention at all, but because of the accidental result. As I told you before, the Bible represents (in the old King James' version at least) the most splendid English and the most melodious English of which the language is capable;—and this English is thus wonderful, not because it is the work of any one translator, but because it is the work of many hundreds of translators, working by generation, each generation improving the English of its predecessors. Undoubtedly Ruskin learned a good deal of the music of his style from the sonorous English of the Bible, though afterwards his Greek and French and Italian studies all enabled him to enrich this power of expression with effects of colour and of light which Bible English alone could not give. Growing up he was more kindly treated; finally, as a lad, he was almost spoiled—allowed to have his own way in everything. He was able to buy all the books and pictures and beautiful things that he pleased; and he was allowed to study very much as he pleased. I believe this is the exact reverse of English education generally. The rule is indeed to treat children severely from the age of 6 or 7, and before that to pet them as much as possible. Happily Ruskin's character was not at all spoiled by the fact that he was never allowed to live like other children. Because he was not permitted to have toys, he played with plants and stones and flowers, and learned to know and to think a great deal about them. This probably helped to make an artist of him. All through his period of home education he was carefully taught drawing and painting; and he attained a very considerable skill in this profession. But he never made it a profession to live by; he was wise enough to know that he could do better as a writer than as a painter. But it was only after having learned all about painting that he attempted to write on the subject.

This was after he left Oxford, where he graduated, also obtaining a prize. Although he had had no school or college training he was entered at the University without difficulty; and the University is still proud of him. He did not publish anything immediately after completing his studies: it took him no less than seventeen years to complete and print his first great work, *Modern Painters.* Next appeared his great work upon Renaissance architecture, entitled *The Stones of Venice.*[1] And it would be probably tiresome for you to write the numerous and fantastic titles of all the smaller books which he afterwards produced at intervals. Sufficient to say that these books treat about almost every department and school of art and of architecture — besides containing a vast amount of æsthetic philosophy, and a good deal of material in relation to matters outside of art—such as social reform, political economy, and the ethics of literature.

The importance of Ruskin in art was extraordinary—because before him there had really been no English art critics of any importance. You may say that he was the first, as well as the greatest, of English writers on art. And he began and completed his mission, as an art teacher, in a totally original way—violently opposed to all previous convention. His immense book, *Modern Painters,*[2] was written chiefly with the object of proving that the English painter Turner was the greatest of modern painters; but it also contained astonishing reviews of the works of nearly all the other distinguished artists of modern times. Turner was essentially a romantic painter, a painter who painted as he pleased, disobeying the rules of the old masters. It required a great deal of courage to proclaim him superior to all other modern painters; but Ruskin actually convinced the world of his greatness. At a later day, when the pre-Raphaelite school came into being it was Ruskin who first fought for the theories of Rossetti, Morris, and Burne-Jones, and who called the attention to the great beauty of their

[1] *The stones of Venice . . . With illustrations drawn by the author.* 3 vols. 1851-3.

[2] *Modern painters: their superiority in the art of landscape painting to all the ancient masters proved by example of the true, the beautiful, and the intellectual, from the works of modern artists, especially from those of J. M W. Turner, Esq., R. A.* 1843. 2nd edn. 1844. 3rd edn. 5 vols 1846-60. Complete edn. 6 vols. 1888.

work. This again was a romantic movement. We must identify Ruskin with the highest achievement of the romantic school both in art and in literature — for he helped with his praise every great romantic book. But his next greatest achievement was in relation to architecture. Here especially you will find him a romantic of the romantics. In spite of all that had been written before him in favour of classic architecture, and against Gothic architecture, Ruskin took the ground that Gothic architecture and kindred architecture of the mediæval Italian school were superior to all other architecture. Undoubtedly he went to extremes, but he actually provoked a European revival of Gothic architecture. He brought the middle ages back again in respect of certain æsthetic and emotional tendency.

It is not possible for me here to fully explain how he did this: I can only tell you something about his general way of thinking. He believed that all great art sprang from a religious idea,—Greek art not excepted; and he held that architecture or painting or sculpture showed at their best only in the epoch when the religious idea was most strong. As religious feeling became intense, the arts became noble and truthful; as religious feeling began to decline the arts became insincere, conventional, and lifeless. Modern civilization appeared to him devoid of all beauty; he hated railway and telegraphs and steamships and the sight of factory building and the sight of modern streets. Modern civilization appeared to him "ugliness itself." And he thought that ugliness of everything was really due to the decline of the religious idea. Throughout Europe people have begun to disbelieve; therefore the greater number remained incompetent to see or to feel beauty. And of course Ruskin imagined a necessary and eternal relation between goodness and beauty, and between wickedness and ugliness. I think that you can see several false positions in such a way of thinking. Everybody saw that Ruskin's theories were very defective indeed. But when he came to explain, to illustrate, and to illuminate particular beliefs of his,—with the help of beautiful pictures and in a style of the most musical and beau-

tiful English that ever had been written precise critics forgot to criticize. They allowed him to convince them of particular facts, even while they refused to endorse his general argument. For example Ruskin could not persuade a master-builder that Gothic architecture was superior in beauty to Greek architecture or to Roman architecture in the more majestic form of the latter; but he could make the master-builder discover meanings in Gothic architecture that had never before been dreamed of. He could point out a dragon or a wivern upon some part of a Gothic cathedral, and make us understand the idea of the artist as it never had been understood before. In short he *interpreted* Gothic architecture, as representing the spirit of the middle ages. And that was why he was able to create a revival of it, —making people love it for the mystery and the ghostly beauty that it expressed.

It is no use to try to believe in Mr. Ruskin as a critic: in fact you must be very careful not to believe in him too much. You must be cautious. When he speak evil of Greek sculpture, —when he says that the Venus de Medici is "an uninteresting little person,"—when he says stupid things about Japanese art (a subject which he never understood at all, and thought to be half diverting), — when he abuses, strange to say, the most Gothic of all modern artists, and perhaps the greatest illustrator that ever lived, Gustav Doré,—then you must understand that Ruskin is talking nonsense, or, at best, expressing prejudices. The prejudice which most troubled him was a prejudice born of his own religious theory,—that nothing could be legitimate art which did not have an ethical idea behind it. Of course he was utterly wrong in this. Art expresses the joy of life very often, and in the most beautiful way, quite independently of ethical ideas. The fact is that Ruskin's opinion of ethics was a little too narrow; it might have been widened very considerably.

And yet, do not think of Ruskin as a sectarian Christian. There was nothing of sect about him. He could sympathize with Gothic art, and the spirit of the middle ages; but he was not a Roman Catholic. He could condemn religious intolerance

and social hypocricy as sturdily as any Puritan;—and yet he could scarcely have been called a Protestant, notwithstanding his early training. In fact I do not know whether he could have been called exactly a Christian believer in the ordinary sense. He sympathized with all great religions, finding beauty in all of them,—in things pagan as well as things Christian. There was no dogma in this mental world,—at least no merely religious dogma. But he was very religious in another sense, —in a great, large, deep, generous way; and he was inclined to think wicked anything in the shape of art that expressed the immoral or illegal. I need scarcely say that with such feeling he could never understand Greek art. He would not have been a defender of what has been called "naked art,"—though some forms of it seemed to him at least excusable.

Perhaps the best idea of Ruskin's mystical way of meeting certain religious questions has been best exemplified in his treatment of the subject of Trinity in his book entitled *Eagle's Nest.* You know the doctrine of Trinity is the doctrine of 3 in 1; the teaching that in God there are three persons—respectively called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and that these three are nevertheless one. Perhaps you have read of the Scriptural assertion that sins against the Father and against the Son can be forgiven; but the sin that is a sin against the Holy Ghost never will be forgiven. Ruskin interpreted this doctrine very much as he interpreted certain bits of Gothic architecture. He says that he does not blame a man who does not believe in God as the Father: many persons cannot indulge or understand such a thing. And again he does not blame a man for not believing in the Son—such belief requires particular conditions of mind. But, he says, I do believe in the Holy Ghost; and I am quite sure that the man who does not will be destroyed, and be eternally destroyed. But what is the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost is in biblical language "the Lord and Giver of Life"—the divine principle of life in all things,—the creating force,—the substance of all soul, of all being. Now Ruskin's argument is this, —that any man who wantonly destroys life, destroys beauty, destroys goodness, is sinning against Life, against the Divine,

against the Holy Ghost. To him the Holy Ghost was much more than a Christian idea: it was the great idea behind all great religion.

And with such ways of thinking, it was natural that Ruskin should have proved himself later in life something like the founder of a new creed,—religious and social. Like Tolstoi, he became the teacher of a new religion, a practical religion, a new kind of Christianity. It is impossible to think of one man without thinking of the other: Tolstoi and Ruskin lived very much in the same way, felt very much in the same way and distinguished themselves very much in the same way. Like Tolstoi, Ruskin was a rich man who devoted his money unselfishly to new, moral and social, reform, and made himself poor for the sake of the poor. But there were certain marked differences in the ideas of these two on the subject of art. You will remember my telling you about Tolstoi's opinion in regard to art: he thinks that nothing is legitimate which common people cannot love and understand. But Ruskin who passed all his life in the practical study of every kind of art would never accept any such position—never! Ruskin would have said, and did say, that no man can understand great art without much teaching and much training; and some people never could be made to understand art at all. But, believing in the relation between ethics and æthetics, between beauty and morality, Ruskin was firmly convinced that the best way to make the common people good was to teach them how to understand and to love beautiful things. With that object in view he expended a great part of his fotune for the education in art of working men: he opened art schools for them, wrote expensive books for them, which he gave away,—established museums for them, became himself their teacher,—and finally founded a society which might have been considered as the starting point for a new religion and a new socialism. It was not successful—how could it be? But the idea was very noble and effected much good, and never will be entirely forgotten. Before we conclude the subject of Ruskin I want to read to you some of the articles in the declaration of faith, which everybody

who wanted to join Ruskin's society was expected to make. But first a word about Ruskin's social politics.

The social ideas of Mr. Ruskin ought to be of particular interest to Japanese students, for reasons which you will presently see. If Ruskin had come to Japan, and had been asked by government officials to address the Japanese students on the subject of commercial morality, he would have done exactly the contrary to what had been asked of him. He would have said: "Gentlemen, I have been asked to talk to you about what is very improperly called commercial morality. And I want you to know that what is improperly called commercial morality in England is not morality, but immorality. There is no morality in European methods of business: there is only selfish interest. Your old-fashioned ideas of morality in business were just and true: in feudal times there may have been, of course, some immoral merchants; but the old ideas of your business men as to the way in which business ought to be done were very much more moral than anything European." That is certainly what he would have said. Perhaps he might have added:—"But now, as you will be obliged, in order to exist, to do business with immoral people, you will have to become immoral and to learn all their deception and trickery." As a matter of fact Ruskin thought about trade just as it was thought about in ancient times in this country; and he thought rightly. The very expression "commercial morality" is a lie—in so far as it refers to Western methods of commerce. If you want to know more about the subject, just read Mr. Spencer's essay on *The Morals of Trade*—in which you will see that if any person in England were to try to do business in a perfectly moral way he would become bankrupt as a matter of certainty. It is very hard to tell the truth about conventional lies; for everybody abuses the man who tells the truth, and tries to injure him. Many tried to injure Mr. Ruskin; but they were not successful. There is one man of letters to-day, who does not lie, even to please Englishmen; and he states in a few ironical words the real truth on this vexed subject of the want of "commercial morality in Japan." I mean Rudyard Kipling. He

said that what is wanted really by the West is to make Japan accept "the privilege of being cheated upon equal terms." That is just what Mr. Ruskin also thought about modern trade morals – the whole thing was in his eyes, as it must be in the eyes of any moral thinkers, mere "cheating upon equal terms."

Now you have heard, of course, complaint about the fact that in Japan competition is not encouraged by public opinion as it is in other countries. Competition was not thought the best possible condition of activity in old times. Mr. Ruskin believes that any competition in business, by which one man could make profit by injuring others, was necessarily wrong; — he would have been quite in harmony with old Japanese teaching about the conduct of competitors. Again the whole of Western business is based upon the principle of buying as cheaply as possible, and of selling as dearly as possible. Mr. Ruskin thought that it was very wrong to buy things as cheaply as possible:—he thought that any man able to pay for a thing ought to give, without being asked, what he believed to be a compensating price. He thought that all bargaining was wrong. Again he believed it was very wrong to sell as dearly as possible,—that involved or encouraged cheating. You have no right, he considers, to ask more for an object than what you believe it to be worth. Once more, it is the Western principle in business to employ labour as cheaply as possible, and treat the labourer very much after the fashion of a slave. This Mr. Ruskin considered sheer wickedness. He proclaimed it was the duty of every employer to pay those whom he employs enough money to enable them to live comfortably and to have a certain amount of leisure. And he thought that it was not enough merely to pay one's servant. Besides that it was a duty to show them personal kindness and sympathy,—to treat them, within certain limits, as members of a household. And he gave admirable reasons for all this in answer to those who opposed his views with statistics and market reports. If he could not answer the assertions that the only means of establishing price was the market itself, he could at least prove that the absence of moral feeling in business was tending to the

utter destruction of all beauty in production. Almost everything now manufactured was ugly, however useful it might be; and there was no reason why the world should be deprived of all beauty and filled with all ugliness except this. In order to produce a beautiful world, it is necessary that the workman should love his work; and he can be made to love his work only when he finds it pleasurable and profitable. Treat all workmen like brothers as far as possible;—try to make them a little happier;—allow them to enjoy all the liberty that is consistent with business necessity; and they will begin to produce beautiful things. Those were Mr. Ruskin's ideas stated in a general way. I do not mean to tell you that I think them practical: men are too selfish to be reformed as Mr. Ruskin wanted to reform them. They are likely to be realized only in far-off time. But they were noble and good ideas; and they have been really exerting a great deal of good influence. You must not think of Ruskin as being a socialist like Tolstoi;—a believer in the equality of men. On the contrary Ruskin was essentially an aristocrat; he believed in class distinction; his socialism was altogether of the moral kind,—he advocated no more than a brotherly feeling among all classes; and when I say a brotherly feeling, you can take it in the Japanese meaning, implying the duties between the elder and the younger brothers. It was not through the lower classes that he hoped to bring about the reform, but through the upper classes. It was to the rich that he spoke, telling them: "You are not only immoral in your selfish treatment of the working men; you are foolish. You are injuring civilization by treating them as you do. Treat them differently; and the quality of all production will be improved; and the riches of your country will be increased; and the general happiness will be augumented." As for the working people themselves, he hoped to benefit them through education, but only to the extent of developing their productive ability. This reminds me to tell you that Ruskin's ideas about education were just as radical as the idea on the subject of political economy. In saying that the whole of Western system of education was entirely wrong, he had many

great thinkers with him;—but it is not so certain that some of his proposed reforms would serve the purpose intended. He wanted all philological study to be banished from his ideal schools;—he declared that the student should not be allowed to study grammar, and he insisted that it was not necessary. Latin and Greek he opposed; and he advocated, in scientific classes, the substitution of object teaching for lecture. In literature, for example, he would have insisted on confining the study to the understanding and the production of emotional beauty and power. He would have said that no man learns to write a beautiful thing by studying grammar, or by mastering its etymology,—but only by learning to love beautiful things in good books, and by trying to do something oneself in the same direction. And his suggestions are often very good;—for example, he tells the literary student, that it is not the mere grammar of a sentence that he should be careful about, but it is the value of every separate word, and the value of grouping, and the effects possible to obtain by different arrangements—so as to select only the very strongest and best. He said that the construction of a sentence should be accomplished just like the construction of a beautiful piece of mosaic work. And you must remember that the man who said these things was himself a real scholar—one who had studied all the studies that he denounces, such as Greek and Latin;—and a very great master of English; so that his advice is worth thinking about. Above all things the student should not let himself be prejudiced against Ruskin because of the mistakes that Ruskin has made, or because of the foolish things that he has said. Look only for the great and the wide and generous thinking; and you will find a harvest of extraordinary riches.

