NOTES ON CHOSEN ENGLISH TEXTS

GENERAL EDITOR: NORMAN T. CARRINGTON, M.A.

LONGER POEMS OLD AND NEW

By

K. HARDACRE, M.A.

Based on the Selection by A. S. Cairncross, M.A., D.Litt. published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

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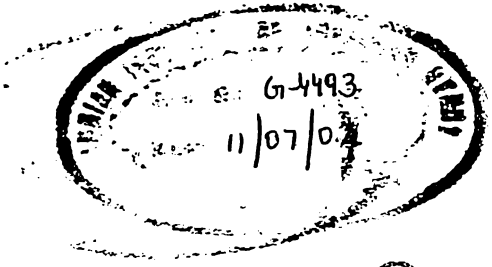

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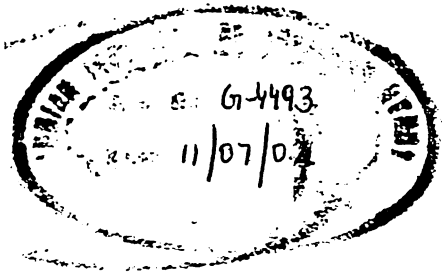

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GEOFFREY CHAUCER. *THE PARDONER'S TALE*

We do not know the exact date of Chaucer's birth: it was some time between 1340 and 1345. The son of a London vintner, he became a page to the Duke of Clarence's wife and later served on a military expedition to France, where he was taken prisoner and ransomed. About 1366 he married a lady-in-waiting to the Queen and became one of the valets of the King's Chamber to Edward III. He wrote *The Book of the Duchess*, a poem on the death of Blanche, the wife of his patron, John of Gaunt. During the next ten years or so he was often abroad on the King's service, in diplomatic and commercial negotiations. He was appointed Controller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wool, Skins and Hides at the Port of London, and later Controller of Petty Customs.

All this time he was writing poetry when his day's work was over; his greatest poem of this period is *Troilus and Criseyde*. In 1385 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and in the following year a Knight of the Shire for Kent (a position equivalent to that of a modern Member of Parliament). About this time he probably began *The Canterbury Tales*, at which he continued to work for the next ten or twelve years, though the whole scheme was never completed.

In 1389, Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works to Richard II; but some time later he suffered a period of poverty, from which he was rescued by a pension from the King. He received an additional pension on the accession of Henry IV. He died in 1400 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where his tomb is still to be seen in the Poets' Corner.

Chaucer's great knowledge of French and Italian literature, combined with his own skill, enabled him to introduce into English poetry a grace and an urbanity that have earned him the title of "the Father of English Poetry".

In *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer imagines that a group of pilgrims meet at an inn in Southwark before setting out to Canterbury to pay their vows at the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket. He describes each of the twenty-nine pilgrims in detail in the Prologue. The host of the inn accompanies them on their journey and suggests that to while away the tediousness of their pilgrimage the pilgrims should tell one another stories. Into this framework Chaucer introduces twenty-three tales, told by men and women of very different qualities.

In the Middle Ages Pardoners, or Questors, were appointed by religious houses to travel up and down the country and, by appealing to Christian charity, to raise

money for the building and repair of churches and hospitals. But there were many false Pardoners. Chaucer's Pardoner was one of these, and before he begins his tale he explains to the pilgrims the fraudulent ways in which he raises money (which he keeps for himself, of course).

The tale he tells is really the sermon he delivers in the country churches which he visits. With wonderful irony Chaucer makes him take as his theme, *Radix malorum est cupiditas* (greed of gain is the root of evils). Medieval sermons were largely composed of edifying stories:

> For lewèd (ignorant) people loven talès olde;
> Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and holde.

In the version which appears here, various sections of moralising, in which the Pardoner attacks drunkenness, gluttony, gambling and blasphemous oaths, have been omitted, leaving only the narrative by which the Pardoner illustrates his warnings.

It is a masterpiece of story-telling. Though the bones of the story existed in different versions long before Chaucer's time, Chaucer clothes them with a literary skill that has made this the earliest and one of the best of English short stories. The tale moves with speed and an economy of means from its beginning (with a corpse being carried to the grave) to its ending ("What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?"), where, since the reader can now foresee the conclusion, Chaucer rapidly brings his story to a close. The whole dénouement is accomplished in less than ten lines.

The story is surrounded by a powerful atmosphere of allegory: the idea of a quest for an intangible, the significance of which the seekers themselves do not realise. The sense of mystery is at its most profound when the revellers meet the old man (variously thought to symbolise Old Age, the Wandering Jew, or Death itself), who addresses them with such sinister courtesy and utters the mysterious words, "I moot go thider as I have to go".

Yet the allegorical elements exist side by side with examples of striking realism. The revellers meet the old man just as they are going to step over a stile; and later the youngest of them gives a convincing explanation of his need for poison, and the apothecary's reply reveals

the artist's pride in his concoctions. The greater part of the story is told by means of dialogue. Every word of every conversation, with natural diction and easy colloquial flow, completely reflects the character of the speaker. Notice the eldest reveller's impudent manner of address to the old man, and compare his boastful "wide boy's" swagger with the words of his slower-witted companion (page 5, lines 24-26). The student should also note how the personification of death as imagined by a serving-boy introduces us quite naturally to the idea of death as a person, on whom, in their drink-befuddled way, the revellers seek vengeance for the loss of their companion.

The tale is full of irony. On the one hand there is the irony of what the characters (unwittingly) say: the serving-boy's warning ("Me thynketh that it were necessarie For to be war of swich an adversarie"); the old man's advice that the revellers should treat age with the respect they would wish for themselves in their old age, "if that ye so long abyde"; the short-lived joy of the eldest reveller—

who wende
To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?

But beneath the surface there is a profounder irony, the irony of the events and situations: the revellers pledge their word to live *and die* for one another; they succeed in their quest, only to meet their own destruction; the youngest reveller plans the deaths of his companions at the very moment when they are plotting his.

The normal line of *The Pardoner's Tale* has ten syllables. This is often obscured by the fact that sometimes endings in *-e*, *-ed* and *-es* were pronounced as extra syllables. Where such endings occur they have been marked in this edition with a dot. Some words are stressed as if they were French (*e.g.* riotoùr, presènce, dishonoùr, villàge, etc.). These phenomena, together with what appear at first sight to be irregularities of grammar and a merely haphazard method of spelling, spring from the fact that Chaucer, living in the fourteenth century, naturally wrote in Middle English and not in the Modern English we use today. It is not the purpose of these notes to go into the finer linguistic details of Middle English. Their aim is to provide the student with the means to work out for himself an accurate translation in Modern English.

p. 1. 1. **whilom**, once.
2. **haunteden**, habitually practised.
4. **over hir myght**, beyond their capacity.
5. **riotourés**, dissolute revellers, rakes.
6. **erst er**, before.
primé, six o'clock in the morning. Prime was one of the seven times of day appointed by the Church for prayer.
7. **were set hem**, seated themselves.
8. **a bellé**. This would be the lich-bell, formerly carried before a corpse at a funeral.
9. **a cors, was carried**, a corpse that was carried.
10. "One of them called his serving-boy."
11. **Go bet**, go as quickly as you can. *Bet* was the old comparative of *well*, and was eventually superseded by *better*.
axé readily, ask quickly.
12. **heer forby**, past this place.
14. **quod**, said.
it nedeth never a deel, it is not at all necessary (*a deel* = a whit).
16. *pardee*, indeed (originally *par Dieu*, by God).
felawe, companion.
17. **y-slayn**, slain.
to-nyght. In medieval English *tonight* often meant "the night now past", "last night".
18. **For-dronke**, very drunk.
19. **privee**, secret.
clepeth, call.
21. **with his spere**. In medieval illustrations Death is sometimes depicted as a skeleton carrying a spear.
atwo, in two.
22. **mo**, more.
23. **this pestilence**, during this present plague.
25. **Me thynketh**, it seems to me.
p. 2. 1. **war**, wary.
2. "Be ready to meet him at all times."
3. **dame**, mother (*cf.* the modern *dam*, of animals).
5. **seith sooth**, speaks the truth.
6. **Henne over a mile**, above a mile from here.
7. **hyne**, servant.
8. **trowe**, think, believe.
9-10. "A man would be very wise to be wary, before he (Death) did someone an injury."
11. **Goddés armés!** In an earlier part of his tale the Pardoner describes the oaths of the three revellers as

"so greet and so dampnable
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere",

and says that they (metaphorically) tore to pieces our blessed Lord's body. See p. 2, l. 28.
13. **wey**, path or track, as distinct from a road (*strete*).
14. **digne**, worthy.
15. **al ones**, completely at one, in accord.
16. **til**, to.

17. **bicomen otheres brother.** References to the practice of "swearing brotherhood" are common in medieval romances.
20. **er,** before.
21. **han,** have.
hir trouthès plight, pledged their word.
23. **his owene y-born brother,** his own brother by birth.
24. **stirte,** started.
25. **rage,** frenzy
26. **biforn,** before.
28. **to-rente,** tore to pieces (*i.e.* metaphorically, in swearing by the parts of Christ's body).
29. **hente,** seize.
31. **right,** just.
troden, stepped.
32. **An oold man and a pouré,** a man who was old and poor (not "a poor old man"!).
33. **grette,** greeted.
34. **God yow see!** May God keep you in His sight, *i.e.* look after you.
36. **agayn,** back.
carl, wretch.
with sory grace. Pollard translates as "cursed"; while Coghill and Tolkien suggest that probably the whole expression means little more than "You ugly old wretch".
37. **artow,** art thou.
al for-wrappéd, all heavily muffled up.
p. 3. 1. **Why lyvéstow,** why do you live?
2. **gan looke,** looked.
3. **For I ne kan nat fynde,** because I cannot find.
4. **into Ynde,** as far as India.
7. **moot I han,** I must have, keep.
stillé, always, ceaselessly.
10. **kaityf,** unhappy wretch.
11. **moodrès gate,** mother's door (*i.e.* mother earth).
13. **Leevé,** dear.
14. **vanysshe,** waste away.
15. **whan,** when
shul, shall.
16. **wolde I chaungé my cheste,** I would exchange my chest (box containing his clothes or his wealth).
18. **heyré-clowt,** hair-cloth shroud.
19. **grace,** favour.
20. **welkéd,** withered.
21. **to yow it is no curteisye,** it is discourteous of you.
22. **vileynye,** rudeness.
23. **But,** unless.
25. **Agayns an oold man.** "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of an old man" (*Leviticus,* xix. 32).
26. **yeve yow reed,** advise you.
28. **Namooré,** no more. "Any more than you would like people to do to you when you are old, if you last so long."
30. **wher ye go or ryde,** whether you walk or ride.

31. "I must go where I have to go."
33. **this oother hasardour**, this other one, the gambler.
35. **thilkė**, that same.
37. **Have heer my trouthe**, take my word.
espye, spy (*cf.* espionage).
p. 4. 1. **abye**, pay for.
3. **oon of his assent**, in agreement with him, in his conspiracy.
5. **leef**, desirous.
7. **lafte**, left.
fey, faith.
9. **Noght for your boost.** "He won't hide himself at all for any of your boastful talk."
10. **ook**, oak.
11. **boghte agayn**, redeemed (*lit.* bought back).
yow amende, reform you.
13. **everich**, each one.
16. **Wel ny an eightė busshels**, something like eight bushels.
as hem thoughte, or so it seemed to them.
22. **taak kepė**, take note of.
23. **wit**, intelligence.
bourde and pleye, jest and joke.
25. **joliftee**, pleasure, gaiety.
26. **lightly**, easily.
comth, comes.
wol, wil.
27-28. "Oh, God's glory! Whoever thought that we should have had such a wonderful stroke of luck?" (Coghill and Tolkien).
29. "If only this gold could be carried from this spot."
30. **ellės**, else.
31. **wel ye woot**, you know very well.
32. **werė we in heigh felicitee**, we should be in the height of happiness.
35. **doon us honge**, get us hanged.
37. "As carefully and cleverly as possible."
p. 5. 1. **rede**, propose.
cut. When "cut was drawn" a number of straws of different lengths were held in one man's closed hand; the lot fell on the person who drew the shortest.
2. **lat se**, let us see
3. **with hertė blithe**, light-heartedly.
4. **rennė**, run.
ful swithe, very quickly.
6. **kepen**, guard.
7. **if he wol not tarie**, provided he does not delay.
9. **by oon assent**, by common agreement.
10. **fest**, fist.
14. **al so soonė as**, as soon as.
16. **swornė brother.** See note to p. 2, l. 17.
17. **Thy profit**, something to your advantage.
18. **thou woost**, you know.
20. **departed**, divided.
21. **nathélees**, nevertheless.

shape, arrange.
23. **a freendès torn**, a friendly act.
24. **I noot**, I don't know.
25. **tweye**, two.
27. **conseil**, a secret (*i.e.* something on which you will keep counsel).
shrewe, scoundrel.
30. **graunté**, promise.
31. **biwreye**, betray.
33. **strenger**, stronger.
34. **is set**, has sat down.
right anoon, at once.
36. **ryve**, stab, pierce.
p. 6. 5. **lustes**, desires, pleasures.
6. **right at our owene wille**, just as we wish, to our hearts' content.
7. **acorded**, agreed.
8. **thridde**, third.
10. "Turned over and over in his mind."
12. **if so were**, if things so turned out.
14. **trone**, throne.
15. **murye**, happily.
16. **the feend**, the devil.
17. **beye**, buy.
19. **For-why**, because.
in swich lyvynge, in such an evil way of life.
20. **hadde levé**, had permission, acquired the right.
him to sorwé brynge, to make him come to grief.
21. **outrély**, entirely, absolutely, utterly.
entente, intention.
22. **sleen**, slay.
24. **pothecarie**, chemist.
26. **his rattès quelle**, kill the rats he had.
27. **eek**, also.
polcat, polecat.
hawe, yard (*lit.* a hedge—cf. *hawthorn*). Here it implies the piece of ground enclosed by a hedge.
28. **capouns**, capons, cocks.
y-slawe, slain.
29. **fayn he woldè wreke hym**, he would gladly avenge himself.
30. **destroyéd**, ruined.
32. **al so God my soulè savel**, as God may save my soul!
34. **confiture**, concoction.
35. **Noght but the montance of**, though the amount be no more than.
a corn of whete, a grain of wheat.
36. **That he ne shal**, that shall not.
forlete, lose.
37. **sterve**, die (by any means, not just by lack of food).
lassè while, less time.
p. 7. 1. **goon a-pass**, walk at an ordinary pace.
3. **y-hent**, taken.

4. sith, then, afterwards.
6. borwèd, borrowed.
9. shoope hym, planned.
swynke, work.
11. with sory grace, accursed.
13. repaireth, returns.
14. "What need is there to say any more?"
15. caste, planned.
20. happèd hym, happened to him, he happened (to take the bottle).
par cas, by chance.
21. ther, where, in which
22. yaf, gave.

QUESTIONS

1. On what grounds could *The Pardoner's Tale* be described as "a masterpiece of story-telling"?

2. Discuss the significance of the old man whom the revellers meet.

3. Compile a list of details which make the characters and events of the poem seem real.

4. Discuss the various kinds of irony to be found in the poem.

JOHN MILTON. *LYCIDAS*

John Milton was born in London in 1608. His father was a scrivener—that is, a lawyer who drew up contracts and arranged loans. He was a man of independent ideas and a great lover of music; both these qualities he passed on to his children. Milton was educated at St. Paul's School and at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he studied Greek and Latin, as well as Hebrew, and was interested in English, French and Italian literature.

After obtaining a degree in 1632, he spent the next six years with his father at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, and engaged in wide reading of the classics, having in mind always the idea of producing at a future time some great literary work. During this time he wrote *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus* and *Lycidas.* In 1638 he set out for a tour on the Continent. He spent some time in Italy, meeting scholars and writing Latin and Italian verse, but the news of troubles in Church and State which were to lead to the Civil War caused him to return to England in the following year.

Soon afterwards he was involved in political and religious controversy. His skill in the classics led to his appointment in 1649 as Latin Secretary to Cromwell's Council of State. Among his duties was the writing of many pamphlets supporting the Commonwealth and attacking the exiled Royalists. With the

exception of a few sonnets, he wrote no poetry for the next twenty years. He was warned that if he persisted in writing he would lose his sight, but he so greatly wished to uphold the Parliamentary cause that he refused to discontinue his work, and eventually he became completely blind.

At the Restoration, Milton lost his post and the greater part of his fortune. He was forced to spend some time in hiding, but, thanks to the influence of powerful friends, he was saved from imprisonment and death. Except during the time of the Great Plague, when Milton lived at Chalfont St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire, he spent the remainder of his life in London and devoted his time to the composing of his great epic poem *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* (a poem dealing with the temptation of Christ) and *Samson Agonistes* (a dramatic poem in the style of Greek tragedy). Milton died in 1674.

From Milton's own note which immediately follows the title, we can see that the poem is an eulogy and a condemnation. Edward King, the "learned friend", had been a fellow-student of Milton at Christ's College, Cambridge, and after gaining his degree had remained at the College as a tutor and "fellow". When he was twenty-five he was drowned while crossing to Ireland, and his Cambridge friends, deciding to publish a volume of commemorative poems, asked Milton to send a contribution. The result was *Lycidas*. It is a pastoral elegy, modelled on the pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil, but Milton does not preserve the elegiac strain throughout. He uses the poem to give his views about the abuses of his own time, especially about the corruption in the Church, and to give his own feeling about the enduring power of fame. The poem is thus as much about John Milton as about Edward King. Milton's tenderness for his dead friend, however, is quite sincere, and his poem ends like most elegies, with a reference to the triumph of the dead scholar.

The student should read the introductory notes to Shelley's *Adonais* (p. 63) and Arnold's *Thyrsis* (p. 98), two other great pastoral elegies.

In the introductory part of the poem Milton explains that he has undertaken the work, although he had not meant to write any poetry until he had fully prepared himself for such a task; the death of Lycidas must be lamented (p. 7, l. 1—p. 8, l. 9). He then invokes the help of the Muses (ll. 10-17) and, pretending that he and Lycidas were fellow-shepherds, states how close their

friendship had been (ll. 18-31). He shows how deeply he feels his friend's loss (l. 32—p. 9, l. 8) and grieves that neither the nymphs nor the Muse herself could preserve his friend's life (ll. 9-22). Turning from the pastoral convention, he discusses the true nature of Fame (l. 23—p. 10, l. 7). He then returns to the pastoral and points out that even Neptune had been unable to save Lycidas (ll. 8-25). The drowned man is mourned by Camus (the University of Cambridge, ll. 26-30) and by St. Peter (the Church, ll. 31-35). Then, still keeping to the pastoral idea, Milton enters on a diatribe against those shepherds of the Church who neglect their duties, and points out that their sloth and selfishness will be punished (p. 10, ll. 1-17). Nature is next asked to bring her flowers to strew the hearse of Lycidas (ll. 18—p. 12, l. 4), and the writer of the poem wonders where the dead body is really laid (ll. 5-15). Then follows the noble thought that Lycidas is not dead but has joined the heavenly company (ll. 16-36), and, finally, Milton makes a reference to the song he has just composed and to his own life (p. 13, ll. 1-8).

Among the many excellences of *Lycidas* the following may be particularly noted.

(1) The appropriate imagery, *e.g.* the references to himself as a gatherer of fruits, picking unripe berries and gathering leaves that are not ready to fall, to Lycidas as a shepherd, and to the River Cam.

(2) The variation of stress in the verse, which avoids monotony in a longer poem and is sometimes used for a particular effect, *e.g.* the short fourth line seems to show his rashness in undertaking this great work, the broken line (p. 9, l. 15) suggests the disjointed nature of a dream.

(3) The irregular rhyme-scheme, *e.g.* some lines have no corresponding rhymes (p. 7, l. 1; p. 8, l. 8; p. 8, l. 10); sometimes couplets are used, sometimes alternate rhymes, sometimes the rhyme is greatly delayed. This seems to give the impression of the sea under which Lycidas lies, with wavelets coming at irregular intervals.

(4) Frequent alliteration, *e.g.* p. 8, l. 10; p. 12, l. 2; p. 12, l. 22.

(5) Repetition, which often leaves a feeling of pathos, *e.g.* p. 8, ll. 3, 4, and 5.

(6) The vowel sounds, which often give a lingering effect of sorrow, *e.g.* p. 8, l. 36; p. 9, ll. 1 and 2; p. 9, l. 17, etc.

(7) The use of a pause, marked sometimes by a question mark, sometimes by a semi-colon.

(8) The classical allusions.

(9) The delight in nature. Most of the illustrations taken from nature are simple and well known, and the flowers are given with a flash of detail—"the rathe Primrose", "the tufted Crow-toe", "the Pansie freakt with jeat", etc. The criticism that all these flowers do not bloom at the same time is beside the point. The point is that all the seasons bring their offerings.

(10) A number of expressions in which two ideas are involved, *e.g.* (*a*) "blind mouthes" (p. 11, l. 5)—the clergy in their corrupt ways of life are spiritually blind and they are also great gluttons for the material wealth and pleasure of this world; (*b*) the "two-handed engine" (p. 11, l. 16), which may mean the two-edged sword carried by the divine figure seen by St. John (*Revelation* i. 16) or the axe which is laid at the root of the tree (*St. Matthew* iii. 10).

(11) The contrast between the beautiful music of the rest of the poem and the harsh sounds in the words applied to the clergy, *e.g.* "Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw" (p. 11, l. 10).

(12) The use of climax, *e.g.* "Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold" (p. 11, l. 1).

(13) The dramatic use of apostrophe when the Angel is addressed (p. 12, l. 14).

N.B.—The spelling and punctuation of *Lycidas* in this edition are Milton's own, as they appear in the first edition of the poem, published in 1638.

p. 7. 1. Yet once more. Milton had written no poetry since he had composed *Comus* four years before, in 1634.

1-2. laurels, myrtles, ivy. Used for crowns to bestow distinction on poets.

2. never-sear, evergreen.

4. rude, unskilful.

5. mellowing year, the time of the year which would ripen them. Milton thought he was not yet ready to write great poetry.

p. 8. **1. dear,** heartfelt.

6. he knew himself to sing, he knew how to sing, *i.e.* how to write poetry.

7. watry bear, *i.e.* watery bier. King's body was not carried to a grave, but lost at sea.

8. welter, roll to and fro (on the waves).

9. melodious tear, poetical lament.

10. Sisters of the sacred well, the Muses, the goddesses of poetry and the arts, believed to dance round the sacred springs on Mount Helicon, where their father Jove lived.

14. Muse, here means a poet.

18. we were nurst upon the self-same hill, *i.e.* we studied at the same college—Christ's College, Cambridge.

22. drove, drove our flocks, *i.e.* pursued our studies.

27. Rural ditties, the poems of Milton and King.

28. th'Oaten flute, the pipe made of oat stems and used by shepherds in pastoral verse.

29. Satyrs, Fauns. Pastoral divinities (representing the students and Fellows at Cambridge).

31. Damoetas. A classical shepherd's name (probably representing a tutor of Milton and King).

35. gadding, straggling.

p. 9. **3. Fanning,** moving like fans.

5. Taint-worm. Supposed to infect cattle.

6. wardrop, wardrobe.

13. Mona, Anglesey.

14. Deva. The River Dee.

wisard stream. One of the legends about the Dee, which formed the boundary between England and Wales, held that changes in its course foretold the fortunes of the two countries. King had sailed from Chester, on the Dee.

15. fondly, foolishly.

17. Orpheus. The son of Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry. He was said to be able to hold beasts and trees spellbound by his music. He offended the Thracian women, who worshipped the god Dionysus in wild rites; in revenge they tore him to pieces and threw his head into the River Hebrus, down which it floated and was carried across the sea to the island of Lesbos.

23. What boots it? Of what use is it?

24. Shepherds trade, *i.e.* poetry.

25. meditate the thankles Muse, practise the art of poetry, which brings no material profit.

27-8. Amaryllis, Neaera. Names of shepherdesses in classical poetry.

29. clear, pure.

30. last infirmity, the last of the weaknesses that the man who seeks nobility of mind is likely to overcome.

32. Guerdon, reward.

34. blind Fury. Milton really means "blind Fate". In Greek mythology there were three Fates—Clotho, who spun the thread of man's life; Lachesis, who measured it; and Atropos, who cut it off, with no regard to merit.

36. Phoebus, Apollo. The god of poetry.

my trembling ears, *i.e.* hearing the voice of a god made me tremble.

p. 10. 2. foil, a thin sheet of metal put behind a jewel to show it up; here, any bright setting.

3. broad rumour, widespread fame.

4. by those pure eyes, as it is judged in the clear sight (of God).

6. lastly, finally.

8. Arethuse. A fountain near Syracuse, in Sicily. Milton uses it to symbolise the greatest of Greek pastoral poets, Theocritus, a native of Syracuse.

9. Mincius. A river near Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil, the greatest Latin pastoral poet.

vocal reeds, reeds which can be made into shepherds' pipes.

10. that strain. The reply of Phoebus.

11. Oate, pastoral verse.

12. Herald of the Sea, Triton, the son of Neptune, the god of the sea. He blew a horn made from a large shell.

13. In Neptune's plea, to defend Neptune from any charge of responsibility for King's death.

14. Fellon, cruel, wicked

19. Hippotades. Aeolus, the son of Hippotes; he controlled the winds, which he kept imprisoned in a cave.

22. Panope. A sea-nymph, one of the fifty daughters of the sea-god Nereus.

24. in th'eclipse, *i.e.* at an unlucky time.

25. sacred, devoted to (in this case, to death).

26. Camus, the River Cam, representing the University of Cambridge.

27. Mantle hairy. A reference to the river-weed which floats on the Cam.

28. figures dim. This perhaps refers to the streaks which appear on withered sedge leaves.

29. that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe, the hyacinth. Hyacinthus was a Spartan prince who was accidentally killed by Apollo. The Greeks believed that this flower had sprung from his blood and that they could trace the words "ai, ai" (alas! alas!) on its petals.

30. pledge, child.

32. The Pilot of the Galilean Lake. St. Peter. Peter was originally a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. Here he represents the Church, which King intended to enter.

33. Two massy Keyes, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, promised to Peter by Christ (*Matthew*, xvi. 19).

34. amain, with force (*cf.* "with might and main").

35. Miter'd locks, wearing the bishop's mitre. Peter was the first bishop.

37. Anow, enough.

p. 11. 1. the fold, the English Church. Milton has in mind the parable of the Good Shepherd (*St. John*, x).

3. the shearers feast, a popular rural festival (like the harvest-home). Here it represents the good posts which the corrupt clergy are aiming at.

5. Blind mouthes. The corrupt clergy are spiritually blind and greedy (for money).

6. Sheep-hook, crosier, bishop's crook, pastoral staff.

8. What recks it them? What do they care?

are sped, have succeeded.

9. when they list, when they wish (to preach)—which is not very often.

lean and flashy songs, sermons which contain no instruction and are insipid.

10. scrannel, thin.

12. rank mist, *i.e.* poisonous teaching.

draw, breathe in.

14. the grim Woolf, the Roman Catholic Church.

with privy paw, *i.e.* secretly making converts.

15. and nothing sed, *i.e.* without opposition.

16. that two-handed engine. There have been many explanations of this mysterious but impressive phrase. Clearly Milton is referring to the vengeance of God. He may have been thinking of the two-edged sword carried by the divine figure seen by St. John (*Revelation,* i. 16) or the axe which is laid at the root of the tree "which bringeth not forth good fruit" (*Matthew,* iii. 10).

at the door, *i.e.* of the sheepfold (the Church).

18. Alpheus. A stream in Southern Greece. In Greek mythology the god of this stream fell in love with the nymph Arethuse; she fled to Sicily and was tranformed into a fountain near Syracuse, but he flowed under the sea and was united with the fountain. Like Arethuse (p. 10, l. 8), Alpheus is used by Milton to represent the pastoral style, which is resumed after "the dread voice" of the preceding lines.

19. Sicilian muse. Theocritus (representing pastoral poetry).

22. use, dwell.

24. The swart Star, Sirius, the Dog-star, which appears in the hottest part of the summer (the "dog-days"), producing swarthiness of complexion.

sparely looks, seldom casts an evil influence.

25. quaint enameld eyes, dainty flowers of variegated colours.

28. rathe, early. (Only the comparative, "rather", survives today).

forsaken. Since the primrose grows in shady places, Milton imagines it to be forsaken by the sun, which is often described as the lover of the flowers. Milton originally wrote "unmarried".

29. Crow-toe, wild hyacinth.

Gessamine, *i.e.* jasmine.

30. freakt, flecked or streaked.

jeat, *i.e.* jet.

32. attired, with the head dressed. "Tire" was a Spenserian word for a woman's head-dress (*cf.* "tiara").

woodbine, honeysuckle.

34. sad embroidery, sober colouring.

35. Amaranthus. A mythical flower which was supposed never to fade.

p. 12. **2. Laureate Herse,** bier covered with laurel (since King had written verse). See note to p. 7, ll. 1-2.

3-4. "In order to soften our grief a little, let our tender thoughts play with a fanciful idea"—that Lycidas's body is lying on a bier covered with flowers instead of being tossed by the waves.

5. Ay me! "Alas! the truth is different."

8. whelming, overwhelming, engulfing.

9. monstrous world, world of monsters.

10. moist vows, tearful prayers.

11. by the fable of Bellerus, near the scene of the legend of Bellerus. Milton appears to have coined the name Bellerus from the Roman name for Cornwall, Bellerium.

12. the great vision of the guarded Mount. The archangel Michael. St. Michael is said to have appeared on St. Michael's Mount (so called after him), a hill on the coast of Cornwall. One of the rocks is still called St. Michael's Chair. Milton calls it "the guarded Mount" because a fortress was later built on the hill.

13. Namancos and Bayona's hold. Places on the north-west coast of Spain. There was an old tradition, probably dating from the time of the Armada, that St. Michael's Mount looked directly towards Spain.

hold, castle.