I will now read to you a few sentences from the confession of faith which Ruskin made every member of his society accept as a condition of affiliation. I will not read the whole; because the following paragraphs sufficiently show the spirit:—

> I trust in the nobleness of human nature, in the majesty of its faculties, the fulness of its mercy, and the joy of its love.

And I will strive to love my neighbour as myself, and, even when I cannot, will act as if I did.

I will not deceive, or cause to be deceived, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor hurt, or cause to be hurt, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor rob, or cause to be robbed, any human being for my joy or pleasure.

I will not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty, upon the earth.

I will obey all the laws of my country faithfully; and the orders of its monarch, and of all persons appointed to be in authority under its monarch, so far as such laws or commands are consistent with what I suppose to be the law of God; and when they are not, and seem in anywise to need change, I will oppose them loyally and deliberately, not with malicious, concealed, disorderly violence.

Now you will see that this is really a very noble code without any comment from me – but I should like you to observe how much better it harmonizes with the old ethical teaching of your own country than with anything which is now called commercial morality. In fact you cannot harmonize the two. Perhaps you would think one restriction somewhat extreme, namely,—that one must not be a hunter, must not kill birds or animals without necessity. Still I must say that I sympathize with this: to kill any animal or bird for mere amusement seems to me just as wrong as to kill a man. You will find a good exposition of Ruskin's political ideas in the volume entitled *Time and Tide.*[1] But I believe that his literary qualities will better appeal to you in such volumes as *The Ethics of the Dust,*[2] and *Sesame and Lilies.*[3] Almost in any volume you will find beautiful things: it would be impossible to make a satisfactory selection out of so great a treasure-house. But I will mention one chapter that may attract you by reason of its curiosity as

[1] *Time and tide, by Weare and Tyne. Twenty-five letters to a working man of Sunderland (Thomas Dixon) on the laws of work.* 1867.

[2] *The ethics of the dust: ten lectures to little housewives in the elements of crystallisation* 1866.

[3] *Sesame and lilies, two lectures delivered at Manchester in 1864 . . . 1. Of kings' treasuries. 2. Of queens' gardens* 1865.

well as beauty: the chapter on serpents entitled *Living Waves.* Perhaps you have never observed how beautiful the motion of a snake can be: Ruskin will teach you how to observe it. And if you like that, you will search his pages through for other wonderful things and find them. He will teach you new ideas about the beauty of clouds, the beauty of trees, the beauty of flowing water, and the beauty of birds and other living creatures.

Matthew Arnold

Froude and Ruskin, two greatest masters of Victorian English, have now been noticed. We can summarize the values of the rest more briefly. Of Matthew Arnold[1] you all know something; and I have lectured about him so often that I will not attempt it now. Besides his faculties of poet and prose-writer, his place as a critic deserves consideration. If you read his different volumes of essays now, you read them chiefly for the English; and perhaps you do not find them nearly so interesting as the essays of Macaulay. They are not. But Matthew Arnold was very important to Victorian literature, not by what he produced so much as by what he taught. His essays will be probably forgotten in another generation; we have got far beyond them to-day. And they will never live by their style as Macaulay's essays must do. But Matthew Arnold's essays really laid the foundation of the new English criticism,—criticism based upon the methods of Sainte-Beuve. It is for this reason that you should give Matthew Arnold particular attention. He first taught English scholars how to write and think in new ways; and he did it partly by setting examples, but much more by showing those scholars how stupid and incapable English criticism was, compared with French criticism.

[1] (1822-1888).

ADDINGTON SYMONDS

Two writers with considerable pretentions to fine style were John Addington Symonds[1] and Walter Pater. Both were university scholars; both were essayists and historians; both died young, and did not fulfil the whole promise of their abilities. Symonds, the son of a Bristol doctor, whose wealth was chiefly accumulated by his successful treatment of the disease of consumption, inherited considerable money. But he also inherited the very disease against which his father had fought. As a consequence he had to pass the latter part of his life high up in the mountains of Switzerland,—a sensitive, delicate, but strangely energetic man, working up to the very hour of his death. He produced the best history of the Renaissance[2] which exists—that is, as a general history of the whole period covered; perhaps in the matter of special periods some French essayists and historians have surpassed him. The chief fault with this great work was prolixity; but it was probably a fault of youth. Symonds wrote a very poetical style; and he studied effects of style so much that he seems to have wasted space very often merely for the sake of a few fine sentences. However, this fault lessened as time went on; and you will find the improvement very marked in his later essays. The best examples of his decorative style are in the two volumes of studies upon *The Greek Poets;*[3] and the finest pages of the descriptive writing in *The Greek Poets* is the conclusion of the essay upon Sappho. There are very fine essays also in the three volumes of essays entitled *Studies in Southern Europe.*[4] Symonds also produced several volumes of poetry. His original verse, though correct, is never great—mostly consisting of melancholy sonnets. But his little book entitled *Wine, Women, and Song*[5] — a treatise upon the old student songs of the middle ages with

[1] (1840-1893).
[2] *Renaissance in Italy* 1875-86.
[3] *Studies of the Greek poets* 1873-76.
[4] *Sketches and studies in Italy and Greece* 1898 (New edn of *Sketches in Italy and Greece, Sketches and studies in Italy,* and *Italian byways.*)
[5] *Wine, women, and song: medieval Latin students' songs now first translated into English verse, with an essay, by J. A. S.* 1884.

translations from the Latin—is very valuable and must be considered a literary success.

As an essayist Symonds is far superior to Matthew Arnold: indeed he has no Victorian superior except Froude; and he was a greater scholar than Froude, and a scholar in extraordinary directions. You should remember, also, that like Froude he was an object of attack for religious prejudices of the most violent kind. Every Roman Catholic will tell you that his history of the Renaissance is everything that a history should not be; but this is simply because of his famous chapter on Jesuit education, and on the Catholic reaction in Italy. He told the truth boldly as he believed and dared the consequences. But Symonds was rich and liked solitude and did not care in the least whether his books sold well or not. He wrote from the love of the subject, never for money; and his work will last. I mention these matters in order that you may not suffer yourselves to be prejudiced against him by any shallow criticism. But you will find the best of his books as to style, and as to charm of the subject, in his Southern study. Next to Ruskin he was the most ornamental writer of the period; and though he never equalled Ruskin's best pages, he compares very favourably even with Ruskin, in regard to the history of art in Italy, if we leave out of the question the æsthetic theories in uttering which Ruskin stood entirely alone like a great discoverer.

Walter Pater

As Symonds represented the florid style of essay, Walter Pater[1] represented the severe style. At one time it was thought that this young scholar would prove the greatest stylist of the century. But he never did. He died too young, and never completely formed his style. It has the great fault of showing the effort that it cost. It is not like the style of Froude, which never shows effort. But it has merits also—curious merits.

[1] Walter Horatio Pater (1839-1894).

Pater's models were classic, of course, for the most part; but some of them were French. What he especially studied in the French writers was the use of the "*mot de lumière*"—"word of light," or "illuminating word." This means generally the use of an old word or very common word in an entirely new relation. I do not know how to explain it otherwise than by examples. Pater was the first, I believe, to use the extraordinary phrase "pathetic pleasures." He was speaking of the pleasures of the miserably poor when he used that phrase. You know that "pathetic" means "causing sadness and pity." We talk of a pathetic poem, meaning a poem that brings tears to the eye. "Pathetic pleasures" would mean pleasures of such a kind that when we see poor people made happy by them, the sight of such happiness in small things makes us sad, fills us with pity and compassion. I think you know the feeling. Sometimes if you go far away, into a very poor little village, where there are no toy-shops or money to buy a toy, you will find the children amusing themselves with funny little toys invented by themselves, or clumsily made by their parents. And the sight of such little toys would at once make you smile and make you feel sorry — make you wish to give the children something better. You might call such toys "pathetic toys"; and the word pathetic would then become a *mot de lumière* — exactly expressing the feeling given by the sight of the toys.

That was Pater's special characteristics — the use of the "illuminating words." But otherwise his style was severe enough, except as regards rhythm. It was a rule with him that every sentence should have its regular rise and fall, like a wave. But he used very few adjectives, and scarcely any strange words. He came very near to producing a new classical style; but he did not quite succeed. His works include a philosophical novel of the 3rd century entitled *Marius the Epicurean*[1] — thought by some to be his best work; a volume of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*[2] (not so brilliant as

[1] *Marius the Epicurean: his sensations and ideas.* 2 vols. 1885.
[2] 1873.

the studies of Symonds, but quite different, and equally valuable in a particular way) and several volumes of essays, the best of which, perhaps, is *Appreciations.*[1] *Imaginary Portraits*[2] also has its admirers. I do not know that I can recommend Pater strongly to you as an essayist: other men have treated the same subject better; and his style is not good to study without a guide. Whether you like *Marius* will depend very much upon your liking for neo-Platonism and certain classic philosophies. But the *Studies of the Renaissance* you can read with profit: it will help you considerably to appreciate the larger work of Symonds on the same subject.

Tyndall and Huxley

And now we come to science. Literature in English science is also represented by two entirely different styles. One classic and severe; one romantic and ornamental. Already we have mentioned that we can scarcely mention the greatest names,—the very greatest names in intimate relation to literature. No man has written stronger and clearer English than Mr. Spencer; but I cannot call Mr. Spencer exactly a representative of style —though he has written a fine essay on the subject of style. Most of his work treats of subjects demanding the use of Greek and Latin poly-syllables: I might call it technical work, technical English. Nor is Darwin, who changed the whole thought of Europe, exactly a literary figure. Style is chiefly represented by Huxley and Tyndall. Tyndall[3] who wrote many books and delivered many lectures on scientific subjects, attempted to appeal to the general reader by addressing him almost in the manner of Ruskin. His prose is often highly poetical; and his enemies declared that such a style was totally unsuited to the subject. But it had merit; and you will find good examples of it in the volumes entitled *Forms of Water.*[4] It was not a very

[1] *Appreciations. With an essay on style* 1889.
[2] 1887.
[3] John Tyndall (1820-1893).
[4] *The forms of water in clouds, rivers, ice and glaciers* 1872.

great style; but it was the most romantic style used by any professinal man of science. Professor Huxley,[1] on the other hand, used the very plainest of English, simplest English ever used by a man of science. About the most difficult subject he talked to people in about the same simple way that a teacher in a primary school would talk to little children; and he did miracles of teaching by that way. He said that no man was fit to be a physiologist or a geologist or a paleontologist or a psychologist who could not explain, in simple English, any fact of his special science even to an uneducated person. Thus he was the most successful of all men who ever lived in writing manuals for students; and his books on physiography and upon physiology were miracles of simple style. I am sorry to say that the English of these has been quite spoiled by stupid editors who revised them a few years ago on account of discoveries made after Huxley's death. But there was nobody to spoil the style of the nine volumes of essays which he wrote, now issued in the beautiful Eversley edition. These include essays on almost every scientific subject as well as a variety of polemic argument—written in answer to religious attacks made upon him (I think you know that religious people greatly atoned for their opposition at a later day by giving him burial with great honour in Westminster Abbey). Articles of controversy need not interest you; but almost any of the essays on science ought to interest you very much and teach you a great deal at the same time. Remember that these nine volumes only represent Huxley's addresses to the general public. When as President of the British Association, or as President of other scientific bodies he was addressing an audience of specialists then he could be quite as technical as anybody else. The purely scientific essays represent another series of larger volumes; but these belong to learning, not to literature. He is related to literature by the delightful English of the essays. His model was Hobbes —the English philosopher of the Restoration. But Huxley was a great scholar, even in the matter of the dead languages; and and he drew his power from a variety of sources.

[1] Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895).

We now come to the literature of criticism. What vast improvement there has here been I have already told you; and I have already explained that this improvement was chiefly due to French influence,—to the new idea of criticism expounded by Sainte-Beuve, and first imitated imperfectly by Matthew Arnold. But Matthew Arnold did not possess those qualities, either of culture or of sympathy, required for real criticism of the catholic kind. In our own time, however, a school of criticism has come into existence,—a school of so high a class that the old fashioned criticism has been practically killed—except in newspapers. To be a critic of literature to-day, one must be both a very learned man and a very remarkable man.

As you might suppose, the great critics are few,—even in a country where the universities are supposed to turn out every year between four and five thousand scholars. In fact, I am going to cite to you only three names. Of course there are numbers of specialists,—very great specialists: men whose authority upon some one particular subject is unquestioned. But these men remain outside of the subject proper. When I speak of a great critic in the general sense, I mean a man capable of taking up any new literary work, estimating its merits justly, explaining them satisfactorily, tracing the influences that produced them back to original sources, and interpreting to us exactly the relation between the history and the character of the writer, and the history and the character of the book. The man who can do this must be a very great reader, a very good scholar, and a master of several European tongues. It is not enough to know Greek and Latin and English; and to have great insight to criticize everything of merit in the classcis and in English, one must also know French, German, and Italian, and something of the literatures of those languages. One must also be sympathetic, tolerant, and free from all prejudices of religion or of class. You cannot expect to find many persons with such abilities and qualifications; and, as I said, I am going to cite only three names,—those of Professors Saintsbury, Gosse, and Dowden. Of these professional critics the first is Professor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh;

the second holds the same position at Cambridge; and the third at Dublin University. All of these men have obtained high distinctions from other universities besides their own, both in England and out of it; and two of them are, even in France, recognized as great authorities upon French literature. You can always, or very nearly always, fully accept the judgments of these men about any book. You will find them commonly in accord—though, as you should expect, each may find different reasons for praise or blame. And so far as English literature is concerned (I am not so sure about French) I strongly advise you not to seek appreciation or condemnation of a book from any other quarter. Find first what these men have thought. After that, read whatever you please in the way of criticism; and you are not likely to be misled.

SAINTSBURY

The first of these professional critics, George Saintsbury,[1] has been a prodigious worker. He has brought into existence whole libraries of literary history and criticism, both on English and French subjects. Perhaps for the reason that he had worked so hard, and is still working quite as hard, his method leaves much to be desired in point of style. He does not write like an artist—probably never found time to amuse himself with beautiful English; and it must be confessed that his style, crammed with parenthetical sentences, wheel within wheel, is often very provoking and difficult to read. He is the least artistic, and the least interesting of the three. Nevertheless he is perhaps the most accurate and fair. It is almost impossible to find a judgment in which he has been at fault—though he has probably made several thousands, and, as an editor of series, tens of thousands. You can find some traces of a tendency to conservatism in his work; for example, in his belief, so often expressed, that rhythmical effects in prose become

[1] George Edward Bateman Saintsbury (1845-1933).

illegitimate in the same proportion that they resemble rhythmical effects in verse. But even this kind of conservatism never caused him to make a false estimate in regard to general method of an author. Again, he happens to be the only critic of the three, who shows no sympathy with scientific thought as expressed in the philosophy of evolution. Here again you will sometimes perceive in him a tendency to sneer, and an inclination to belittle a whole class of modern thinkers. But, to his credit, be it observed, that when he comes to judge the books of these thinkers as literature, he is nearly always right. You can safely trust him. A word now about his work. You are aware, I think, that he is the author of a history of Elizabethan literature,[1] of 19th century literature,[2] and of French literature from the beginning even to the present time.[3] This history of French literature is admirably supplemented by a volume of selections from all the great French writers and poets, commencing with Villon and brought up to the latest romantic period.[4] He has also given us several volumes of essays—the last of which *Corrected Impressions*[5] well shows the sincerity of the man who is not afraid to revise in age the judgment of his youth. Besides the work already mentioned, representing about eight volumes, we have a history of English literature, in one volume, for the use of students;[6] the best thing of its kind in existence. Yet all these represent little of his work as an editor. For a number of years past he has been engaged in producing what is at present the greatest history of literature in any modern language. Before his time the great authority upon comparative European literature was Hallam. Hallam did about as much as any man could have attempted in the early part of the 19th century; he studied the whole range of European literature, during several centuries, much after the fashion that Gibbon studied history. But he really tried to do what was beyond the power of mortal man—the subject was

[1] *A history of Elizabethan literature* 1887.
[2] *A history of nineteenth century literature* 1896.
[3] *A short history of French literature* 1882.
[4] *Specimens of French literature from Villon to Hugo* 2nd edn 1892.
[5] *Corrected impressions: essays on Victorian writers* 1895.
[6] *A short history of English literature* 1898.

too vast. Saintsbury knew this; and knew that a comparative history of European literature could only be successfully undertaken by a score of people working under a single direction. He chose the men, began the work, has carried it nearly to completion; and his great history, entitled *Periods of European Literature*, will not only render Hallam altogether obsolete, but will be almost impossible to supersede. Hereafter, it is probable that all histories of national literature must be the work of a coterie of specialists. The expansion of the field has made such work too large for the achievement of one man. But, you must remember that the study of literature by the student must be correspondingly changed. In the future it will not be enough for him merely to know the value of a particular book; he must know the relation of that book to all books of the same class; and he must study the movement of literature as a series of great waves passing over the sea of European intellectual life.

Gosse

I do not say that Mr. Saintsbury is pleasant to read; though he is very necessary to read. He does not try to be pleasant, but to be exact. It is quite different in the case of Professor Edmund Gosse.[1] Mr. Gosse probably equal to Mr. Saintsbury as a scholar, happens to be something which Mr. Saintsbury is not, a poet. Mr. Saintsbury can scarcely be said to have a particular style; Mr. Gosse is probably the greatest living master of English style. To read him is to read the most delicate and beautiful English which the 19th century produced since the days of Ruskin. For we must compare the romantic only with the romantic; and Mr. Gosse is a master of romantic style. You will not find this quality of style so marked in his *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*.[2] It was necessary that this volume should have been very compactly written; and he wrote

[1] Sir Edmund William Gosse (1849-1928).
[2] 1889.

it in almost the same precise method as that of Saintsbury. But in his volumes of essays and in his beautiful *Modern English Literature*,[1] you will find poetry in prose—poetry of the rhythmical and imaginative form. The volumes of his essays which I should particularly recommend you to read are *Gossip in a Library*,[2] *Seventeenth Century Studies*,[3] *Questions at Issue*,[4] *Northern Studies*,[5] and *Critical Kit-Kats*.[6] These volumes of essays cover a great variety of subjects—Elizabethan and 17th century books; Scandinavian literature (on which Mr. Gosse is an authority); modern poetry and American literature; modern essayists and novelists; living celebrities, such as Rudyard Kipling and Mr. Meredith. Mr. Gosse, unlike his brother critics, is not afraid to express an opinion about living writers. He is now, in a sort, the literary king of his time,—the one English man, who by word can make a literary reputation. It is the ambition of all literary aspirants to get noticed by Mr. Gosse. Naturally only a few are thus gratified; but we may say that no man has used greater literary influence in a more generous way than Mr. Gosse, or in a more impartial way. It matters nothing to him what evil is spoken about a young writer, or about his life, or about his work, when he comes to judge the work. If there be beauty there and strength, he will say so; and that ends the matter. Perhaps really it requires a poet and a great stylist to do these generous things—that is, a man in whom the sense of literary beauty is very great. The charm of his essays is almost independent of the subject. I mean, that even if you have not read the books that he is talking about, his essays will make you want to read them. Now the most useful of all guides for a literary student with a taste for letters, is the man who will tell him what to read,—what will amuse him, what will delight him, what will give him the pleasure of mystery and the pleasure of fear. Better than any one else Mr. Gosse does this. Mr. Saintsbury will teach you how to form accurate judgment; but he will not teach you how to love the book and the man that wrote it. Mr. Gosse will do that; and so great is the variety of his essays, that no matter

[1] 1897. [2] 1891. [3] 1883. [4] 1893. [5] 1879. [6] 1886.

what your tastes may be, you are almost certain to find something there that will gratify them. Of Mr. Gosse as a poet, I cannot speak so enthusiastically. He has written a number of volumes of poetry; *In Russet and Silver*,[1] *New Poems*,[2] and *Firdausi in Exile*[3] are the best known; and there are others. Mr. Gosse's poetry is always good, always scholarly; but he does not pretend to be a great poet, or even a professional poet; and his poetry represents for the most part only studies in form. His mastery in form is unquestioned; but that is all—and his value to you should be that of a great critic and a matchless essayist. I doubt whether, of essays, any essays better than those of Mr. Gosse have been produced in the 19th century. It is probable that he will shortly undertake a history of English literature that will be far superior to anything ever attempted before. The work will probably be accomplished by forty or fifty scholars working under his direction; and I am sorry to say that it will necessarily be rather expensive.

Dowden

Professor Dowden[4] comes very close to Professor Gosse as a writer, but not quite. Some of his books, I think, you know. He has produced several volumes of essays,—on English, German and French subjects; and he is the author of a famous *Life of Shelley*[5]—more famous perhaps, because of the manner in which it was sharply criticized by Matthew Arnold in one of his celebrated essays. Mr. Dowden was a young man at the time when he published his *Life of Shelley;* and perhaps to-day he would not write the book in exactly the same way. But in spite of Matthew Arnold, that book remains the standard biography and there is no fault to be found with its accuracy. Mr. Dowden is not so frequently an essay writer as Mr. Gosse; but when he does attempt an essay, he can be almost equally

[1] 1894. [2] 1879. [3] 1885. [4] Edward Dowden (1843-1913).
[5] 1886.

charming and equally instructive. If you will take one of the volumes entitled *Studies in Literature*,[1] you will find how very educating an effect the reading of any one of them will have. It is as if the writer gave us new eyes to see with; and, in the matter of appreciation, this is exactly what a great critic should do. Here we may close our course of English literature,—the great general facts having all been touched upon. Nothing remains but to present a little summary of 19th century literary history, and that we shall do the next day.

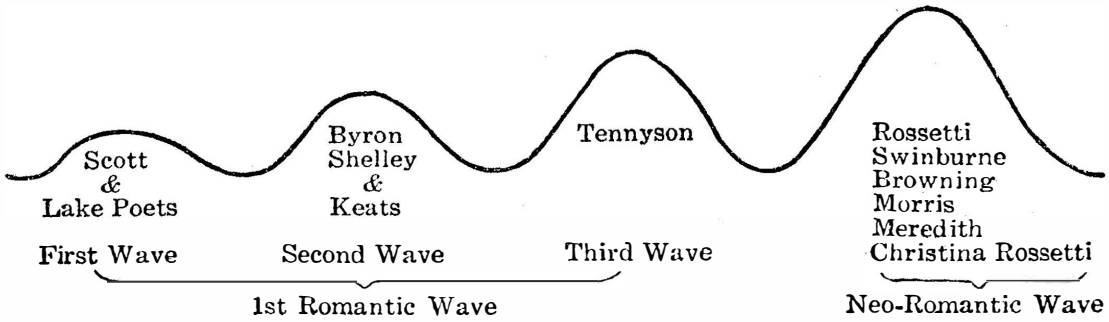
SUMMARY

Let us now very briefly review the general history of 19th century literature.

First of all, it is best to remember that this whole century especially represents the period of "Romantic Triumph," as it has been called,—that is to say, the complete breaking down of the old classic rules, ideas, and restrictions, both in poetry and in prose.

The second thing to remember is that it can be conveniently divided into two periods—pre-Victorian and Victorian,—the Victorian period representing considerably more than the latter half of the century: we might say more than sixty years.

The undulations of the movement are more noticeable in poetry than in prose—at least they are more easily memorized.



The first wave of romantic feeling—fresh but weak—is represented by the names of Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge,

[1] *Studies in literature 1789-1877* 1878.

and Southey—the last three of whom have been usually called the Lake Poets. The second was stronger by far,—the wave which broke down the last classical barriers was impelled by Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The third, and the largest wave of all, can be sufficiently indicated by a single name—that of Tennyson. When Tennyson appeared, to perfect everything, the time of struggle was passed. But at the name of Tennyson there comes a long pause. He represented the period of fruition,—the great peace after the storm. And we may say that the first romantic epoch ends with him. But one more wave was to come — and the larger one — the neo-romantic wave, represented by the names of Rossetti, Swinburne, Browning, Morris, Meredith, and Christina Rossetti. This new romantic movement really revived mediæval romance, and enriched English poetry with foreign material before unknown. Its effect has only recently begun to die away.

So you could represent the changes in English poetry by one undulating line representing four waves—the third a little larger than the other preceding two. Nevertheless the students should be able to remember some of the names that represent exceptions to the general current—such as those of Matthew Arnold and of Robert Bridges. Here were two men, who, in the most romantic time, still clung to certain classical ideas, and did not allow themselves to be swept away with the feeling of the age.

In prose, as I said, the change was less marked. But you can easily remember that prose obtained its highest perfection in two distinct forms — a romantic form, and a very simple form, having the severity of classic style without classic convention. Of romantic writers pure and simple—innovators in style—the most remarkable was Carlyle; the most poetically romantic was Ruskin. But the best way to remember would be for you to drop the distinctions of classic and romantic in regard to prose; and to substitute for them "ornate style" and "plain style." Even Macaulay, with his classic tendencies, would have to be put among the writers of "ornate" prose. Indeed the only very great writers of "plain" prose worth re-

membering are Froude and Pater; Pater showing tendencies occasionally to romantic directions.

So you will remember without difficulty that, just as in poetry there are two names representing conservatism, there are two names in prose representing conservatism. But these forms of conservatism were not at all rigid—they rejected ornament only for the purpose of obtaining greater strength.

Of course you should remember that the 19th century has been the great period of fiction,—that every kind of novel was brought to perfection before the last twenty-five years of the Queen's reign. If possible, try to memorize such names as those of Thackeray, Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Anthony Trollope, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans); — for each of these gave us a new form of novel. Out of ten thousand novels since written, there are scarcely any which does not represent some combination of the methods first introduced by these. I have not dwelt upon Scott, who belongs to both centuries; but you should remember to identify Scott with the growth of English historical romance.

As for history, remember that this is not a historical class; it is a literary class, and our lectures regarding historians deal with them only in relation to literature. In literature remember the histories of Macaulay, of Carlyle, and of Froude. These are the three great and monumental figures in the true literature of history. Each one of them discovered a new way of writing history; and you ought to be able to state something about the respective methods of all.

There are men too, who belong to several departments of literature, not only to one; and you ought to be able to think about them in their various aspects. For example, you have Kingsley as a novelist, or at least as a writer of romance; you have Kingsley as a writer of delightful books for children; and you have Kingsley as a poet and a song writer. Again you have Symonds the historian; Symonds the essayist; and Symonds the translator and poet. Figures like these ought not to be allowed to fade from memory.

And if possible, try to keep in mind one general fact in re-

gard to the division of English fiction into *Romance* and *Novel.* You must remember that the romance and the novel are not the same thing, and must not be classed together. The first great romance of the century was the work of Scott; the last that of Stevenson. That is not hard to remember. The difficulty will meet you only when you are asked questions about writers who produced both forms: Bulwer-Lytton, for instance. Was he greater as a romance writer or as a novelist? Questions like these I might ask at the examination.

Lastly, do not omit from your mental map of the 19th century literature the action of science upon the minds of men. At no time in the whole history of literature has the mental transformation been so sudden or so large. If possible, try to remember what writers, in poetry or in fiction, especially represent the new idea.