14. Look homeward. Milton urges the archangel Michael to turn from Spain and to look at the coast of England. He will be filled with pity when he sees the dead Lycidas.

15. Dolphins. A reference to the story of Arion, a Greek poet and musician, who, when captured by pirates and thrown overboard, was carried to land by a dolphin which had been charmed by his music. An apt connexion with Lycidas, who "knew himself to sing".

waft, convey safely by water.

19. day-star, the sun.

21. tricks, dresses, decks.

Ore, *i.e.* golden rays.

24. him that walk'd the waves, Christ (*Matthew*, xiv. 25).

25. other groves, *i.e.* not on earth, but in heaven.

26. Nectar, a fragrant liquid; in classical mythology the drink of the gods.

oozy, wet with sea-water.

27. unexpressive, inexpressible.

nuptiall Song, sung at "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (*Revelation*, xix. 9).

32. Wipe the tears. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (*Revelation*, xxi. 4).

34. Genius, guardian spirit.

35. In thy large recompense, in ample recompense to thee.

p. 13. **1. uncouth,** unskilled. Milton is here referring to himself.

3. various Quills, reed pipes from which the player produced varied notes. Milton is referring to the changes of feeling in the poem he has just written.

4. Dorick, pastoral The Doric dialect of Greek was spoken in Sicily. The pastoral verse of Theocritus was written in the Doric dialect.

5. stretch'd out all the hills, made long shadows of the hills.

7. twitch'd, pulled round him.

blew, *i.e.* blue.

8. fresh Woods, and Pastures new. This may refer to Milton's plans for his journey to Italy, or to his decision to write poetry of a different kind from the pastoral. The smooth and settled flow of these last eight lines contrasts with the uncertainties and varied movement of the rest of the poem.

QUESTIONS

1. What allusions are made in *Lycidas* to contemporary events and institutions?

2. What knowledge do you gain from the poem of Milton's own character, his hopes and fears?

3. It has been said that "the theme of *Lycidas* is how the man of talents and ideals can come to terms with the prospect of sudden and premature death". Do you agree?

4. Write notes on the following: Orpheus, "that two-handed engine at the door", Alpheus, "the great vision of the guarded Mount".

JOHN DRYDEN. *CYMON AND IPHIGENIA*

Dryden was born in 1631. He was educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was to become one of England's greatest men of letters, a prolific writer of plays, poems and prose works, the greatest literary figure of the Augustan age and perhaps the greatest writer of poetical satire in the language.

His first important poem, *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell* (1659), was soon followed by *Astraea Redux*, on the return of Charles II. He wrote his first play in 1663; among the many which followed the most important were *Aureng-Zebe*, a tragedy; *The Conquest of Granada*, a heroic play; *Marriage à la Mode*, the best of his early comedies; and *All for Love*, a version of the story of Antony and Cleopatra.

In 1663 Dryden married the wealthy Lady Elizabeth Howard. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and was appointed Poet Laureate in 1668.

He wrote much literary criticism, often in the form of prefaces to his plays. His greatest work in this field is his *Essay of*

Dramatic Poesy. In 1681 Dryden wrote his first great satirical poem, *Absalom and Achitophel*, attacking the Earl of Shaftesbury's party, and this was followed by *The Medal* and *MacFlecknoe*, two further crushing satires.

In 1682 he wrote *Religio Laici*, defending the Anglican theology, but in 1686 Dryden joined the Roman Catholic Church and in the following year published *The Hind and the Panther*, a defence of Roman Catholic theology. On the abdication of James II and the succession of William and Mary, Dryden lost the office of Poet Laureate to Thomas Shadwell, the man he had attacked in *MacFlecknoe*.

Dryden made a brief return to the writing of plays, but the later years of his life were largely occupied with translations, which were highly successful financially; his translation of Virgil was said to have brought him £1,200.

He died in 1700 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

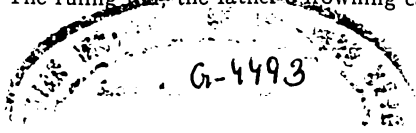
Dryden's last great work was *Fables Ancient and Modern*, a collection of loose translations of tales by Chaucer, Boccaccio, Homer, and Ovid, with a delightful preface which contains a long discussion on Chaucer. It is probably Dryden's most varied collection of verse, and Wordsworth described the *Fables* as "the best, at least the most poetical, of his poems". The volume contained three tales, *Sigismonda and Guiscardo, Theodore and Honoria*, and *Cymon and Iphigenia*, from *The Decameron*, in which the fourteenth-century Italian poet, Boccaccio, imagines a group of young Florentines fleeing from the plague to a neighbouring villa, where they amuse one another by telling tales.

The verse-form of *Cymon and Iphigenia* is the heroic couplet, which Dryden did so much to perfect. Its main characteristic as used by Dryden is its variety. This arises not merely from its occasional triplets (three lines rhyming together), Alexandrines, and "fourteeners"—

> The fanning wind upon her bosom blows,
> To meet the fanning wind her bosom rose;
> The fanning wind and purling streams continue her repose;

but from the variety of movement and pause within each line. Consider the particular rhythm of each of the following lines, taken from the first thirty lines of the poem:

> Where either sex is formed of softer earth (an example of a perfectly regular line);
> Wise, wealthy, with a numerous issue blest;
> Beauty was there, but beauty in disgrace;
> The ruling rod, the father's frowning care.



Dryden also obtains contrast of movement in the two lines of the same couplet—

> A clownish mien, a voice with rustic sound,
> And stupid eyes that ever love the ground;

and sometimes within each line itself—

> Restraining others, yet himself not free,
> Made impotent by power, debased by dignity.

Much of the vigour of Dryden's lines derives from alliteration:

> His corn and cattle were his only care.
>
> Then day and darkness in the mass were mixed,
> Till gathered in a globe the beams were fixed.

The student will be able to find for himself many other examples of this device; of Dryden's fondness for repetition and echo:

> Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
>
> He seemed, nor only seemed, but was inspired.

and of his skill in various forms of word-play:

> Made impotent by power, debased by dignity.

But Dryden's strength is not based on metrical and verbal effects alone. Notice his apposite similes:

> Fixed as a pilgrim wildered in his way,
> Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray;
> But stands with awful eyes to watch the dawn of day.

The lines describing the storm (p. 21) are full of vigour, with short, jerky phrases, alliteration ("Forsake by fits and fill the flagging sails", etc.), successions of harsh consonants, and a feeling of continuous movement. The famous description of the militia (p. 23) is full of scorn; notice the stinging contempt of the antitheses in these lines,

> Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,
> And ever, but in times of need, at hand,

reflecting the burly insufficiency of the militiamen; and its concluding lines, which by their very sound seem to represent the rapid movement to the public house. The passage which tells of the appearance of Cymon and Lysimachus at the banquet (p. 28) shows a sudden acceleration, and the fight which follows is given a special zest by the inclusion of no fewer than three sets of triplets and Alexandrines.

p. 13. **9. that sweet isle.** Cyprus, famous in ancient times for the worship of Venus, the goddess of beauty and love.

15. sincere, unmixed.

19. joined. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this was pronounced "jined" and thus rhymed perfectly with "mind".

23. clownish mien, the bearing of a peasant.

27. But made for two. This, the last of three lines rhyming together, is an Alexandrine, containing twelve syllables. Dryden, always experimenting in verse, was fond of making occasional use of triplets and Alexandrines—and sometimes of triplets and "fourteeners" (see p. 15, ll. 4-6; p. 27, ll. 28-30).

29. wit, intelligence.

p. 14. **7. Nature,** natural feeling or affection (because Cymon was his son).

9. rude, rough, unskilled.

11. A squire among the swains, a young man of good birth among the peasants.

17. quarter-staff, a long pole tipped with iron, formerly used as a weapon by English peasants.

28. Dian, *i.e.* Diana, the goddess of hunting.

29. Eurotas. A river of southern Greece, on which Sparta stood.

30. dame, a woman of rank. To call a woman a "dame" was perhaps somewhat poetic in Dryden's day but certainly not colloquial, as it is today. Notice the changes in meaning of this word since Chaucer's day (p. 8).

expressed, represented.

31. vest, robe (*not* the modern sense).

34. composed with decent care, carefully arranged in a becoming posture.

35. cymarr, a loose, light garment for women.

p. 15. **4-6.** Besides being a triplet and "fourteener" (see note to p. 13, l. 27), these lines illustrate another device of which Dryden was fond—the "turn", which has been defined as "the musical repetition of a phrase with variations of meaning" (though it is difficult to see the variations of meaning in this example).

14. found his want of words, realised his inability to express himself.

15. doubted, feared, suspected.

16. clown-accent, the speech of a peasant.

18. native, in its natural state, before being touched by art (in this case, by God's creating word). Dryden compares the dawn of understanding in Cymon with God's first act of creation, "Let there be light".

23. brutal, like that of an animal, unrefined.

p. 16. **1. somewhat,** something.

8. or this or t'other, either this or that.

10. in gross, in a general way.

14. several, separate, different.

p. 17. **1. wildered,** lost in a wild or unknown place.

3. awful, terror-stricken.

6. double day revealed, *i.e.* by opening both her eyes.

8. cudden, born fool.
16. sot, blockhead, dolt.
24. essayed, tried, put to the test.
34. doubtfully, apprehensively.
p. 18. 11. fashioned, transformed.
his tongue he filed, he polished his speech.
22. progress. This word was used of a state journey made by a king or queen.
29. of the better hand, in the right direction.
35. bishoped, ordained.
the fair, one of the fair sex.
p. 19. 5. Rhodian, from Rhodes, an island near Cyprus.
8. speed, be successful.
9. the doom was past, the decision had already been made.
10. prevent, forestall.
32. prove, make trial of, test.
36. grapples, grappling irons.
p. 20. 24. signed the accord, compelled them to assent.
p. 21. 1. the Spartan spouse. Helen, wife of the Trojan king. She was carried off to Troy by Paris.
7. secure of fate, feeling confident about the future.
8. Candy. Candia, a town in Crete.
19. prevents, is too quick for. *Cf.* above.
23. different, coming from different directions.
24. counterbuffed, stopped by a blow in the opposite direction.
25. the proud archangel. Lucifer. His fall from heaven is described in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
35. forfeit faith, breach of faith, faithlessness.
p. 22. 6. Powers, gods.
9. That for his daring enterprise. "Making him believe that it was because of him and his bold action that she would be punished by death; though she did not really believe this, Iphigene allowed him to go on thinking so."
13. Sex to the last, she acted like a woman to the very end, *i.e.* in changing her mind.
31. tempt, try.
p. 23. 3. cheer, expression (of face).
5. Not them but theirs. Cymon's men fear, not the men of Pasimond's ship, but their countrymen, the men of Rhodes, who, on account of superior numbers, would capture the Cypriots before they could flee.
15. Of seeming arms. "To make a brief attempt at pretending to be soldiers." Dryden is making fun of the English militia of his day, auxiliary civilian forces who were drilled and given military training once a month, in case of emergency.
28. addressed, prepared.
29. his, *i.e.* his men.
32. the church of womankind. A reference to the doctrine of passive obedience.
35. It rested. "It remained either to drop Cymon from the Wheel of Fortune (*i.e.* to put an end to his life), or to raise him up again."

p. 24. 1. **pleased,** was determined (a Latinism).
31. **A slave to fame,** governed in his actions by what people would say, by his good name.
p. 25. 11. **his wit the praetor bent,** the magistrate directed his wisdom.
12. **event,** result.
15. **example,** parallel case.
19. **menage,** husband, treat carefully.
p. 26. 4. **own,** yield, acknowledge.
35. **neuter,** neutral.
p. 27. 1. **provoke,** call forth, summon.
6. **joy,** enjoy.
12. **dissolved,** deprived of force.
14. **suborn,** prepare secretly.
19. **It pleased.** See note above.
p. 28. 2. **vests.** See note, p. 23.
8. **harpies.** Winged monsters who tormented the blind soothsayer, Phineus, by carrying off the food that was placed before him.
19. **purchased,** obtained by exertion.
26. **unbathed,** *i.e.* in blood. Cymon's coat of mail prevented the blade from entering his body.
30. **enured,** inured, accustomed.
34. **corps,** corpses.
35. **floats,** overspreads.
p. 29. 4. **buxom,** pliant, yielding.
14. **darts,** spears.
15. **missive,** missile.
19. **Jove's isle.** Crete. The Greeks claimed that a nature goddess worshipped by the Cretans was the mother of Zeus, the father of the gods, whom the Romans called Jove.
20. **Candian shore.** See note on "Candy", p. 24.

QUESTIONS

1. With detailed reference to the poem, illustrate Dryden's skill in vigorous and forceful story-telling.

2. Discuss the humour of the poem, with detailed reference and quotation.

3. Write an essay on Dryden's use of the heroic couplet, with detailed illustration from *Cymon and Iphigenia*.

4. Discuss the different kinds of descriptive writing to be found in the poem (of individuals, groups, nature, and natural phenomena, etc.).

ALEXANDER POPE. *THE RAPE OF THE LOCK*

Alexander Pope was born in 1688. He was a Roman Catholic and a cripple, and suffered on both accounts. It is not surprising that when he became a poet (and he was precocious writer) he

should eventually wield a bitter pen. After some early descriptive poetry, he wrote *An Essay in Criticism* in 1711 and *The Rape of the Lock* in 1714. He published a translation of Homer's *Iliad* between 1715 and 1720 and of Homer's *Odyssey* in 1725-6, both in heroic couplets. They were a great financial success. About the same time he published an edition of Shakespeare, which was severely criticised by Theobald, whom Pope then made the first hero of his great satire on dullness, *The Dunciad*. This poem was much altered and enlarged before the final version appeared in 1742. Pope wrote many other satires in succeeding years, as well as a philosophical poem, *An Essay on Man*, and several *Moral Essays*. He was a friend, and later an enemy, of Addison, and a friend of Swift. Most of his life was spent at his large villa in Twickenham, where he died in 1744.

This famous poem is a satire on the fashionable society of Pope's day, and especially on the younger ladies of the Beau Monde. The *Iliad* of Homer, which was well known to the literary world of his day, presented a hero and displayed his heroism against fearful odds. *The Rape of the Lock* chooses a worthless hero and incidents of the utmost triviality. Hence it is well described as a mock-heroic poem, and is probably the best specimen of such verse in existence.

Pope gave an account of the circumstances which led him to write the poem. The young Lord Petre had cut a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor, a famous beauty, and as a result the families to which these young people belonged were the worst of friends. Pope's friend, John Caryll, suggested that such a poem as Pope actually wrote might be a means of bringing the families together again. The desired result was attained; Miss Fermor herself supplying some of her friends with copies of it. The first sketch consisted of two Cantos only; the second edition was enlarged to five Cantos by the addition of what Pope called "the machinery of the Sylphs". Pope gives Miss Fermor the name of Belinda: Lord Petre becomes the Baron; Thalestris is Miss Morley, a friend of Miss Fermor: while Sir Plume is Miss Morley's brother, Sir George Brown. We do not know who Clarissa is.

So great was Pope's knowledge of the Greek and Latin Classics that he was admirably fitted to write a burlesque of them, by treating trivial subjects as though they were of the first importance. He was well acquainted with the epics of Homer, which he later translated into English

verse. The account of the petticoat worn by Belinda is reminiscent of the account in the *Iliad* of the shield of Ajax; the desertion of Belinda by Ariel recalls the desertion of Hector by Apollo; the list of "bodies chang'd to various forms by Spleen" reminds one of a passage in the *Iliad*.

The student who reads Dryden's *Cymon and Iphigenia* (and the introductory note to that poem, p. 21) will easily understand that Pope followed the path of Dryden in his use of the heroic couplet. Though less forceful, Pope practises many of the same effects as Dryden, often with greater delicacy and subtlety. His couplets are sometimes examples of extreme compression:

> Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
> Beaux banish beaux, and coaches drive.

(the student should note the varied placing of the repetitions).

Most appropriately in a poem which throughout attacks those who hold a false scale of values, Pope makes frequent use of anti-climax.

> Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
> Or some frail china jar receive a flaw.

> Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
> When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last.

The student should pay particular attention to the description of Belinda's "devotions" before her dressing-table (p. 33), the delicacy of the lines describing the guardian sylphs (pp. 35-36), and the mock-heroic account of the game of Ombre (pp. 38-40).

Canto First

Belinda is asleep; a youth in her dream whispers to her of the spirits who protect such as seem to be in danger. She is roused by her dog and proceeds to perform her toilet with the aid of her maid and the unseen help of the sylphs.

p. 30. 1. The opening lines recall those of the *Iliad*; thus Pope ensures that educated readers will recognise the classical form of the whole poem.

13. Sol, the sun.

14. Those eyes, *i.e.* Belinda's.

17. The bell and the **slipper** were to call Belinda's maid; the pressed watch would repeat the last hour it had recorded.

20. Sylph. A creature of the air, and favourable to mortals.

23. birth-night beau. On the occasions of birthdays in the Royal Family fashionable young men displayed their smartest clothes.

31. elves. They were supposed to leave sixpences for the maids.

circled green, *i.e.* by fairy rings seen on the grass after dewy nights.

p. 31. 7. wits, intelligent persons. Sceptical wits would not believe in the presence of these spirits.

12. the box, *i.e.* at the theatre.

the ring. A circular drive, in Hyde Park, already a fashionable resort.

14. two pages and a chair, *i.e.* a sedan chair.

24. ombre, a card game, played in detail in the third canto.

27. sprites of fiery termagants, spirits of scolding women.

28. salamander. A creature supposed to live in fire.

30. nymphs, *i.e.* girls or young women.

tea, pronounced "tay".

31. prude, a woman who is proud of her modesty, and ridiculously so.

gnome, spirit of earth, hostile to human beings. Gnomes are the opposites of the sylphs

33. coquettes, flirts.

p. 32. 4. spark, lover.

10. conscious of their face, aware of their beauty.

11. predestined. The gnomes give their victims the idea that they are destined to be the brides of titled husbands, and even to be called "Your Grace".

25. impertinence, foolish conduct, not insolence.

27. one man's treat. Many a nymph might fall a victim were she to attend one man's party; it is her sylph who leads her to attend someone else's ball instead.

28-29. Florio, Damon. The names of lovers in seventeenth-century romantic novels.

31. toyshop. "Toys" are trifles, vanities. Toyshop suggests that the hearts of women are well stocked with trivialities.

33. drive, drive out, expel.

p. 33. 1. Ariel. Also the name of the airy sprite in Shakespeare's *Tempest.*

3. ruling star. The influence of the stars upon human destiny was long believed in; some people believe in it still.

10. He said. The words remind one of Virgil's fondness for using the word "dixit" after a long speech in *The Aeneid.*

Shock. The name of Belinda's pet dog.

13. billet-doux, love-letter.

14. Wounds, etc. Such words would normally be found in a love-letter.

ardours, longings.

15. The vision, the ideas contained in her dreams of the sylph and her warnings against lovers and their wiles.

16. toilet, dressing table.
22. The'inferior priestess. Belinda's maid, who is named in the last line of this canto.
29. Arabia. Famed for perfumes. Lady Macbeth's references to them should be recalled.
30. tortoise, tortoise-shell.
elephant, *i.e.* ivory.
33. patches, black plasters calling attention to some specially beautiful feature of the lady's face. Sometimes the plasters indicated the wearer's political party.
p. 34. 5. these, those, *i.e.* some, others.

Canto Second

Belinda and her friends take a boat to Hampton Court, the sylphs being entrusted with the safety of the heroine.

10. the rival, *i.e.* Belinda (see p. 30, l. 14).
32. hairy springes, wire traps for birds.
33. finny prey. A characteristic eighteenth-century phrase for "fish" (what Wordsworth called "poetic diction").
p. 35. 9. Phoebus, the sun.
12. vast French romances. These novels extended to very great length and were popular in England in translations. They dealt, as a rule, with romantic lovers.
27. careful thoughts, thoughts giving rise to anxiety.
p. 36. 23. glebe, ploughed field.
28. fair, *i.e.* fair sex.
37. flounce. The sylphs suggest slight changes in the gowns. the addition of a flounce, for example, or something equally trivial.
p. 37. 5. Diana's law, *i.e.* the laws of chastity.
6. China jar. There was a craze for collecting them at this time.
26. be stopped in vials, be shut up in narrow bottles, or phials.
31. styptics, substances for closing small wounds or cuts.
32. rivelled, furrowed or wrinkled (*not* shrivelled).
33. Ixion. A character in Greek mythology who was condemned to be bound to an ever-revolving wheel.
34. mill. The chocolate mill, in which the solid chocolate had to be ground to powder to make "an excellent West India drink", very popular with the fashionable world.
p. 38. 2. thrid, thread.

Canto Third

The young folk enjoy themselves in talk and with the cards, but in spite of the sylphs Belinda loses a lock of her hair to the Baron's scissors.

8. a structure. Hampton Court Palace, recently rebuilt by William III.

32. **ombre.** In the lines that follow, Pope describes in full the game of Ombre. Charles Lamb's friend, Mrs. Battle, played over this game with him. Three people play, one of whom holds the bank. Belinda won the last trick with the King of Hearts. The game is not played in England nowadays. It was introduced from Spain, and this is why the cards have Spanish names.

p. 39. 1. **sacred nine,** *i.e.* the Muses.

4. **Matadore.** Matadores were the chief cards. **Spadillio** was the Ace of Spades, **Manillio** was the two of trumps, **Basto** was the Ace of Clubs, and **Pam** was the Knave of Clubs.

p. 40. 4. **The Club's black tyrant.** Pope describes the King of Clubs in some detail.

27. **codille.** A player who makes more tricks than the Ombre who is banker (in this case it was Belinda) wins the game. This critical situation is called codille; but she wins the last trick with the King of Hearts and so is the winner. The care with which Pope described the court cards is to be noted.

p. 41. 3. **For lo!** They now indulge in chocolate, coffee, wine and tea. What follows is a burlesque of the descriptions of feasts to be found in Homer. The lines about coffee "which makes the politician wise . . ." are frequently quoted.

20. **Scylla.** The daughter of Nisus, who was besieged in Megara by Minos of Crete, with whom she fell in love. She offered to surrender Megara to Minos, to do which she had to cut a golden hair from her father's head. Minos was so disgusted at her treachery that he discarded her, and she was changed to a lark.

26. **two-edged weapon,** *i.e.* scissors (called a forfex nineteen lines later). The whole account of the severing of the lock is a burlesque of critical moments as described by Homer.

p. 42. 18. **Not louder shrieks . . . lie.** The great disasters to a society woman—the death of the husband or a pet dog, or the breaking of a china ornament—suggest her lack of sense of proportion.

26. **Atalantis.** A popular book of scandalous stories about Whig politicians of Pope's day.

Canto Fourth

A struggle takes place betwen the Baron's supporters and Belinda's.

p. 43. 1. **But anxious cares . . . breast.** Belinda's distress is here contrasted with the Baron's triumph at the end of Canto Three.

10. **Cynthia.** No particular person is intended here.

15. **Umbriel.** A gnome, who represents the beings hostile to the human race.

18. **Spleen.** An organ of the body, supposed to produce the feelings of depression and ill-temper associated with melancholy, and liver upsets. Personified, she is attended by her two handmaids, Pain and Megrim (migraine), while here two lesser servants, Ill-nature and Affectation, wait for her commands.

32. **lampoons,** personal and scandalous libels.

p. 44. 7. **A constant vapour.** "Vapours" was the name once used for nervous depression, which gave rise to the symptoms mentioned in the following lines.

14. **machines.** Angels, or gods, were let down upon the stage by machinery to solve otherwise insoluble situations in certain plays. (Hence the phrase, *deus ex machina.*)

24. **spleenwort,** a type of fern, here used to protect the gnome from the effects of spleen.

25. **queen,** *i.e.* spleen herself.

32. **pet,** temper.

p. 45. 7. **chagrin,** melancholy, anxieties. The gnome wants to alter the cheerful disposition of Belinda mentioned on p. 44, ll. 33-34.

27. **Was it for this?** This and the following lines detail the labours of the hair toilet.

33. **ravisher,** thief, despoiler.

p. 46. 7. **Exposed through crystal.** The Baron might have the hair mounted in a ring which he might exhibit to his friends in his pride.

10. **Hyde Park Circus,** *i.e.* the ring (see p. 32, l. 12).

11. **the sound of Bow.** One born within the sound of the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside is called a cockney. A wit would live in the West End.

13. **men, monkeys . . . all!** A catalogue of the things the fair sex valued.

14. **Sir Plume,** the brother of Thalestris.

17. **the nice conduct . . . cane.** The dexterous management of his dappled cane.

19. **the case,** the case of Belinda, *i.e.* her defence.

25. **Who speaks so well.** Obviously spoken ironically.

28. **honours,** beauty.

32. **spread,** spread it out to admire.

p. 47. 14. **bohea,** the name originally given to the best tea.

CANTO FIFTH

Belinda demands the return of her lock, but it is seen in the heavens, where it takes its place among the stars.

p. 48. 10. **toast,** *i.e.* the lady whose health he proposes.

18. **the first in virtue . . . face.** The most virtuous as well as the most beautiful

20. **small-pox.** This was dreaded, especially by beautiful women, on account of the disfigurement it left behind.

31. **good-humour.** Clarissa speaks sound sense. Good-humour is a more powerful weapon than exhibition of temper.

p. 49. 3. **virago.** Amazon. This mock fight resembles many a one in Homer's works

13. **'Gainst Pallas . . . arms.** Mars fights Pallas; Hermes arms himself against Latona.

19. **sconce,** candlestick

25. A beau, *i.e.* Dapperwit. The witling (or one who fancies himself as a wit) was Sir Fopling.

p. 50. 4. the wits mount up. The hair proves to have more weight than the intelligence of the men.

14. titillating, tickling

19. Proculus. This Roman senator is said to have announced to the Roman people, after the death of Romulus, that the latter had appeared to him and told him that they must honour Romulus as a god.

21. raidiant trail of hair. It became a comet's tail.

22. Berenice. The wife of Ptolemy III, who devoted her hair to the god as a thank-offering for her husband's safe return from a campaign. The hair became a constellation.

26. the Mall. A fashionable part of St. James's Park.

29. Rosamonda's lake. This is now filled up. It was a favourite resort of lovers, near the site of Buckingham Palace.

30. Partridge, an astrologer of Pope's time. Pope described him as "a ridiculous Star-gazer, who in his Almanacks every year never fail'd to predict the downfall of the Pope, and the King of France, then at war with the English".

31. Galileo's eyes, *i.e.* the telescope, invented by the great Italian astronomer.

p. 52. 4. fair suns, *i.e.* Belinda's eyes.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that Pope portrays the women as coquettes and the men as fools?

2. Why did Pope describe this poem as "an heroi-comical poem"? Refer to specific passages in your answer.

3. What ideas do we form from this poem of English society in Pope's day?

4. The purposes of satire are to castigate human vices and to laugh at human folly. Do you consider that *The Rape of the Lock* fulfils these purposes?

THOMAS GRAY. *THE BARD*

Thomas Gray was born in 1716 in Cornhill, the son of an ill-tempered London broker. His mother, with the proceeds of her shop, sent the sole weakly survivor of her twelve children to Eton, where he formed a close friendship with Horace Walpole, son of the Prime Minister. He left Cambridge in 1738 and went on a tour of Europe with Walpole. In Italy they separated after a mysterious quarrel, which lasted for three years.

In 1742 Gray went into residence at his old university, where, apart from vacations at Stoke Poges (where his mother and aunts now lived), visits to London and, in later life, extensive tours of

England, he spent years of study in his rooms, made vast notes for erudite works which were never completed, played his harpsichord on twilight evenings, surrounded by books, china and pictures, and corresponded with Walpole and a narrow circle of friends.

His most famous poems are his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and his two odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*. His reputation as poet and scholar was such that in 1757 he was offered the Poet Laureateship, which he refused, and in 1768 the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge, a sinecure of £400, which, in straitened circumstances, he accepted.

Though he walked considerable distances on his visit to the Lakes, he took habitually little exercise, and his last years were troubled by frequent attacks of hereditary gout, to which, in 1771, he succumbed at the age of fifty-four. He lies without a trophy almost under the shadow of the "ivy-mantled tower" of Stoke Poges Church, but his medallion is in Westminster Abbey.

A Pindaric Ode is strictly a choral song, accompanied by music and dancing, to celebrate the victors in the Greek games. Pindar (d. 435 B.C.) blended references to mythical heroes and the athletes' ancestors with descriptive details and moral lessons, in a harmonious and impressive manner. The structure was elaborate, consisting of strophe ("turn", or movement of chorus to the right of the stage), antistrophe (back again), and epode ("song" before the altar). The series, repeated twice, is faithfully followed by Gray, and his metrical symmetry is perfect. The chief difficulties of such a lofty composition in English are the elaborate allusions and the rapid transitions of thought.

Gray's preface to this poem states: "The following Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death".

This ode has always been more popular than *The Progress of Poesy* because it is picturesque and recites well. As a prophetic utterance it ranks high, the Bard's eloquence ringing all the changes on passion and plaintiveness, fierce indignation and tender mourning, ironical gibe and ecstatic vision. The personification, for once, is vivid, and the metaphors are arresting. The opening and the close are abrupt, the narrative and the dialogue skilfully interwoven, and yet the Pindaric form is strictly adhered to, while the metre is perfect in every syllable. Its

obscurity lies in the extreme allusiveness of the prophecies: Edward alone of all his race is mentioned by name.

The weaving of the shroud, the catalogue of heroes, the clash of conflict, and the sight of the slain are of Norse origin, and Gray's indebtedness to his Scandinavian studies is seen in these lines from *The Fatal Sisters*, composed a few years later:

> Now the storms begins to lower,
> (Haste, the loom of Hell prepare)
> Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
> Hurtles in the darkened air.
>
> Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
> Where the dusky warp we strain,
> Weaving many a soldier's doom,
> Orkney's woe and Randver's bane.