NOTES
ON
AMERICAN LITERATURE

NOTES ON AMERICAN LITERATURE

IN speaking to you on the subject of American literature, I propose especially to treat of those authors whose acquaintance would be, in my opinion, of literary value to you. A very large part of what is called American literature could not be of much benefit to you. Again I propose to speak of work which appeals rather to the imagination than to the intellect, because I am convinced that, in the study of literature in Japan, it is especially the imaginative part of literature which has been neglected (so far as the foreign study is concerned); and I think that the imaginative part of literature is not only important, but that it is the only part of a foreign literature which can be of real benefit to you. Studies of style, of methods, of constructions—these can scarcely be of very much use, unless indeed you hope to write works of merit in another language than your own. In all Western countries—I suppose in Eastern countries too—the natural course of literary study begins with the cultivation of a child's imagination. The child reads stories, fairy tales, everything of that kind; and his fancy is nourished and caressed by home teaching, which is the best of all teachings just because it is the most sympathetic. Unfortunately it can last but a short time;—thereafter the boy plunges into the school world of matter-of-fact study, and is obliged to stop dreaming. But in Western schools some attention is always given to imaginative work, and private studies of fiction and poetry are warmly recommended and encouraged. I presume that this rule holds good in the case of Japanese studies, but it has not held good in the case of foreign fiction and foreign imaginative literature of any sort. One reason, I believe, may have been the dearth of foreign books, but I do not think that this dearth would explain the indifference with which foreign imaginative work is generally regarded by Japa-

nese students throughout the country. Sometimes I have suspected that there is a kind of pride, intellectual pride in the way. I have been often told by young men of talent that they want to read *serious* things—history, biography, science, etc. They plainly hinted that they supposed imaginative literature unworthy of them. This seems to be so serious a mistake, that I think it well to say a few words about it. I shall begin by saying that the literary value of the *serious* works which the student is willing to read depends upon its relation to exactly that kind of literature which he is disinclined to read. The best histories, with few exceptions, are those which depend upon the imaginative faculty; the best biographies are those which have the interest of a novel. And the best works of science are the books which not only appeal directly to the imaginative faculty, but which force it to expand itself. I think that every single great name in Western fiction is the name of a man who gave the utmost attention to imaginative literature from the time of his childhood. The dramatists, the poets, the essayists of France and Germany, England and Italy, have all been great devourers of fiction, and learned their art to a very great extent from fiction. But let us take some serious names for illustration. Macaulay was certainly a very serious man—probably the most solidly practical Englishman of his time, and a mighty influence in literature. Nobody reads *The Arabian Nights* more often or to better purpose than did this terribly serious Lord Macaulay; and it was he that first taught to Englishmen the immense value of the Oriental tales for purposes of illustration and of symbolism. He was also a constant reader of fiction of his time. Ruskin has been all his life a reader of novels and stories; and his style owes much of its beauty to the cultivation of his fancy by such studies. The grim Carlyle was also a great reader of such books. There is not a noteworthy author of the Victorian period—not even the poet Tennyson—who has not been a constant reader of novels in many languages. Having stated these facts, merely by way of suggestion,—allow me to say that I believe it impossible to properly study a foreign literature by reading only the serious part

of it. Any attempt to do so must be exactly like the attempt to learn a language by means of a grammar. I do not deny that there have been born two or three men able to learn languages merely by a grammar;—there is a story of one gifted Italian who learned a language entirely by the help of a dictionary. But these were extraordinary cases of genius in faculty, and these were not creative minds. The power to create is the special power which the study of literature should cultivate, and the power to create can scarcely be developed without a love for both poetry and fiction. Of course making these remarks, I suppose that the truths they contain are recognized in studies of Japanese literature. But it is highly important that they should also be recognized in the study of foreign literatures. Every literature in the world is developed by influences from outside of itself. Left to itself a literature will die for want of food. English literature has lived only through the inspiration obtained from all the other literatures of the world made accessible to it. And it is certain that if a great movement in creative work again takes place in Japan, it must get its inspiration from outside sources. These sources are extraordinarily rich; but I believe that very little attention has yet been paid to them. The serious part of foreign literature has indeed been studied zealously; but I am of opinion that this part is of no more use by itself than a body without a heart. The heart of all literature is its imaginative power. Now as this term is brief, in taking up the next subject, I shall deal only with the heart of it—with its poetry and with its fiction.

* * *

American literature really exists in a very small quantity. An immense deal of printed matter that Americans have called literature would not now be so called even by themselves. About twenty-five or thirty names would include all the writers of real importance; and even out of these we should have to make a careful selection for the purpose of an effective lecture. One of the greatest of modern English critics indeed has declared that an American literature does not exist,—that it could

be represented by two or three names. He takes, however, a very high standard by which to measure American literature: if we accept American literature as a second or third class matter, the range ought to extend far beyond two or three names. On the other hand, if we look to America for classics comparable with the greatest of English literature, it is true that we find almost nothing. Poetry is a test;—we can measure the power and value of a literature best by its poetry—for poetry is the highest form of literary expression. And America has produced very little poetry above the third class and none at all of the first class—if we except a few lyrics of singular beauty. Nothing like an epic poetry is offered by American literature with the sole exception of Longfellow's[1] *Hiawatha*[2]—written in a measure imitated from the much greater Finnish epic, *The Kalevala*. *Evangeline*[3] is indeed a poem of great beauty, though not of the epical kind; but it fails to reach the high standard by reason of the imperfect character of the measure in which it is written. Thus Longfellow, beyond all question the greatest American poet, ranks at his best scarcely above what English critics would call the third class. Bryant,[4] a pale shadow of 18th century literature, has given us a few lines of almost perfect verse in the poem *Thanatopsis*[5] and some other pieces; but his good work is so small in quantity that he can hardly be said to have done more than attempt to maintain a tradition. It is not until we count the lyrists that we find anything worthy of the highest admiration; and even American lyrical poetry is curiously light and thin. Whittier[7] would take a very high place here; yet Whittier managed well only the very simplest forms of verse,—the distich, as in *Maud Muller*,[7] and the quatrain in the multitude of his emotional short pieces. In other words he excelled only in the very easiest ballad-measures; and the beauty of the work is in simple feeling rather

[1] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882).
[2] *The song of Hiawatha* . . . Boston, 1855; London, 1855; Leipzig, 1856.
[3] *Evangeline, a tale of Acadie* . . . Boston, 1847; London, 1848; Hamburg, 1870.
[4] William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).
[5] *Thanatopsis, a poem* 1874.
[6] John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892).
[7] *Maud Muller . . . With illustrations by W. J. Hennessy.* Boston, 1867, 1872.

than in literary craftsmanship. There is indeed, as Professor Gosse has said, but one American poet who shows a really noteworthy mastery of verse; and that one poet is Edgar Poe.[1] Yet Poe wrote very little. To publish his poems in a separate volume it is necessary to print them in very large type and on very thick paper in order to make a book of reasonable size. But it must be confessed that the power of this small cluster of verses is so great that almost every poet, English or American, during the latter half of the 19th century, has been affected by it. Tennyson shows its influence; and so do other great Victorian poets. Leaving Poe aside, first-class American poetry can scarcely be said to exist. What does exist is a good deal of charming lyrical poetry of the second and third class. It is very much scattered, and is the work of a multitude of writers of varying degrees of merit. No one single volume of such poetry would show a general second-class level, but here and there in a mass of work, we can discover one or two jewels. It is now proposed to attempt an anthology of American poetry; the editor being Stedman.[2] When this volume appears, I believe that the result will be surprisingly interesting. From hundreds of sources, choice verses are to be collected, representing hundreds of small names, but very few well-known names. There is going on in America a sort of poetical incubation which promises well; but which will scarcely produce anything great for two generations to come. Of the light dainty verse, there is no lack; and there is in it a particular delicate quality distinguishing it from English verse. To define this quality would be very difficult: it is something to be felt rather than explained;—I can only say that it seems to depend upon a particular way of thinking which shows itself in philosophical suggestion as well as in exquisite choice of words. One characteristic poem, *Atalanta's Race,* I cited for you in a previous lecture. It is very beautiful. Let me now cite one or two other examples of the modern kind of light verse. The other day one of my students gave me a little book of Japanese poems on

[1] Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).

[2] *An American anthology 1787-1899: selections illustrating the editor's critical review of American poetry in the 19th century. Edited by E. C. Stedman* 1900.

the subject of frogs. The treatment of the same subject by a recent American writer may interest you.

TO A TOAD

Blue dusk, that brings the dewy hours,
Brings thee, of graceless form in sooth;
Dark stumbler at the roots of flowers,—
Flaccid, inert, uncouth.

Right ill can human wonder guess
Thy meaning or thy mission here,—
Grey lumps of mottled clamminess,
With that preposterous leer.

But when I see thy dull bulk where
Luxurious roses bend and turn,
Or some slim lily lifts to air
Her frail and fragrant urn,—

Of these, among the garden ways,
So grim a watcher dost thou seem,
That I, with meditative gaze,
Look down on thee, and dream,

Of thick-lipped slaves with ebon skin,
That squat in hideous dumb repose,
And guard the drowsy ladies in
Their still seraglios.

Edgar Fawcett.[1]

Toads and sometimes a large kind of frog are sometimes kept in gardens to protect the flowers from insects; contrast between the ugliness of the toad and the beauty of the flowers suggested to the poet the fancy of a black eunuch guarding the women of a Persian or Turkish harem. But the charm of the thing is altogether in the beautiful use of adjectives, culled with a skill almost equal to that of the best French poet. Now let us look at another little poem displaying the same kind of skill—a poem on the sea, compared to the monster Caliban in

[1] (1847-1904).

Shakespeare's play of *The Tempest.* Short as it is, I take this poem to be the very best thing that the author ever wrote; but, of course, it is only a very light poem.

MARSH SONG—AT SUNSET

Over the monstrous shambling sea,
    Over the Caliban sea,
Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest:
Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West,—
    Thy Prospero I'll be.

Over the humped and fishy sea,
    Over the Caliban sea
O cloud in the West, like a thought in the heart
Of pardon, loose thy wing, and start,
    And do a grace for me.

Over the huge and huddling sea,
    Over the Caliban sea,
Bring hither my brother Antonio,—Man,—
My injurer: night breaks the ban:
    Brother, I pardon thee.

Sidney Lanier.[1]

Here some of the verse is certainly defective but the choice of adjectives is almost magical; and the beauty of the composition is the grotesque art of the first line of the three stanzas. Those three lines prove that the writer might have become one of the very best of poets if he had not died quite young, after years of sickness and disappointment. He was the author of a new system for the teaching of poetical composition to students, —he proposed to teach measure by music, instead of the old and confused rules of prosody. And his book, *The Science of English Verse,*[2] is a very curious and valuable work.

Well, poetry of this kind swarms in America; there are countless minor voices, like a chirping of crickets to be heard at all times; and occasionally we catch a wonderfully sweet note. Therefore although I have not spoken much in praise of

[1] (1842-1881). [2] 1880.

American poetry, I should not like to think that it is not worth examining. On the contrary, I believe that a good American anthology would be of immense value to the students because of the world of light, graceful, pretty fancies which it would contain and because of many beautiful suggestions which it would make to you of the thoughts belonging only to the philosophy of the 19th century. But until such an anthology shall have been published you cannot very well attempt to study American poetry as a distinct art; for you would have to search through hundreds of books to find a few beautiful pieces.

It is otherwise with American prose. American prose has had its influence upon English prose; and if the writers are few, it must be confessed that their power has been great. Irving,[1] for example, has a place in English literature of the very highest rank; indeed some English critics insist upon claiming him as an English writer. And most of his books first appeared in London. It was Sir Walter Scott who introduced him to the great English publisher Murray; and Murray paid him prices for his work such as few writers of to-day could hope to obtain. He was paid four hundred pounds for *The Sketch Book*,[2] one thousand guineas for *Bracebridge Hall*,[3] fifteen hundred pounds for *Tales of a Traveller*,[4] three thousand guineas for his *Life of Columbus*[5] and two thousand pounds for *The Conquest of Granada*.[6] I need not tell you very much about him; for all of you have read at least the story of *Rip Van Winkle* and other things from his pen. But I doubt whether the choice made by Japanese students of Irving's prose has been the best possible. Everybody has read *The Sketch Book;* but I doubt if many have read *Tales of a Traveller* or *Wolfert's Roost*,[7] or that wonderful collection of magical tales entitled *Tales of the Alhambra*[8] which has all the charm of *The Arabian*

[1] Washington Irving (1783-1859).
[2] *The sketch book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* [7 nos.] 1819-20.
[3] *Bracebridge Hall; or, the humorists, by Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* 2 vols. 1822.
[4] *Tales of a traveller. By Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* [4 parts] Philadelphia, 1824.
[5] *A history of the life and voyages of Christopher Columbus.* 3 vols. 1828.
[6] *A chronicle of the conquest of Granada. By Fray Antonio Agapida.* 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1829.
[7] *Wolfert's roost and other papers, now first collected . . .* 1855.
[8] *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards. . . .* 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1832.

Nights, although based upon real Spanish and Moorish legends. Without going further into any view of Irving, I want to call your attention especially to one story. Perhaps you do not know that *Rip Van Winkle* is not the most wonderful story of this kind that Irving wrote. There is another, much more like the story of "*Urashima*" than *Rip Van Winkle* is; and in spite of all the critics, and of popular judgment, I hold it to be the best of all Irving's short stories. It is founded upon a Portuguese legend and it is called *The Adelantado of the Seven Cities; or the Phantom Island.* I am sure that, if you know not yet, you will agree with me after having read it that it bears a very strong resemblance to the story of "*Urashima.*" I do not say anything here about Irving's histories — most of which have become superseded in our own time; the history of *The Conquest of Spain*, for example, by the wonderful work of Dozy and Engelman; the life of *Mahomet* by the much greater *Life of Mahomet* which we owe to Sir William Muir; and the *Life of Columbus*, superseded by the works of Fiske and Winsor. The main value of Irving for the student of English literature is altogether in his short stories.

Irving has already become a classic which *must* be read; and for many years to come a perusal of his work must be considered a necessary part of literary education. Therefore there is no doubt about the immense importance of the American name in the literature of the English speaking world. Next to Irving in importance, if not equally important, is Poe. Poe is altogether a unique figure in literature and demands special and careful attention.

Early in the century there was a young student at Baltimore studying law. His name was David Poe. He was fond of the theatre. One evening at the theatre he saw a beautiful young actress, Elizabeth Arnold, upon the stage, who had just come from England. The student at once sought and obtained an introduction to her; and the two fell desperately in love with each other. They married. But David Poe was too honourable a man to live at his wife's expense; and nevertheless he could not support her and continue his studies for the law. He re-

solved to abandon the law and to become an actor. He went on the stage, and acted with his wife. They were both very handsome and excellent actors. They travelled about the country from one town to another. And in Richmond, Virginia, their first child was born,—Edgar Allan Poe. What is very strange is that the father and the mother died within a few weeks of each other, not very long after. A kind merchant of Richmond named Allan adopted the orphan, sent him to England to be educated and afterwards sent him to the University of Virginia. Poe proved to be the cleverest student in the University; but he was also the worst behaved and he was at last dismissed. Then his friends tried to get him into the great American Military Academy at West Point, but after Poe had been at West Point for some time, he forced the authorities of the institution to expel him. The discipline at West Point is severe; and Poe never could submit to any sort of discipline. His next misfortune was a quarrel with his adopted father; and from that time all his life proved one succession of misfortunes. He married and lost his first wife; became editor of various papers and magazines, but always quarrelled sooner or later with the proprietors of those periodicals; and at the age of thirty-nine, on the eve of a second marriage, died in consequence of a drunken spree. Poe has his advocates as well as his enemies even at the present day. Some of his biographers consider him to have been unfortunate rather than bad, and claim that he had the best of hearts. This is perhaps extravagant; but it is now generally acknowledged that Poe was not the moral monster that his early biographers tried to prove him. He was simply one of those unhappily sensitive beings unable to exercise that self-control necessary for success in life. There was some reaction of late years against the influence of Poe in literature; but the best proof of the power of that influence is in the fact that the reaction has been followed by a counter-reaction in favour of Poe, and that new editions of his works have been brought out recently, not only in America but in other countries; for Poe has been translated into many languages. While the details of his life are still in dispute, we

cannot occupy much time in discussing them. What is not a dispute any longer is the fact that Poe remains the most original and most powerful influence in American literature, and we have to occupy ourselves with the meaning and quality of his extraordinary work.

I shall not say much about his poetry at present,—although at a later time I may have occasion to call your attention to some of its wonderful beauties. There is very little poetry in the volume of his work. The great bulk of what he has left consists of short stories, short essays and a quantity of light and sometimes cruel, but generally excellent, criticisms. The criticisms have long ago been superseded by better works; the essays are likely to become obsolete,—for they dealt with philosophical subjects that have received entirely new light from latter-day science. But the stories, which resemble no other stories in any other literature, have lost nothing by the lapse of time. They are masterpieces both of style and of imagination; they still give delight to both young and old; and they give Poe a place in literature apart from any other European or American writer.

Nevertheless it is not easy for me to define to you the reason of the popularity of these stories,—not simply in England, but in all countries. Many of the stories written by Hawthorne live because of the moral in them; and many of the world's great stories owe their immortality to the same fact. The stories of Voltaire, for example, are still read by everybody because they teach some philosophical, or human truth. The short stories of Gœthe are still intellectual luxuries, because they all contain profound meanings which expand according to the intellectual capacity of the reader. Short stories, such as those of Prévost (*Manon Lescaut*), La Motte-Fouqué (*Undine*), and Mrs. Shelley (*Frankenstein*), are immortal because they are wonderfully didactic. Even our fairy tales—most of them—have deep meanings; and the fairy tales of Andersen are delightful to grown-up people because of their human and moral meanings. In all of Poe's stories there is nothing of this. There is nothing didactic; there is nothing touching in a

human sense; there is nothing moral—indeed, although none of the stories is in the least degree immoral; all of them are unmoral,—display no moral feeling at all. How then account for the extraordinary charm and influence of the stories? A story can only be great by reason of some truth in it, or some relation to truth suggested by it. *The Arabian Nights* offer analogous problems. They charm everybody; but not for the reasons that we usually seek. We must consider the stories of Poe, in one sense, just as we must consider *The Arabian Nights.*

The charm of *The Arabian Nights* is partly at least in the imaginary realization of all human wishes as presented in those wonderful stories. What we cannot have, we like to imagine we have; and therefore any story in which the delightfully impossible is made to appear delightfully possible pleases everybody with a vivid infatuation. It consoles us, after a fashion, to find our longings imagined and satisfied for us even in the dreams of another. But there is another kind of pleasure than this pleasure, which may make a story successful. I mean the pleasure of fear. Children are especially susceptible to this form of pleasure. Hence their love for fairy tales and ghost stories, which give them the sensation of fear in the midst of light, love, and safety. It requires very little art to give this pleasure to a child; because the child's imagination is so fresh and so sensitive that it can make a great many wonderful fancies out of very simple facts. With grown-up persons it is most difficult to excite this feeling; for the world has ceased to be mysterious for them as it is mysterious to the child. But there are experiences of fear, common to the man and to the child, of which a great artist can take advantage. Such are the fear of death and the fear of dreams. Dream-fear is a fear from which the wisest of us never can entirely escape; and its mystery has never been satisfactorily explained by psychologists. The one thing which especially distinguishes the stories of Poe from the stories of any other writer is this element of dream-fear—fear of darkness, and of things moving in darkness—fear such as we do not know in our waking life, but which comes upon us at intervals during sleep and especially such sleep as

sickness or weakness may influence. This is probably one of the oldest forms of fear in the world; but it is also one of the strongest, and its value in literature is likely to be recognized for hundreds of years to come. In our own day the great success of the writer Mæterlinck—whose dramas are being translated into every European language—is probably based upon the pleasure of fear.

All of Poe's stories are not, however, qualified by what I have called dream-fear. Some of them — even some of the cleverest—read as if they might have been written by somebody else. His early work was immediately recognized as the best of the kind ever done in America, and was immediately translated into French. But this work was more ingenious than imaginative;—it is called by critics "analytical." The analytical story represents Poe's first period. Later on the story becomes less analytical in his hands and more terrible. Still later it comes altogether terrible or grotesque. Finally it becomes a pure nightmare. The nightmare period is the period preceding Poe's death. This extraordinary series of changes in his work, as pointed out by critical experts, suggested to Francis Gerry Fairfield the curious theory which he propounded some twenty years ago in an essay entitled *A Mad Man of Letters.*[1] Fairfield attempted a critical analysis from the medical standpoint. He studied Poe's work pathologically, like a physician studying insanity according to its modes of psychological expression. He considered that Poe was insane during a greater part of his literary career. At the beginning of that career, he was not insane;—then he wrote ingenious analytical stories only such as *The Gold Bug,*[2] *The Purloined Letter,*[3] *The Murders in the Rue Morgue,*[4] etc., etc. Later, a curious change appears in his methods. At first he wrote in the third person, but now he began to write in the first person. The stories written in the first person are much more gloomy and strange than the others. For a time the tales remain ingenious, even

[1] Printed in *Scribner's Monthly,* Oct. 1875.
[2] Ptd in *Dollar Newspaper,* 21, 28 June 1843.
[3] Ptd in *The Gift,* 1845.
[4] Ptd in *Graham's Magazine,* April 1841.

in their gloom; and several persons figure in them. At last, however, all resemblance to the real vanishes in these secondary persons; they become clear shadows, mere dreams, but the "I" becomes more intense, more passionate, and more terrible. At last the man is utterly mad;—then he writes only such things as *The Masque of the Red Death*,[1] *Shadow*,[2] *Silence*,[3] —or *The Fall of the House of Usher*,[4] — which is nightmare absolute,—perfect horror.

There is some truth, undoubtedly, in the theory of Fairfield; but a careful chronological study of the history of the tales does not bear out the whole of this theory. Nevertheless it is quite likely that in the latter part of his career Poe's mind was gradually giving way; and it is certain that his most terrible pieces represent a period of nervous prostration.

We may now attempt to classify the best of the stories in a rough way. First we may consider as forming a class by themselves the pieces entitled:—

I. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*[5] *The Purloined Letter* *The Gold Bug* *A Descent into the Maelstrom*[6] *MS. Found in a Bottle*[7]	Mostly Ingenious or Analytical

The above group are for the most part healthy,—only in one, the last mentioned, though we find a suggestion of the morbid horror which was to unfold itself at a later day. All show a very uncommon quality of intellectual power. As for analytical ingenuity, *The Gold Bug* is certainly the best, including as it does an elaborate invention and interpretation of cipher. The most terrible is not the last, but the first in the above list; yet the terror is not in this case morbid; it is a terror

[1] Ptd in *Graham's Magazine*, May 1842.
[2] *Shadow: A Parable* (originally *Shadow. A Fable.*) Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger*, Sept. 1835.
[3] *Silence—a Fable* (originally *Siope—A Fable.*) Ptd in *The Baltimore Book*, 1838.
[4] Ptd in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, Sept. 1839.
[5] *A Sequel to the Murders in the Rue Morgue.* Ptd in *Snowden's Ladies' Companion*, Nov. and Dec. 1842, and Feb. 1843.
[6] Ptd in *Graham's Magazine*, May 1841.
[7] Ptd in *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, 19 Oct. 1833.

of suggestion only, brought about by perfectly natural circumstances. I mean the fact that the detective discovered the murdered persons to have been murdered apparently by a being in human form, because of the prints of the strangling fingers, and yet a being stronger and more active and longer-handed than any man possibly could be. This inspires a sense of supernatural fear in the cleverest possible way—until we reach the fact that the murderer was a great ape. Still there is not very much in these stories to suggest an extraordinary and morbid personality. Clever as the whole group is, we feel that it might be the work of a very clever but not an extremely original mind.

A second group, which might be arranged thus, would interest us in a somewhat different manner; we should begin, while reading it, to suspect something very extraordinary in the personality of the author—something morbid also:—

II. *Thou Art the Man!*[1]
The Oval Portrait[2]
The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar[3]
The Pit and the Pendulum[4]
The Imp of the Perverse[5]
William Wilson[6]

All of the above contain, besides their strangeness, some suggestion of supernatural horror. The second is somewhat beautiful, but the beauty is weird. It is the story of a painter painting the portrait of his beloved, but the soul and life of the woman gradually mixes up with the paint while he works, and when he finishes the portrait she is dead. Her life passed from her body into the picture, with the result that whoever looks at the picture feels at once terrified and charmed by it without being able to imagine why. In this story we get the first gleam of that new sense of mystery which obtains full development

[1] Ptd in *Godey's Lady's Book*, Nov. 1844.
[2] Originally *Life in Death*. Ptd in *Graham's Magazine*, April 1842.
[3] Originally *Facts of M. Valdemar's Case*. Ptd in *The American Whig Review*, Dec. 1845.
[4] Ptd in *The Gift*, 1843
[5] Ptd in *Graham's Magazine*, July 1845.
[6] Ptd in *The Gift*, 1840 [published before 17 Sept. 1839].

in the third group presently to be considered. *The Imp of the Perverse* is altogether morbid, and represents a phenomenon familiar to those physicians who care for the insane. It is the most unhealthy of the six, but not the most horrible. That is rather *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*—the story of a man mesmerically kept alive while his body is not only dead, but rotting: this hideous fancy of life in death returns in several other stories of Poe. *The Pit and the Pendulum*, a story of the prisons of the inquisition, is wonderfully ingenious, and might be classed with the first group of stories, were it not for the very horrible decorations of the *mise-en-scène*. On this account it cannot be placed with the healthier group of analytical tales. The last story was perhaps an original product of Poe's mind; but the idea existed long before Poe—the idea of a double personality, of a man continually tormented by an enemy looking exactly like himself. The enemy is at last killed in a fit of passion; then the murderer discovers that he has murdered himself. A much finer example of this kind of tale in modern literature is a short story by Théophile Gautier, who borrowed the fancy from Scandinavian literature. In the Northern story the warrior is represented as fighting with himself, and feeling the pain of every blow which he gives to his enemy. There is a beautiful moral in the Northern story; for it symbolizes the battle between right and wrong, which every man must wage with himself,—the struggle of the good principle against the evil. The French author fully recognized this. Poe does not. We do not get from him any deeper suggestion than that of a gloomy mystery and fate. Perhaps we might say that the story of *William Wilson* represents to some extent the history of Poe himself, self-destroyed by impulses over which he had no control. Anyhow this story, the last of the second group, fitly introduces us to the terrible third group, all of which are written in the first person,—except one.

III. *The Masque of the Red Death*
The Assignation[1]

[1] Originally *The Visionary*. Ptd in *Godey's Lady's Book*, Jan. 1834.

The Black Cat[1]
The Cask of Amontillado[2]
The Tell-Tale Heart[3]
Berenice[4]
Ligeia[5]
Eleonora[6]
Morella[7]
Shadow
Silence
The Fall of the House of Usher

These twelve stories represent the very highest expression of Poe's genius, but they also represent a very morbid condition of mind. We must not make the mistake, however, of belittling them on that account. Probably had Poe's mind been quite healthy and happy, such stories could not have come out of it; but in that case we should have lost some of the most splendid work in all modern literature,—work which has suggested new artistic effects and possibilities to hundreds of writers,—work also which taught us new values of words and new capacities of the English language.

The first two tales of this group give us suggestions of an imaginative quality quite different from anything to be found in the preceding lists. This quality expresses itself in gorgeous but tenebrous descriptions of luxury and splendour. Both occurrences narrated take place in palaces; and the description of these palaces is unlike anything else in any literature. As a decorative artist Poe was certainly great; but there is something infernal in his descriptions, — something suggesting the superhuman in his demonism. One becomes afraid while wandering through these palaces, these vast rooms, lighted by crimson glass; and the fear is the fear of strangeness, or rather the fear of something occult producing the strangeness. In *The Masque of the Red Death* the occult almost shows itself,

[1] Ptd in *United States Saturday Post*, 19 Aug. 1843.
[2] Ptd in *Godey's Lady's Book*, Nov. 1846.
[3] Ptd in *The Pioneer*, Jan. 1843.
[4] Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger*, March 1835.
[5] Ptd in *American Museum*, Sept. 1838.
[6] Ptd in *The Gift*, 1842. [Out in Sept. 1841].
[7] Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger*, April 1835.

almost becomes tangible; and the horror is brought to a climax as in nightmare when the ghost touches us. In *The Assignation* the occult does not appear,—death takes its place. These wondrous chapters both reflect the impressions which old Italian and Venetian art and history produced upon Poe's brain. Where others would have seen all things luminous, he saw everything shadowy and terrible. In this his art very much resembles that of the great French artist Doré.

The next two stories are ugly — very ugly, because they picture for us two forms of vice, — brutal anger and studied revenge. Nothing more atrociously ugly than the story of *The Black Cat* was ever written. It reaches the utmost limit within which art can exist without becoming something lower than art; it is saved from vulgarity only by the power of the horribe in it. *The Cask of Amontillado* is horrible in quite another way; and it is quite natural,—if we imagine ourselves in the time of Renaissance. But *The Tell-Tale Heart* might have been written in a lunatic asylum,—indeed it pretends to be the story of a lunatic, — the confession of a madman and a murderer. The end of the story gives you exactly the feeling of nightmare;—you feel that, as a dream or distortion of fancy produced by a morbid condition, it is absolutely true. The fact that the murderer probably hears only the beating of his own heart,—not the beating of the heart of the murdered man,—does not diminish the terror of the thing in the least.

The sub group of four stories, each of which bears a woman's name, is quite unique. All are nightmares,—although in the dream some gleams of mystical love and beauty are discernible. Three of them deal with fancies more familiar in Japan than in America or Europe; but Poe did not get these fancies from Oriental sources. In *Ligeia* a second wife is possessed and destroyed by the spirit of the first wife, but with this curious additional operation,—that the ghost of the first wife, entering into the body of the second wife, completely changes and transforms that body, so that she is incarnated in her original form. The dominant fancy is that the will power of one soul or ghost may be much greater than that of another.

In *Eleonora* it is suggested that the dead wife is reborn into the body of a young girl so as to become re-united with her husband. In *Morella* it is the mother's ghost which enters into the body of her daughter. The vagueness and mystery of this story lend to it what we call mystical horror,—a horror somewhat different from that of other tales. In *Berenice* there is nothing ghostly; but there is a brutal kind of horror, that gives the precise effect of an abominable dream.

Next we have a sub-group of two little stories—to my mind the gems of the collection, and one of them the most perfect thing of its kind in any literature, ancient or modern. I mean the so-called fragment *Silence.* This is written in the style of an Arabian story, and it is left purposely unfinished. It only pretends to be a page from a lost manuscript giving us one astounding glimpse of the world of demons and of demon-wastes. The story is supposed to be told by a demon to a man. There is nothing else in English at all resembling this wonderful thing except that weird prose fragment by Coleridge entitled *The Wanderings of Cain.* Marvellous as Coleridge's fragment certainly is, it cannot be compared for artistic exquisiteness with Poe's fragment. No prose is so musical, so poetical, so astonishing as the prose of *Silence* which almost obliges you to sing while you read it, and which leaves an ineffaceable impression upon the mind. Many persons have learned it by heart, and I do not know anything better for a student of style to do than to learn by heart the prose of these two extraordinary compositions. Here Poe has surpassed even the French — even Baudelaire,—who dreamed of prose more perfect than poetry, and who wrote a book of prose-poems in imitation, perhaps, of the style of Poe. But he never attained the same effect in his prose. His best composition of this kind was the *Bienfaits de la Lune,* which is very weird and very beautiful, but in the melody, the sonority, the melancholy beauty of Poe's *Silence* there is something altogether foreign to the French language, —and Baudelaire could not repeat the effect of Poe. *Shadow* is very nearly, if not quite, as marvellous a thing. And it contains the singular fancy of a composite ghost, — millions of

dead combining to form one shadow and to utter one voice.