The poem is thus a remarkable combination: Greek in structure, Welsh in setting, Norse in spirit, and eighteenth-century English in diction!

Analysis of the Poem

I 1 (strophe). The curse of the Welsh bard alarms Edward and his army.

I 2 (antistrophe). The appearance of this sole survivor as he laments the massacre of his companions.

I 3 (epode). He sees their spirits on the mountain preparing to prophesy (their chorus extends from p. 53, l. 30, to p. 55, l. 20).

II 1 (strophe). The assassination of Edward II, whose wicked queen bears a son who will ravage his mother's country, France.

II 2 (antistrophe). Edward III's neglected death-bed, while his grandson, Richard II, begins his prodigal reign.

II 3 (epode). The deposed Richard starves in prison, and the Wars of the Roses cease only with the death in the Tower of Henry VI, the pious but feeble grandson of the usurping Bolingbroke; the tale of vengeance ends on Bosworth Field.

III 1 (strophe). But, first, Edward's own queen, Eleanor, is to die. The departure of the spirits is followed by a vision of Welsh-descended sovereigns.

III 2 (antistrophe). The court of Elizabeth, with its statesmen and poets.

III 3 (epode). In her reign, the bards live once more in the works of Spenser and Shakespeare, who are followed by Milton and a succession of poets stretching into the dim future. His own glorious future thus contrasted with the tragedy of Edward's line, the bard commits spectacular suicide.

Gray was a fervent disciple of Milton in language and lofty expression, while any "excellence in his own numbers" he attributed to Dryden. Unlike his master Milton, whose early ambition to write a great English epic was finally achieved in years of blindness, Gray preferred the shortness of the ode, because the ideal he set himself of concise expression and exact versification would not suffer any alternation of inspired and uninspired passages, which, as he recognised, was unavoidable in longer works. His very perfection of diction and metre emphasise that lack of spontaneity and that emotional timidity which deny him entry into the first rank of English poets. The odes are carefully elaborated compositions by a modest but exacting scholar, too aware of his great literary predecessors (Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden) and too remote in his studious seclusion from real living contacts to create the poetry which moves and inspires.

Gray was more concerned over the reception of his Pindaric Odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, than over that of his famous *Elegy*. The former were much discussed, but few claimed to understand them, and, at a later date, Gray actually added some explanatory notes. Published in 1757 as *Ode I* and *Ode II*, they were his friend Walpole's first production at his private printing press at Strawberry Hill, and brought Gray the only sum he chose to receive for his verse. *The Progress of Poesy* is more truly Pindaric in its blending of mythology with the praise of great men, while *The Bard* is better known because of its dramatic qualities. All Gray's poems, but especially these two, mark a break with the heroic couplet of Pope and his followers (Goldsmith was the only poet of note after this to use the "two coursers of ethereal race") and a return to the true lyric stanza and strophe,

in which a harmonious development of thought and sound is the chief aim, not a string of pointed felicities.

To sum up, Gray wrote in the language of the "classical" period of Pope and Johnson and indulged freely in its abstract, moralising vein, yet in his sympathy with the common man and his descriptions of natural scenery he is the chief of those who ushered in the Romantic Revival.

In the notes which follow, the statements between quotation marks are from Gray's own explanatory notes to the poem and from his letters.

p. 52. **8. ruthless King.** Edward I.

9. Confusion, destruction.

10-11. Tho' fanned . . . state. A bloodthirsty victory has followed the Royal Standard, but now its splendour is an empty delusion.

12. Hauberk's twisted mail. "The Hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sate close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion."

15. Cambria, Wales. Welsh (*i.e.* foreigners) was the name given by the English to the Cymry of Britons.

18. Snowdon. "*Snowdon* was the name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract, which . . . included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway."

20. Glo'ster. "Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward."

21. Mortimer. "Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore."

25. haggard. "A metaphor taken from an unreclaimed hawk, which is called a haggard and looks wild and 'farouche' and jealous of its liberty."

p. 53. **1. Stream'd . . . air.** "The words, you see, are almost stolen from Milton [*Paradise Lost*, i. 536-7] . . . Do not wonder, therefore, if some magazine call me plagiary: I could show them a hundred more instances which they never will discover for themselves."

8. Vocal no more, no longer echoing the music of Hoel, Prince of North Wales, and Llewellyn, the last native Prince of Wales.

10. Cadwallo, Urien, Modred. Kings and bards of early Welsh history.

15. Plinlimmon. A mountain in Montgomeryshire.

16. Arvon's shore. "The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the isle of Anglesey." Caernarvon means "the fort in Arvon".

29. the tissue of thy line. This is a reference to the Norns of Scandinavian mythology, three Fates who wove the web of fate.

30. Weave the warp. Threads were spun lengthwise on the loom (warp) and then other threads woven across them (woof).

p. 54. **2. characters,** writing.

5. Berkley. The castle in which Edward II was murdered by order of Mortimer, supporter of Queen Isabella ("She-Wolf of France"), daughter of the French King, against her husband. Hume's *History* (1754) mentions the "screams" of the "agonizing King"

9. who o'er thy country . . . Heaven. Edward III scourged France at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War.

12. sorrow's faded form. "Death of that King, abandoned by his Children, and even robbed in his last moments by his Courtiers and his Mistress." Edward III survived his wife and his eldest son, the Black Prince ("the sable Warriour").

19. born? The question implies, "Where are they?"

20. rising Morn. "Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign."

21. Fair laughs the Morn . . . prey. A sustained metaphor for Richard's extravagant reign; sowing the wind of oppressive taxation, he reaped the whirlwind of Bolingbroke's usurpation. "Grim repose" aptly describes the latter's attitude in Shakespeare's *Richard II*.

p. 55. **1. Thirst and Famine.** "Richard the Second (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older Writers) was starved to death [*i.e.* in Pontefract Castle, after his deposition]. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon is of much later date."

3. din of battle. "Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster."

8. midnight murther. "Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, *&c.*, believed to be murthered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Caesar."

9. Consort. "Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her Husband and her Crown."

Father. Henry V.

10. meek Usurper. "Henry the Sixth very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the Crown."

11. rose of snow, Twined with her blushing foe. "The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster."

13. bristled Boar. "The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third; when he was usually known in his own time by the name of *the Boar*." It was for long believed that Richard III had murdered his two nephews in the Tower in order to secure the throne for himself.

19. Half of thy heart. "Eleanor of Castille [the queen of Edward I] died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her Lord is well known. The monuments of his regret, and sorrow for the loss of her, are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places."

20. The work is done. Here ends the chorus of the spirits of the dead bards, "the dreadful harmony" of p. 53, l. 28.

29. Arthur. "It was the common belief of the Welch nation,

that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-land, and should return again to reign over Britain."

30. genuine. Because of Welsh (British) descent. "Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welch should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor."

32. fronts, foreheads.

p. 56. 5. lyon-port, proud carriage. "Speed relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, Ambassadour of Poland, says, 'And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert Orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartnesse of her princelie cheekes'."

7-8. strings symphonious, vocal transport, the music and lyric poetry of the age of Elizabeth.

9. Taliessin. "Taliessin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the VIth Century."

13. verse, object of "adorn".

14. Fierce War. "'Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.' *Spenser's Proëm to the Fairy Queen.*"

16. buskin'd measures. Blank verse tragedy of Shakespeare. Buskins were the high boots of Greek tragic actors.

19. A Voice. Milton, who wrote in *Paradise Lost* of the fall of Adam and Even in the garden of Eden.

21. distant warblings. "The succession of poets after Milton's time."

23. sanguine, red with blood; a reference to the massacre of the bards.

25. repairs, renews.

Questions

1. What do you understand by the term "Pindaric Ode"? Illustrate your answer with reference to *The Bard.*

2. What qualities make *The Bard* "romantic"?

3. Have you found *The Bard* a difficult poem to study? If so, wherein does your difficulty lie?

4. What do you know of: Edward I, Queen Isabella, Richard II, Margaret of Anjou, Henry VI?

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. *THE DESERTED VILLAGE*

Oliver Goldsmith, the fifth child of the poor vicar described in the poem, was born in 1728 at Elphin, in Roscommon, Ireland, or at Pallas, Co. Longford. He studied mathematics and logic at Trinity College, Dublin, where he took his B.A. in 1749. After various false starts on different careers, he wandered over the Continent for two years, living on his wits, and when he returned tried to fit himself for medicine in London. This attempt failing, he endeavoured to make ends meet by doing literary hack-work,

ultimately becoming a school-usher. It was in 1759 that his contributions to periodicals began to attract notice. In 1764 he published *The Traveller*, a poem embodying the experiences of his foreign travels, which, said Dr. Johnson, "brought him into high reputation". *The Deserted Village* (1770) was received with enthusiasm.

Of his prose works, the most important are *Letters from a Citizen of the World* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, an idyllic but humorous novel of the "loves and the simple lives of country people in country scenery" Goldsmith was also the author of two famous comedies, *The Good-Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, which still holds the stage.

He died in 1774, at the age of forty-five, and was buried in the churchyard of the Temple Church, close to which he had lived for a great part of his life. Dr. Johnson said of him that there was nothing to which he set his hand that he did not adorn.

Theme

Although Goldsmith had not revisited his native village and is here thinking of any English village, several of the scenes and people (*e.g.* the preacher, his father, and the master) were recollections from his own boyhood days.

The "moral" of the poem is stated in p. 58, ll. 18-19, and p. 69, ll. 10-17. To gain his point, Goldsmith idealises village life and exaggerates the evils of town life; furthermore, it is doubtful whether it is the accumulation of wealth that causes depopulation of the countryside, but we do not read *The Deserted Village* for its social theories. Concern over the lot of the poor is a characteristic of the later, rather than the earlier, eighteenth century. It marks, perhaps, the first impact of the Industrial Revolution.

Atmosphere and Tone

There is real personal feeling in the poem. Goldsmith was a kindly man and his heart was always touched by human suffering, and although he was always in debt seldom did anyone in need appeal to him in vain. It is said that when he died many of his poor neighbours whom he had helped came to his funeral. His sympathy with the suffering poor is matched by his indignation against the selfish rich. The pathos of emigration for those who are forced to leave the home which has been the family dwelling-place for generations has never been more powerfully presented than in p. 67, l. 19—p. 68, l. 6.

The poem has sadness and tenderness without being sickly and sentimental. Touching and pathetic as it is,

its pen portraits are not without humour, and there is a strain of cheerfulness running through it.

Descriptions

Some of the descriptions of nature are rather conventional. The poem opens with a catalogue of nouns with an adjective before each. The description is given a touch of sadness, for these scenes from the past are no more. There are fresh touches elsewhere, however. One of the most beautiful lines in English poetry occurs in this poem —"Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn".

There follows a lively description of the village sports. Here, too, there is a wistful note about such pleasure, for "thy sports are fled" and are all part and parcel of the irrecoverable past.

Goldsmith describes the village tavern better than "tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds". But the best descriptions of all are those of the people: the village preacher, prompt at duty's call, with open house for anyone in need; the schoolmaster, whose learning "amaz'd the gazing rustics"; the "village-statesmen" talking politics over their glasses; the bent old widow gathering cress and faggots for food and warmth. The student would be well advised to commit some of these to memory. They are all lifelike and fit naturally into the scene. Goldsmith seizes on the human qualities of these people. The parson and the master are fine men, but Goldsmith can laugh in kindly fashion at their human oddities, and the feeling that laughter is never far away helps to light up the prevailing melancholy tone of the poem.

Verse, Language, and Poetic Effects

The verse is graceful, with a quiet, unruffled loveliness. It has a "native charm" without the "gloss of art".

The couplet form in which it is written is one of the chief characteristics of the eighteenth-century "classical" school, though in subject-matter (in so far as it deals with a village) the poem has been hailed as showing the influence of the "romantics", of whom Wordsworth (born in the same year as the publication of *The Deserted Village*) became the outstanding figure.

The language of the poem is simple compared with that of most eighteenth-century poetry. There are exceptions

(*e.g.* "contiguous pride"), and there is occasional poetic diction (*e.g.* the smith relaxing his "*ponderous* strength"), but instances are not numerous.

Other characteristic features of eighteenth-century poetry are abstract terms for actual things (*e.g.* "famine" for starving people and "poverty" for poor people), and transferred epithets (*e.g.* "The sad historian of the pensive plain", where the epithet "pensive" is transferred from the historian to the plain).

Goldsmith shows a happy knack in choice of words (*e.g.* the "geese that *gabbled*", the "clock that *click'd*"). Apart from specific onomatopoeic effects, alliteration is often beautifully used.

There is frequent use of antithesis (generally in a single line), especially in the description of the village preacher (*e.g.* p. 57, l. 20; p. 61, ll. 12 and 14; p. 62, ll. 10 and 21-22; p. 69, l. 13).

The student should also notice the extended simile (p. 65, ll. 13-21).

p. 57. 4. parting, departing.
12. decent, comely, pleasant-looking.
16. remitting, ceasing for a time.
18. led up, began.
19. circled. The epithet is transferred from the people to the pastime (see above).
20. contending, *i.e.* in games.
25. simply, in simple fashion.
27. mistrustless . . . face. This refers to an old country game where a number of people held in front of their faces plates which, unknown to them, were covered with lamp-black on the far side. They were then told to copy a leader who stood in front of them with a clean plate. He would go through various motions in which he wiped a finger over the back of his plate and then on to his face. At the end of the game his face was clean, but the faces of his imitators were covered with lamp-black.
p. 58. 2. lawn, grassland.
4. tyrant, *i.e.* Lord of the Manor, local landowner. Between 1760 and 1774 there were over seven hundred Enclosure Acts
7. half . . . plain. "Thy smiling plain" is the subject, "stints" the verb and "half a tillage" the object. "Tillage" = land under crops, as distinct from pasturage. "Stints" = gives in a stinting way.
11. bittern. A marsh bird like a heron.
12. lapwing. A kind of plover with a monotonous cry.
16. spoiler, plunderer, *de*spoiler.

31. swain, countryman, peasant.

p. 59. **7. a kinder shore,** *e.g.* America.

8. manners, customs, habits.

10. forlorn, *i.e.* neglected.

confess, *i.e.* display, illustrate.

12. tangling, tangled (with weeds).

21. husband, preserve carefully, to make it last as long as possible.

p. 60. **2. fly,** *i.e.* fly away from them.

6. imploring famine, *i.e.* a starving beggar. (An abstract idea instead of a concrete example.)

15. careless, free from care. "Care" is used in the same sense as p. 59, ll. 17 and 32.

21. bay'd, barked at.

30. plashy, splashy, marshy.

33. wintry, *i.e.* gathered for warmth in winter.

36. historian, *i.e.* one who *knows* the history.

pensive. Implying "sorrowful".

p. 61. **4. mansion,** house.

6. passing, surpassingly.

forty pounds a year. This was the stipend of Goldsmith's father at the time Oliver was born.

13. the vagrant train, tramps, the fraternity of the road.

15. long-remember'd, able to remember things long ago.

18. kindred, to be known, *lit.* to be a relative.

26. pity, natural feeling.

charity, *i.e.* considered as a duty.

p. 62. **6. his last,** *i.e.* the dying man's last.

9. double sway, *i.e.* practice as well as precept.

14. gown. In Goldsmith's time clergymen wore a gown every day, not just in church on Sundays.

20. midway leaves the storm, *i.e.* the storm-clouds reach only half way up the cliff, so that the storm is below and the top in sunshine.

24. unprofitably. Because there is no one to see it.

29. boding, expecting trouble.

p. 63. **3. cypher,** do arithmetic.

4. terms, times for paying rent, etc. (not school terms).

tides, festivals, *e.g.* Whitsun*tide*.

5. gauge, measure liquids, or perhaps areas and volumes.

15. sign-post, inn sign. (Not a sign-post in our sense.)

22. nicely, carefully.

27. twelve good rules. Reputed to have been found in the study of Charles I and commonly hung in inns in Goldsmith's time. They were: (1) Urge no healths; (2) Profane no divine ordinance; (3) Touch no State matters; (4) Reveal no secrets; (5) Pick no quarrels; (6) Make no comparisons; (7) Mention no ill opinion; (8) Keep no bad company; (9) Encourage no vice; (10) Make no long meals; (11) Repeat no grievances; (12) Lay no wagers.

royal game of goose. A game of chance played with dice on a card divided into numbered squares. Some of the squares had

a goose printed on them, and if a player landed on one of these he doubled his throw.

29. **fennel.** A fragrant plant with yellow flowers.

p. 64. 1. **An hour's . . . heart.** In the inn the poor man felt that he was somebody.

9. **mantling,** foaming.

30. **freighted,** *i.e.* in ships.

p. 65. 8. **spurns,** takes away, pulls down.

9-10. **Around . . . supplies,** *i.e.* products needed at home are exported so that luxuries can be paid for and imported in exchange.

12. **fall,** i.e. of the land.

14. **Secure,** certain

15. **Slights,** despises.

19. **solicitous to bless,** anxious to bestow her affections on someone.

30. **contiguous,** next to it, side by side with it.

31. **fenceless,** i.e. *once* fenceless.

p. 66. 8. **artist,** craftsman.

sickly, *i.e.* unsuccessful.

10. **black gibbet.** Goldsmith was one of the first to protest against the severe penal laws of the time. Nearly two hundred crimes were punishable by death.

14. **torches.** There were no street lamps in London at this time. It was possible, however, to hire a boy with a torch.

15. **scenes . . . annoy.** "No troubles" is the subject, "annoy" the verb and "scenes like these" the object. "Annoy" = harm.

27. **ambitious of,** *i.e.* hoping to prosper there.

28. **wheel,** *i.e.* spinning-wheel.

p. 67. 1. **Altama.** The River Alatamaha, in Georgia, U.S.A., at that time an English settlement.

2. **before,** *i.e.* in the old country.

12. **tigers.** Goldsmith, who wrote a book of natural history in 1774, apparently had a poor knowledge of the animals found in North America.

19. **thefts of harmless love,** *i.e.* stolen kisses.

25. **seats,** *i.e.* estates.

p. 68. 26. **connubial,** of husband and wife for each other.

30. **where,** from the place where.

p. 69. 5. **Torno.** The River Tornea, flowing into the Gulf of Bothnia, between Finland and Sweden, corresponding to "the polar world".

Pambamarca. A mountain in Ecuador, South America, corresponding to "equinoctial fervours".

6. **equinoctial fervours,** equatorial heat.

12. **states.** A metaphor, meaning a vast amount.

15. **labour'd mole,** breakwater erected with difficulty.

QUESTIONS

1. Write character-studies of the preacher and the schoolmaster.

2. What can we learn from *The Deserted Village* of the condition of rural England in Goldsmith's time? What remedies does he propose to improve the state of the countryside?

3. What evidence do you find in *The Deserted Village* that Goldsmith was a kindly man?

4. With detailed reference, discuss (*a*) Goldsmith's language, and (*b*) his use of the heroic couplet.

WILLIAM COWPER. *ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE*

William Cowper (pronounced Cooper), born in 1731, was the son of the rector of Great Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire. He was a shy and sensitive child, and his mother's death when he was six years old affected him deeply. He was sent to a private school, where he was bullied, and later to Westminster School, where he was reasonably happy. He was articled to a solicitor and called to the Bar in 1754, but the fits of depression from which he suffered grew worse, and in 1763 he tried to commit suicide. He was befriended by Morley Unwin, in whose home he lived in the peaceful country seclusion of Huntingdon, gardening, breeding hares and composing verse. Hymns, moral poems, occasional trifles, and what Charles Lamb called "the best letters in the English language", poured from his pen. At long intervals insanity would lay him low for months at a time, from which, nursed by his devoted friend, Mrs. Unwin, he would emerge, his intellect vigorous and his personal charm undiminished.

On the death of her husband, Cowper moved with Mary Unwin to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, and came under the influence of the Rev. John Newton, the converted captain of a slaveship, with whom he collaborated in producing the "Olney Hymns". Cowper's best-known contributions to this collection are "God moves in a mysterious way" and "Hark, my soul! it is the Lord".

After 1779 Cowper wrote much poetry, including *John Gilpin* and *The Task*, a long poem describing the delights of life in the country, condemning many of the evils of his day, and combining wit and philosophy with a lucidity of style. After moving with Mary to the nearby village of Weston, Cowper turned to a translation of Homer in blank verse. Mary Unwin's death in 1796 was a severe blow to him. Cowper himself died in 1800.

Cowper's poetry is part of a development that took place in the later part of the eighteenth century, whereby verse became much more personal. His subject is not man in society, in relation to other men and judged by the standards of politics and polite society, but man as an

individual; not Man, but a man—one man's thoughts and feelings. Everything Cowper wrote is a reflexion of his own gentle, sensitive, melancholic, but quietly humorous, personality; and all of it is written with an ease which must not be mistaken for mere facility. "I never suffer a line to pass," he said, "till I have made it as good as I can." The result is an absence of that obscurity which often mars the work of greater men. His fluent language, if it does not soar, at least soothes the ear with its quiet melody and pleases the mind by its very transparency.

On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture is written in the popular heroic couplet of the day, but it has little of the artifice of that form as practised by Dryden and Pope. Lines like

> Me howling winds drive devious, tempest toss'd

are exceptional, and antithesis and alliteration are used sparingly,

> What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
> And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.

Cowper often seems concerned to conceal, by varied pauses and enjambment ("running over" from one line to the next) the effect of the rhymes, which his predecessors had developed into a rapier-like thrust; and in doing so he gives variety and sincerity to his expression. There are few examples of artificial diction so characteristic of the verse of the period ("Elysian reverie", "loins enthron'd", "mimic show"); but the poem has one example of the extended and carefully wrought classical simile (that of the "gallant bark" on p. 72). On the whole, Cowper achieves what he set out to achieve—the effect of "an artless song", "a frail memorial, but sincere".

The poem is a blending of the sorrow of childhood, the domestic details of a child's life, and the philosophic consolation of the adult (even though his own life follows a far from prosperous course). The only characteristic of its author that it does not reveal is his gentle humour. Cowper provides his own summary of its subject-matter in the last eight lines of the poem: what he wished is done.

On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture was written in February, 1790. Cowper's mother, who died when he was

six years old, was the daughter of Roger Donne, of Ludham Hall, in Norfolk. Anne Bodham, formerly Anne Donne, was Cowper's cousin and one of his early playmates. In a letter to her from Weston, dated February 27th, 1790, Cowper wrote:

> The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. . . . I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember, too, a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression.

p. 69. 25. the art, *i.e.* of the painter.

28. Faithful remembrancer . . . dear. "I am delighted with Mrs. Bodham's kindness, in giving me the only picture of my own mother that is to be found, I suppose, in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection that her death, fifty-two years since, has not in the least abated. I remember her, too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable. Everybody loved her, and with an amiable character so impressed upon all her features, everybody was sure to do so" (Letter to Lady Hesketh, 26th February, 1790).

p. 70. 4. as, as if.

7. Elysian, blessed; literally, belonging to Elysium, where dwelt, according to Greek mythology, the souls of the virtuous.

12. Wretch. Cowper's childhood was an unhappy one. He was reserved and despondent, and was bullied at his first school.

24. maidens, maid-servants.

27. still, always.

p. 71. 1. bauble coach, toy coach.

4. the past'ral house. The rectory of Great Berkhampstead. Cowper's father had been rector there when Cowper was a child.

18. humour, whim, caprice.

22. numbers, verse.

27. jessamine, jasmine.

p. 72. 1. unbound spirit, *i.e.* her spirit is now freed from the limitations of the body.

2. Albion. A poetical name for England, supposed to be derived from its white cliffs (Lat. *albus* = white).

9. streamers, flags.

11. "Where tempests . . . roar." A quotation from Sir Samuel Garth, a minor poet of the seventeenth century and a friend of Pope.

12. consort, husband. Cowper's father had died in 1756.

16. devious, from the right course.

23. loins enthron'd. Cowper's mother traced her family back to Henry III.

32. fancy, imagination.

33. mimic show, *lit.* an imitative appearance, *i.e.* his mother's picture.

QUESTIONS

1. From reading this poem, what do you imagine the personality of Cowper to have been?

2. How does Cowper's use of the heroic couplet differ from that of Dryden and Pope?

3. Cowper's most striking quality is his sincerity. Do you agree? Discuss, with illustrations from the poem.

GEORGE CRABBE. *PETER GRIMES*

George Crabbe, son of an Aldeburgh (Suffolk) "salt-master" (*i.e.* collector of salt dues), had a sorrowful life. In boyhood he often saw his father in drunken rage; as a father himself he lost five of his seven children; his wife became depressed and ultimately near mad in her continual mourning, and for the rest of her life alternated between fits of unnatural excitability and of depression. Be it said to his credit that Crabbe looked after her devotedly and without complaint.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his poetry is sombre. Before *Peter Grimes* was published, his poems, wrote Southey, had "a gloom which is . . . not in nature, . . . the . . . shadows of one who paints by lamplight—whose very lights have a gloominess".

Born in 1754, Crabbe started life as a doctor, but in 1780 he sailed to London to try his fortune in literature. He was in dire straits until he found a patron in Edmund Burke, after which he was a "made man". The next year he entered the Church and was ordained to the curacy of his native town, and thereafter he held various livings, spending thirteen years in Suffolk and, after his wife's death, eighteen in Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

In 1783 he wrote a poem called *The Village*, and nearly a quarter of a century later produced a volume of poems called *The Parish Register*, which first showed his gifts as a narrative poet. From time to time he produced various long poems which tell of the people of a country town; one of these was *The Borough*, of which *Peter Grimes* is a part. Crabbe died in 1832.

This poem tells how Peter Grimes (a hard-sounding, well-chosen name), a fisherman, was brought up by a loving father in a good home, but soon cast aside parental authority for a wild and drunken and thieving youth. As

an outlet for his sadistic love of power over "a feeling creature" he obtained an apprentice, who died from his savage ill-treatment. Others were readily obtainable, however, and two more, one after the other, met the same fate. When the third had died Peter was tried. Nothing could be proved against him, however, and he was freed, but debarred from employing another apprentice. Everyone despised and hated him, and he lived as an outcast, eventually ending his life in a mad delirium.

Wordsworth's poem *Michael* had a sad outcome, but it concentrates attention on the heart-broken father, not the wayward son; Crabbe's poem on the wayward son, not the quiet, loving father. Burns's *Tam o' Shanter* deals with a drunken rascal not much better than Peter Grimes, but there is a gleam about *Tam o' Shanter* and it does not strike one as drab. Crabbe wrote of things with stark reality, just as he saw them, and he saw more of the tragedy of life than the comedy—the Hogarth of poetry. "Nature's sternest painter, yet the best", Byron called him. There is nothing to relieve the character of Peter Grimes; it is horrible from beginning to end.

Peter Grimes is the last Canto but one ("Letter XXII" Crabbe called it) of a much longer poem, *The Borough*, and was written about 1808. (The whole poem was finished in 1809.) The borough is clearly Aldeburgh, his birthplace, with certain features exaggerated, according to his topic. This particular "letter" is about the poor of the borough, and, one would imagine, unrepresentative of the average working labourer. But, then, Peter Grimes's kind father was also one of the borough poor. Most of Crabbe's poetry deals with contemporary social questions, and *The Borough* is simply a reconsideration of the same topics he had already dealt with in *The Village* and *The Parish Register*. The student will call to mind the fortunes of Oliver Twist when he reads of Peter Grimes's way of replacing his boys from the "slave-shop".

The Borough is monotonously sad, with few shafts of sunlight (none at all in *Peter Grimes*), yet from the first it was a great success and ran to six editions in six years. After the first few lines, Letter XXII of this popular poem has neither love nor hope, only misery and degradation and untimely death.

Crabbe's country tales do not tell of idyllic shepherds in green pastures, but of poverty and squalor. In landscape he notices the weeds, but fails to mention the flowers (p. 78, l. 1). There is no joy or rapture, but remorseless elaboration of repellent detail, without the imagination to make it fascinating, as Coleridge does in *The Ancient Mariner*.

Crabbe is essentially a narrative poet, and as a story *Peter Grimes* reaches a high level of achievement. Whether we like this sort of story is, for the moment, not the point. It is clear and direct, powerful and concentrated, and told with much dramatic force. It is only its lack of relief that causes any doubt in our minds. We are not convinced that a man can be so despicable with no flicker of goodness. Even Carver Doone, in Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, loved his little boy. Crabbe had not learnt the secret of making qualities of character or features in a landscape to show up by contrast. *Peter Grimes* is simple and obvious—there is nothing subtle about the man.

Crabbe's descriptions are not in the conventional manner of eighteenth-century poetry. There is reality and power in the description of the mud-banks (p. 78, ll. 3-20). The details selected bring the scene home and present it vividly before the mind, so that

> all, presented to the eye or ear,
> Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.

In a manner comparable to that of Wordsworth, Crabbe suggests the way nature influences a man's disposition and character. "He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce." The description of the mud-flats fits the mood of Peter Grimes: it is a sympathetic background. Conversely, his impression of the scenes he saw was affected by the mood of the moment:

> Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
> And still more gloomy in his sight they grew.

The poem is written in the heroic couplet (iambic pentameter); a well-tried metre by the time Crabbe wrote at the end of the century. (Horace Smith called Crabbe "a Pope in worsted stockings".) In the measure itself there is little variety; it generally goes on mechanically under its own weight, and most lines are end-stopped. The lines

which have most variety are, dramatically enough, the mutterings of Peter Grimes when he is out of his mind (p. 80, ll. 19-26). Notice the constant use of alliteration (*e.g.* p. 78, l. 15, or p. 78, ll. 8-9, where the *l*'s echo the laziness of the thought), and of antithesis (*e.g.* "He fish'd by water and he filch'd by land", in this case with a very awkward jingle in "fish'd" and "filch'd"). Crabbe's ear has not the sensitiveness to sound of Coleridge's, for instance, and this is one reason why he is not among the greatest of our poets. Whatever can be said in praise of Crabbe, there is one thing lacking—there is in his work no charm.