The last tale of the twelve, as I have said before, is an absolute nightmare,—the most terrible and the most perfect of all the nightmare stories in the group. Every kind of horror of the supernatural is combined in the story,—first, the vague fear that comes before the true nightmare; then the paralysis of will, the numbing of the limbs, the inability to move, then the feeling of a step coming from far-away, then the entrance of the thing feared; then the seizure of the dreamer. For a very young person such stories as these are not good reading: they affect the imagination too powerfully. Yet, perhaps for that very reason it is young people especially who delight in reading them, and who are influenced all through the rest of their lives by the style of them. The style is indeed their great value; there is not another such style, and the importance of some knowledge of it to the student of literature can scarcely be exaggerated.

There is yet a fourth group of stories, somewhat numerous, which we may call the grotesques. As I said in a lecture on Ruskin, it is necessary to remember that all grotesque art is made by a clever mixture of the playful and the terrible; and this is quite as true of literary art as it is of sculpture. The best of Poe's grotesques are the following:—

IV.	
Grotesques	*Bon-Bon*[1]
	Duc De L'Omelette[2]
	King Pest[3]
	Hop-Frog[4]
	Four Beasts in One[5]
	A Tale of Jerusalem[6]
	The Uuparalelled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall[7]

[1] Originally *The Bargain Lost.* Ptd in *Saturday Courier,* 1 Dec. 1832.
[2] Ptd in *Saturday Courier,* 3 Mar. 1832.
[3] *King Pest: A Tale Containing an Allegory.* Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger,* Sept. 1835
[4] Originally *Hop-Frog, or The Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs.* Ptd in *The Flag of our Union,* 17 Mar. 1849.
[5] *Four Beasts in One: The Homo-Camelopard.* (Originally *Epimanes.*) Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger,* Mar. 1836.
[6] Ptd in *Saturday Courier,* 9 June 1832.
[7] Ptd in *The Southern Literary Messenger,* June 1835.

These are but a few out of many; but it may be said that Poe touched the high art of the grotesque only in a few instances. A curious fact is that whenever he tried to be simply funny he never could become really funny; the purely humorous sense was lacking to him. Therefore when he attempted real humour he fell somewhat below the grotesque, without succeeding in being truly amusing. A number of his efforts in a lighter vein are scarcely worth reading. But the above group is very interesting in itself, besides displaying an extraordinary amount of versatility. The first-named story *Bon-Bon* is of a metaphysician who, being drunk, attempts to sell his soul to the devil, who, being, as the proverb has it, a gentleman, refuses to take advantage of the situation. It is not the kind of story that makes one laugh outright, but it keeps the reader smiling and gives him a pleasant sense of excitement. The next story also takes us into Hell, or at least the ante-chamber of Hell, where a clever French nobleman saves himself by challenging the Devil to a game of cards. There is a lurid splendour in the descriptions of this scene admirably in keeping with the whole tone of the episode, half comical and more than half awful. One would imagine that Poe had been inspired by studies of such characters of the old French nobility as Taine describes in the chapters of his *Ancien Régime*. *King Pest* might, in the same way, have been partly suggested by reading Defoe's history of the plague in London. The ghosts here and the governor are of rather a material kind; but the pictures have a strange vividness like those scenes of drinking and feasting given us by Hogarth. *Hop-Frog* is almost more than grotesque; for the terrible here largely predominates; furthermore it is founded upon an actual incident in history. There was a French king who very nearly lost his life in attempting a practical joke of the kind described. *Four Beasts in One* takes us back to the time of the Roman amphitheatre. *A Tale of Jerusalem* assumes to be an incident in the siege of that city by Titus; there is a great deal of power in this sketch. The last story takes us to the moon; I have often wondered whether the great French story-teller Jules Verne did not get some in-

spiration from it for his much more wonderful story upon the same subject. Of course the art of Jules Verne is not grotesque; it is slightly humorous and delightfully happy even in its most serious passages. But the few scientific suggestions used by Poe might very well have been developed afterwards by the Frenchman who knew very much more about real science than Poe did.

Remember that I have called your attention only to what I believe to be the best of Poe's work. Many of his stories I have not mentioned at all. He has suffered very much from the indiscretion of his editors. Anything and everything that he ever wrote for a newspaper as well as for a magazine has been collected since his death, and very foolishly published together with his really matchless work. As for his metaphysical and miscellaneous essays and fragments, I cannot recommend you to give any time to them. His stories will probably prove immortal; the rest, if we except half a dozen poems, is now scarcely read.

In conclusion I would like to answer a question that must be shaping itself in the minds of some of you,—the question, "What is the use of stories of the impossible and the terrible that read like narratives of nightmare?" Apart from their value of style, stories capable of making powerful appeal to the emotion of fear have in themselves about the same value to literature as black has in value to painting. The quality of the terrible, like every other true quality, represents power, and all kinds of power have their worth for the creative artist, exactly as all kinds of colour have their value to the painter. The mere subject of the stories has nothing to do with the matter. By a clever use of the knowledge gained from the expression of the terrible in a ghost story, a great writer may find means to express even a religious truth more forcibly and more beautifully than he could have done before. The student of literature should never forget that a little of the element of fear enters into every great and noble emotion, and especially into the higher forms of æsthetic feeling. The sublime is more than the beautiful, because it is the beautiful capable of inspir-

ing awe as well as admiration; and even in the most sensuous forms of high art,—even in the perfection of a Greek statue, — there is always a something more than admiration which mingles with the feeling which it awakes in us,—a something very close to the element of fear.

If Poe suffered from his editors, still more did Hawthorne,[1] who ranks immediately after him among American story-tellers. A great deal of the material published in the definitive edition of Hawthorne's works is little more than rubbish. Perhaps we may say that one half ought not to have been published at all. The proportion of bad work to good is much greater in the case of Hawthorne than in the case of Poe. We need not refer at all to the volumes of his notes, his letters, his half finished studies,—nor even to those containing the multitude of little stories written to order for children or for provincial newspapers. But by his very best work, his reputation has become European as well as American.

No two characters ever were more dissimilar than those of Poe and Hawthorne. What was strikingly deficient in Poe was the moral sense; and Hawthorne had too much of the moral sense—so much of it that it glooms all his work more or less, and gives sombre touches to his happiest pages. Though not exactly a Puritan, he certainly inherited from his Puritan ancestry that austere sense of moral responsibility which toned his life as well as his work. The same inheritance might also account for the peculiar simplicity and severity of his method, which disdained all ornament. He could not play with words like Poe—could not make them flash and change colour and become luminous at will; neither could he put into his sentences that music which is scarcely ever absent from the serious style of Poe. A great French critic said that there are some words like phosphorus; they shine when you rub them. Poe knew this; Hawthorne did not. The art of the latter was certainly an art of imagination; but while Poe's imagination was entirely his own—unique and inimitable—Hawthorne's is recognizably

[1] (1804-1864).

the imagination of Puritan New England. The New England feeling haunted him even in Italy, among the sunniest scenes of Europe, even in the presence of the most exquisite works of art. His life too was always, even during poverty, regulated with methodical sameness. If he had any sense of romantic freedom, of its value to the creative artist, he certainly never allowed it to become visible either in his books or in his conduct.

He was born in 1804, the son of a shipmaster in the little town of Salem, Massachusetts, the very centre of the old Puritan feeling. Salem, you may remember, was a little town where witches were executed in the early days of the American colony; and even in Hawthorne's boyhood something of the old fanatical gloom must have lingered about the place. Probably Salem and its associations influenced his whole life; but he had advantages beyond those of his ancestors in regard to education. He graduated with Longfellow at the University, and felt such an inclination for literature that he determined to attempt the dangerous experiment of writing for a living. He was long unsuccessful; and the stories that he wrote during his early struggles were not his best; they are called the *Twice-Told Tales*.[1] Subsequently he obtained a government position in the Custom House, which helped him considerably; but he could not keep it owing to a sudden change in politics. Nevertheless his patient industry at last obtained its reward: he began to attract attention as a writer. In the latter part of his career he was appointed to an American Consulate at Liverpool —a position then worth 25,000 dollars a year. This signified for him a little fortune, and enabled him to devote the rest of his life to literary work without anxiety as to his means of existence. The most noteworthy of his books were not written during his youth.

Briefly, we can class all his productions under two heads —romances and short stories. Of the romances three deserve particular attention. These are *The Marble Faun*.[2] *The Bithe-*

[1] 2 vols. Boston, 1837. London, 1851. Bielefeld, 1852. 2 vols. Boston, 1842, 1851, 1864, etc.

[2] *The Marble Faun; or, The Romance of Monte Beni.* 2 vols. Boston, 1860.

dale Romance,[1] and *The Scarlet Letter*.[2] A fourth, *The House of the Seven Gables*,[3] is a very remarkable book; but we need not say much about it because its merits will appeal chiefly to those who know the New England life, and because, as a whole, it does not come up to the fine merits of the other romances. A fifth, *Septimius Felton*,[4] should not have been published—because the author had neither finished nor corrected the manuscript at the time of his death. So we shall speak only of the three romances; and I shall begin by observing that there is only one of them which I could recommend you to read—that is *The Marble Faun*.

In Rome Hawthorne saw a bust representing a young faun. The other day when we were reading *Lucretius*, there was occasion to explain the meaning of "faun." Many representations of fauns have been preserved to us from Greek and Roman times; and some of them are very beautiful. You will find descriptions of them in Winckelmann. The faun was commonly represented as a slender young man, naked, playing on a flute. The head of a faun differed from the head usually given by sculptors to a god: the features were less regular and more human; there were two little horns on the forehead sometimes; sometimes, again, the ears were pointed like those of an animal. Hawthorne, seeing one such representation of a faun, was very much interested by the peculiar expression of the beautiful, playful, sensuous face. He said to himself that if there were a human being with such a face, that human being would have a character unfitting him to live in modern society. Such a being, he thought, would be very kind, very lovable, very playful, very intelligent; but also very passionate, very impulsive, and, under the influence of anger or any other emotion of a violent kind, would be uncontrollable and dangerous, Then it occurred to him to write a romance expressing these fancies. In the romance the faun becomes a young man of modern society—an Italian nobleman, whom chance throws into the com-

[1] *The Brithedale Romance*. . . . Boston, 1852.
[2] *The Scarlet Letter a Romance*. . . . Boston, 1850.
[3] *The House of the Seven Gables, a Romance*. . . . Boston, 1851.
[4] *Septimius, a Romance*. . . . London, 1872. *Septimius Felton*. . . . Boston, 1872.

pany of some American ladies paying a visit to Rome. Of course it is not until the very end of the story that we find out the identity of the faun and the count; but the suggestion runs through the entire tale. The faun is a most charming person; but he commits a murder for love's sake without any scruple at all, and the end of the romance is very sad indeed. We might say that Hawthorne intended in this story to suggest the history of the emotional nature of the Latin races in contradiction to the cold and self-suppressed character of the races of the north. But all through there is also that dark moral tone so peculiar to Hawthorne—the awful sense of responsibility and conscience, characteristic of the Puritan mind, insufficiently lightened by the brightest atmosphere of the 19th century feeling.

The Blithedale Romance[1] I cannot recommend you to read at this time; but it introduces us to the most interesting subject of the American ideal communities. After having talked a little about them with you, you will be able to decide for yourselves whether *The Blithedale Romance* could be useful reading for you.

A little before the middle of this century an extraordinary wave of intellectual feeling passed over America. It expressed itself in a great variety of ways, but in no way more strikingly than in the establishment of little societies the object of which was ideal life in the midst of a purely material civilization. American existence had long been a tolerably dismal affair. Men had no time to think, to study, to dream, to amuse themselves. Everybody was working at high pressure—much harder than men were obliged to work in Europe. Under all such conditions, however, there are always a certain number of men of culture and fine feeling, desirous of rebelling against such an order of things. Such men seek each other, form societies to discuss social and moral problems, attempt, or dream about attempting, to live in a better way. In the time I speak of, minds had been deeply stirred by the work of Fourier, and of other extraordinary thinkers, who believed it possible to reno-

[1] Boston, 1852, 1894.

vate society by changing its form. Fourier had many disciples in other countries than France, who preached his doctrines. His dreams were extravagant, impossible, in some respects even absurd. But they had a great attraction for unhappy minds before the time of the philosophy of evolution. We now know perfectly well that an ideal community is impossible; but we know this because of our new acquaintance with the laws of growth and development. Nobody knew it in the beginning of the second quarter of the century. Even such a mind as that of Emerson would have considered the experiment worth trying—and, from one point of view, worth trying it was. Parts of Fourier's theories were charming; parts were scandalous. His theory of communism embraced the communism of women. In short he preached free love. There was to be no more family; but all humanity should form one great family, subdivided into groups corresponding to cities and its districts. The head of everything was to be Constantinople, and the head of the human race was to be called the Omniarch. It is not necessary to go into the subject of his wilder theories, according to which the seas would eventually become something like lemonade for the benefit of the human race. Fancies like these could not equally appeal to all classes of minds, though they set all classes of minds in a ferment. The ferment in America manifested itself very differently. Some people tried, and succeeded in founding new religions. Others established what were called free love communities—in which no man had the right to call any woman his wife; nor any woman to call any man her husband; and in which to be jealous was the capital sin. Most of these extraordinary institutions, in which everything was to be held in common, broke up in a very short time—and in most cases because of this awful sin of jealousy! All this was funny enough. But one community actually succeeded—the famous Oneida community of New York. The Oneida people succeeded because they were religious fanatics, and allowed themselves to be ruled by a discipline of iron. This was a perfect case of communism; only remember that it was a religious communism, in which even the conception and birth of children was

strictly regulated by law. A combination of the churches at last broke up the regime of sect, by force of money and legal power—only to the extent of compelling the members to marry, and to abandon their free love doctrines.

Other communities simply tried economical experiments—tried to get along without money, substituted exchange of commodities for the ordinary operations of sale and purchase. In these communities the individual was not allowed to own anything; everything was owned by the society only; everybody worked for everybody also, and the good of one depended upon the good of all. The most remarkable of these communities was established in Kansas; but none succeeded. As a matter of fact only a religious order ever succeeded in living after this plan. It would be the partial application of the Jesuit system to industrial existence, and it could not succeed because it annihilates the great source of all progress, which is competition.

There was yet one other, and more sensible, kind of communism attempted. This was the work of men of culture; and its experiments were made in New England, at a beautiful place called Brook Farm. The object was altogether the moral and intellectual pursuit of happiness. About eighty or ninety cultivated men and women attempted at Brook Farm to form a perfect human society. The community expected to exist through the produce of the united labour of all the members composing it. Those who knew anything about agriculture tilled the soil, or attended to the fruit or vegetable gardens; those who were not strong enough for bodily labour turned teachers, and educated the children of the neighbourhood; those who had trades worked at them for the benefit of the rest. Besides all this, there were regular courses of intellectual study pursued by the community. Brook Farm was not only a farm and an educational centre; it was also a kind of philosophical academy. Lectures were regularly given upon all branches of strange philosophy; and these intellectual gatherings were further made pleasant by music and dancing. Really Brook Farm was a very wonderful place, and contained a very considerable number of remarkable men and women. Most of the

persons who afterwards became distinguished in New England literature — I might even say in American literature — were either members or close friends of the community. Hawthorne was a member, Emerson a faithful friend. To look at a list of the names of the New England school is almost to look at a list of the distinguished members of Brook Farm. But, of course Brook Farm did not succeed. It failed after three or four years. It did not fail simply because some of the members worked themselves to death, nor because all lost their money, nor because there was anything wrong to speak of in the objects and hopes of the society. It failed for reasons which probably every one of you students know, but very few people knew in the first half of this century. And that is simply this: — human society as it now exists is as good as it is possible for human society to be under the circumstances, and you cannot improve it. Moral and intellectual life are as rich as human experience has been able to make them, and you cannot improve human experience. All society, all morality, all cultivation is a natural growth; and nothing attempted in the way of living at variance with, and independently of, such growth, can be natural or successful. Evolutional philosophy proves this very plain. We can only have a perfect society when all men will have become perfect.

Hawthorne used his experience at Brook Farm as a source of literary inspiration. In his *Blithedale Romance*, he gives us a poetical picture of the existence which he and the other enthusiasts went through. It is very much poeticized of course; but it is founded upon real fact and observation. It offended Emerson and other friends of the society; but the reason is simply that Hawthorne could never look at any fact of life in a bright and optimistic way. His touch saddened everything; and *The Blithedale Romance* is a melancholy book. But the particular reason why I do not strongly recommend you to read it is that a proper understanding of American life in the forties and especially in New England, is necessary to a thorough comprehension of it.

About *The Scarlet Letter* I shall say very little. It is the

most gloomy of the writer's books,—although, for some strange reason, most popular. It is a story of New England life in the time of the Puritans, when a woman convicted of an adultery was condemned to wear for the rest of her life a dress on the front of which was sewn a great red letter "A." The novel is the narrative of the moral sufferings of a deserving woman subjected to this cruel punishment.

Leaving Hawthorne's novels aside, I will now speak only of his short stories. There are many volumes of these, and they are of the most unequal merit. The *Wonder-Book*[1] (a title taken from Andersen) are chiefly stories of Greek mythology rewritten for children. Only one book of this kind has ever been written which is really good,—and that is the exquisite *Heroes* of Charles Kingsley. The *Twice-Told Tales* are partly historical, and mostly dull. It is not so with the *Mosses from an Old Manse*[2] (2 vols.). In these there are many strange and pleasing things, and one composition which to my mind, and in the judgment, I am glad to say, of the great French critic Gautier, is the most excellent that Hawthorne ever wrote. You ought to read this little story which is called *Rappacini's Daughter*, because it is a very great bit of art. Like all of Hawthorne's shorter stories, it is moral; but here the moral is forgotten almost in the startling character of the fancy. A rich Italian physician, entirely devoted to botany, conceives the idea of nourishing his daughter on poisonous food. She becomes so poisonous that as she walks about in the sun, butterflies and gnats that come near her drop dead. She becomes so poisonous that her touch will burn the skin of a man like red-hot iron. Nevertheless, she is so beautiful that anybody who sees her immediately falls in love with her. The difficulty is to get a husband for her—because any ordinary man could not kiss her without dying immediately. Her father then decides to find the beautiful young man, and to make this young man sufficiently poisonous to become the husband of the girl. As chance would have it, a young student of medicine, living

[1] *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys. . . .* Boston, 1852, etc. London, 1852, etc.
[2] 2 vols. New York, 1846.

in the next house, sees the daughter, falls in love with her and is at once selected by her father for the experiment. For many months he is fed upon strange food until his whole body becomes saturated with poison—but he is quite unconscious of the fact. Then the old man says, "Now you shall marry my daughter. You and she are the most powerful, the most terrible of all human creatures. By your power you can possess the world." But two young people are terrified at learning what has been done at them. They try, because they are good-hearted creatures, to destroy the effect of the poison by taking antidotes. But the result is fatal to the young girl;—only the man survives. I think you can see for yourselves the strange and powerful moral of this story. Its teaching, of course, is that by the administration of moral poison to young minds the most terrible consequences may result, and that attempt to remedy the mischief in adult life is more likely to cause death than to effect a cure. At all events, if you read this story, you have read the very best pages of Hawthorne.

If Hawthorne is remarkable for his gloom, Dr. Holmes[1] must be regarded as his antithesis. No more cheerful, light, sparkling mind ever appeared in America; and no American writer is more popular in England. Something of Holmes every student of literature ought to know; but there is a great deal of his work which is too local, too essentially American to be enjoyed by you. I should suggest only a selection from his works, of which I shall try to give you a brief sketch.

Holmes was born in 1809—so that he is one of the oldest of the great American writers under consideration. He was sent to France to study medicine, distinguished himself as a student, and afterwards became Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard University. He kept this position until 1883, when he abandoned it for literature, and the private practice of medicine. His professional studies are reflected in nearly all his work, but only in the very best way. The higher study of medicine develops, as perhaps no other scientific study does, the habits of observation and of thinking in relations;—

[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894).

perhaps it is for this reason that the literary work of doctors is nearly always marked by very solid qualities. In the case of Dr. Holmes, we have a medical writer who uses the best results of his studies without troubling the reader by scientific details. One might say that medical knowledge has a tendency to blunt emotional feelings and to chill impulses of sympathy. But Dr. Holmes' work affords us charming proof of the contrary. Warm sympathy and fine emotion are always there; but they are tempered by perception and comprehension such as can only be obtained through scientific study. A beautiful voice, he has shown us, does not touch the heart less because he happened to understand the mechanism of the vocal chords; and the pathos of grief need not be diminished because the observer has familiarized himself with its physiological accompaniments.

The work of Dr. Holmes is not very large in quantity; but it is very light and fine. The books which are most popular in England and in America,—the books which have most extended his reputation, are not the books which I would recommend to read by preference. They are intensely American; and without a thorough knowledge of American life, you would miss a great deal of their charm. But we must talk first about these. They form three volumes, respectively called *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*,[1] *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*,[2] and *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table*.[3] The first named is the most famous. Dr. Holmes took for the scene of his narrative an ordinary private boarding-house in Boston; and his chief figure, the Autocrat, is one of the boarders, who exercises a sort of autocratic intellectual dominion over his fellow-boarders, by reason of superior culture and knowledge. It is, however, a very gentle and kindly dominion. The book consists chiefly of reports of the conversations held every morning at the breakfast table; but there is a faint thread of romance which ties all these conversations together. Properly speaking, it is a book

[1] Boston, 1858. London, 1859. Edinburgh, 1883.
[2] *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table; with the Story of Iris.* . . . Boston, 1860 [1859]. London, 1860.
[3] Boston, 1872.

without chapters — which is very extraordinary. Altogether the choice of scene was not a bad one. It is in a private boarding-house, such as is described, that persons of the most diverse characters may come together, and exchange the most diverse opinions upon all manner of subjects. And the book is a collection of such opinions, commonplace, brilliant, original or fantastic, all being eventually collected and explained by the Autocrat whose own opinion is invariably supposed to represent the advanced culture of the day. There are opinions about science, art, religion, social morality, love, music, beauty, — almost everything, except politics or subjects of that sort; and one point of the writer's art is to be noticed in this,—that the characters are not described: they describe themselves by their conversation. The Autocrat himself is never described; but we know perfectly well what kind of man he is: we can see him. It is Dr. Holmes. This book proved immediately successful. It was immensely successful because the subjects discussed were subjects common to all human experience for the most part,—nothing but the local colour and form being American. It became nearly as popular in England as in America shortly after its appearance; and the Queen at a later day asked for *The Autocrat* of Dr. Holmes—an honour accorded to very few foreign writers. The success of the volume induced the Doctor to write two more books in the same style,—*The Professor* and *The Poet* appearing in turn at the same breakfast table,—to discuss questions of science, philosophy and literature in the lightest and brightest way possible. It would be difficult to say that any one of these three volumes is much better than either of the others. All are good; and all deal with the largest subjects in the simplest and the strongest way. All are without chapters.

A striking peculiarity of this work is its tone. It is thoroughly optimistic—the most cheerful possible kind of writing, conceived in the most liberal spirit. There was no religious nonsense about Dr. Holmes;—he hated the cant and hypocricy of the New England spirit, made himself its open enemy from the beginning (especially in regard to education); and religious

people were at first offended somewhat by his manner of talking. In spite of the optimism and cheerfulness of the books, they discerned another element in them not at all to their liking,—a very delicate tone of mockery. But it was not only a particular class of fantastic folks who were provoked by these books;—almost everybody who read them was a little provoked by them. Now it was just the provoking quality in Dr. Holmes' writing that assured his success. Everybody who reads him even to-day will find some of his own faults or weaknesses or prejudices or hobbies, beautifully dissected and gently ridiculed. Not only the man who has too much religion and therefore too much fear of science, but also the young man who wishes to be thought old, and the old man who wishes to be thought young, and the old maid angry at the world because she never married and the mischievous youth who laughs at the old maid, and the student who has just learned enough to make him think that he knows everything in the whole world, and the professor who expresses opinion about subjects of which he knows nothing. Almost every type of modern character is thus drawn,—drawn with the least little bit of caricature drawing. But Dr. Holmes never went far enough, or spoke harshly enough, to make people seriously angry. Everybody quickly forgave him and began to recognize that he was not mocking people merely for amusement, but as medicine;—that he was a physician of souls as well as of bodies. The books are full of what we might call moral tonic;—they make stronger and healthier the mind of everybody that reads it. If you can find pleasure in the first few pages of *The Autocrat*, I should advise you then to read the whole book—and remember that it is one of those books which you can open anywhere and in any time and learn something from. But if you do not feel interested after the first few pages, you had better put the book aside for the present and try again to read it in four or five years of time. Just now I should rather suppose that the extraordinary novel of *Elsie Venner*[1] would attract you.

Elsie Venner is not only the most extraordinary book that

[1] *Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny*. . . . 2 vols Boston, 1861.

Dr. Holmes wrote; it is also one of the most extraordinary novels of the 19th century. Nevertheless it did not become very popular. Perhaps it was too fine to win popularity, and perhaps, for an English public, a little too American. It was based, the Doctor assured us, upon a scientific fact;—we may at all events believe that only a scientific fact could have suggested it to a physician. The story circles about a New England school; and its principal characters (except Elsie) are the schoolmaster, a university student obliged to teach in the country for a living, and a young schoolmistress with whom he falls in love. The young girls who attend the school are almost grown women; and one of them, Elsie, complicates the situation by falling in love with the schoolmaster. She is the most attractive of all the pupils, — a dark, Spanish-looking beauty; but there is something sinister about her. Her fate forms the tragedy of the book and her history is a very strange one. Her mother, while pregnant with her, was bitten by a rattlesnake, and died of the poison, after having put her baby safely into the world. Elsie grows up very beautiful, but very queer; she has two souls. She has inherited, with the poison of which her mother died, the soul of a serpent and the grace of a serpent and the fascination of a serpent. She is able, by her gaze alone, to overcome the will of almost anybody at whom she looks,—to charm them, just as a serpent charms a bird. She has also a strange liking for poisonous plants. In the hottest period of the summer, she goes away into the wildest parts of the mountain to play with serpents. She had also a curious fancy for serpent-jewelry. But she has also a human soul and a human character, very loving and very sweet. Her life is tragical, because it is one endless fight between the two natures within her. When the woman nature is the strongest, Elsie is everything that man could wish for or admire. When the serpent character gets the upper hand, she is simply terrible, —and even her father is afraid of her. But the life of the rattlesnake can only last for about 18 years; while a life of human being may last five times longer. In her 18th year Elsie falls terribly sick;—and it is the year in which the serpent must die.

Unhappily the shock to the constitution is too great. With the death of the serpent soul, the human soul also passes away; and the tragedy is over. You can see that there is suggested by the story a very powerful moral problem. It is not only in the romance of *Elsie Venner* that beings exist who have inherited double natures, and suffer from the terrible conflict between the impulses of good and evil.

But every thing in the story is quite modern—reads like an ordinary novel. The character of the schoolmaster, the schoolmistress, the school proprietor—a typical Yankee of the meanest sort,—also the young Mexican who falls in love with Elsie and tries to kill the schoolmaster in a Mexican way; together with the country doctor, the school-bully, with whom the young student has to fight, and the various personages of the New England village which is the scene of the story,—all are drawn from actual observation. They live; they are very real, and proclaim their creator a great master. This queer book was first published under the title of *The Professor's Story*. It is not so well known, as it deserves to be. It is far superior to another novel by Holmes called *The Guardian Angel*,[1]—which I cannot very strongly recommend.

Elsie Venner and the three volumes of breakfast conversations form the important part of Dr. Holmes' prose. If he had written nothing else he would have been still famous. But he wrote a great many other books and a good deal of poetry. Nearly all the other books are collections of essays—scientific, moral, and miscellaneous. In his old age he visited England, where he received great honour and was introduced to the highest personages. The results of his voyage he embodied in a volume of pleasant gossips entitled *Our Hundred Days in Europe*. As a poet, he has only written three or four compositions that will long endure; but all his poetry was very fair, and distinguished by the same qualities of mischievous good humour and light wit that characterize his prose. Of course such light poetry cannot be called great; yet if Dr. Holmes had

[1] Boston, 1867. London, 1867 [2 vols.]
[2] Boston and New York, 1887. London, 1888.

given his time only to verse, he would perhaps have done something very remarkable. One of his little poems *The Last Leaf*,[1] —describing an old man in the 18th century living on into the 19th century — is so graceful and so daintily humorous that we can only compare it with the society verse of Frederick Locker or of Austin Dobson.