Few would call *Peter Grimes* inspiring: it comes as rather a surprise, therefore, to remember that Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes* was inspired by the poem.

p. 73. 7. **in his hand,** by the hand.
23. **assert the man,** assert his manhood.
26. **sacrilegious,** dishonouring what was sacred; in this case, his pious father.
32. **settle.** A high-backed wooden bench, often placed at the side of big old-fashioned fireplaces.
p. 74. 27. **workhouse-clearing men.** Men who apprenticed boys from workhouses to tradesmen who wanted their labour. The service was merely slavery for such boy-victims.
29. **parish boys.** Those who had no parents to care for them and were therefore kept at the cost of the parish.
bind, to apprentice.
p. 75. 6. **stroked,** treated humanely.
18. **feeling being,** sensitive person.
33. **bound,** apprenticed.
p. 76. 14. **slave-shop,** *i.e.* workhouse.
33. **draughts,** catches of fish.
35. **London-mart,** *i.e.* Billingsgate fish-market.
p. 77. 14. **hall,** *i.e.* guildhall, where the magistrates sat as judges.
16. **the lad he loved,** that he loved the lad.
21. **in thy despite,** in spite of you.
p. 78. 3. **neap.** At such tides the high-water level is as low as possible
17. **golden-eye.** A sea-duck which breeds in the Arctic summer and spends the winter in this country.
20. **bellowing boom.** The bittern's characteristic cry.
30. **reach,** stretch of a river which can be seen between two bends or points.
p. 79. 29. **stations,** positions.
31. **Or that,** or as if.
p. 80. 1. **distemper'd,** *i.e.* out of his mind.
2. **parish-bed,** *i.e.* bed in the infirmary.

19-26. "It was the fall . . . pray." These lines refer, in muddled form, to his experiences (told in the poem). He dreams he is being tried for murder; he refers to the jury ("All agreed?") and to the judge ("My Lord").

32. death-drop. This has been explained as a drop of cold sweat often accompanying death, but it may well refer to the gallows (*i.e.* his fear of being hanged).

p. 83. 14. the strong foe, *i.e.* death.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you find *Peter Grimes* depressing? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Do you think that such a story is (or can be made) fit for poetry, or that poetry should deal only with the beautiful and romantic in life?

3. Crabbe is described as a "realist". With examples from *Peter Grimes* show what is meant by "realist".

4. Describe the scenery in the background of the tragedy and discuss whether it is suitable to the story.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. *LINES WRITTEN ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY*

Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in 1770, and lived nearly all his life in the Lake District. He was educated at the grammar school at Hawkshead and at St. John's College, Cambridge. One of his vacations was spent in a tour of the Alps and gave him a contact with the French people in the year after the outbreak of the French Revolution. Soon after leaving Cambridge he returned to France and was much influenced by the revolutionary movement. It was a severe blow to Wordsworth when England declared war on France.

In 1795 a legacy enabled him to settle with his sister, Dorothy, in Dorset and Somerset, and to devote himself at last to poetry. At this time began his friendship with Coleridge, with whom he collaborated in producing *The Lyrical Ballads* (1798). After a brief stay in Germany, Wordsworth moved with his sister to Grasmere, in his native Lake District, where he spent the remainder of his life, first at Dove Cottage and later at Rydal Mount. Here he wrote the poetry which made him the greatest poet of his age, married and, with events abroad bringing a change in his political attitudes, found that he was able to accept the office of distributor of stamps for Westmorland. He continued to write and to travel, and in 1843, seven years before his death, he was made Poet Laureate.

Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey was first published in *The Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

Wordsworth recalls a visit to the Wye Valley in 1793, but his real subject is the development of his love of nature. He said that no poem was composed under circumstances more pleasant for him to remember. "I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister." Elsewhere, Wordsworth says they returned to Bristol "in a small vessel".

The poem is remarkable because it shows that Wordsworth had reached maturity of style (given the right subject) as early as 1798, and also because it illustrates his extraordinary powers of remembering what he was in the habit of composing out of doors. "Not a line of it was altered and not any part of it was written down until I reached Bristol."

Tintern Abbey is, in a sense, an essay on Wordsworth's views on nature, and it is doubtful whether a finer poetic essay has ever been written.

Three stages in the growth of his love of nature will be noticed.

The *first* is merely alluded to in parenthesis; the glad animal movements of his boyhood days (p. 85, ll. 27-28), such as are described in Books I and II of his autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, where he tells us how he and his school friends delighted in rowing and skating and riding.

The *second* stage was one of conscious delight in the external beauty of nature. This he describes (p. 85, l. 19 —p. 86, l. 1):

> a feeling and a love
> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, not any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.

The *third* stage is more complex, revealing the matured views that Wordsworth had reached from 1795 to 1798. Its aspects may be described as (*a*) philosophical, (*b*) religious, (*c*) moral.

(*a*) *Philosophical.* The sight of a sparrow's nest, a butterfly or a celandine, and the voice of a cuckoo, a

stock-dove or a skylark stirred him as much as in his childhood; but the experience was humanised by personal recollections and feelings, or by thoughts on life in general. He now regarded nature more philosophically:

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue.

(*b*) *Religious.* By 1798 Wordsworth was a pantheist, *i.e.* he believed that God was a spirit animating all living things. This he expresses (p. 86, ll. 11-20: "And I have felt A presence that disturbs me . . . And rolls through all things"). He was aware of this spirit in moments of mysticism, when the light of sense (*i.e.* perception by the senses alone) goes out with a flash that reveals the invisible world and makes us partakers of eternity. The full mystical realisation gives us the peace that passeth understanding and the profoundest intuitions. This is the theme of p. 84, l. 24—p. 85, l. 2. The mind of man is then in complete untrammelled communion with God or the Spirit of Nature and "sees into the life of things".

(*c*) *Moral.* Wordsworth believed that nature was an educative force. Not only did he learn by observation of her, but his character was moulded by the Spirit of Nature:

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.

From her man can learn the three Platonic virtues of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, which have such an influence

> On that best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.

Through quietness and beauty nature can provide the "lofty thoughts" and "cheerful faith" which will prevail against the evil, the emptiness, and the dreariness in life (p. 87, ll. 7-16). Wordsworth proclaims that nature was

> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.

Tintern Abbey expresses ideas of considerable profundity and complexity. It would be foolish to expect that it should be as easy to read as a morning paper. Yet the language of the poem is surprisingly simple, the words being those in ordinary use. One of Wordsworth's aims in *The Lyrical Ballads* (as he explained in the Preface to that volume) was to write in the language really used by men, as distinct from the "poetic diction" and "the gaudiness and inane phraseology" of the eighteenth century. The pursuit of his theories carried him at times too far in the direction of prosaic matter-of-factness, but in poems like *Tintern Abbey* the elevated thoughts and moods produce a heightening of the expression which adds dignity and grandeur to the subject.

The form is that of blank verse, written in long, supple paragraphs, with varied pauses and enjambment (see p. 45).

TINTERN ABBEY. A Cistercian abbey, now in ruins, which stands in a strikingly beautiful situation on the bank of the River Wye in Monmouthshire.

p. 83. 17. Five years. Wordsworth had previously visited Tintern Abbey in 1793, on a walking tour to North Wales.

27. orchard-tufts. The orchards would, as seen from a distance, resemble tufts of foliage.

p. 84. 4. sportive, suggesting that the trees had some life in themselves and enjoyed their lives.

p. 85. 12. half-extinguished, half-forgotten during the intervening five years.

p. 86. 24. both what they half create. Wordsworth believed that the imagination, with its "shaping spirit", recreates the outer scene, so that "the mighty world of eye and ear" is half-created and half-perceived.

32. genial spirits, kindly feelings.

33. thou. His sister, Dorothy, his constant companion and one who exerted a great poetic influence on him.

Questions

1. Why does Wordsworth begin the poem with the words, "Five years have passed"? How does this fact bear upon the poem?

2. Show from *Tintern Abbey* how Wordsworth's love of nature developed.

3. Explain what is meant by "Pantheism", referring to passages in the poem where Wordsworth deals with this subject.

4. Illustrate from this poem Wordsworth's belief that nature has the power to bring joy and happiness to men.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. *RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE*

To obtain some idea of the transforming power of the imagination one should compare this poem and the record of its origin in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*. She and her brother met the leech-gatherer on 3rd October, 1800, and it is typical of Wordsworth that he thought long upon the subject before composing (the poem was written in 1802). Dorothy records little but the facts. They met the leech-gatherer on the road; he was on his way to Carlisle "where he should buy a few goodly books to sell". He had a coat thrown over his shoulders and wore an apron and a night-cap. He was bent almost double. "His face was interesting. He had dark eyes and a long nose. . . . He was of Scotch parents. He had had a wife, and 'she was a good woman, and it pleased God to bless us with ten children'. . . . He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broken, his body driven over, his skull fractured. . . . His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches are scarce, and he had not the strength for it. . . . He lived by begging".

These facts are not in themselves the stuff of poetry. Dorothy gives bare information, her brother the feelings which stirred in him as he looked upon the leech-gatherer. The facts Wordsworth incorporates are slight compared with the changes he makes.

The two opening stanzas of the poem appeal most vividly to the mind's eye and ear. Wordsworth is walking upon a moor alone (there is nothing to distract the attention from his feelings); the morning is bright, but, after feeling the joy which all nature seems to share, he is suddenly despondent. Man can never, it seems, like the skylark and the hare, enjoy pleasure unalloyed; it is part of his

nature to look beyond the present moment; and Wordsworth thinks of what the future might bring—"solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty"—and of the unhappy deaths of Chatterton and Burns.

The sudden appearance of the old man bent double by the pool and the simile by which Wordsworth describes him (as though he were an eternal and elemental part of nature) are unforgettable.

Wordsworth makes a conventional remark about the weather and asks the old man what he is doing in that lonely place. "A flash of mild surprise" breaks from "the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes", and Wordsworth is struck by the grave courtesy of his reply as he tells him of the hardships of his trade. While the old man is speaking, Wordsworth is almost mystically abstracted by the power of imagination from his surroundings; the old man's voice is "like a stream, scarce heard" and he seems "like one whom I had met with in a dream"; in his mind's eye, Wordsworth sees him pacing

> About the weary moors continually,
> Wandering about alone and silently,

a symbol of the strength and resilience of the human spirit; and, recalling his former despondent thoughts, he regards him as a reprimand from Heaven, "an interposition of Providence" (Wordsworth's own phrase in a letter he wrote about this poem).

Though there are occasional traces of poetic diction ("sable orbs", "espy"), Wordsworth's choice of words is often most effective (the stock-dove *broods*, the skylark *warbles*). The student should examine carefully the stanza-form, with its final Alexandrine, whose slow weight is emphasised by the couplet-rhyme:

> And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
> Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor
> could name.
>
> I saw a Man before me unawares:
> The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.
>
> That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
> And moveth all together, if it move at all.

As a narrative, with natural magic (the opening), imaginative presentation (the stanzas describing the old man),

and moral force (the conclusion), *Resolution and Independence* ranks very high among Wordsworth's poems.

p. 88. 9. Stock-dove, wood-pigeon.

16. plashy, splashy.

p. 89. 22. Chatterton. Born in Bristol in 1752, he was interested chiefly in history, heraldry and medieval literature. He was a genuine poet, but made the mistake of translating his poems into a species of medieval English (of which he was not completely master) and writing them on old parchment in order to claim that he had discovered the remarkable MSS. of a priest named Rowley. Scholars soon detected the forgery, but Chatterton went to London, confident of a successful literary career. Lack of success, and pride (he refused to accept charity), led to his suicide in 1770—at the age of seventeen.

24. Him who walked in glory. Robert Burns, the Scottish lyric poet who began life as a ploughman and who died, ruined by drink and his sudden rise to fame, in 1796, six years before this poem was written.

p. 91. 22. lofty, *i.e.* dignified.

25. grave Livers, *i.e.* Presbyterians.

p. 92. 2. leeches. Used by doctors for bleeding patients; they were chiefly found in fresh-water ponds.

QUESTIONS

1. How far does this poem show that Wordsworth sees common things as strange and wonderful?

2. How does it illustrate Wordsworth's fondness for solitude and solitary figures?

3. Illustrate from *Resolution and Independence* Wordsworth's powers of description.

4. With reference to the poem discuss Wordsworth's mystical experiences.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. *CHRISTABEL*

Born in 1772, Coleridge was the twelfth and youngest son of the vicar of Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, who was also headmaster of the town Grammar School. A singularly precocious lad, he was reading Homer and Virgil when he was only nine years old. He went to Christ's Hospital (a very famous school), where he was a schoolfellow of Charles Lamb. "At a very premature age," he says, "even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy." In 1791 he went on to Cambridge, but left three years later without a degree. He was always dilatory in study, as in

writing poetry. *Christabel* was left unfinished, though Coleridge lived for thirty-six years after it was written.

For many years Coleridge was a close friend of Wordsworth, and in 1797, the year in which Coleridge wrote the first part of *Christabel*, Wordsworth and his sister moved to Alfoxden in order to be near Coleridge, who was living at the Quantock village of Nether Stowey. It proved an invigorating friendship for both of them; they collaborated in writing *The Lyrical Ballads*, a volume of verse which had a most important influence on the development of English poetry. In 1800 the reverse occurred, when Coleridge went to live at Keswick so as to be near the Wordsworths (in Grasmere); and here he wrote the second part of *Christabel*.

Racked by neuralgia and rheumatism, Coleridge took to opium. This affected his whole being—made him "difficult" with his friends, injured his health and killed his imagination. As time went on he became more and more of a critic and philosopher and less and less of a poet. But he was a very great and appreciative critic, and his criticism on Shakespeare still stands high among all that has been written since.

Coleridge spent the last years of his life in the homes of kind friends. He died at Highgate in 1834.

The Lady Christabel, wandering in the wood at midnight outside her father's castle, came across a beautiful but strange lady who, according to her story, had been carried off by five warriors and left stranded in the wood. Christabel took her in to share her bed, but during the night realised that the newcomer, who had called herself Geraldine, was an evil spirit. She would, however, be unable to say anything of this in the morning, as Geraldine had sealed her lips by a spell.

Morning came, and Geraldine told Christabel's father that she was the daughter of an old friend of his with whom he had quarrelled long ago, to his lasting regret. He therefore arranged to send a messenger to his one-time friend, asking him to come and fetch his daughter home, and saying that he would set out with her and meet him on the way. Christabel's entreaty to her father to send "this woman" away only angered him, because he felt dishonoured by such a show of inhospitality. There the poem ends.

It is not the story that makes Christabel, but the atmosphere—the glamour of the supernatural and mysterious. You should notice with what art Coleridge introduces this atmosphere. He nowhere lays it on heavily, but subtly

lets us feel that all is not well with Christabel. His method is to select significant details—here one mysterious touch, there another—till we are prepared to accept the strange happenings in the forest and in the castle. The notes indicate some of these hints of mystery.

As a work of art, *Christabel* is unequal. The first part is the better. In the second part Coleridge has lost the delicate touch and suggestiveness. The unearthly beauty has vanished, and the change from night to day, and from an unnamed castle in an unknown land to Langdale Hall, near Dungeon Ghyll, seems to have robbed the castle of all its mystery and impressiveness. A place marked on a map seems somehow safer than some undefined, unspecified tract of country. One would expect the second part, where the story is pinned down to definite places, to be the more vivid, but the fact that it leaves a blurred impression compared with the first part shows Coleridge's mastery of suggestive writing. In Part I he has a lightness of touch and a fairy-like grace that baffles all description, and in itself gives a sense of the supernatural and romantic. Incidentally, this part was written at Nether Stowey (in the winter of 1797-1798), but Part II, containing the names from Lakeland, was written after Coleridge had removed to Keswick (1800).

Not only is the story unfinished, but we are left unable to decide in what direction the climax lies. We do feel, however, that the essential goodness of the heroine, under the guardianship of her mother's spirit, will be proof against the wiles of the Lady Geraldine (see p. 103, ll. 22-27).

In his *Life of Coleridge* James Gillman, with whom Coleridge spent the last eighteen years of his life, says that Coleridge intended to complete the poem in two more cantos and that the following was the outline of the rest of the tale.

> Over the mountains the Bard, as directed by Sir Leoline, hastens with his disciple; but, in consequence of one of those inundations supposed to be common in the country, the spot only where the castle once stood is discovered, the edifice itself being washed away. He determines to return. Geraldine, being acquainted with all that is passing, like the weird sisters in *Macbeth*, vanished. Reappearing, however, she awaits the return of the Bard, exciting in the

meantime by her wily arts all the anger she could rouse in the Baron's breast, as well as that jealousy of which he is described to have been susceptible. The old Bard and the youth at length arrive, and therefore she can no longer personate the character of Geraldine, the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, but changes her appearance to that of the accepted though absent lover of Christabel. Next ensues a courtship most distressing to Christabel, who feels—she knows not why—great disgust for her once favoured knight. This coldness is very painful to the Baron, who has no more conception than herself of the supernatural transformation. She at last yields to her father's entreaties and consents to approach the altar with the hated suitor. The real lover, returning, enters at this moment and produces the ring which she had once given him in sign of her betrothment. Thus defeated, the supernatural being Geraldine disappears. As predicted, the castle-bell tolls, the mother's voice is heard, and, to the exceeding great joy of the parties, the rightful marriage takes place, after which follows a reconciliation and explanation between father and daughter.

There is an important passage on the metre of the poem in Coleridge's "Preface".

> The metre of *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.

It will be seen how different is this principle of metre from that of Goldsmith and Crabbe, who counted the syllables. The result is that the verse looks more irregular (in essentials it is not), but gives the poet more freedom in expression.

These lines should be learnt by heart: p. 93, ll. 17-21; p. 94, ll. 5-13; p. 95, ll. 6-10; p. 95, ll. 16-26; p. 106, ll. 10-11.

PART THE FIRST

p. 93. 17. the middle of the night. Always a time for mysterious happenings. The first strange occurrence is mentioned in the next line. You should make a list of these touches which give an eerie atmosphere.

p. 94. 4. shroud. A word which suggests horror. The lady referred to is the Baron's wife, Christabel's mother.

16. makes her, is she doing.

21. weal, well-being.

25. **mistletoe.** Unusual in April.

31. **what it is.** The word "it" by its very vagueness adds mystery. A moan in the forest at midnight is uncanny.

p. 95. 3. **There is not wind . . . check.** The moan therefore cannot come from the wind.

12. **Maria.** The Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus.

15. **What sees she there?** Every syllable is stressed in this line This brings a pause which accentuates the suspense.

p. 96. 4. **pursue,** follow with.

13. **amain,** fiercely, in all haste.

18. **wis,** think.

34. **chivalry,** *i.e.* men-at-arms.

p. 97. 4. **That strove . . . fast.** The difficulty she found in walking is another strange feature. You will already have added to your list the very appearance of Geraldine with the "wildly" glittering jewels in her hair.

5. **gracious stars,** good fortune.

22. **Lifted . . . threshold.** The swooning adds to the mystery, for it was held that witches and evil spirits could not of themselves cross a threshold; they had to be carried over by one of the household. Similarly, Geraldine is unwilling to say the name of the Virgin.

p. 98. 5. **The mastiff . . . make.** This increases the sense of mystery.

10. **scritch,** screech.

11. **For what . . . bitch.** Repetition of this line emphasises the bewilderment.

14. **The brands . . . flames.** Another fearful touch.

p. 99. 1. **The moon . . . air.** *Cf.* p. 94, ll. 7-10. This adds a suggestion of eerieness.

4. **curiously,** carefully and skilfully.

31. **Off, wandering mother!** Why did Geraldine want to drive away the spirit of Christabel's mother? See p. 112, ll. 11-25.

Peak and pine. Both these words mean the same—get thin and waste away.

p. 100. 10. **wildered,** bewildered.

p. 101. 15. **A sight . . . tell!** Fear of the unknown is all the greater. We feel that it would be a relief to know the worst. This increases the suspense.

20. **assay,** attempt.

30. **is lord of thy utterance,** controls what you say. This turns out to be an important feature of the spell.

p. 102. 15. **bale,** evil.

p. 103. 2. **tairn.** Usually "tarn", the regular word for a small mountain lake in the Lake District.

11. **tears,** *i.e.* tears of relief.

Part the Second

28. **matin bell.** Bell to announce the first (morning) service of the day.

p. 104. 4. **sacristan,** sexton, the one who tolls the bell.

6. beads. On a rosary, each one representing a prayer.
tell, count.
9. Bratha Head. Some five miles west of Ambleside, the town at the northern tip of Lake Windermere, the largest of the English lakes. The names which follow are well-known places in the Lake District.
13. ween, guess, suppose.
16. ghyll. In the Lake District the word for a deep, narrow glen, usually with a stream tumbling down it.
30. tricks, decks out, with a view to some subtle purpose.
plight, fashion.
31. nothing doubting of her spell. She had not reckoned with the goodness of Christabel, however.
p. 106. 6-11. Alas! . . . brain. Coleridge thought these the best and sweetest lines he ever wrote.
12. divine, guess, suppose, "ween".
p. 107. 5. tourney, tournament. If they "deny the same", the Baron will fight a duel with each of them.
9. kenned, knew, recognised.
23. a hissing sound. A hint of Geraldine's serpent nature. See also p. 111, l. 15.
p. 108. 6. Had deemed, would have thought.
20. solemn vest, ceremonial vesture.
24. Irthing flood. The Irthing River forms part of the boundary between Cumberland and Northumberland. Knorren Moor and Halegarth Wood are actual places, leading to Triermain Castle ("that castle good"), which looks towards Scotland from Bewcastle Fell. The ruins of the castle remain.
p. 109. 24. So strange a dream. The dream of the bard, who has the power of seeing below the surface of things, is significant. Geraldine is now in alliance with Christabel's father; her mother is shielding Christabel with her influence from the other world.
p. 111. 11. askance. Notice that she cannot look Christabel in the face.
p. 112. 22. her deadly pangs beguiled, helped to make her less conscious of her death agony.

Questions

1. Indicate, step by step, how Coleridge introduces and sustains the atmosphere of mystery.

2. Point out phrases which are full of suggestion of facts not definitely stated.

3. Do you agree that the effect of mystery is diminished in Part II? Support your answer by close reference to the poem.

4. Explain why *Christabel* is a landmark in English metres.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. *ADONAIS*

Shelley, who was born in Sussex in 1792, was the descendant of an ancient family. As a child he learnt very rapidly. He went to Eton, where he objected to the fagging system and fell foul of the authorities on account of his love for scientific (and sometimes dangerous) experiments, when the staple interest of the school was in Classics. From early days he was in revolt against the general feeling of his environment, and this inability to fit in with the rest of men is characteristic of him during the whole of his short life. He studied a book of revolutionary tendency written by Godwin, and at Oxford he was never popular with the authorities, who expelled him in his second year for his pamphlet called *The Necessity for Atheism*. He now married, out of pity, a young girl, Harriet Westbrook, after a quarrel with his father. Three years later he left her and went to live with Mary Godwin, daughter of the author of the book on political justice. His wife then committed suicide, and Shelley married Mary. It was in the next year that he met Keats, at Hampstead.

In 1818, Shelley left England for Italy, and never returned. He met Byron at Venice, but Pisa was his home. Here Shelley wrote his most beautiful poems.

Shelley was a reformer and was angry at any attempt to destroy public or private liberty. He used his gift of poetry to express his desire for social reform. This can be seen in such poems as *Queen Mab* and *The Revolt of Islam*, and particularly in *Prometheus Unbound*

When he heard of the illness of Keats, Shelley invited him to his home, but Keats went to Rome, where he died in 1821. Shelley himself was drowned when a squall upset his boat on 1st July, 1822. In his pocket was found an edition of Keats's poems, doubled back as if it had been thrust hastily away. He was buried near the grave of Keats in the cemetery at Rome, which he describes in Stanza XLIX of *Adonais*.

On 23rd February, 1821, Keats died, and Shelley appears to have heard the sad news some weeks later, probably in April. A letter written by him to some friends in June of that year contains these words:

> I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the death of Keats, which will shortly be finished. . . . It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written.

In another letter of the same period Shelley wrote,

> *Adonais* is a lament on the death of poor Keats, with some interspersed stabs on the assassins of his peace and of his fame. . . . It is little adapted for popularity, but it is perhaps the least imperfect of my compositions.

The poem deals with the themes of glory and death, of Shelley's dreams about his own life, of the work of other poets, of the Spirit that animates the world; and these themes are formed into a symphony where the first thirty-eight stanzas form a kind of lament, and, with a change of tone, the last seventeen suggest consolation. Like Milton's *Lycidas*, *Adonais* is a pastoral elegy; and like Milton, Shelley has employed invective—just as *Lycidas* includes a severe criticism of the corrupt clergy, so *Adonais* is an indictment of the reviewers, who, according to Shelley, were responsible for the death of Keats. Both poems use the classical conventions of pastoral elegy. In both we find:

1. An invocation.
2. A reference to the dead man being a shepherd.
3. That nature joins in the lament.
4. A contrast between the unreturning life of man and the ever-returning life of nature.
5. A procession of mourners—gods, shepherds, dreams, etc.
6. A lament of a personal character.
7. A change of mood towards the end of the poem, leading to a feeling of consolation.

Adonais is dead, and the Hour of his death is asked to teach all other hours to mourn (Stanza I). The poet calls on Urania to mourn for the death of her youngest poet, as she had also wept for Milton, and before that time for Homer and Dante (II-VIII). He then describes the Dreams (*i.e.* the thoughts) of Keats, now having no real connection with his mind, tending the dead poet and lamenting their loss (IX-XIII). Nature now takes up the note of mourning (XIV-XVIII). Though grief for Keats is ever-present, life renews itself as the seasons come round. Nothing dies; must the soul alone die and Keats's life *really* end (XIX-XXI)?

Urania is roused and visits the dead Adonais (XXII-XXVI), saying that had he but waited till he had the help of wisdom and scorn he would have been better equipped to attack the forces of hatred, the reviewers

(XXVII-XXIX). The mountain shepherds (the contemporaries of Keats) join the lament (XXX-XXXV). Shelley then lashes the reviewers, whom he regards as responsible for the death of Keats (XXXVI-XXXVII), who, now "a portion of the Eternal", is beyond their reach (XXXVIII).

The mood changes, the poet rejects his grief. Adonais has "awakened from the dream of life"; he is far from envy, calumny, hate, and pain, safe from the hopelessness that accompanies old age (XXXIX-XL). We and nature must not mourn for him (XLI), for he is "made one with Nature", now immortal as part of the Universal Mind which sweeps through the world (XLII-XLIII). Those with splendid intellects—such as poets—may be "eclipsed" for a time, but they cannot be destroyed; their noble aspirations live on whenever anyone with lofty thoughts struggles to rise above the mean notions of earthly matters (XLIV). Chatterton, Sidney, Lucan, poets who died young, rise to meet Keats, and many others whose names are not remembered; they point out a sphere which has been waiting for him to occupy it as its king (XLV-XLVI).

Anyone foolish enough to mourn for Adonais should keep his spirits raised or go to Rome and visit the cemetery at Rome where Keats is buried, and realise that Keats adds lustre to the great ones already buried there and that death is a shelter from the bitterness of the world (XLVII-LI). Though individual lives change and pass away, the One Eternal Spirit of absolute reality (of which human life is but a poor distortion) remains always (LII), and death means reunion with those who have preceded us (LIII).

Prophetically, Shelley feels the Spirit of the Universe shining on him; he feels that he is near death, but the soul of Adonais seems to guide him and "beacons from the abode where the Eternal are" (LIV-LV).

Here are two extracts from the reviews to which Shelley refers in the poem:

Blackwood's Magazine, 1818.

> The frenzy of the poems (*i.e.* Keats's *Poems*, 1817) was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of *Endymion*. . . . It is a better and wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop, Mr. John, back to plaster, pills and ointment-boxes.

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Quarterly Review, 1818.

He seems to us to write a line at random, and then he follows not the thought excited by this line, but that suggested by the *rhyme* with which it concludes. There is hardly a complete couplet enclosing a complete idea in the whole book.

Shelley is not a poet of detailed sensuous description and delight in material objects in nature. His eyes are fixed on the thoughts aroused by such objects. He is more likely to find beauty in an abstract intellectual idea. His verse is particularly rich in terms describing the elements—flame, fire, darkness, cloud, and wind— and full of feeling and intellectual thought leading to a spirituality of vision. All this is clearly seen in *Adonais*.

It has intensity of feeling and grandeur and nobility of expression (*e.g.* the Platonic ideas in Stanzas XXXIX and LII), and is only occasionally marred by the defects found in some of Shelley's other poetry—vagueness, unreality, and the sense of moving in a rarefied atmosphere (*e.g.* XLVII). Consider, in contrast, the economy of words in the opening of Stanza XXIX.

It is natural that a poem in the tradition of the pastoral elegy should contain a good many classical references (Hours, Echo, Narcissus, Actaeon, etc.); but as an elegy *Adonais* is remarkable in that so many of its stanzas deal, not with death, darkness, and corruption, but with flowers, living forms of nature, and the vital spirit behind them, and with images of light—suns, stars, meteors, moonlight, lightning, the vault of blue Italian day, and the white radiance of eternity.

Shelley's language is intensely poetic, with its characteristic use of oxymoron ("mute voice"—III), hyperbole ("blushed to annihilation"—XXV), and alliteration ("most musical of mourners"—IV, etc.), the latter sometimes quite forceful and almost savage ("trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite of lust and blood"—IV). The student will note the metaphor of morning seeking "her eastern watch-tower" (XIV). Most striking of all are Shelley's similes:

like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished (VI),
with no stain she faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain (X),
as a dying meteor stains a wreath of moonlight vapour (XII),

as a sword consumed before the sheath by sightless lightning (XX),
companionless as the last cloud of an expiring storm whose thunder is its knell (XXXI),

and the long simile of an autumnal Night (XXIII).

Adonais is written in the Spenserian stanza (which Keats had used for *The Eve of St. Agnes*): note its rhyme-scheme and its concluding Alexandrine.

The student should learn by heart the following stanzas: XIV, XXIII, XXXI-XXXII, XL, XLII-XLIII, and LII.

Stanza I. Adonais. This name, by which Shelley refers to Keats, is probably taken from that of Adonis, on whom the Greek poet Bion had written an elegy.

II. mighty Mother. Urania, whom Milton in *Paradise Lost* calls the Muse of Heavenly Wisdom.

pierced by the shaft . . . darkness. Adonis was killed by a boar's tusk. Adonais (Keats) was supposed to have had his death hastened by the scathing remarks of the reviewers.

melodies, *i.e.* the poems which Keats had written.

III. amorous Deep. The Abyss of Hades, where Death loves to keep Adonais.

feeds on, enjoys. For "mute voice" see p. 66.

IV. He. Milton, as the following lines indicate; they refer to his later years, when he was blind and despised, in the days of Charles II.

the third. If Milton is the third, there is no doubt that Homer and Dante, the great epic poets, are the first and second. Indeed, in his *Defence of Poetry* Shelley says so, in so many words.

V. envious wrath . . . god. Envy of man against man and of gods against mortals.

some yet live. Such poets as Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley himself.

VI. sad maiden. Probably a reference to Keats's poem *Isabella.*

VII. blue Italian day. Keats was buried at Rome, the "high Capital" of Italy.

VIII. Hunger, *i.e.* the hunger of Corruption.

IX. quick Dreams, lively thoughts, *i.e.* Keats's own thoughts in his poems.

X. one. One of the dreams.

Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise. The mind of Adonais is the Paradise. The messenger of the mind can carry no messages, as do angels, now that the mind itself is dead.

XI. anadem, wreath.

to stem . . . weak. The idea is probably that of physical pain distracting the mind from mental sorrow, but it is unusual to speak of stemming a loss with another loss. The "stemming of a torrent of grief" is a more usual expression. In the poem by Bion, and in an idyll by Theocritus, there are references to the

Loves or Cupids breaking their bows and arrows. Shelley has transferred this gesture to the Dreams. The last line suggests that the "wingèd reeds", *i.e.* the *arrows*, otherwise the *winged words* of Keats, are tipped with fire, but this flame dies when pressed against the dead poet's cold cheek.

XII. Splendour, a luminous Dream.

XIV. Morning. Nature has now taken the place of the procession of Dreams in mourning for Adonais.

XV. Echo. A nymph who is said to have pined away for love of Narcissus, who was so greatly in love with himself that he ceased to pay any heed to her. Shelley now imagines her grieving for Adonais.

XVI. Hyacinth . . . Narcissus. In this stanza there is a change from the legendary Hyacinth and Narcissus to the flowers which bear their names. Hyacinth was a beautiful youth loved by Phoebus. Zephyrus was jealous of this friendship and blew aside a quoit which Phoebus was throwing, so that it struck Hyacinth on the head and killed him. He was changed into the flower hyacinth, which is supposed to bear markings that look like the Greek letters "ai, ai" (alas! alas!). Narcissus looked so long in admiration at his own face in a pool that he pined away and was changed into the flower narcissus. It is the flowers and not the personages which are said to mourn for Keats.

XVII. the lorn nightingale. Shelley is probably making a reference here to Keats's ode *To a Nightingale*. In classical mythology Philomela was changed into a nightingale while being pursued by her jealous husband, Tereus, who became a hawk.

Albion, England.

Cain. Cain was branded as a murderer, and Shelley considers the reviewer, Jeffrey, in the *Quarterly Review*, to have been responsible for the death of Keats.

XVIII. brere, briar.

XX. that alone which knows, *i.e.* the spirit of man. The question suggests that if the mind were to die while the body in one form or another continued to live, then the mind would resemble a sword which by the action of lightning is made molten within its sheath, while the sheath itself remains intact. The answer to the question is not given, but Shelley's thought seems to be that the mind does *not* really perish. There is an interesting parallel in his *Defence of Poetry*, where he says, "Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it".

intense atom, the mind

XXI. who lends . . . borrow. The idea that life is only lent from death is suggested here.

XXII. fading Splendour. Urania.

XXIV. Palms of her tender feet. In Italian *palme* refers to the sole of the feet of aquatic birds.

soft Form. The delicate nature of Keats.

XXV. silent lightning, lightning unaccompanied by thunder.

XXVI. heartless breast. All her heart has been given to Adonais.

XXVII. unpastured dragon, *i.e.* the uncultured and insensitive section of the population, the "philistines" hostile to art in any form.

mirrored shield. A reference to the shield given to Perseus by Athene, so that he might kill Medusa by seeing her reflection and so avoid her fatal gaze. Shelley means that if Keats had waited till he had the help of the shield of wisdom and the spear of scorn he would have been better equipped to attack his enemies.

crescent sphere. A metaphor taken from the moon, which grows from a crescent into the full round.

XXVIII. The Pythian of the age. Shelley is possibly thinking of a statue of Apollo in which the attitude *may* be that of slaying a python, or dragon. An early work of Byron's, *Hours of Idleness*, was severely criticised by the reviewers in the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron (the Pythian) avenged himself for this by writing a satirical poem on the reviewers, called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

XXX. mountain shepherds. These are the poets who were contemporaries of Keats.

Pilgrim of Eternity. Byron—a reference to *Childe Harold* and his pilgrimage.

Ierne, Ireland.

sweetest lyrist. Thomas Moore, who wrote *Irish Melodies*.

XXXI. one frail Form. A reference to Shelley himself.

Actaeon-like. Actaeon, a hunter, was supposed, in classical mythology, to have looked upon Diana as she was bathing, and, as a punishment, was turned into a stag and killed by his own dogs.

XXXII. pard-like, like a leopard.

XXXIII. light spear . . . cone. The thyrsus or Bacchic wand, which was a light wand covered with a bunch of ivy or vine-leaves or the cone of a fir tree. Sometimes the top of the stick contained a sharp spike.

XXXIV. who, *i.e.* one who (Shelley himself).

accents of an unknown land. An allusion to the fact that Shelley was living and writing in Italy. In these poignant lines Shelley speaks of his own fate. Both Christ and Cain were lonely, the one with a crown of thorns, the other with the brand of a murderer.

XXXV. softer voice. That of Leigh Hunt, friend and neighbour of Keats at Hampstead.

XXXVI. prelude. Keats's *Endymion*. Shelley suggests that this poem, which was so cruelly criticised by Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* (the "noteless blot" of the next stanza), was only the beginning of Keats's work.

XXXIX. dream of life. Shelley introduces here the Platonic idea that the soul awakes when it is no longer connected with the body.

XL. Notice that the reference to "the shadow of our night" fits with the similitude of a dream in the previous stanza.

XLI. Dawn. Here Shelley turns to different aspects of nature; he has previously mentioned flowers.

XLII. that Power. Shelley here gives the idea of an all-pervading Spirit in the Universe.

XLIII. the one Spirit's plastic stress. Shelley suggests that this Spirit animates the whole Universe and takes into itself individual minds, such as that of Keats. It has a formative function, creating "trees and beasts and men", and taking their life back into itself. *Plastic* means "giving shape to formless material".

XLIV. The following paraphrase may help the student with this difficult stanza: "Those with splendid intellects—such as poets—cannot be destroyed, though they may be 'eclipsed' for a time; like the stars, they *cannot* perish. Death may blot out brightness, but it does not destroy it. When anyone with lofty thoughts tries to rise above earthly matters and struggles to give lovely ideas to mankind instead of being satisfied with mean notions, then noble aspirations, like those of Keats, live in that person's heart, and such aspirations spread 'like winds of light on dark and stormy air'".

XLV. Chatterton. A young poet to whom *Endymion* had been dedicated by Keats. See note to p. 89, l. 22.

Sidney. Sir Philip Sidney, famed as a knight on the battlefield and as a poet, died at Zutphen at the age of thirty-two.

Lucan. This Roman poet, who was persecuted by Nero, killed himself at the age of twenty-six after he had been condemned to death. Shelley was an admirer of his poem *Pharsalia*.

XLVI. effluence, outpouring of spirit.

Vesper. A brilliant star and one that is known as the *evening star*. These young poets hail Keats as a brilliant companion and as the latest-comer to their throng.

XLVII. fond wretch, foolish mortal (*i.e.* in mourning). This is another difficult stanza. "Any foolish mourner should realise how great was the difference between him and Keats. He should first think about the magnitude of the earth; then from the starting-point of the earth itself he should consider all the worlds in the universe and the space in which they move; then he should realise how very small he is and how he is confined within the day and night of this world; and then when he has gone to the very brink of life, *i.e.* the division between life and death, and has raised his spirit to the hopes aroused by those other worlds, he will indeed need to keep as light a heart as possible, for otherwise he will be plunged into despair at the realisation of his own littleness."

XLVIII. Rome. In his preface to *Adonais*, Shelley refers to the beauty of the cemetery at Rome—"the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place".

XLIX. a slope of green access. In a letter to a friend, Shelley described the beauty and freshness of the grass in the cemetery.

L. one keen pyramid . . . sublime. The pyramid above the tomb of Caius Cestius, a tribune of the people. Little is known about this man, but he evidently planned this monument to preserve his memory.

LI. one fountain of a mourning mind. A reference to Shelley's much-loved little son, William, who died at the age of four and was buried in this cemetery in 1819.

LII. The One remains. A reference to the Platonic idea that there is *one* real existence of which the many are but insubstantial representations.

LIV. wove, woven.

LV. my spirit's bark. This premonition of Shelley's own death and the metaphor of the ship are the more remarkable in that he was drowned in a shipwreck almost exactly a year later.

QUESTIONS

1. Indicate from *Adonais* Shelley's interest in classical literature.

2. Compile a list of striking lines from *Adonais*. Try to say why the lines have appealed to you.

3. By what methods does Shelley constantly insist on the youth of Keats?

4. Consider the idea that in *Adonais* we gain more information about the *writer* than about the subject.

JOHN KEATS. *THE EVE OF ST. AGNES*

Keats was born in 1795; his father was an ostler in a livery stable. His headmaster, Charles Cowden Clarke, was interested in the boy and helped to cultivate his love of literature (and in particular the poetry of Spenser). Through a love of Greek sculpture, Keats became thoroughly imbued with the Greek spirit. He left school at the age of fifteen, was apprenticed to a surgeon and entered a London hospital, where he remained for two years. But he was far more interested in poetry than in medicine. His first volume of poems (1817), and a longer poem, *Endymion* (1818), both met with severe criticism. He nursed his mother and brother in very severe illnesses, and when they died his own health was much impaired. He had by this time given up medicine and determined to devote his life to literature; but the disease—consumption—from which his mother and brother had died attacked him and, after living for some time in Hampstead, he went first to Naples and then to Rome, in the hope of regaining some measure of health During the last year of his life he produced poems of enduring worth—the narrative poems, *Isabella, The*

Eve of St. Agnes and *Lamia*; a portion of an epic poem called *Hyperion*; odes, sonnets and other lyric poems. His letters to his family and his literary and artistic friends are among the finest in the language. He died in 1821 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome.

The poem tells how a young girl, Madeline, carries out certain rites in association with the eve of St. Agnes, which were supposed to ensure that she would see in a vision the face of her future husband. Through the good offices of her nurse, her lover, Porphyro, obtains access to her on the night on which she has carried out these legendary rites, and thus the rites are vindicated in very deed and truth. He is able to carry her away from her relations, who object to their marriage, and the poem ends with the two lovers fleeing away into the night.

The story makes a simple enough plot—merely a variation on the success of two lovers in spite of parental opposition. Its interest therefore depends on the treatment.

Leigh Hunt wrote of the poem:

> Let the student of poetry observe that in all the luxury of *The Eve of St. Agnes* there is nothing of the conventional craft of artificial writers: no heaping up of words or similes for their own sakes or the rhyme's sake; no gaudy commonplaces; no borrowed sins of earnestness; no tricks of inversion; no substitution of reading or of ingenious thoughts for feeling or spontaneity; no irrelevance or unfitness of any sort. All flows out of sincerity and passion.

In the craft of the poem notice particularly these effects.

1. The detail. Keats builds up a picture by a masterly choice of *significant* detail, each detail a little picture in itself. The impression of the bitterly cold night is brought home by its effect on the owl, the hare and the sheep, creatures which *normally would not feel the cold*; it is suggested that even the sculptured figures feel the deathly cold. So, later in the poem, he makes us feel how windy it is by the way "the long carpets rose along the gusty floor".

Every detail stands out in Keats's mind—not just a lamp, but a "*chain-droop'd* lamp". So, in passing, he notices the figures on the arras.

2. The deep, vivid colouring, particularly the eight stanzas beginning, "A casement high and triple-arched there was".

3. The use of contrast, *e.g.*

(*a*) The paralysing cold outside and the warm festivity inside.

(*b*) The Beadsman and Angela, old, poor and backward-looking, and Porphyro and Madeline, young, rich and forward-looking.

(*c*) The boisterous revellers and Madeline brooding on "St. Agnes' saintly care"; their feasting and her fasting.

(*d*) The noise of the feast downstairs and the hush of Madeline's bedroom.

(*e*) Amongst all the richness of the description of Madeline's room the freshness of p. 142, ll. 10-11.

4. The way *things* are given a sense of life, *e.g.*

(*a*) Knights, ladies, *praying* in *dumb* orat'ries, *aching* in *icy* hoods and mails.

(*b*) *Snarling* trumpets

(*c*) The carved angels, ever *eager-eyed, stared.*

(*d*) The music, *yearning* like a god in pain.

(*e*) A shielded scutcheon *blushed.*

5. The force of simple adjectives amidst the "purple riot" of description. Fond as Keats is of unusual adjectives, he knows the striking power of simple ones. These adjectives frequently occur in groups of three, *e.g.*

(*a*) Meagre, barefoot, wan. (*b*) Pale, lattic'd, chill. (*c*) Silken, hush'd, and chaste. (*d*) Boisterous, midnight, festive. (*e*) Pallid, chill and drear.

6. The beautiful similes, *e.g.* p. 140, ll. 8-9; p. 140, ll. 14-15; p. 141, ll. 17-18; p. 144, ll. 24-25. Generally, the similes are concrete and definite; there is one, however (p. 141, ll. 24-25), which is full of weird suggestion and which awakes the reader's imagination to create an eerie, undefined picture.

7. The Spenserian stanza, with its triumphant closing Alexandrine, which seems to gather together and round off the whole stanza.

Some of the finest of these Alexandrines are similes referred to above, and p. 140, l. 19; p. 145, l. 27; p. 146, l. 9.

Sometimes the words are of the simplest, as in

> The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

But they cannot be considered as isolated lines; their force is in their resonant climax to the whole stanza. They round off the "linked sweetness long drawn out" of the

rest of the stanza with a magnificent conclusion, which is detached in metre from the rest of the stanza and yet, linked with it in rhyme, never suffers complete isolation. While its lingering nature makes it unsuitable for quick-moving narrative, the Spenserian stanza is admirable for descriptive poetry.

Those who know Spenser cannot fail to see his influence throughout *The Eve of St. Agnes*. The whole poem is a "triumph gay of old romance", like a rich tapestry come to life out of medieval times.

p. 132. **19. St. Agnes' Eve.** St. Agnes was martyred at the age of thirteen in the year 304, because she refused to marry a pagan; after her death her parents dreamt that they saw her in the glory of Heaven with a white lamb beside her. A lamb is a symbol of purity, and Agnes herself is associated with the idea of the purity of marriage. Her "day" is January 21st. On the evening before that day, so the legend runs, a girl who fulfils the ritual mentioned by Keats in Stanza 6 will be rewarded with the vision of the man she will love and marry.

23. Beadsman, one who prays for the souls of the dead.

told His rosary, counted his prayers by means of the beads of his rosary.

p. 133. **6. purgatorial rails,** probably garments worn in purgatory, but perhaps Keats intends the more obvious rendering—the rails which enclose the statues.

7. dumb. Transferred epithet. The "knights" and "ladies" —"the sculptured dead"—were dumb.

12. Flatter'd to tears, made him cry for joy with a false (hence "flatter'd") hope that his might be a happier lot.

20. so it chanc'd, it (the fact that he "heard the prelude soft") happened so.

23. level chambers, rooms on the ground floor.

p. 134. **16. supine,** at full length.

17. require, ask.

24. tiptoe, *i.e.* full of expectancy.

25. not cool'd . . . she saw not, the "amorous cavalier" did not retire because Madeline "froze" them with a look of "high disdain", but simply because she did not see them.

p. 135. **1. regardless,** unseeing.

4. timbrels, tambourines.

7. amort, dead. Madeline was as if dead to what was passing before her, as she was thinking solely of the rites she intended to carry out.

8. unshorn. Two unshorn lambs were brought to Mass on St. Agnes' Day, and their wool was afterwards used to make holy vestments (see p 136, ll. 25-27). The name Agnes is derived from Lat. "agnus", a lamb.

14. Buttress'd from moonlight, *i.e.* a buttress sheltered him from the moonlight.

p. 136. 15. **Gossip,** my old friend.

p. 137. 8. **deceive.** Not in the usual sense of "mislead", but show her a vision in her sleep which she might take to be real.

9. **mickle,** much.

10. **moon,** moonlight.

16. **brook,** check, forbear.

17. **cold,** *i.e.* not the real thing.

p. 138. 11. **churchyard,** at the point of death.

12. **passing-bell,** "death-bell".

27. **Merlin.** Magician of the court of King Arthur. The son of a demon, he paid "the monstrous debt" when he ended his life as a victim of one of his own spells.

p. 139. 2. **cates,** delicacies. We still have the verb "to cater" and the noun "catering". *Cf.* "catering", below.

14. **dim espial.** Transferred epithet. She was afraid that Porphyro might be spied in the dim light.

17. **amain,** exceedingly.

21. **St. Agnes' charmed maid,** a maid under the charms of St. Agnes.

22. **mission'd,** with a mission to perform.

unaware, without *anyone else* being conscious of her approach.

26. **fray'd,** frightened.

p. 140. 6. **But to her heart . . . voluble.** The first "heart" is used in the sense of "feelings". The beating of her heart told her how much she felt.

17. **emblazonings,** heraldic devices.

p. 141. 1. **her vespers done.** The student should contrast the rich detail of the description which follows with the reserve and suggestion of *Christabel,* p. 100, ll. 30-31.

16. **Clasp'd . . . pray.** In the lands of pagans ("Paynims") a missal would have to be kept tightly shut.

21. **if it chanc'd . . . tenderness,** for the time when it took on the gentle regularity of deep sleep.

p. 142. 1. **faded.** Because setting. *Cf.* later, "St. Agnes' moon hath set".

5. **Morphean.** Morpheus was the son of sleep and god of dreams in classical mythology. **amulet,** charm—so that Madeline would not awake until she was ready.

10. **azure-lidded.** Keats probably has in mind a picture of the faint blue veins of the eyelids. He is very exact in details of this sort.

13. **gourd,** pumpkin.

14. **soother,** more soothing. Keats has coined the word.

15. **tinct,** coloured. As the reader says this line aloud, his lips, tongue and teeth seem to go through the very motions of tasting.

18. **silken Samarcand.** A town in Turkestan. "Silken" because it is the market for silk brought from Japan and China.

Lebanon. Hilly district in Syria, near the coast, to the north of Palestine, famous for its cedars, in connection with which it is usually mentioned, as in the Old Testament—"the cedars of

Lebanon".

25. eremite, hermit.

p. 143. 3. dusk, dusky.

9. entoil'd in woofed fantasies, caught in the web of fancies woven together.

13. Provence. In the south of France, home of the medieval troubadors.

"La . . . mercy", "the beautiful lady without mercy"—*i.e.* she did not return the love of her knight.

17. affrayed. See note on "fray'd" above.

21. There was a painful change. Because the Porphyro she now saw was so pale, in contrast with the Porphyro of her vision who had his normal colour. See p. 144, l. 5.

p. 144. 16. Solution, mingling, "blend".

19. flaw-blown, blown by gusts of wind.

27. unpruned, untrimmed—un*preen*ed.

p. 145. 11. seeming, appearance.

16. Rhenish, Rhenish wine.

sleepy, causing sleep.

20. sleeping dragons, *i.e.* enemies of Porphyro.

p. 146. 6. owns, recognises.

17. aves, prayers to the Virgin Mary (beginning "Ave Maria" —Hail, Mary).

Questions

1. Briefly tell the story of the poem. Which do you consider the more important element—the poet's artistic skill or the actual story? Give your reasons fully.

2. How far does the medieval setting contribute to the success of the poem?

3. Comment on and illustrate Keats's detailed poetic pictures and show how he has enriched the poem by the use of strong contrasts and colour.

4. Illustrate Keats's love for beautiful words quite apart from their meaning.

EDWARD FITZGERALD. *THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM*

Edward FitzGerald spent much of his life at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, where he was born in 1809. He had no regular profession and, since he disliked society, he spent much of his time quietly reading or dreaming. He was a friend of Thackeray, the novelist, and later of Tennyson and Carlyle. He translated plays of Aeschylus the Greek, and Calderon, the Spanish dramatist. In 1859 he published a very small edition of what was supposed to

be a translation from the Persian of *The Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám. Actually he changed parts of the poem, left out others and even inserted lines of his own, so that the completed poem is as much the work of FitzGerald as of the original poet. FitzGerald also published a collection of aphorisms and compiled *Readings from Crabbe*. He wrote many charming letters, which were published in 1889, six years after his death.

Gray's *Elegy* and FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*, perhaps the two best-known of all English poems, have much in common—notably their melancholy and their polished cadences and phrases. (Their authors, both recluses, had much in common, too; indeed, FitzGerald has been called the Gray of the nineteenth century.)

It has been said that the *Rubáiyát* "reads like the testament of a mid-Victorian Persian". The idea which pervades the poem is partly Oriental—accept what comes, it is of no use to fight against Fate; and partly European—enjoy the world of the senses while you can; eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die. The great popularity of the poem is partly due to the fact that its themes represent a reaction against doctrines of industrious earnestness.

In the original Persian each quatrain was independent, and though FitzGerald rearranged the quatrains to provide some kind of continuity, it is difficult to regard the poem as a satisfactory unity. A consideration of the transience of life and the vanishing of the great ones of the past leads to the conclusion,

> Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we too into the Dust descend.

There follows a section on the vanity of speculating about the mystery of existence. The only comfort is "the Cypress-slender Minister of Wine". This leads, in turn, to another section on the transience of life, and on the difficulty in differentiating between the False and the True. Since everything is predestined anyway, why worry? It was also predestined that Omar should find solace in wine, and there is as much chance of finding the flash of truth in the tavern as in the temple. A further section deals with the impossibility of fathoming the mystery of life. Wine is not the answer after all, perhaps. The passing of youth and spring still fills the poet with sadness.

There is much repetition of ideas. The poem often goes round in circles, and in places seems almost static. In addition, its ideas are almost always couched in oriental metaphors which bring a certain vagueness: the tavern and the wine, the potter and the pots; and there are many references to figures from Persia's legendary past.

Yet the *Rubáiyát* has always appealed to all kinds of readers, and many of its stanzas are part of our popular literary inheritance (*e.g.* stanzas XII, XIII, XIX, XXII-XXIV, XXVII, LXXI, XCIX). Perhaps the greatest reason for its popularity lies in its musical phrasing and its incantatory rhythm. The poem is written in five-foot quatrains, with the rhyme-scheme *a a x a*.

> The opening couplet, giving the ear a taste of rhyme, makes it expectant of more; the blank third line at once gives variety and increases appetite by delaying its gratification; and the echo of the first rhyme unexpectedly repeats an old delight (E. A. Greening Lamborn, *Poetic Values*).

RUBÁIYÁT. A series of *rubáis* or four-line stanzas in Persian poetry, each independent of the rest, and of an epigrammatic nature. (In his "translation", FitzGerald attempted to weave them into a connected train of thought.) The rhyme-scheme of the Persian is the same as that of the English version.

OMAR KHAYÁM. At one time a tent-maker (*khayyám*), Omar was a great Persian poet. He was born at Naishapur in Khorassan, in north-east Persia, in the second half of the eleventh century and died in 1123. He was very learned in astronomy, medicine and mathematics.

Stanza II. False morning, *i.e.* the "false dawn", a pale light on the horizon about an hour before the real dawn. This is a frequent phenomenon in the East.

Temple, *i.e.* tavern.

IV. New Year. In Persia the New Year begins at the spring equinox (March 21st).

White Hand of Moses. A metaphor for the blossoms. See *Exodus*, iv. 6.

Jesus . . . suspires. According to the Persians the healing power of Jesus resided in his breath. He was believed to bring the flowers to life

V. Iram. A fabulous garden, planted by a Persian king and supposed to be now sunk beneath the sands of Arabia.

Jamshýd. A legendary king of Persia, whose reign was a long period of prosperity and magnificence. By his seven-ringed cup (said to represent the seven heavens of Mohammedanism, the seven seas, the seven planets, etc.) the future could be foretold.

VI. David. As well as being king of Israel, David was a

musician and the author of the Psalms. His lips are "locked" in death.

Pehleví. An ancient Persian language.

sallow cheek . . . incarnadine. FitzGerald wrote, "I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or to the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White and Yellow Roses are all common in Persia". Incarnadine = to redden.

Kaikobád. A famous king of Persia, known to history as Qubad I.

Kaikhosrú. King of Persia, A.D. 531-579. He extended the Persian dominions from the Indus to the Red Sea.

X. Zal. The father of Rustum.

Rustum. The great legendary hero of the Persians, a warrior whose exploits against national enemies, dragons and demons are told in Firdusi's great Persian epic, the *Shahnameh*. One of the incidents of Rustum's life is the subject of Matthew Arnold's poem *Sohrab and Rustum*.

Hátim. A figure symbolic of generosity.

XI. Mahmúd. Turkish ruler of the Persian Empire in the tenth century. He was a patron of Persian literature and a great conqueror; he extended his dominions as far as the Ganges, forcing the Hindus to worship the Mohammedan god, Allah.

XIV. silken tassel of my Purse, *i.e.* the rose's golden centre.

XV. aureate, golden in colour.

XVII. Caravanserai. A kind of inn in the East, consisting of a large building enclosing a courtyard where caravans may put up.

XVIII. Courts. Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire, supposed to have been founded by Jamshýd.

Bahrám. A national hero of Persia, who became king in 420. He was nicknamed "The Wild Ass" on account of his strength and speed.

XXI. Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years. In Omar's time this was believed to be the age of the earth.

XXV. Muezzín. A public crier who proclaims the regular hours of prayer in Mohammedan countries.

XXVII. by the same door, *i.e.* having learnt nothing.

XXX. forbidden Wine. Mohammedans are forbidden to drink wine.

XXXI. Seventh Gate. The entrance to the Seventh Heaven, the most exalted and blissful in the Mohammedan Paradise.

Saturn. Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

XXXII. Some little talk . . . Thee, *i.e.* discussion of the mystery of individual personality.

XXXIV. the Thee in Me, *i.e.* the idea of Providence, a power behind the universe, for the existence of which Omar finds no evidence.

XXXVI. once did live. The clay from which the bowl ("earthen Urn") is made was once Man. The Eastern mystics believe that all things share the same spirit of life and that the soul inhabits several successive bodily forms.

There is much repetition of ideas. The poem often goes round in circles, and in places seems almost static. In addition, its ideas are almost always couched in oriental metaphors which bring a certain vagueness: the tavern and the wine, the potter and the pots; and there are many references to figures from Persia's legendary past.

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Pehleví. An ancient Persian language.

sallow cheek . . . incarnadine. FitzGerald wrote, "I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or to the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White and Yellow Roses are all common in Persia". Incarnadine = to redden.

Kaikobád. A famous king of Persia, known to history as Qubad I.

Kaikhosrú. King of Persia, A.D. 531-579. He extended the Persian dominions from the Indus to the Red Sea.

X. Zal. The father of Rustum.

Rustum. The great legendary hero of the Persians, a warrior whose exploits against national enemies, dragons and demons are told in Firdusi's great Persian epic, the *Shahnameh*. One of the incidents of Rustum's life is the subject of Matthew Arnold's poem *Sohrab and Rustum*.

Hátim. A figure symbolic of generosity.

XI. Mahmúd. Turkish ruler of the Persian Empire in the tenth century. He was a patron of Persian literature and a great conqueror; he extended his dominions as far as the Ganges, forcing the Hindus to worship the Mohammedan god, Allah.

XIV. silken tassel of my Purse, *i.e.* the rose's golden centre.

XV. aureate, golden in colour.

XVII. Caravanserai. A kind of inn in the East, consisting of a large building enclosing a courtyard where caravans may put up.

XVIII. Courts. Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire, supposed to have been founded by Jamshýd.

Bahrám. A national hero of Persia, who became king in 420. He was nicknamed "The Wild Ass" on account of his strength and speed.

XXI. Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years. In Omar's time this was believed to be the age of the earth.

XXV. Muezzín. A public crier who proclaims the regular hours of prayer in Mohammedan countries.

XXVII. by the same door, *i.e.* having learnt nothing.

XXX. forbidden Wine. Mohammedans are forbidden to drink wine.

XXXI. Seventh Gate. The entrance to the Seventh Heaven, the most exalted and blissful in the Mohammedan Paradise.

Saturn. Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

XXXII. Some little talk . . . Thee, *i.e.* discussion of the mystery of individual personality.

XXXIV. the Thee in Me, *i.e.* the idea of Providence, a power behind the universe, for the existence of which Omar finds no evidence.

XXXVI. once did live. The clay from which the bowl ("earthen Urn") is made was once Man. The Eastern mystics believe that all things share the same spirit of life and that the soul inhabits several successive bodily forms.

XXXIX. from our Cups. The superstitious custom of throwing a little wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia.

XL. till Heav'n To Earth invert you. This refers to the Eastern idea of life as a wheel, which is continually changing and which will eventually change man to dust.

XLIII. Angel of the darker Drink, *i.e.* the angel of Death, Azrael, who severs the soul from the body at the moment of death.