Those already named are the greatest figures in American literature. After Holmes—indeed long before his death—new forms of literature begin. We shall speak of them presently. Meanwhile I should observe to you that Cooper,[2] the great novelist of pioneer life in the American West, has not been particularly dwelt upon, because he takes high rank only as a story-teller, not as a stylist, nor as a man of letters in the truest sense of the word. His novels are now very little read by grown-up people; but, as novels of adventures, they will delight the young no doubt for many years to come. His work belongs to the first half of the century—all being done between 1820-1850. Thirty-two volumes represent the bequest he made to American literature. He had been a midshipman in the navy before he began to write; and his personal knowledge of sea life gives almost as much value to one class of his stories as the personal experience of Marryat gives to the captain's tales. Five novels by Cooper are sea novels; the best is *The Pilot*.[3] Five others treat of the early conflicts between the American settlers and the Indians; these have been called *The Leather Stocking Tales*,—and one of them, translated into many languages, is read by everybody: I mean *The Last of the Mohicans*.[4] Cooper also wrote some historical novels; but these were very bad, and are now almost unread. You are not likely to learn much from Cooper in the way of pure literature, but *The Pilot* and the other novels mentioned are delightful as stories. I say nothing about a number of smaller writers; and one very great writer can scarcely be of interest to you —

[1] Appeared in *Poems*. . . . Boston, 1836.
[2] James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851).
[3] *The Pilot; a Tale of the Sea*. . . . 2 vols. 1823 [pub. Jan. 1824].
[4] *The Last of the Mohicans. A Narrative of 1757*. . . . Philadelphia . . . 2 vols. 1826.

Lowell.[1] Indeed I must express my conviction that the position of James Russell Lowell has been very much exaggerated. He was undoubtedly a very great influence,—for he was during many years extremely active in promoting American literature as the editor of various magazines, and during the Civil War he published a volume of political satires in the New England dialect which were admirable things of their kind. These satires in New England dialect (Yankee dialect) are certainly the best things of their kind in existence and among them is one dialect poem, in quatrains, *The Courtin'*, which is beautiful as well as witty. Besides this kind of work Lowell wrote a great number of very fair poems, chiefly of a serious sort—his longest effort being a piece somewhat in the style of Tennyson's *Idylls*, *The Vision of Sir Launfal.* None of this work, however, is great; and Lowell's popularity in England was chiefly due to his charming manner, and to his success as American Minister at the English court. His real greatness, like that of Burns, belongs to his witty work in dialect; and he wrote very little prose. Having mentioned Lowell we have closed the list of the first great group of American writers in prose.

It will be necessary to curtail this lecture considerably; and I shall therefore attempt grouping. The next remarkable figure in American literature is, I think, Bret Harte.[2] He introduces us to the new circle of story writers who have won the reputation beyond their own country. He was born in 1839 in the state of New York at the old-fashioned town of Albany — the son of a school teacher. He had only a very plain education—no literary training. He went to California about 1854 and worked there in a number of capacities—gold-miner, government clerk, printer. There was then in California what was called "the Gold Fever." Men of energetic and often desperate character flocked to the gold region from all parts of the world, willing to risk their lives for the sake of fortune, and fearing nothing in the way of human or divine law. Of

[1] Jámes Russell Lowell (1819-1891).
[2] Fránci**s** Bret Harte (1829-1902).

human law there had been since 1845 very little outside of the great Pacific city—absolutely none in the gold region. Every man was armed; and while gambling or drinking, weapons were used freely. Men killed each other for a word; and the chances of life were best for the man who could shoot the quickest. It was a rude and terrible existence; but it had its heroisms and its romances. Bret Harte saw it, suffered with it, and found his inspiration in it. He wrote down what he had seen at the mines in the form of little stories and poems, afterwards contributed to various Californian periodicals. These immediately delighted the American people, were quickly reprinted in book form, obtained great success in England, and introduced quite a new phase of literature. The short story had never been popular before in England or America, — although, under the title of *Conte* or *Nouvelle*, it had been very popular in France. I think we may say that Bret Harte first made it successful, in the business sense. A publisher in Boston immediately offered him ten thousand dollars for one year's work—a good proof of the popularity of his books. The stories were extremely well written. The poems were good in respect to literary feeling, but were failures in regard to workmanship. He is worth considering only as a prose writer; and here he is great. The general value of his stories lies not so much in the faithful portrayal of a wild condition of society that has ceased to exist, as in their showing that even the roughest and most terrible class of men and women may have noble qualities and may be capable of noble actions. Some of Bret Harte's characters are gamblers; some are thieves; some are prostitutes; — others are simply half-savage children of civilized periods. Children may be half-savages by being unnaturally separated from civilization, but retaining through inheritance many fine moral qualities. They are very queer stories; and some of them are very touching. Of late years Bret Harte's work has not been very good. He has exhausted the subject which made him famous. But his early work deserves to live, and will probably for a long time. The best of it is to be found in the two volumes respectively entitled *The Luck of Roaring*

Camp,[1] and *Mrs. Skagg's Husbands*.[2] Rough work, but very strong—that is the shortest criticism possible.

On the other side of the American Continent two writers were rising into fame about the same time that Bret Harte was living in San Francisco. William Howells,[3] an Ohio printer; and Henry James (Jr.),[4] son of a man of letters. These two have already become celebrated throughout the English-speaking world; both belong to one literary school; but the two have been working in very different ways. Both Howells and James attempted to do in English something resembling what the realistic school has been doing in France. They forswore the improbable and the romantic, and attempted to paint life exactly as they saw it. Howells took for his subject the most ordinary happenings of American life in the Eastern States. He has written a great number of novels which are equally well known in England and in America. He has made both a reputation and a fortune. Nevertheless it is the opinion of some excellent critics that the success of Howells is only temporary, — that his books have become popular because they appeal to the great mediocrity,—to the great mass of readers possessing very small culture. This is not to say that the style of Howells is a mediocre style. It is simple and strong, highly polished, and of the first class. But the characters and the scenes of the novels are invariably commonplace; the people are tiresome; the incidents are uninteresting. There is perfect realism; but it is not the kind of realism in which a man of culture cares to live. His first great novel remains, I think, the best—*The Rise of Silas Lapham*.[5] It is a simplest story of an ignorant but energetic American manufacturer. James, on the other hand, is never commonplace; and although always realistic he is always extraordinary. In my opinion Henry James is by far the greatest of living American writers,—although his greatness is not to be measured by his popularity. He is too refined in his art to be popular. He describes only

[1] *The Luck of Roaring Camp and other Sketches*. Boston, 1870. 1872.
[2] *Mrs. Skagg's Husbands and Other Sketckes*. Boston, 1873, London, 1873.
[3] William Dean Howells (1837-1920).
[4] Henry James (1843-1916).
[5] Boston, 1884.

the most complex society of England, America and Italy. He has lived in England during a great part of his life; and has written much more wonderful things there than he could have written in America. He is, indeed, the only writer of English novels possessing the same kind of psychological art as distinguishes the great modern novelists of France—such as Daudet or Bourget. And he is capable of an astonishing variety of work. At one time he gives us a picture of the vagaries of spiritualism in America, as in the *Bostonians*;[1] again he takes us to Italy, and paints for us the highest forms of æsthetic enthusiasm; again we are in London, studying the psychology of aristocratic circles; or we are taken to Paris, or taken — as sometimes happens—out of the known world of fact into the unknown world of psychological fact—for James is very great, too, as a moral fabulist. Almost anything that he has written is worthy of study; but I must warn you that he is very difficult, perhaps the most difficult of all novelists of the time, for Japanese students.

The realistic school has not had otherwise any very great success in America. Howells and James are its only fine representatives—unless we except a few remarkable female writers, whose place in literature it is still difficult to determine. Marion Crawford,[2] whose novels, mostly laid in Italy, are so successful, cannot very well be called a realist. Aldrich,[3] the poet, who has written a charming volume of stories *Marjorie Daw;* Cable[4] who, in his *Old Creole Days*, pictured the Creole life in Louisiana now disappearing; Craddock (Miss Murfree)[5] with her portraits of the Kentucky mountains;—Miss Woolson,[6] with her stories of the American Civil War,—all these have a delicate flavour of romance. Among men of letters, not story-tellers, we find another sort of romance of a very high order—sometimes in philosophical studies, sometimes in essays of a peculiarly emo-

[1] *The Bostonians. A Novel.* 3 vols. London, 1886. Originally appeared in *Century*, Feb. 1885—Feb. 1886.
[2] Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909).
[3] Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907).
[4] George Washington Cable (1844-1925).
[5] Mary Noailles Murfree (*pseudonym* Charles Egbert Craddock, 1850-1922).
[6] Constance Fenimore Woolson (1839-1894).

tional kind. There are a number of these; I will mention the very best.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the essayists—in point of literary beauty—is Donald Mitchel,[1] a former graduate of Yale, author of *Reveries of a Bachelor* and *Dream Life.* The first mentioned of these books is simply a collection of thoughts—the thoughts of a young man about marriage, with memories of an old woman that he would have liked to marry and could not marry. Mitchel is now an old man, but his books are still much loved by those who know them. They represent a very refined and tender art. I do not know of any other writer who has attempted work in exactly the same line; but we find very similar beauties, in the form of emotional reverie, in a few books of American travellers. Such are Charles Warren Stoddard's[2] Polynesian sketches *South Sea Idyls,* and Curtis'[3] *Howadji in Syria.*

Enough has been said, considering the time at our disposal, of prose writers of the lighter American order; but I shall be sorry to leave you with the impression that American writers of the more serious order have no great emotional value. This is far from the truth. It is especially far from the truth in relation to the historians. The American historians are especially distinguished by literary qualities, which lend them a value independent of their work. The histories of Prescott,[4] although partly superseded by later research, will always charm by reason of their fascinating style; and the literary quality of Motley[5] is quite extraordinary—no novel treating of the struggle between Spain and the Netherlands even approaches the interest of Motley's accurate but impassioned recital. A third figure, who lately passed away, Francis Parkman,[6] historian of the struggle between France and England in North America, and of the attempt of the Jesuits to found a Catholic power with the help of the North American Indians, ought to interest not only be-

[1] Donald Grant Mitchel (*pseud.* "Jk Marvel," 1822-1908).
[2] Charles Warren Stoddard (1843-1909).
[3] George William Curtis (1824-1892).
[4] William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859).
[5] John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877).
[6] (1823-1893).

cause of his style, but because of the wonderful romance of his life. He lived with the Indians in order that he might obtain sufficient knowledge of their nature to explain certain facts of their history — such as the inability of the Jesuits to master them. A fourth historian yet living, John Fiske[1] is also a great stylist; and his philosophy (he is a great representative of the Spencerian philosophy in America) is marked by the same fine qualities of expression as his history. The best work of history which he has written is *The Discovery of America* (2 vols.), — which supersedes a great deal of Prescott's work; and the best examples of his style as an essayist are perhaps to be found in the two little volumes respectively entitled *The Idea of God* and *The Destiny of Men.*

I have not spoken to you much about Emerson—although one of the greatest figures in the history of American thought. But I beg you to remember the limitations of this essay. Great as are the qualities of Emerson, both in the strange flashes of his philosophical poetry, and the occasionally strange splendours of his emotional style, I could not recommend Emerson to you as a model either of prose or verse. Both—from the artistic point of view—leave much to be desired. The only thing which Emerson might teach you in regard to literary construction is, I think, this—the value and the strength of very short sentences. But you could not imitate his style. No man could do that. Emerson's style was himself: it was not something carefully studied and elaborated, but a natural eloquence in which a great deal of ore remains crude.

THE END

[1] (1842-1901).

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☞ *Principal references are denoted by heavy figures.*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

on the

COMPLETE LAFCADIO HEARN LECTURES

It is with great pleasure that I am able to announce the publication, on September 26th, 1934, the very day of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of the great interpreter of Japan, of two volumes of Lafcadio Hearn's lectures "On Poets" and "On Poetry", thereby bringing the issue of the Complete Lafcadio Hearn Lectures to a conclusion. It is nine years since the publication of the Lectures was first undertaken, and seven years since "A History of English Literature" was brought out, followed by the publication in 1932 of the lectures "On Art, Literature and Philosophy."

I recall to mind as vividly as if it were yesterday how, in 1922, and just about a year before the Great Earthquake and Fire which devastated Tokyo and Yokohama, Mr. Mitchell McDonald, the life-long friend and literary executor of Hearn, in his room on the second floor of the Grand Hotel, Yokohama, said under great emotion to me:

"It is already twenty years since my dearest friend Hearn died. I am now seventy and cannot hope for many more years to live, but you are still a young man and have a great work ahead in publishing the works of Hearn. Lafcadio often told me to take good care of my health, and now I must tell you to do the same thing, especially because you are undertaking a great work. Your work will greatly delight me and the spirit of Hearn, whose remains lie in the Zoshigaya Cemetery."

A year later Mr. McDonald was killed in the Great Earthquake and Fire, which also caused almost the complete ruin of my business. However, with the words of Mr. McDonald ringing in my ears, I started at once to re-establish my ruined plant and business. You can imagine therefore how pleased I am at the completion of the work, and with what profound pleasure and gratification I am dedicating the four volumes of Hearn's Lectures to the spirits of Hearn and McDonald.

After Hearn's death, Mr. McDonald regretted for a long time that his lectures delivered at the Tokyo Imperial University, masterpieces of delivery and fine pieces of literary criticism in themselves, should remain unpublished, and he entrusted part of the lecture notes taken in class by Hearn's pupils, including those of the editors of the present volumes, to Professor Erskine, of Columbia University, New York, for publication. The result was Hearn's "Interpretation of Literature" in two volumes,

"Appreciation of Poetry" and "Life and Literature", edited by Professor Erskine and published by Dodd, Mead and Co., New York. These four volumes, representing the able craftsmanship of Professor Erskine as the editor, justly remained for long as the standard edition of Hearn's lectures. Among the pupils and admirers of Hearn, however, there was an irresistible craving to have Hearn's lectures in complete form, including everything their beloved master delivered, and in its original form. That is why the editors of the present volumes and the publisher undertook the issue of the Complete Lafcadio Hearn Lectures.

Recourse was made to the notes taken in class by Professor R. Tanabé and Professor T. Ochiai, two of the former pupils of Hearn, who re-read and compared their notes again and again, and reference was made by Professor Nishizaki of the Lafcadio Hearn Library, Toyama Koto Gakko, to the books Hearn possessed and used in Japan, to verify the lecturer's statements and correct the notes,—a laborious research indeed. We are now satisfied that the volumes in its present form, containing all the lectures delivered by Hearn at the Imperial University of Tokyo during the period extending from 1896 to 1903, represent his lectures as they were delivered by the master.

As to the third revised edition of "A History of English Literature", which also forms a volume of the series, it may be added that it represents the editorial work of Professor Tanabé and Professor Ochiai, with emendations by Professor Nishizaki of the Hearn Library, and Professor A. Stanton Whitfield, B. Litt. (Oxon), F. R. Hist. Soc., B. Sc., formerly of the Tokyo Imperial University.

September 26, 1934.

YOSHITAKA NAKATSUCHI
The Hokuseido Press, Tokyo.

NOTE TO THE NEWLY REVISED EDITION

Lafcadio Hearn's lectures on English Literature have a lasting value in literary criticism. It is the source of profound pleasure to us to realize that we have at last succeeded in bringing out the Lectures in the form as Hearn actually delivered them.

I take this opportunity of expressing my cordial thanks to the various professors and readers in various parts of the world who have so loyally helped me to accomplish this volume, which I believe completes the monumental work of Lafcadio Hearn's achievement in Japan.

The Publisher

March 20, 1941.

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