XLV. addrest, travelling towards.

Ferrásh, slave.

another Guest, *i.e.* another soul.

XLVI. Sákí, cupbearer. FitzGerald describes God as a cupbearer who pours out the lives of men.

XLVII. the Veil, *i.e.* Death, the curtain which separates the temporal from the eternal.

XLVIII. Well amid the Waste. A man's life is like a brief stay at an oasis in the midst of the desert of eternity.

XLIX. spangle, *i.e.* a small particle.

The Secret, *i.e.* spend your brief life worrying about the mystery of existence.

L. Alif. A thing of no importance; *lit.* the first letter of the Arabian alphabet.

Treasure-house, *i.e.* an understanding of the mysteries of nature.

The Master, *i.e.* God

LI. secret Presence. A reference to the belief called Pantheism, according to which all natural phenomena are manifestations of the one essence (God), whose only existence is in them. *Cf.* Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, p. 86, ll. 13-20.

Máh. The constellation of the Fish (Pisces).

Máhi. The Moon.

They change . . . He remains. *Cf.* Shelley, *Adonais*, p. 131, "The One remains, the many change and pass".

LIII. You when shall be You no more. When you will have lost your individual identity.

LV. Second Marriage. Metaphorically, of course, as the next lines make clear—Omar deserted his studies for enjoyment and the delights of wine ("the Daughter of the Vine"). Though Mohammedans are allowed to eat grapes (called the Mother of Wine), they are forbidden to drink wine (see note on "forbidden Wine", p. 79).

LVI. In this stanza Omar is ridiculing the logical analysis of his studies.

LVII. my Computation. Omar was an astronomer and mathematician. In his introduction to his *Rubáiyát* FitzGerald writes:

> When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era—"a computation of time", says Gibbon, "which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style".

Unborn To-morrow and dead Yesterday. Today, the present, is the only important thing.

LIX. Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects. The seventy-two different religions which, according to Mahomet, divide the world. Wine unites men of all creeds.

Alchemist. Medieval alchemists sought "the philosopher's stone", a method of transmuting base metals into gold.

LX. Mahmúd. See note on Stanza XI, p. 79. Like Mahmúd conquering the dark-skinned Hindus, wine conquers the dark fears and sorrows of man.

LXVII. Heav'n . . . on fire. Heaven and hell have no real existence; they are merely the reflexion of the hopes and fears of man himself.

LXVIII. Magic Shadow-shapes. FitzGerald writes of "a Magic-lantern still used in India; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within". In this stanza, life is said to be just such a magic-lantern: the figures are men's lives, the candle is the sun.

LXIX. Chequer-board, chess board. The game of chess originated in Persia.

LXX. Here and There . . . goes. *I.e.* goes wherever the player strikes it.

LXXI. The Moving Finger. The metaphor of this, the best-known stanza in the poem, is based on the incident of the writing on the wall in *Daniel*, v. 5.

Wit. See note, p. 23.

LXXII. As impotently moves. The gods themselves are just as powerless in the hands of destiny as men are.

LXXIII. first Morning of Creation . . . Last Dawn of Reckoning. A reference to the Mohammedan idea that all things are predestined from the beginning of time.

LXXV. the Foal. The sun. In Greek mythology the sun-god's chariot was drawn through the sky by horses.

Parwín. The constellation of the Pleiades.

Mushtarí. The planet Jupiter.

LXXVI. The Vine had struck a fibre. In the very beginning, when the courses of the stars and planets were fixed, it was predestined that Omar should have a liking for wine.

Dervish. A Mohammedan priest. Some sects of Dervishes indulge in fantastic practices, like whirling and howling.

Of my Base metal . . . without. In my life of indulgence I may find a clue to the mystery of existence which he, in his ascetism, is denied.

LXXVII. Wrath-consume, consume in wrath.

LXXVIII-LXXXI. In these stanzas Omar ridicules the idea of God creating sinful man, giving him the power to do wrong and then punishing him for using that power.

gin, trap.

LXXXII. Ramazán. The month of fasting, during which Mohammedans take no food until after nightfall.

the Potter, God. The shapes of clay are different types of men, with their various arguments about the mystery and the purpose of existence. Their thoughts turn in this direction during the

period of fasting, but all their anxieties can be allayed with wine (see LXXXIX).

LXXXVII. Súfi. The *Súfis* were Mohammedans of a sect opposed to Omar.

XC. the little Moon. The new moon which begins the month after Ramazán (see note above) and which is a sign that the fast is over.

shoulder-knot. A pad worn by a porter to ease his burden. Now that the fast is over the porter is carrying wine from the cellar.

XCI. the living Leaf. A coffin made from the vine.

XCVII. One glimpse. The normal word-order would be, "Would the Desert yield but one glimpse of the Fountain". The desert is this world; the fountain is the future, the after-life.

XCVIII. If we could see the future and the consequences of our actions we should have a chance to act differently.

CI. Tamám. It is finished.

Questions

1. Write a detailed description of the stanza-form of this poem and discuss its effectiveness.

2. Distinguish the Oriental and the western ideas in the poem.

3. Discuss Omar's praise of wine, illustrating your remarks with reference and quotation.

4. What do you know of each of the following: Jamshýd, Rustum, Mahmúd, Ramazán?

LORD TENNYSON. *THE LOTOS-EATERS*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was born in 1809, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he made the acquaintance of Arthur Hallam, the occasion in after years of his *In Memoriam* (1850). His first important volume was *Poems, chiefly Lyrical* (1830), and other volumes of lyrical poems followed in 1833 and 1842. In 1847 appeared *The Princess*, and in the year of *In Memoriam* Tennyson succeeded Wordsworth as Laureate. *Maud* (1855) is a lyrical poem, and the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852) one of the results of his Laureateship. The series of *Idylls of the King*, dealing with episodes in the Arthur Legend, first took definite shape about 1860, and were completed in 1885. In Tennyson's later work the dramatic element was strong (as in *The Northern Farmer* and *The Revenge*), and he wrote several dramas. *Queen Mary* and *Harold* are not very successful, but *Becket* justified all the other experiments, and is great not only as poetry but also as drama.

Tennyson wrote up to the very close of his life, in 1892, and his later work shows little decline of power. For a long period of sixty years and upwards he had written, and with rare exceptions he had written greatly. From the death of Wordsworth to his own death he was almost universally looked upon as the first poet of his time, and no one else during this time wielded so great an influence.

Many of Tennyson's thoughts are comparatively simple, but he expresses them with such beauty that they become memorable. His lyrics usually give his own thoughts and feelings, and most of his poetry is pictorial and descriptive. He describes nature vividly and accurately, for he was born and lived for much of his life in the country; it is the typical English scene which attracts him most. He has a good knowledge of classical literature, and his poetry contains many reminders of this knowledge. His style is smooth, graceful, and for sheer melody has never been surpassed.

This poem was first published in 1833. Tennyson was interested in classical literature at this time, and many of the poems of this year are based upon it. The story of the Lotos-Eaters is taken from Book IX of *The Odyssey*, by Homer. Ulysses and his men, having taken part in the ten years' siege of Troy, were on their way home to Ithaca, but misfortune after misfortune had overwhelmed them, and when they came to the land of the Lotos-Eaters, they were ready to give up the attempt to find their dear ones again. Tennyson depicts with keen insight what the exhausted mariners must have felt when at long last they came to these shores. Ulysses, however, was made of sterner stuff; he carried out what he attempted to do, arrived home and set out on a further voyage, as Tennyson tells us in his poem *Ulysses*.

The Lotos-Eaters tells a story and it also shows Tennyson's keen appreciation of natural beauty, which resulted in the unerring description that comes from a poet's command of language joined with first-hand observation. In addition, the poem expresses a view of life in the nineteenth century. It is one of the finest expressions of ennui in all English literature. Is it worthwhile making any effort in life? Shall we not rather just put ourselves at our ease and take the line of least resistance?

The poem is full of beautiful pictures which please the mind's eye and sweet music which delights the ear. Throughout, alliteration is beautifully used, often with onomatopoeic effect. Could a finer illustration of sound echoing sense be found than the following, where the *ls*

and *o*s give a slow, sleepy, lulling effect, and the *m*s and *n*s a drone, in perfect accord with the subject?

> The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
> The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
> All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
> Through every hollow cave and alley lone
> Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
> is blown.
> We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
> Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge
> was seething free,
> Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains
> in the sea

The student should write out this passage and mark on his copy the effects noted above.

If you have a good ear you will readily find many other examples of skilful onomatopoeia. The whole poem gives a sense of dreaminess and richness and sweetness; the music is

> Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
> Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes.

By way of contrast, the student should read Tennyson's *Ulysses* and the criticism of it on page 86 of this book.

The irregular metre of the Choric Song is based on the principle stated by Coleridge in his Preface to *Christabel* (see page 60 of these notes).

Lotos. An African shrub, bearing a sweet-tasting fruit. In mythology the fruit was supposed to cause forgetfulness when eaten.

p. 167. 1. he. Ulysses.

4. always afternoon, *i.e.* the hottest part of the day, when one feels most overcome.

5. did swoon, *i.e.* as if the air were in a swoon; "without a breath of air".

7. Along the cliff . . . seem. Notice the onomatopoeic effect of the three cæsuras in this line.

11. lawn, fine white linen.

16. aged, *i.e.* it had long lain there.

18. Up-clomb, climbed up (a poetical form).

19. charmed, *i.e.* as if it could not leave the scene.

21. yellow down, *i.e.* rolling hill covered with lotos.

23. set, planted

galingale, a kind of sedge with an aromatic root.

25. keel, ship. (Synechdoche.)

p. 168. 6. music. The object of "did make". "His beating heart" is the subject.

8. sun and moon. The sun setting in the west and the moon rising in the east.

12. Weary . . . foam. Opposed to the "fast-rooted" fields of fruitful soil (p. 169, l. 25). Notice the repetition of "weary" twice in the two lines.

14. Our island home. Ithaca (now Thiaki), one of the Ionian Islands, on the west of Greece, where Ulysses was king.

CHORIC SONG. Sung by the mariners. Alternating strophes deal with the pleasures of the Lotos-Land and the pains of a wandering life (or in VI those which await them on their return home), until in the last strophe the mariners resolve they will wander no more.

17. blown, full-blown.

19. gleaming. On account of the granite.

27. Why are we. The emphatic word is "we".

p. 169. 3. the first of things, chief of our race, "the roof and crown".

15. care, thought, anxiety.

26. dark-blue sky . . . dark-blue sea. A sense of endlessness is given by repetition.

31. are dumb. The present tense emphasises the reality and inevitability of death.

p. 170. 13. yonder amber light. The lingering sunset.

22. old faces, *i.e.* faces of long ago.

24. Two handfuls of white dust. Emphasising that whatever sort of life we live—one of strenuous endeavour or one of slothful ease—we all come to the same end. A reference to the Greek practice of cremation of the dead.

29. inherit us, succeed us as our heirs.

p. 171. 1. minstrel. The ideas of the princes and the minstrel are derived from the *Odyssey*.

4. the little isle. See note on "Our island home", above.

6. reconcile, appease.

12. with gazing on the pilot-stars. In steering.

13. amaranth, an imaginary flower supposed never to fade.

moly, a magic plant given to Ulysses to save him from the wiles of the enchantress Circe, to which his men succumbed.

16. holy. Because still and quiet.

19. dewy. Therefore muffled.

22. acanthus, a plant with long hanging leaves. Acanthus-wreathes are frequently found as a decoration for the capitals of Greek columns.

23. Only to hear. And not to sail upon it.

29. Round and round. Aubrey de Vere comments, "The sudden change of metre in the last paragraph has a highly artistic effect, that of throwing the bulk of the poem, as it were, into a remote distance". The longer lines of this strophe give it an air of finality.

p. 172. 2. wallowing monster, *i.e.* whale.

3. with an equal mind. A translation of the Lat. *aequo animo*, calmly.

4. hollow. Emphasising that it is the valleys which make the Lotos-Land so alluring.

5. careless of mankind. Notice this classical idea of the gods, here and in the succeeding lines. "Careless of"—not concerning themselves with. *Cf.* note on "care", p. 85.

6. nectar, the drink of the gods.

bolts, thunderbolts.

8. gleaming world, the stars of the heavens.

10. roaring . . . sands, sea-storms and sand-storms—the sands of the desert, not of the sea-shore.

13. ancient, *i.e.* it has been the same from time immemorial.

14. tho' . . . strong, *i.e.* it means much to mortals, but it has "little meaning" for the indifferent gods.

19. Elysian. Elysium was the Greek paradise.

20. asphodel, the lily of Elysium, where it covers all the meadows.

Questions

1. Briefly describe the Lotos-Land as seen from the sea.

2. Imagine you are one of Ulysses' men and say how the Lotos-Land affected you.

3. How did the objects they saw on the island appear to the mariners to support their desire for an indolent life?

4. Give illustrations of the way the music of the verse is adapted to the subject of the poem.

LORD TENNYSON. *ULYSSES*

First published in 1842, *Ulysses* was written soon after the death in 1833 of Tennyson's great friend, Arthur Hallam, in whose memory he wrote *In Memoriam*. Tennyson said *Ulysses* "gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*".

Ulysses, now an old man and at home in Ithaca after his wanderings, watches the harbour at dusk and makes up his mind to return to the life of adventure he once knew. He feels that his son, Telemachus, whose interests are in his subjects at home, has no real need of him, and he plans to sail with his men to the ends of the earth, seeking to do some noble work before he dies in action. The poem is healthy in tone, and the restless vigour of the

hero, even in old age, is expressed by the short vowels and clipped consonants of such lines as,

> How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
> To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

or the invigorating freshness of,

> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

The description of the harbour as the day fades shows Tennyson at his best; he seems to catch the timelessness of the evening hour, when work has ended for those ashore but is just beginning for the fishermen putting out to sea.

The energy and determination, and strenuous, active tone of *Ulysses* is a great contrast to the listless, weary spirit of *The Lotos-Eaters*. In *The Lotos-Eaters* the mariners wish

> To dream and dream like yonder amber light,
> Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height,

while Ulysses, "strong in will", is determined "to follow knowledge, like a sinking star". *Ulysses* is plain, and bracing in tone; we can feel a fresh breeze against our faces: *The Lotos-Eaters* is ornamented and heavy, full of the languor of a warm, tropical atmosphere.

It is instructive to see the way Tennyson achieves his effects of sound echoing sense in each case. A sense of freshness and action is given by short vowels:

> That ever with a frolic welcome took
> The thunder and the sunshine.

Such lines form a sharp contrast to *The Lotos-Eaters*, loaded with *l*s and long vowels.

p. 173. 3. an aged wife. Homer tells us how Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, foiled the suitors who pestered her while her husband was away at the siege of Troy. She was making a shroud for her father-in-law and promised to marry when it was finished; but each night she crept to her loom and undid the portion she had woven during the day.

mete and dole. The words have a sense of littleness and pettiness. Nothing open-handed is implied.

4. Unequal, unfair. As the people are "savage", he has to improvise a rough and ready justice to suit each occasion and cannot have a system of law for all alike.

5. know not me, cannot understand my restlessness for travel and adventure (because they are concerned merely with laying in store for the body).

7. lees, the sediment left at the bottom of a glass of wine. He has enjoyed his life and wishes to enjoy it and use it to the very end.

10. drifts, *i.e.* of cloud.

Hyades. The five daughters of Atlas, King of Mauritania, who pined away with grief at the death of their brother, Hyas; they were then changed into stars. When those stars rose or set the ancients supposed there would be much rain.

11. name, *i.e.* famous name.

15. Myself not least, myself being not least.

17. ringing, *i.e.* with the clashes of battle.

windy. A permanent epithet for Troy in Homer.

18. I am a part . . . met, my experiences have helped to make me what I am.

19. Yet all . . . move. Travel breeds an impulse for more travel (not for settling down). The more one travels, the more one wants to travel. There can never be "an end". However much one travels, the "untravelled world" remains like the horizon, which can never be reached but recedes as one moves towards it.

24. to breathe, merely to breathe.

Life piled on life, many lives.

25. one, *i.e.* one life.

26. every hour, *i.e.* wisely used.

27. eternal silence, the grave.

something more . . . things. It is something more than merely saved from the grave, it brings a positive gain in new experiences.

29. three suns, three years, the little span of life which, as an old man, he can now expect.

30. gray, *i.e.* old. "Spirit" is the object of "store and hoard".

31. like a sinking star, as it would follow a star sinking below the horizon.

33. Telemachus. Son of Ulysses and Penelope, who at first seemed a very different kind of man from his father. He was a wise ruler with home-loving qualities and none of the lust for adventure.

p. 174. 2. discerning to fulfil, showing discernment in fulfilling.

3. by slow prudence, so as not to antagonise the people by sudden interference with their customs.

4. soft degrees, gentle steps.

6. centred in the sphere of, wrapped up in.

7. decent, fittingly attentive.

8. tenderness, *i.e.* to his (Telemachus's) mother.

9. household gods. The Lares and Penates who presided over the Roman home.

10. He works . . . mine. Implying—"I admire his qualities, but they are not mine".

12. gloom. Tennyson was fond of using this word as a verb.

14. frolic, frolicsome.

16. free, willing, cheerful.

20. strove with Gods. In the Trojan War.

21. the lights, *i.e.* of the cottages.

23. Moans round with many voices. The noise of the waters comes to him as voices calling him to action.

26. furrows, troughs of the waves. They "sound" as the oars smite them.

holds, keeps firm.

27. the baths, beyond the horizon, where the stars appear to sink in the sea.

29. gulfs. The ancients believed that the world was flat and that anyone sailing beyond the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) would be destroyed.

30. Happy Isles. The Greek paradise.

31. Achilles. The bravest of the Greeks during the Trojan War. He was completely invulnerable except for his heel, and is supposed to have been shot in the heel by Paris. He was then taken to the island of Leuce, where many of the ancient heroes were supposed to live after death in a separate Elysium.

p. 175. 1. One equal . . . hearts, all of us heroic hearts habitually even-tempered—our will is unalterable.

QUESTIONS

1. Account for the urge that stirs Ulysses to action.

2. Contrast Ulysses' views on life with those of Telemachus.

3. Contrast the spirit of Ulysses with those of the Lotos-Eaters in the previous poem. How is this contrast underlined by the different ways in which the poet handles the verse in these two poems?

4. Discuss Tennyson's skill in the descriptive passages in *Ulysses*.

LORD TENNYSON. *TO VIRGIL*

Tennyson had a great love for classical literature, and this noble poem is a tribute to the great Roman poet in lines of a sonorous rhythm which have something of the "ocean-roll" of Virgil's own stately hexameters. It is unusual in being written throughout in a trochaic measure—

˘ x | ˘ x | ˘ x | ˘ x |

˘ x | ˘ x | ˘ x | ˘ x | ˘

and the economy of the rhymes emphasises the long steady march of the lines. Tennyson speaks of Virgil's gift for wonderful phrases, and this poem itself has many memorable lines:

All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase.
Summers of the snakeless meadow
unlaborious earth and oarless sea.
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

The poem is full of allusions to Virgil's own poetry, and the reader should study carefully the notes which follow.

p. 175. Virgil. The great Roman poet Virgil was born in a village near Mantua, in northern Italy, in 70 B.C. His chief works were the *Aeneid*, an epic which tells of the adventures of Aeneas and his Trojan followers and their settlement in Italy; the *Eclogues* and the *Bucolics*, poems imagined as being sung by shepherds, in the pastoral manner of Theocritus; and the *Georgics*, a poem on country life, farming and rearing of bees.

5. Ilion, or Ilium, was the Greek name for Troy. In the second book of the *Aeneid* Virgil describes how it was sacked and burned by the Greeks.

7. filial faith. When Troy was in flames, Aeneas carried away upon his shoulders his father Anchises, to whom he was deeply attached.

Dido's pyre. Dido was Queen of Carthage. When Aeneas was shipwrecked on the shores of Carthage she fell in love with him. But Aeneas was ordered by the gods to leave her, and Dido killed herself on the flames of a funeral pyre.

9. he that sang . . . Days. Hesiod, one of the earliest Greek poets. His most important poem, *Works and Days*, like Virgil's *Georgics*, described agricultural life and work on the land.

16. Tityrus, a shepherd in Virgil's *Eclogues*.

18. poet-satyr. Silenus, another character in the *Eclogues*, was a faun or woodland spirit, half-beast and half-man.

p. 176. 1. Pollio. Asinius Pollio (76 B.C.—A.D. 4) was a Roman orator and poet who became consul in 40 B.C. He was a patron of Virgil, Horace and other Roman writers (on one occasion he saved Virgil's property from confiscation) and the first person to establish a public library at Rome. Virgil addresses Pollio in two of his *Eclogues*.

2. blissful years again to be. In his fourth *Eclogue*, Virgil prophesies the return of the "golden age" during the consulship of Pollio. Crops will grow fruitfully without the need for man's toil on the land; "the snake will come to grief, and poison lurk no more in the weed".

7. majestic in thy sadness. A reference to Virgil's famous phrase, *lachrymae rerum*, which has been translated as "the heartbreak at the heart of things".

11. Golden branch. When Aeneas visited the underworld he was given for protection a magical golden bough from the sacred grove of Nemi. Tennyson means that the works of Virgil brought a light to the succeeding dark ages.

13. Forum. The public square of ancient Rome.

14. purple Caesar. The Emperors of Rome wore purple robes.

15. ocean-roll of rhythm. The *Aeneid* is written in hexameters, lines of six metrical feet, which usually consist of five dactyls (/xx) and a trochee (/x) or spondee (//). The hexameter was the Greek and Latin metre for heroic poems. In the last lines of his poem Tennyson calls the hexameter "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man".

18. Rome of freemen. In 1870, the year in which Tennyson's poem was written, Rome became the capital of an Italy whose freedom had been won by nineteenth-century statesmen like Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi.

19. Northern Island, *i.e.* Britain.

20. sunder'd once, *i.e.* before the Roman civilisation was brought to Britain.

p. 177. 1. Mantovano. This is the Italian form of "Mantuan" —*i.e.* Virgil himself.

3. stateliest measure. See note on "ocean-roll of rhythm", above.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is this a "noble" poem?

2. Write a detailed and illustrated description of the verse-form in which it is written.

3. Say what you know about each of the following: Virgil, the *Aeneid*, the *Georgics*, the *Eclogues*, Pollio.

ROBERT BROWNING. *MY LAST DUCHESS*

Browning was born in 1812 and educated at University College, London. Early in life he decided that poetry was to be his vocation, and his first work, *Pauline*, a dramatic poem, was written when he was only nineteen (though it was not published until two years later). This was followed by *Paracelsus* in 1835, in which the poet seemed to spring at once into maturity. From 1837 to 1846 Browning wrote many dramas, chief among which stands *Strafford*, and several poems. He showed an extraordinary power of entering into the thoughts and feelings of other people, yet had little power of showing them in action and inter-action in a play. Hence his dramas failed, but he is supreme in dramatic monologue. *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) and *Romances and Lyrics* (1845) show Browning at his best in sheer poetry. From 1850 to 1870 he wrote much poetry expository of his philosophy, including the two volumes of *Men and Women* (1855), which contained his finest dramatic monologues. *Dramatis Personae* (1864) was a similar volume. Browning's masterpiece is generally acknowledged to be *The Ring and the Book* (1868-1869). As time went on he cultivated the intellectual at the expense of the poetical, and much of his later work is merely philosophy in

verse. He went on writing up to the end of a long life, and died on the day that his last volume of poems, *Asolando* (1889), was published. Browning married Elizabeth Barrett in 1846, and much of their fifteen years of married life was spent abroad at Florence, a sojourn which left deep marks on the work of both.

Browning is an inspiriting poet; he cheerfully faces and overcomes all doubts and shows no indecision. He has a keen sense of the dramatic, and by describing one incident or part of a scene he can show the bearing of the whole. His wide human sympathies make him intensely interested in people of all races, but he is particularly interested in the psychology of unusual characters, especially those who are highly intellectual. He was keenly interested in the Renaissance.

His style is abrupt and rugged, as if the thoughts he wished to express were so vital that he chafed at the limitations that words imposed on his desire to express them; yet he is forceful and vigorous. He took great pains with his verse and preferred "a manly rough line" to "an oily smooth one". He writes in many different ways and shows more variety of style than Tennyson.

First published in *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), this poem admirably illustrates the method of dramatic monologue, so well suited to Browning's genius. The situation is complete in itself, yet from the speaker's words on this one occasion the bearing of his whole life may be judged.

The widowed Duke of Ferrara exhibits the portrait of his former wife to the envoy of some rich nobleman whose daughter he proposes to marry, not because he loves her but because her father is wealthy and a large dowry will come with her. The portrait is one item, among others, in his picture gallery. The art of the painter means more to the Duke than the memory of his wife. It is a piece to be looked at with the same detachment as a statue of Neptune taming a sea-horse. Love of the arts is the only love he feels, and the poem gradually reveals his jealousy of the wife who was warm and generous in her affection and in her gratitude to all who were kind to her. His pride is hurt that she was not more fully conscious of the favour he bestowed on her by marrying her and giving her "a nine-hundred-years-old name". That same pride made him consider it below his dignity to complain at what he considered her distasteful lack of reserve. So he "gave commands", and the smiles, too evenly dispensed,

stopped altogether. One is left wondering what sort of life the new duchess will have with this unfeeling man.

Browning catches the spirit of the Italian Renaissance—love of the arts coupled with cruelty and tyranny.

Notice the little circumstantial details given by the way—for example, the name of the sculptor of the statue of Neptune—and such natural touches as "Wilt please you rise?" "Nay, we'll go together down, Sir", which give an air of actuality.

Collect all the evidence which shows the character of the Duke and the Duchess.

p. 177. **FERRARA.** A city of north-east Italy.

5. **my last Duchess.** At the present time the speaker is negotiating with his hearer for his next Duchess. (Refer to the end of the poem.)

7. **Frà Pandolf.** An imaginary painter.

p. 178. 3. **favour,** little present.

24. **Then all smiles stopped together.** The nature of the commands may be judged from this euphemism.

30. **Though his fair daughter's self . . . object.** Manifest hypocrisy.

32. **Neptune.** God of the sea.

34. **Claus of Innsbruck.** An imaginary sculptor. Innsbruck is the capital of the Austrian Tyrol

QUESTIONS

1. Describe fully the character of the speaker and of his late wife, illustrating your statements from the poem.

2. How does the colloquial language and natural expression contribute to the effectiveness of *My Last Duchess*?

3. With detailed reference to the poem, explain the term "dramatic monologue".

4. Compile a list of the circumstantial details which make this poem so effective.

ROBERT BROWNING. *ANDREA DEL SARTO*

First published in *Men and Women* (1855).

The speaker in this dramatic monologue is an actual person, not, like the Duke in *My Last Duchess*, an imaginary character typical of his age. The age is again the Italian Renaissance.

Andrea del Sarto (1486 or 1487-1531), a noted Florentine artist, went as court painter to the court of Francis I, King of France, and after a year asked for leave of absence in order to return to Florence to see his wife. This was readily granted, and he was also given money to buy Italian works of art for the French king's palace. Once out of reach of Francis, however, he was persuaded by his wife not to return and to spend the money on the decoration of their house. The time of the scene represented in the poem is about 1525.

It is to his wife that Andrea is speaking, on the verandah of the Florentine house which had been built with the misappropriated money. The poem has a pleading, yearning tone, and a sense of futility. All the time Andrea is trying to regain the love of his wife he seems to realise it is of no use. Associates in fraud, they cannot look one another openly in the eyes again. "You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?" Andrea longs for sympathy, longs for something of her first pride in him.

> You don't understand
> Nor care to understand about my art.

The root evil of her encouragement of her husband to defraud and of her lack of interest in his art is the same. Money means more to Lucrezia than either her husband's honour or his art. Her interest in his art ends with the money she can get out of it. Andrea makes a point of saying that he will "shut the money into this small hand", and he persuades her to sit for him by emphasising that it will save a model. How tragic that a man of his talents should have to solicit the inspiration she can give him by bribery!

> If you would sit thus by me every night
> I should work better, do you comprehend?
> *I mean that I should earn more, give you more.*

If only Lucrezia's mouth had urged "God and the glory! never care for gain", what a different painter and what a different man he would have been! But she is of the earth, earthy, and he cannot "leave the ground".

The story is hinted at rather than told. It is the story of a man of brilliant parts and weak character, who lets a woman whom he loves for her physical beauty drag

him down to her own moral level. His great hopes become dust and ashes. The comfortable home to which he looked forward has become dust and ashes.

> Inside the melancholy little house
> We built to be so gay with.

The love and sympathy to which he looked forward have become dust and ashes.

> You don't understand
> Nor care to understand about my art.
> Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!

The inspiration in his art to which he had looked forward has become dust and ashes. The Urbinate's technical faults he can correct, but "its soul is right".

> Had you . . . given me soul,
> We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.

And the final comment of a disillusioned man is that other artists still surpass him "because there's still Lucrezia".

What Browning looks for in art is the vision of the artists; that which gives significance to the picture, that which a painting has which a photograph has not. A photograph is a mere copy of a view: a painting adds something of what it means to the artist. Andrea realises that in sacrificing his moral and artistic conscience to a woman who does not return his love he has fallen short of his ideal. In art, as in every other aspect of life.

> a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?

Rafael's painting lacks the faultless craftsmanship and technique of Andrea; but "its *soul* is right, He *means* right". Andrea has the technical skill, but

> There burns a truer light of God in them . . .
> Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
> Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
> Enter and take their place there sure enough,
> Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
> My works are nearer heaven, *but I sit here.*

The poem is very typical of Browning in form and nature. There is one speaker, speaking on a particular occasion, but his words throw into relief his whole character and the whole tendency of his life. From his comments and questions we can also tell the response of the hearer. Browning does not often describe the appearance of his

dramatis personae; he goes straight to the man. Mind and heart are what matter to him. And he has the dramatic power of entering into thoughts and feelings which are far removed from his own.

The man is not a high-and-dry psychological study; he belongs to the world and is set in natural surroundings. A sense of reality is given by little circumstantial details, which give clearer definition to the picture in the reader's mind. The poet does not describe the setting *for* us; it is built up by slight references in the words of the speaker, who takes it for granted. Thus we never feel we are people of the poet's age looking back on the fifteenth century: we become one with it.

p. 179. **1. quarrel.** The quarrel has evidently been due to Andrea's refusal to paint an uncongenial picture when Lucrezia sees there is money in it. He gives way.

15. Fiesole. A small town overlooking Florence. The way the reader is made aware of the background by unobtrusive, natural references here and there, should be noted.

p. 180. **9. clinking.** A perfect onomatopoeic word for the sound of a monastery bell lacking resonance.

24. But you can hear . . . speak. Even if you don't realise the value of my work, you can at least hear other people praise it.

25. cartoon, a design-sketch on stout paper for a painting, tapestry, mosaic, etc.

the second from the door. One of the circumstantial details.

27. Madonna. A picture of the Virgin Mary. (Lucrezia was his model for the Virgin.)

33. Legate. Ambassador of the Pope.

p. 181. **24. Morello.** A spur of the Apennine Mountains, in view from the verandah of Andrea's house. Here he is referring to a painting of the view.

36. The Urbinate. Rafael, the great Italian painter contemporary with Andrea. He was born in Urbino, but lived in Rome. Much of the decoration of the Vatican was done by him.

p. 182. **1. George Vasari.** A painter and architect who was one of Andrea's pupils. He was the author of a famous book, *Lives of the Painters.*

5. it gives way. The limits of Rafael's technical powers give way before his great inspiration.

25. Angelo. Michael Angelo, the great Florentine painter and sculptor.

p. 183. **4. Paris lords.** French noblemen in Florence.

9. leave the ground. And ascend into the artist's heaven of vision and inspiration for his work.

20. this face, *i.e.* Lucrezia's.

26. The Roman's is the better when you pray. Rafael's is the

better religious painting, in contrast with Andrea's, which has no soul.

p. 184. 21. Do you forget already . . . those? Evidently Lucrezia looks bored.

31. cue-owls. Scops owls. Their cry sounds like "cue".

p. 185. 4. Cousin. Lucrezia's lover.

19. subjects for. Pictures he has ordered for.

25. scudi. Italian coins, worth about 4s. each.

26. does that please you? Lucrezia showed more pleasure at the thought of a new ruff than at the praise of her husband's art. It is by touches like this that the attitude of the hearer is revealed.

p. 186. 9. Four great walls . . . reed. See *Revelation*, xxi. 15-20.

10. Meted, measured.

reed. A Hebrew measure of six cubits.

11. Leonard. Leonardo da Vinci, the great Italian sculptor, painter and architect, contemporary with Andrea.

Questions

1. Describe the house of Andrea and its surroundings.

2. What do you gather from the poem as to the character of Andrea and that of his wife, and of the relationship between them?

3. How far does the success of the poem depend on the fact that the whole story of events is hinted at rather than told?

4. What are Browning's views on art, as revealed in this poem?

MATTHEW ARNOLD. *THYRSIS*

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was the son of the famous Headmaster of Rugby. He took his degree at Oxford in 1844 and next year became a Fellow of Oriel College. In 1851 he was appointed an Inspector of Schools and wrote several valuable reports on the educational system of England. He was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, a post which he held for ten years. But it was as a critic that he made his mark. He wrote most of his own poems as a criticism of life.

In a period of great industrial expansion Arnold believed that the things of the mind and spirit are more important, and he could see no progress in "this strange disease of modern life". The nineteenth century was also a time when men's religious beliefs were being shaken by the new scientific theories of Darwin and T. H. Huxley. Arnold was a deep and serious thinker who greatly desired to believe in God, but just could not resolve his

doubts; like his friend Clough, he became an agnostic. The melancholy tone of his poetry earned him in his own day the title of "the poet of sackcloth and ashes".

Arnold was a classical scholar, and his verse is in the restrained classical manner, as if he wrote poetry because he chose, not because he must. Above all, he was a lover of the English countryside, which always gave him delight, whatever his perplexities of mind.

Thyrsis was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1866. It is not an elegy of deep personal grief, but a tender poem of tranquil reminiscence of pleasurable associations with Arnold's friend, Clough. Following literary tradition, it is cast in pastoral metaphor (like Milton's *Lycidas* and Shelley's *Adonais*). Thyrsis and Corydon (Clough and Arnold) are represented as shepherds whose pastoral affairs symbolise the real affairs of Clough and Arnold.

"*Thyrsis* is a very quiet poem," said Arnold in a letter at the time it appeared, "but, I think, solid and sincere. . . . One has the feeling, if one reads the poem as a memorial poem, that not enough is said about Clough in it. I feel this so much that do not send the poem to Mrs. Clough." In a letter to his mother at the same time, he wrote, "The images are all from actual observation".

As a contrast with the intellectual unrest of the nineteenth century and the sense of personal loss, *Thyrsis* shows the happiness of man in contact with nature. It has been well said that what Wordsworth did for the Lake District, Arnold did for the Oxford country, which he knew intimately and made his own. Not only does he name many notable landmarks—the Hinkseys, Wytham, the Cumner Hills, etc.—but he supplies us with delightful accounts and pictures of the flowers of the field, of the activities of a pastoral district (*e.g.* p. 187, ll. 20-21; p. 190, ll. 14-16), and of the whole countryside in the varying seasons of the year. He liked what was quiet and secluded. He was happiest in the Oxford countryside because it is modest and unobtrusive. Leisurely rural beauty attracted him.

In keeping with the pastoral tradition, *Thyrsis* is memorable as being a whole bouquet of English flowers: "Sweet-William with his homely cottage smell", "blue-bells trembling by the forest ways", the Cumner cowslips,

white and purple fritillaries, "red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet", "High-tower'd the spikes of purple orchises" and "Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime".

In *Thyrsis* Arnold is influenced by the contrast between the peace, quiet working and permanence of nature, and the turmoil and ceaseless change of human things. What he seeks is not to be found in "the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar"; it comes not

> with houses or with gold,
> With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
> 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold.

The strength derived from contact with nature is "a fugitive and gracious light", but it brings power and rest, "And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields".

Thyrsis is a companion poem to *The Scholar Gypsy* (which the student should read). The Gipsy-Scholar is mentioned several times; the same countryside is described; Arnold, Clough and the Scholar Gipsy were all bound "on like quest". The two poems are written in the same stanza form. The student should notice the beautiful effect of three opening unrhymed lines, and then rhymes coming in later one by one in a different order, like echoing chimes, ending these six lines with a single short line which as the same time rounds them off and swings on to the second part of the stanza.

The beautiful pictures in the following lines are worthy of particular note: p. 187, ll. 3-7; p. 188, ll. 15-24 and 25-30; p. 189, l. 25—p. 190, l. 17.

p. 186. **THYRSIS**, *i.e.* Clough. The name is a pastoral name borrowed from Virgil's Seventh *Eclogue*.

Monody, lament.

Arthur Hugh Clough. A minor poet (1819-1861). He was an old Rugby boy, but attended the school before Arnold's time. Both Arnold and Clough held appointments at Oriel College, Oxford, between 1845 and 1848, when their friendship was established.

Florence. A town in the province of Tuscany, northern Italy, on the River Arno, at the western foot of the Apennines.

16. How changed . . . fills! This line could be taken as the motto of much of Arnold's poetry. It is for this reason that Arnold seeks the unchanging quiet of nature.

17. the two Hinkseys. North Hinksey and South Hinksey, two villages to the south-west of Oxford.

19. sign. The sign on the village inn, The Cross Keys, South Hinksey.

Sibylla. The name Arnold uses for the landlady of the inn.

24. in old days, *i.e.* when Arnold and Clough were at Oriel.

25. the track. From South Hinksey. Childsworth (or Chilswell) is just beyond South Hinksey.

p. 187. 1. Ilsley Downs. To the south.

2. The Vale. The Vale of the White Horse, to the south-west.

three lone weirs. The Ark, Hart's and Langley's weirs.

6. that sweet city. Oxford.

9. some loss of habit's power, *i.e.* I have not been here for a long time.

10. this upland dim. Notice how Arnold prefers subdued light.

11. pass'd I blindfold here, *i.e.* I could have passed through blindfold because I knew it so well.

16. the Gipsy-Scholar. Arnold's poem *The Scholar Gipsy* is based on the legend of an Oxford scholar who grew tired of seeking preferment and joined the gipsies to learn their secrets, and who still haunts the Oxford countryside. For Arnold he symbolises faith and dedication, more likely to be found in contact with nature than in modern civilisation, "with its sick hurry and divided aims".

22. our shepherd-pipes. The pastoral symbolism for poetry.

24. My pipe is lost. Arnold had not published a volume of poetry since 1857

25. Needs must I lose them. Arnold was first and foremost a critic, not a poet.

27. Thyrsis . . . away. Clough resigned his appointment as tutor at Oriel.

30. keep, stay.

31. For that, because.

32. silly, simple (archaic).

33. Some life . . . head. This is taken by some to be a reference to Clough's concern at the sufferings of the Irish peasants in the potato famine of 1848, but this was passing and did not occasion his resignation from Oriel, which was due to his perplexities in matters of religious faith and his growing agnosticism.

p. 188. 11. the cuckoo's parting cry. In June the cuckoo develops a song of three notes, instead of two. Country readers may know the line, "In June he changes his tune" (though he does not depart till August).

12. vext. With the rain and the breeze.

15. Too quick-despairer. This is a rich stanza for Arnold, one recalling Keats.

20. blow, bloom.

24. the full-moon. Moonlight is never absent long in Arnold's poetry.

28. uncrumpling. An apt word to describe the way the folded fern leaves open.

32. cut a smoother reed, *i.e.* write a smoother poetry. Arnold thought Clough's poetry too rough.

34. Corydon. By this name Arnold refers to himself. In

Virgil's Sixth *Eclogue* Corydon and Thyrsis have a song competition, in which Thyrsis is defeated.

thee. Here he addresses Clough.

p. 189. 2. Sicilian. Of Sicily, the island off the "toe" of Italy.

4. Bion. A Greek pastoral poet who spent the last years of his life in Sicily (about 100 B.C.) and was poisoned by a jealous rival (his "fate")

5. the unpermitted ferry. The ferry between earth and the underworld, beyond which no mortal was permitted.

6. Pluto. The god of the lower world.

8. Proserpine. The wife of Pluto, Queen (or goddess) of the Shades. According to Roman mythology, Proserpine was carried off by Pluto while she was gathering flowers (in Sicily).

10. Orpheus. The most celebrated of the poets and minstrels of early Greek mythology. When his wife, Eurydice, died, Orpheus followed her to Hades, where the ravishing music of his lyre charmed Pluto to give her back (under certain conditions which were not fulfilled).

12. Dorian. Sicilian (the Sicilian poets wrote in the Dorian dialect of Greek).

15. Enna. The vale in Sicily where Proserpine was gathering flowers when she was carried off by Pluto.

19. Cumner. Cumner (or Cumnor) Hill lies to the south-west of Oxford.

26. the Fyfield tree. The "signal elm" mentioned in the second stanza of the poem Fyfield is a village about five miles south-west of Oxford.

27. fritillaries. Plants of the lily family, common around Oxford.

29. Ensham (or Eynsham). A village on the River Thames about five miles "above" Oxford.

Sandford. A village about four miles "down" the river from Oxford.

p. 190. 2. orchises. Wild plants of the lily family, usually with red or purple flowers.

4. coronals, garlands.

6. gleam. A verb.

7. orphans. Because only they are left.

9. the locks. One near Godstow Bridge, the other at King's Weir, about a mile above it.

10. Wytham flats. The flat meadows between Wytham village and the river. They are a mile or two down the river from Eynsham.

11. loosestrife. Another red or purple wild flower.

18. round me . . . shade, *i.e.* I, too, am nearer death. The metaphor of night as the end life is continued. It is strange that a man of only forty-three should write like this. But when he was a young man he had been told by his doctor that he might die at any time of angina pectoris, the heart disease from which his father died at the age of forty-seven. Arnold himself

died suddenly of heart-failure at the age of sixty-five, while he was running to catch a tram-car in Liverpool

22. sprent, sprinkled.

29. sanguine, hopeful.

p. 191. 1. in life's morning sun, *i.e.* to the eye of a young man.

5. thy repose. The poet is addressing Clough again.

11. Berkshire. The county on the south side of the Thames along these reaches.

16. the Tree! See note on "the Fyfield tree" above.

17. Eve lets down her veil. The coming on of night is symbolical of the poet's advancing years.

23. Arno. See note on "Florence" above.

31. boon, bountiful, kind.

p. 192. 1. Mother, *i.e.* Mother Earth, or Mother Nature.

4. Apennine. The mountain range which forms the "backbone" of Italy.

7. the Phrygian king. Two different stories are interwoven here. Daphnis was a Sicilian shepherd who, according to one myth, followed his beloved into Phrygia, a country in the east of Asia Minor, where she had been carried off by robbers, and found her in the power of Lityerses, the king. Lityerses compelled all strangers to work in his harvest fields, and if they failed to surpass him in reaping he cut off their heads and hid their bodies in the sheaves. (No doubt this story had its origin in, or from, a time when human sacrifices were offered after the harvest had been gathered in.) The arrival of Hercules, who surpassed Lityerses in reaping and then slew him, saved Daphnis from death.

The other story is that a Naiad (water-nymph) who fell in love with Daphnis made him swear that he would never love any other maiden, threatening him with blindness if he broke his oath. He proved faithless to her, was stricken blind, and Mercury, his father, raised him to heaven and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he sprang heavenward into "all the marvel of the golden skies"

Notice again that Arnold thinks of the skies as starlit.

10. Sings, *i.e.* sings about.

24. why not me? *i.e.* why may they not know me "a wanderer still"?

p. 193. 7. Hurst. The name of a hill to the south-west of Oxford and near to Cumnor Hill. The meaning of "hurst" is a wood.

10. virtue. Used in its Latin (derivative) sense, a strengthening power.

12. its happy, country tone. As in Clough's pastoral poem, *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848). Arnold said that this poem had an "out-of-doors freshness, life, naturalness, buoyant rapidity".

13. a stormy note. As in Clough's *Dipsychus* (1850).

16. It, *i.e.* thy throat

thou wast mute, *i.e.* you wrote no more poetry. This is not

strictly true, but Clough wrote only a little poetry in the last years of his life.

20. on, *i.e.* went on. These lines refer to Clough's wanderings in the south of France and in Italy in search of health.

Then through . . . *hillside*. The poem ends, as it began, with the contrast between the tumult of man's life and the peace of nature, and with the elm tree and the Scholar Gipsy.

QUESTIONS

1. With which do you think Arnold is more successful: description or the expression of ideas? Give reasons.

2. What are Arnold's reasons for his dissatisfaction with the world in which he lived?

3. Arnold said of *Thyrsis*, "The images are all from actual observation". With detailed reference, say whether you find them convincing.

4. Describe the verse form of *Thyrsis* and discuss its effectiveness.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI. *THE BLESSED DAMOZEL*

Rossetti, the son of Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian who was forced to leave his native city of Naples owing to political troubles, was born in London in 1828. When his education at King's College, London, was ended, he became a painter and studied under Ford Madox Brown. Soon he met two other artists, Holman Hunt and John Millais, and in 1848 the three formed a kind of secret society—the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Raphael was, of course, the celebrated Renaissance painter, and they chose the name because they wished to follow the painters of the Middle Ages, before the ideas of the Renaissance took shape, in representing facts in their work and not merely painting beautiful pictures. In 1859 they began to publish a periodical called *The Germ*, in which appeared *The Blessed Damozel* and other poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as well as poems by his sister, Christina Rossetti, and Coventry Patmore. In 1887 Rossetti went to Oxford to paint frescoes, and there he met Edward Burne-Jones, the painter, William Morris, the poet and reformer, and Algernon Charles Swinburne (see page 105). He greatly influenced the work of all these men. Rossetti married Elizabeth Siddal, who appears in so many of his pictures, and when she died in 1862 he was overcome by remorse for the way he had neglected her and placed the manuscript of his poems in her coffin. In 1869 he gained permission from the Home Office to recover the poems. Rossetti studied the works of Dante and other Italian poets and translated many of their poems into English. He died in 1882.

In *The Blessed Damozel* Rossetti shows a melodious choice of words, especially in the use of proper names. He captures the atmosphere of another world by using archaic words, such as "beseemed" and "citoles". The descriptions are very beautiful and in their rich sensuousness suggest the work of Keats, especially *The Eve of St. Agnes*. Yet Rossetti can also be strikingly simple:

> Her eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of waters stilled at even.

He has a painter's eye for colour (the *gold* bar of heaven, a *white* rose, hair *yellow* like ripe corn, etc.). Though the lines are short, they have a slow rhythm on account of the emphatic long vowel sounds and the frequent placing of stresses side by side:

> like thín flámes; the stárs sáng; the deép wells of light.

Rossetti often makes use of repetition, which almost suggests incantation:

> Her voice was like the voice of stars.
>
> Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
> Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
> Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
> And shall I feel afraid?

The student should also note the striking similes:

> And the souls mounting up to God
> Went by her like thin flames.
>
> Where the earth spins like a fretful midge.

Rossetti painted pictures of the Blessed Damozel on two occasions.

The subject of the poem is most unusual: the lady, who is dead and in heaven, is longing for her lover as she waits for him to come to her.

p. 194. 5. three lilies . . . seven. Three and seven are the "perfect" numbers; the seven stars of the seven churches are referred to in *Revelation*, i. 20.

7. ungirt, wearing no girdle.

9. white rose. This was the symbol of purity.

10. meetly. White was a colour "meet" or suitable for her.

13. Herseemed, it seemed to her.

19. To one . . . years. The "one" is, of course, the lover still on earth; as the autumn leaves fall from the tree they seem to him to be the hair of the Blessed Damozel.

p. 195. 13. **And the souls . . . God.** She is hoping that her lover's soul will be amongst them.

21. **from the fixed place . . . spheres.** Notice how this stanza conveys a sense of vastness and spaciousness.

26. **The stars sang . . . spheres.** This was once an accepted idea. It came originally from *Job*, xxxvii. 7.

p. 196. 13. **aureole,** halo.

20. **occult,** secret.

p. 197. 12. **lady Mary.** The Virgin Mary.

14. **five sweet symphonies.** The names of the saints are so melodious that they produce harmony.

15-16. **Cecily . . . Rosalys.** Cecily was the patron saint of music. Gertrude was the foundress of the Abbey of Nivelle, in Flanders; Magdalen was St. Mary Magdalene; Margaret was martyred at Antioch; Rosalys was the patron saint of Palermo. But the saints were chosen rather for the beauty of their names than for any other reason.

p. 198. 2. **citherns.** These are a kind of guitar.

citoles. Stringed instruments which are round in shape; often seen in pictures representing heavenly choirs.

Questions

1. By what devices does Rossetti produce the requisite atmosphere for his poem? How would you describe that atmosphere?

2. Show from the poem Rossetti's delight in things of the senses.

3. What is the point of the occasional stanzas in brackets?

4. How does Rossetti give the illusion of distance?

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. *CHORUSES FROM "ATALANTA IN CALYDON"*

Swinburne's ill-health had a great effect upon his life and work. When he was born (in 1837) it was not expected that he would survive, and the care which had to be lavished on him in his infancy made it impossible to discipline him in a normal way. This and his strange temperament made his schooldays unusual. He was sent to Eton, but did not fit in with the life of a public school, and so he returned home, where, with his mother's help, he educated himself by reading widely. In 1856 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and it was there, a little later, that he met the Pre-Raphaelites—Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Morris—when they came to decorate the walls of the Union Debating Hall with frescoes. Rossetti influenced Swinburne greatly, and at the same

time he was helped by Benjamin Jowett, the Professor of Greek in the University. His studies with Professor Jowett enabled him to write *Atalanta in Calydon* and other Greek-inspired poems.

In 1878 Swinburne became ill, and a lawyer, Theodore Watts-Dunton, took charge of him at a house which he bought—"The Pines", in Putney. Here Swinburne lived a conventional life, and produced much poetry.

Most of his best lyrics appeared in the volumes *Poems and Ballads*, *A Song of Italy* and *Songs before Sunrise*, but he also wrote a number of verse dramas, among them *Chastelard* in 1856, *Bothwell* in 1871 and *Mary Stuart* in 1881, all these on the story of the Scottish Queen. In 1885 appeared *Marino Faliero* and in 1899 *Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards*. Swinburne died in 1909 and was buried in the Isle of Wight.

Although *Atalanta in Corydon* is based upon Greek tragedy, it combines with the original idea all the lyrical profusion of romantic poetry. It is divided into six episodes with five choruses. The story is of Atalanta, one of the maidens dedicated to the service of Artemis, the virgin goddess of hunting. When the goddess, angry because the people of Calydon have not made their sacrifices to her, sends a wild boar into the country, she allows it to be killed for Atalanta's sake. Meleager, who kills it, gives the spoils of the chase to Atalanta, with whom he is in love. Whereupon Toxeus and Plexippus, his mother's brothers, are so angry, that he is obliged to kill them to protect Atalanta from their fury. At this, his mother, Althaea, Queen of Calydon, throws into the fire the brand on which Meleager's life depends. As the brand is consumed, so Meleager dies. Althaea herself dies soon after.

Swinburne had a genius for versification and used almost every possible metre. (In *Poems and Ballads*, which included nearly sixty poems, he employed thirty-nine different metres.) Unfortunately, he wrote easily, and was sometimes so carried away by his talent that he used excessive alliteration. He made fun of his own weaknesses in *Nephelidia*, the first line of which runs, "From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable nimbus of nebulous noonshine".

Swinburne was intoxicated by the sonorous quality of words; and the effect on the reader is often like intoxication, too. After a time this becomes tedious, since frequently his poems have no real construction—their only momentum is a rhetorical exploitation of the sound of

words and rather vague symbols; the *meaning* of the words seems comparatively unimportant.

Swinburne had a keen love and appreciation of nature; his favourite themes are the sea, the appeal of strenuous effort, the material glories of life and the perpetual darkness of death, the changing cycle of the seasons, and the fragile delicacy of love.

The two passages here are the first and second choruses of the play.

p. 198. 21. traces, tracks or footprints.

24. lisp of leaves and ripple of rain. A lovely example of onomatopoeia.

26. Itylus. The son of Tereus, King of Thrace, and Procne. After a period of married life, Procne wanted to see her sister, Philomela, so Tereus went to Athens to fetch her. On the way, however, he ill-treated her and cut out her tongue so that she could not tell the story of her wrongs. He then returned and told his wife that her sister was dead. Philomela succeeded in reaching a cottage, and later wove her story into a robe which she sent to her sister. In revenge on her husband, Procne killed her son, Itylus, and served him up for Tereus to eat; she then fled to her sister Tereus pursued her, but she implored help from the gods, who changed Procne to a swallow, Philomela to a nightingale and Tereus to a hawk.

p. 199. 4. Maiden most perfect. Artemis, the goddess.

28. trammel, trail, like a net

32. oat. The shepherd's oaten stem, used as a pipe to play music.

33. satyr. An attendant upon Bacchus; half goat and half man.

p. 200. 1. Pan. The god of shepherds and their flocks.

Bacchus. The god of wine and revelry.

4. Maenads. Bacchantes or revellers. *Bassarids* is another name for Bacchantes.

9. Ivy. A Bacchanal, or priestess of Bacchus, wore a fillet of ivy in her hair.

p. 201. 26. travaileth, strives to bring forth words. Swinburne apparently puts the stress on the last syllable of this word, to rhyme with "death" two lines below.

QUESTIONS

1. Show how skilfully Swinburne uses alliteration and onomatopoeia in these choruses.

2. Select a passage of 10-15 lines which gives you pleasure. Try to give reasons for your choice.

3. It has been said that Swinburne's poetry is all sound and no sense. Is this criticism a fair one?

4. Illustrate from these choruses Swinburne's appreciation of nature. What aspects of nature particularly appealed to him?

THOMAS HARDY. *THE SACRILEGE*

Thomas Hardy, who was born near Dorchester in 1840, was educated at a private school. Later he studied architecture and attended evening classes at King's College, London. After gaining considerable success as an architect, he turned to literature and became one of the most important figures in recent English literature. At first he wrote poetry, but later turned to novel-writing. Among his novels, the most important are *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), *The Woodlanders* (1887) and, in a more sombre style, *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896). The latter was received with some hostility and Hardy returned to writing poetry; during his lifetime he published seven volumes of lyrics. The setting for most of his novels and poems is the south-west counties, principally Dorset—an area which Hardy called "Wessex". Between 1904 and 1908 Hardy published his great epic-drama in blank verse, *The Dynasts*, dealing with the Napoleonic Wars.

Much of Hardy's work is characterised by a sense of irony and a view of the lives of men as a struggle against a Fate which is indifferent to their sufferings, but this is combined with an appreciation of rustic humour. Hardy died in 1928.

The Sacrilege is in two parts: the first is spoken by the man who is about to commit the crime, and addressed to his twin-brother; the second is that brother's account of events subsequent to the sacrilege.

Hardy's poetry is often deliberately severe, even austere, in manner, for he seems to have distrusted the richly musical lyrics of Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites (*e.g.* Rossetti and Swinburne). His diction also is typical of the poet himself, often appearing harsh and unnatural, as though in dealing with words he is carving out his ideas from hard and untractable material (*e.g.* "speed my soul's imperilling", "at her ill-witchery's request"). Though he does not scorn poetic devices like onomatopoeia and alliteration, the effects he gains from them are likely to be more striking for their harshness than for smoothness and melody:

And their swift sweets outwore.

Who has gathered gear for many a year
From mansion, mart and fair.

By arch and aisle and saint and knight
Of sculptured stonework sheeted white.

As in all Hardy's writing, both poems and novels, the reader has a vivid sense of locality and setting. In this poem Hardy makes most effective use of the repetition of place names. You should not fail to notice how the Beacon and the Moor seem to take interest in what is going on. They seem to be in some strange communion: Dunkery "frowns" and "pouts" in keeping with the pouting of the woman. It smiles at the preparation of the van to receive her; and as the brother takes his revenge the Moor and the Beacon frown to one another.

The rhyme-scheme is interesting, for in most stanzas the third line is almost the same as the first. Were it exactly the same we should know what was coming, but as we expect a variant we await it with interest.

p. 202. 2. **Dunkery.** Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor, frequently mentioned in Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*.
Exon Moor. Exmoor, a hilly moorland in western Somerset and northern Devon, noted for its breed of ponies and wild deer.
6. **hood,** cover. The word "kerchief" in the next line means head-covering.
10. **Tor,** a rugged hill of rock.
11. **moon,** month.
14. **Priddy.** A village in Somerset, four miles north-west of Wells. A fair has been held in Priddy in August for 500 years.
16. **gallanting,** love-making.
20. **outwore,** came to an end.
25. **van,** caravan (of the gipsy type).
p. 203. 10. **dallyings,** love-making.
11. **cathedral.** Probably Wells Cathedral.
12. **finger,** steal (*cf.* "pinch").
divine, sacred.
15. **gathered gear.** A euphemism for "stolen goods".
16. **Marlbury Downs.** Marlborough Downs, in Wiltshire.
17. **mart,** market.
23. **pouts,** shows her displeasure.
29. **ravishing,** great delight.
p. 204. 2. **botchery in this rash assay,** clumsiness in this rash attempt.
3. **take hers,** *i.e.* take her life.
9. **rafted,** set free.
24. **fay,** good fairy, hence good fortune, luck.

30. Mendip. The Mendips are a range of hills in Somerset, south-west of Bristol. The cathedral of the Mendips is Wells.

p. 205. **6. Severn shore,** *i.e.* the coast of Somerset.

13. confused the sky, threw the clouds into confusion with its winds.

14. Toneborough Town. In his novels Hardy used fictitious names for many actual towns (and other places) in "Wessex". Here he refers to Taunton.

16. stretched, hanged.

19. lipped, made a sign with his lips.

22. Toneborough Deane. The valley of the River Tone above Taunton.

26. To figure as her chosen man, to appear as her lover.

28. To doom . . . fair. This line follows in sense l. 24.

p. 206. **5. clave,** kept close, remained true.

11. wanton, wayward.

13. blew to blazing, fanned into flame.

15. swelled, was at the flood in the March rains.

17. dogged, followed.

19. dank, sodden.

20. goodman, lover.

26. bode, portend.

awry, crookedly, missing her footing.

Questions

1. Does the writer remember that the speakers are both uneducated men? Study the words they use.

2. Do you see any point in having the two speakers—one speaking Part I and the other Part II?

3. Hardy calls the poem "a ballad-tragedy". Show that the description is a suitable one.

4. Describe the rhyme-scheme of the stanza.

ROBERT BRIDGES. *ELEGY*

Robert Bridges was born at Walmer in 1844 and educated at Eton and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He studied, and for a time practised, medicine, but in 1882 he turned to literature. He published many beautiful lyrics and some essays, including a most noteworthy one on *Milton's Prosody*. In 1913 Bridges was appointed Poet Laureate. In addition to his poetry he wrote eight plays, and in 1922 (when he was eighty-five years of age) he published *The Testament of Beauty*, an account of the wisdom and experience of an artistic spirit. Bridges was connected with the Oxford University Press and did much to encourage taste and accuracy in printing; he was also one of the founders of the Society for Pure English. He took a great interest in Church music. Bridges died in 1930.

It has been said that the writing of all poetry is an attempt on the part of the poet to control experience and emotion. This is particularly true of elegy. Elegies are usually written less to utter than to *master* grief, and the mastery comes largely through concentration on the formal pattern of the verse—rhythm, rhyme and stanza form. One may question how much grief Bridges felt on this occasion; but being a somewhat fastidious and scholarly poet, much interested in the mechanics of prosody, he is clearly fitted to exercise control and mastery of words and rhythms. The chief quality of this Elegy is not its feeling, but its artistic ceremoniousness. Not only does it describe a ceremony, commanding those present (maidens, musicians, priests and boatmen) to play their parts in turn; it describes it in a ceremonial way, in lines of slow and stately movement, the lines of differing lengths suggesting pauses in the ceremony itself. All this is reinforced by the somewhat archaic and poetic language ("bridal", "cloke", "tabor", "viol", "upstaying", etc.) and the rather classical remoteness suggested by "festal crown", "flaming torches", "cedar litter" and "forgetful streams".

The poem is written in a highly-wrought stanza form. The basic rhythm is iambic, but there are many inversions and substitutions (especially in the eleventh line of each stanza). The first four lines of each stanza have five feet and rhyme alternately. The fifth line has only three feet, providing a kind of echo to the fourth line, with which it rhymes. The effect is emphasised by the enjambment, which often occurs at this point. The sixth line has four feet and introduces a new rhyme, which is always a feminine rhyme (*i.e.* it has an extra, weaker syllable: "light-ly", "right-ly", etc.). The seventh line is a return—to the length of the opening lines and to the rhyme of the first and third lines, thus pulling the whole stanza together. The eighth line, with five feet again, echoes the feminine rhyme and provides an artistically satisfying conclusion.

The student should learn by heart one or two of the stanzas, so that he has available some examples with which he can illustrate the pattern which has been described above.

p. 207. **7. bridal,** wedding. Used as a noun this word is archaic. Its original form was *bride-ale*—a wedding-feast.

21. cloke. An archaic spelling of "cloak".

26. litter, a framework supporting a bed or couch for transporting sick or wounded persons. The "cedar litter" here may, of course, be the coffin itself.

p. 208. **1. tabor,** a kind of drum.

3. viol, an early musical instrument, having several strings which were played with a bow; an older form of the violin.

10. stoled, wearing a stole, a narrow strip of silk or linen worn over the shoulders.

14. upstaying, holding up.

p. 209. **2. bark.** A poetic word for boat, especially rowing-boat.

4. Embark, put on board (transitive).

10. forgetful streams. Referring to one of the rivers of the underworld in classical mythology. When the souls of the dead drank from it they forgot their past lives.

Questions

1. Do you find this poem a convincing expression of grief? Give reasons for your answer. What else has the poem to offer?

2. Write a description of the verse form of this poem, illustrating your remarks by detailed reference to a stanza that particularly appeals to you.

3. How would you describe the language of this poem? Support your remarks by reference to lines and phrases.

4. What evidence do you find in the poem that Bridges was a scholarly writer?

FRANCIS THOMPSON. *THE HOUND OF HEAVEN*

Francis Thompson was born at Preston in 1859. He was educated for the Catholic priesthood, but when his superiors decided he had no vocation for the priesthood he studied medicine at Owen's College, Manchester. Though he became a distinguished Greek scholar, he failed to obtain a degree and came to London, where, without friends or money, he attempted to earn a living as a bookseller's assistant, a messenger and a boot-black. Meanwhile, he was writing poetry, which he submitted to Wilfred Meynell, a magazine editor. Suffering from poverty, ill-health and indulgence in opium, Thompson was rescued by the Meynells, who took him into their home and helped him in the publication of his *Poems* (which included *The Hound of Heaven*) in 1893. Thompson wrote two more volumes of poetry and several prose works, including a brilliant *Essay on Shelley*. He died from consumption in 1907.

The chief difficulty in this difficult poem lies in the varied and ever-changing symbolism. To follow the poet's changing mood would be to involve oneself in an almost interminable task, so only the most striking of his symbols are spoken of in this short analysis.

p. 209, ll. 17-31. The poet begins his account of how the Spirit of God, in the likeness of a hound, pursued the soul which tried to escape Him. Yet nothing could hide the soul fleeing from God.

p. 210, ll. 1-30. Just as an outlaw might plead for shelter at a window where lived a kind heart, so did he plead for shelter to the stars, the moon, the sun, the clouds. But their loyalty to "this tremendous lover" compelled them to refuse the request.

p. 210, ll. 31-36. Meanwhile, the relentless pursuit continued.

p. 211, l. 1—p. 212, l. 16. Perhaps the children would shield him; but even they failed him. Then he asked for protection from the other young things of nature as they were born; but as a man he had no real fellowship with inanimate nature.

p. 212, ll. 17-22. And still the feet pursued him who could find no satisfaction apart from God.

p. 212, l. 23—p. 213, l. 32. It was now impossible to avoid the love of God. His armour was taken from the fugitive and he had no defence against the oncoming of God. He had wasted his powers in his youth; now, like another Samson, he stood amidst the destruction he had wrought, and himself ruined. Even dreams and music failed to bring comfort; the fantasies with which he once circled the whole world broke with the weight of the realities in the world. Must the love of God choke, as it were, every flower but itself? And must the Divine Draughtsman ruin the soul before it is of use for His purpose? The freshness of youthful days is soiled in the dust of the world. If the best of his days have been so bitter, what will the others belike? Time confuses what eternity would make plain; the trumpet notes call clearly, but the towers are soon hidden again, though not till the one who summons the souls of men stands revealed. And yet must the fields He reaps be first vitalised by the deaths of victims?

p. 213, l. 33—p. 214, l. 19. The Pursuer draws nearer and nearer, saying that if the old world and its joys had so completely broken down, it was not surprising. No one but God would love so undeserving a person. And yet all that had been taken would be restored to the soul which comes as a child to its father's arms.

p. 214, ll. 20-25. The pursuit ceases; the gloom the fugitive had seen was, after all, but the shadow of a Loving Hand, while the voice declared itself to be that of Him whom the troubled soul had been seeking.

Thompson was a Catholic mystic. *The Hound of Heaven* is a poem of terror and glory, magnificent and compelling in its imagery (which is always symbolic), rich and sonorous in its words. Especially beautiful is its nature imagery.

The continuity of the metaphors cannot be maintained unbroken, however. They are fine in themselves, but they are not united in one idea, and they change so quickly that at the end the reader's mind feels as if it has been bandied about like a shuttlecock.

There is a free play of rhythm within an elastic metrical scheme, which is very suitable for the varying imaginative figures. The rhyme-scheme is very complicated, but often very effective, as it gives the right shock of surprise at intervals. Sometimes the actual rhymes are very poor (*e.g.* "dais" and "way is"—p. 211, ll. 18-19). The poet does not spend the care of Keats or Tennyson on word music, but treats it as a minor detail in the imagery and movement of the poem.

p. 209. 22. **vistaed,** seen in the distance.
24. **Adown,** down.
Titanic, gigantic. In Greek mythology the Titans were giant gods.
chasmèd, full of terrors.
28. **instancy,** urgency, overwhelming pressure. "Instant" (l. 30) is the adjective.
p. 210. 2. **hearted,** concealing a heart, perhaps of sympathy for the fugitive.
5. **adread,** afraid.
9. **wist,** knew
10. **margent,** margin, boundaries.
12. **clangèd.** Because the fugitive soul struck them. An onomatopoeic word.
13. **Fretted,** wore.

dulcet jars, sweet discords. An example of oxymoron. *Cf.* "traitorous trueness" and "loyal deceit". The antithesis in l. 21 on this page is similar.

26. savannahs of the blue, wide spaces of the heavens.

29. spurn o' their feet, what their feet spurned.

p. 211. 9. Their angel. See *Matthew,* xviii. 10.

15. our Lady-Mother. The Virgin Mary, mother of Christ. Francis Thompson was a Catholic.

21. Lucent-weeping, the shining tears.

p. 212. 24. harness, armour. An archaism—there are several in the poem.

29. lustihead, vigour.

30. pillaring, supported by pillars.

p. 213. 1. sun-starts, flashes of sunlight.

3. lutanist, lute-player.

7. overplussed, weighed down.

9. albeit, although.

amaranthine, immortal.

20. The pulp, the rind. Corresponding to life and death respectively.

28. purpureal, purple.

cypress-crowned. The cypress is symbolical of death and mourning. Twigs of cypress were worn in the hair of the mourners.

Questions

1. Give examples of rich and sonorous lines and phrases in this poem.

2. Compile a list of (*a*) apt though unusual adjectives, (*b*) effective repetition.

3. Write a short summary of the developing story of the poem.

4. Choose half a dozen striking metaphors from the poem and try to explain why you find them effective.

G. K. CHESTERTON. *LEPANTO*

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born in London in 1874. He was educated at St. Paul's School, and later entered the Slade School to study art. But in 1900 he took up literature as a career, making contributions on a great variety of subjects to a number of periodicals. He became a Catholic in 1922, and wrote many works of Catholic philosophy. He wrote in almost every form of literature: *The Napoleon of Notting Hill, The Man who was Thursday, The Flying Inn* (novels); *The Innocence of Father Brown, The Wisdom of Father Brown* (detective stories); biographies of Dickens, Browning, Bernard Shaw; much criticism

and hundreds of essays. Among his best-known poems, besides *Lepanto*, are *The Ballad of the White Horse* and *Wine, Water and Song*. He died in 1936.

Chesterton's writing is characterised by great verve and exuberance, a rollicking humour, a broad-minded enjoyment of life and a hatred of Puritanism, an intellectual assurance based on the certainty of his religious faith, a brilliant style and a love of paradox.

This poem deals with one of the great historical sea battles of the world, the Battle of Lepanto, which was fought on 7th October, 1571, between the Turks and a "holy league" formed by the Christian States of the Mediterranean. Don John of Austria, the half-brother of Philip II of Spain, commanded the allied fleets of Spain, Venice and the Papal States, and he completely destroyed the Turkish fleet, under Ali Pasha, and liberated more than twelve thousand Christian galley-slaves. The battle was the last one fought between fleets of galleys, and was also the last crusade.

The story moves swiftly, helped by the rhyming in couplets and by the anapaestic measure, varied by iambs and trochees. The poet makes effective use of lines with many unaccented syllables, which are, as it were, to be hurried over in order to reach the next stress:

> They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
> They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea.

The effect of slowness, which makes the rapid lines all the more rapid by contrast, is produced by the omission of these unstressed syllables and the use of stressed syllables one after the other:

> Stíff flágs stráining in the níght-blásts cóld,
>
> In the glóom bláck-púrple, in the glínt óld-góld.

Onomatopoeia, aided by alliteration, serves to make the poem very vivid—*e.g.* "dim drums throbbing", "strong gongs groaning", etc. The use of the present tense and the references to people by name ("It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey in the gate") have the effect of suggesting that the author is present and reporting to us what he is looking at. The suggestion of the fight taking place on a foreign strand and at an earlier period than our own is given by the exclamations in Latin. The varied

repetition concerning the actions of Don John of Austria adds life and gives colour to the description of the historical event.

p. 214. **26. Soldan of Byzantium.** The Sultan of the Byzantine Empire. When the Turks crossed into Europe and overthrew this Empire in 1453, Constantinople (Byzantium) became their capital.

30. crescent. The flag of the Turks bore a blood-red crescent moon.

p. 215. **1. inmost sea.** The Mediterranean. All the Christian countries of the Mediterranean had been harried by the fleet of the Turkish ruler, Suleiman I.

2. dared, challenged.

white republics. The republics of Venice, Este and Romagna.

3. Lion of the Sea. Venice, whose emblem is the winged lion of St. Mark.

4. the Pope . . . Cross. The Pope's call for help was largely ignored, notably by the great Christian powers of England and France.

6. cold queen of England. Elizabeth I, who was noted for her personal vanity.

7. Shadow of the Valois. The Valois was the reigning house of France, and at the time of Lepanto the king was Henry IV of Navarre. He was the leader of the French Protestants or Huguenots, but in 1593, in order to gain the throne of France, he became a Roman Catholic. Chesterton's line suggests that he was rather bored by the Roman Catholic service.

8. From evening isles . . . gun. The Spaniards were preoccupied with their newly-acquired dominions in the Far West.

9. The Lord upon the Golden Horn. The Sultan, Suleimán I. The Golden Horn is an inlet which forms a good harbour and which separates the Christian part of the city from the Mohammedan part.

11. nameless throne . . . crownless prince. Don John, or Juan, of Austria was the half-brother of Philip II of Spain. He was a great but ruthless soldier. After the Battle of Lepanto he schemed to gain a throne in Tunis, but Philip II became jealous of him and gave him various offices where he had no scope for carrying out ambitious plans. One of these was a post in the Netherlands, and when he tried to make himself king there, in 1578, he died suddenly, and he is generally supposed to have been murdered.

12. doubtful seat and half-attainted stall. Don John was an illegitimate son of Charles V; as a Knight, therefore, there was some slur upon his right to the seat, or stall, he may be said to have occupied.

13. the last Knight of Europe. This adventure may well be called the Last Crusade, for it was a quixotic enterprise.

14. troubador, a singer of love songs—suggesting that Don John hardly belonged to the newer times which had arrived.

16. enormous silence. No one else responded to the Pope's call for help.

21. gloom . . . old-gold. The flag seemed black-purple until the sun revealed its deep golden colour.

20-23. Notice how these lines give the impression of increasing speed by a gradual increase in the number of unaccented syllables.

23. tuckets, fanfares.

p. 216. 2. spurning . . . world. He despises the stirrups of his horse just as he despises the thrones of kings: he can do without them.

4-5. Love-light of Spain . . . Death-light of Africa! The Spaniards will welcome him as a champion, but he brings death to the Moors who are on the side of the Sultan.

8. Mahound, Mahomet.

9. Note how the lines in italics and in brackets, and the accounts of the preparations made by the Turks, serve as reminders of what is taking place on the other side. The huge armaments, and the indifference, against which Don John has to contend, are not to have everything their own way.

10. houri, a nymph in the Mohammedan paradise. Mahomet is resting with his head on her knees.

15. Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon. Respectively the Angel of Death, the Lion of God and the Unrevealed One. They will be allies of the Sultan.

16. Genii, spirits who had many wings and many eyes.

19. Solomon. This Jewish king, renowned for his wisdom, had control over these spirits, who had to do his bidding.

p. 217. 3. hermit-folk, *i.e.* Christian devotees.

5. Giaours. The Turkish word for infidels, *i.e.* non-Mohammedans. (The word is pronounced "jowers" to rhyme with "towers".)

6. that which was our trouble, *i.e.* the menace of the Christian crusaders.

11. Kismet. Fate. The crusaders did not submit to what fate seemed to prescribe for them; they fought against it.

12. Richard . . . Raymond . . . Godfrey. Three famous leaders of earlier crusades: Richard I of England; Raymond of Toulouse; Godfrey of Bouillon, who became King of Jerusalem. The spirit of these men was alive again in Don John.

18. Iberia, Spain.

20. Alcalar. There are three towns in Spain of this name. Cervantes (see below) was born in one of them.

21. St. Michael's on his Mountain. St. Michael was the archangel who was specially chosen for the defence of Christ. He was therefore particularly honoured by the Crusaders. His mountain is Mont. St. Michel, off the coast of Brittany. The red sails of the fishing boats are characteristic of that coast today.

p. 218. 5. The North is full of tangled things. This line and those that follow refer to the quarrels about religion that took place between the different sects at the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.

7. Christian killeth Christian . . . room. In 1563 the Duke of

Guise, a Roman Catholic, was murdered at Blois by a Protestant.

8. Christian dreadeth Christ . . . doom. A reference to the Inquisition and the hardships inflicted on Protestants by Catholics.

9. Christian hateth Mary. A reference to the Protestant refusal to pay to the Virgin Mary the devotion accorded to her by Catholics.

14. *Domino gloria!* Glory be to God (Lat.).

16. ships. A reminder that the fight is to be on the sea.

17. King Philip. Philip II of Spain. He was ruler of the Netherlands and therefore head of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

21. phial. The phial of poison which, it is thought, was sent by Philip for the poisoning of Don John of Austria. See note on "nameless throne" above.

p. 219. 7. The Pope. The Pope is praying for the success of the campaign, and reviews as he prays the horrors against which the Christians are to fight. The fleet of the Sultan seems to overshadow the whole of Christendom.

14. galleys of St. Mark. The Venetian galleys. See note on "Lion of the Sea", p. 117.

22. granite of Babylon. The stones in Babylon where records of historical events were carved. The Babylonian kings were carved as huge figures, but the conquered people were represented as very small.

p. 220. 9. *Vivat Hispania!* Long live Spain! (Lat.).

13. Cervantes. A Spanish writer of plays, novels and poetry. He took part in the Battle of Lepanto and he lost his left hand during the fight. Later he wrote *Don Quixote*, a burlesque about "a lean and foolish knight".

Questions

1. Indicate the effects of onomatopoeia introduced by Chesterton.

2. How far is the poem a commentary on the remark that the days of chivalry were over?

3. How has Chesterton recaptured the atmosphere of 1571?

4. Illustrate the variety of movement which Chesterton manages to achieve in his lines.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE. *INDIGNATION, AN ODE*

Lascelles Abercrombie was born in 1881. Although he was educated at Victoria University, Manchester, to become a scientist, he later turned to literature and became a well-known poet and critic. He was a lecturer in poetry at the University of Liverpool, and became Professor of English Literature at the University of Leeds and then at Bedford College, London. His *Collected*

Poems were published in 1930. Among his critical works are: *Thomas Hardy* (1912), *The Idea of Great Poetry* (1925) and *Romanticism* (1926). He died in 1938.

This is a magnificently vigorous and forceful poem. It is a plea for the revival of indignation and spiritual anger ("the anger of the Lord") to sweep away the evils of modern civilisation which corrupt the minds and lives of men. Because we accept too easily and without complaint,

> The fiendish bands go lording in the day
> And openly possess the mind of man

with corrupt ideas, cheap literature, low standards of art and entertainment, folly and greed, commercialism and ugliness. Man no longer has the sturdy independence of the farmer, working his own land. Foundries and furnaces straddle everywhere and our very souls are in the grip of commercialism. Too many people are condemned to spend their lives in "mills and yards and factories" and ugly dwellings, so that their souls are debased and they are "trapped in vice and crime". Abercrombie believes that if enough people were sufficiently indignant at such conditions they could be swept away. Indignation, like a sword,

> Would mightily cut the built iniquities,
> Commerce, and all the policies
> Of ownership and avarice.

Men's minds would be free to feel again the influence of higher things.

> Thought would walk again like a sacred king
> The shining space of immortality.

The lines vary in length—sometimes three, sometimes four, sometimes five iambic feet. The sense rolls forward like a great river, in long sentences which surge over nine or ten lines. The rhymes do not fall into any regular pattern. All this makes the metrical scheme a fitting medium for the surge of passion which forms the theme of the poem.

p. 220. **20. a sword.** This metaphor of a spiritual force fighting with a great sword against the material wickedness of the world is based on *Ephesians*, vi. 17, "And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God". The metaphor recalls the archangel Michael in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the part he played against the rebellious angels in the war in Heaven.

p. 221. **18. scimetar,** a short curved sword, used in the East (usually spelt scimitar).
22. **mow,** destroy in large numbers.
30. **into good Hunting,** *i.e.* made them prey, which he hunted with delight.
p. 222. **6. Beleaguerment,** besieging.
16. **statures.** Literally animals or men standing upright. "Statures of great wind" may mean huge creatures in the air, attacking with the force of a strong wind.
27. **hosted.** Sanctified by the Eucharist, the wafer used in celebrating Mass.
31. **bale,** evil, destruction.
p. 223. **7. glebe,** a piece of cultivated land.
14. **pound,** a place of confinement (*lit.* an enclosure for detaining stray cattle).
25. **lime,** *i.e.* bird-lime, a sticky substance spread on twigs for catching birds.
26. **Embruted,** degraded to the level of brutes.
27. **hutches,** mean dwellings, huts or cabins
31. **pales,** limits, enclosures.
p. 225. **8. motes,** particles of dust.
13. **laidly,** hideous, repulsive. A northern variant of "loathly".

QUESTIONS

1. Select from the poem a passage of 10-15 lines which gives you pleasure. Try to give reasons for your choice.

2. Do you think that this is a poem which is better read *aloud*? Give your reasons.

3. Why is Lascelles Abercrombie dissatisfied with modern life?

4. Select and summarise those sections of the poem which propose a remedy for the evils which the poet attacks.

RALPH HODGSON. *THE SONG OF HONOUR*

Ralph Hodgson was born in 1871 and educated in Yorkshire. He worked for newspapers in England and America, and was for some time a lecturer on English in Japan. He is very fond of animals (his best-known poems, *The Bull* and *The Bells of Heaven*, both reveal this sympathy) and once waged a campaign to end the custom of docking the tails and clipping the ears of bull-terriers. Nearly all his poetry was originally issued in loose broadsheets and small pamphlets, each containing one poem. He was awarded the Polignac Prize for his poems *The Bull* and *The Song of Honour* by the Royal Society of Literature.

The Song of Honour is a very noble poem in which the whole of God's creation seems to be linked together to mount "from lowly to sublime". The poet describes how he stood on a hill listening to the rooks and the owls, and gazing at the stars, when suddenly he heard in imagination two birds that inhabit an Abyssinian vale—the nightingale and the babble-wren. When their music had begun, their song was taken up by every singing bird, and it swelled into a paean of praise, a song of honour. This song comprises all that men do that is lovely; poetry, painting, courageous deeds, love, children's play—all these have a part in the song of honour. When the song was finished the poet was so dazzled by its wonder that he stood in bewilderment on the hill, gazing at the stars.

The length of the stanzas is varied, thus avoiding monotony, and a contrast is afforded by the introduction of dialogue in Stanza 4.

The whole poem has a breathless rush and force, and there are some notable lines,

The testament of Beautysprite

and

Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light.

p. 226. 18. *Ah! some wild . . . one of these.* The lines in italics represent what Hodgson imagines the reader, used to conventional nature poetry, might be thinking at this point. But what Hodgson hears is in his imagination.

p. 227. 8. **The Sons of Light exalt their Sire,** the creatures of God praise their Maker.

21. **Beautysprite,** the spirit of beauty.

25. **limn,** paint.

30. **pleiades,** brilliant clusters of stars.

p. 228. 8. **fortune Men,** fortune tellers, advisers.

9. **crown themselves anew,** perform deeds which bring special honour.

p. 229. 6. **Twitched up from place and time,** transported by their love beyond the mundane matters of their ordinary lives.

14. **Dog-loyalties,** loyalties as strong as that of a dog for its master.

15. **Ruth.** Ruth was a Moabite woman, married to one of the two sons of Naomi, who had come to the land of Moab because of famine in Judah. The sons died, and when Naomi decided to return to Judah Ruth went with her, saying, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (*Ruth*, i. 16).

17. for beauty . . . not behind, in beauty and magnitude no whit inferior to the songs previously mentioned.

p. 230. 1. too grey to tell, too dull and lifeless to describe.

p. 231. 1. deaf men, *i.e.* those unable to appreciate the beauty of sculpture and carving.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the theme of this poem? Illustrate your answer with reference and quotation.

2. Select and summarise those sections of the poem which deal with the activities of man.

3. Do you think that this is a poem which is better read *aloud*? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Choose half a dozen striking figures of speech from the poem and try to explain why you find them effective.

ALDOUS HUXLEY. *THEATRE OF VARIETIES*

Aldous Huxley, grandson of T. H. Huxley, the supporter of Darwinism, and brother of Julian Huxley, the scientist, was born in 1894. He was educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. After a short period teaching at Eton he joined the staffs of several important literary periodicals. Since that time he has devoted himself entirely to writing, living first on the Continent and then in California. He first attracted attention in 1920 as a poet and writer of short stories. Later came a series of satirical novels, "debunking" accepted ideas and standards: *Chrome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923) and *Those Barren Leaves* (1925). His writing then began to show a growing preoccupation with modern science and with psychology, ethics and philosophy; and more recently Huxley has turned his attention to the Eastern mystics and to an attempt to synthesise existing evidence for mysticism into a comprehensive system. Huxley has an encyclopaedic range of knowledge, and his stimulating ideas are always expressed in lucid and witty prose.

Theatre of Varieties is a witty, lively, colourful and also somewhat cynical poem. It describes a series of music-hall turns and the reactions of the audience—but the poet stands apart, holds himself aloof from the glitter and the glamour and rather despises the audience on whom they cast their spell; for the description clearly suggests not only the apparent splendour of these music-hall acts, but also their basic tawdriness. Their music is a "revelation and marvellous lie"; their beauty is a debasement of

Spenser's platonic theory of beauty. Words and music hammer on the malleable minds of the audience, who experience an obvious form of escapism:

> Happy because the irremediable is healed,
> Happy because they have seen the impossible,
> Because they are freed from the dull daily law.

Bemused by music and bright lights, they live in a world of make-believe,

> where the saxophone
> Affirms everlasting loves, the drums deny
> Death, and where great Tenorio, when he sings,
> Makes Picardy bloom only with perfumed roses,
> And never a rotting corpse in all its earth.

Only "the terrible infant" wonders and questions, and his questions come near to breaking the spell.

Here is the danger of too much indulgence in make-believe and escapism, whether it be the theatre of varieties, the cinema or television. Religion, thought, philosophy, beauty are replaced by tawdry and glamorous entertainment, which is seized upon like a drug, and reality is forgotten.

> The dangers which confront our civilisation are not so much the external dangers. . . . The most alarming dangers are those which menace it from within, that threaten the mind rather than the body and estate of contemporary man. . . . The horrors of modern "pleasure" arise from the fact that every kind of organised distraction tends to become more and more imbecile. . . . In place of the old pleasures demanding intelligence and personal initiative, we have vast organisation that provide us with ready-made distractions—distractions which demand from pleasure-seekers no personal participation and no intellectual effort of any sort.
>
> —Aldous Huxley, *On the Margin* (1923).

At the end of the poem there is a suggestion that the world itself is merely a music-hall, a theatre of immemorial varieties, a parade of old mummery, every night from now till doomsday.

Though Huxley's writing is always thoughtful, it is always sparkling and entertaining. *Theatre of Varieties* is written in flexible blank verse, with occasional shorter lines. Its style is supple and varied, literary, mannered and witty. There are one or two striking metaphors; for example, "Flute fountains and the swallow flight of

strings", and the extended metaphor of the hanging gardens of flower faces.

p. 232. **9. hanging gardens.** The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, consisted of terrace on terrace of gardens, "four hundred foot square and fifty cubits high". Huxley uses the metaphor to describe the packed circles and galleries of the theatre.

14. quick, alive.

18. tumblers, acrobats.

20. Van Hogen Mogen. The name suggests "hocus-pocus", trickery, deception.

30. clue. In its original sense (sometimes spelt "clew"), this word means a ball of thread used as a guide through a maze.

p. 233. **3. Ethiop,** negro.

p. 234. **9. Automaton.** A piece of mechanism which imitates the actions of human beings.

10. viols, early musical stringed instruments, to be played with a bow.

virginals, early keyboard instruments.

11. ombre, loo, mistigri, card games.

tric-trac, an old variety of backgammon, a game played with draughtsmen and dice.

pushpin, a child's game played with pins.

12. Lillibulero. A famous ballad, originally written in ridicule of Irish Catholics in the seventeenth century.

14. heydiguy, a kind of country dance.

15. terrible infant. A literal translation of the French phrase *enfant terrible*, a child who embarrasses his elders by his remarks.

28. Picardy . . . earth. "Roses of Picardy" was a popular song during the First World War. Huxley contrasts the sentiment of the ballad with the horror of reality.

34. "Divine Zenocrate." A quotation from Marlowe's play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, in which Zenocrate (pronounced Zenó-craté) is the beautiful wife of Tamburlaine.

p. 235. **11. emanation,** power, warmth or light flowing outwards.

15. feat, neatly attired.

20. Siren song. In classical mythology the Sirens had the power of luring men to destruction by their song.

21. So every spirit. This and the next six lines are a quotation from Spenser's *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*.

29. dominant. A term connected with the theory of harmony. Huxley probably has in mind the "dominant seventh", a chord with a discord, which provides a kind of suspense before being "resolved" by a common major chord.

p. 236. **3. Urim and Thummim.** Two mysterious objects (perhaps jewels) worn on the breastplate of the Jewish high-priest. They were supposed to declare the will of Jehovah.

4. Magian, magician, wizard.

Questions

1. Why, according to the poet, do people go to variety shows? Can anything of what the poet says be applied to other forms of entertainment (*e.g.* cinema, television)?

2. What do you find amusing in this poem? What is the serious theme behind it?

3. Discuss the poet's interest in and knowledge of music,

4. What reasons can you give for the introduction into the poem of "the terrible infant"?

ROY CAMPBELL. *TRISTAN DA CUNHA*

Roy Campbell was born in Durban in 1901 and brought up in South Africa. He lived most of his adult life in Spain, Portugal and France, mainly among fishermen and horse-breakers, and took up bull-fighting as a pastime. He fought for General Franco in the Spanish Civil War and in the Second World War served in East and North Africa and in Burma. His most important volumes of verse are *The Flaming Terrapin* (1924), *Adamastor* (1930), *The Georgiad* (1931) and *Collected Poems* (1949). Campbell was killed in a motoring accident in Portugal in 1957.

After a life of fierce action the poet sees a comparison with himself in the island of Tristan da Cunha, consisting of great rocks once thrown from a volcano, but now dark and grim and cold in the midst of the ocean, sleeping beneath mist and storm clouds, a haunt of sea birds, as the poet's mind is a haunt of poems, "a roost for empty words". As though finding a solid strength "in the very coldness of its stone", self-dependent and remote from the events of the world, the island appears to be leading some great exploration into the vast unknown, turning from splendour and sunshine into darkness and tempest. The poet, himself cut off from his countrymen by lack of sympathy, sees the island as a ship plunging forward through the storm to seek the solace of self-forgetfulness, but finding, like the poet himself, "only the bitter knowledge of his soul".

> You fish with nets of seaweed in the deep
> As fruitlessly as I with nets of rhyme.

The metaphor changes and the island is seen as "a missile from the great sling of the past", hurled away from the

distress and despair of world events. As the boat on which the poet is a passenger moves onward, the island recedes.

> Our ways divide, and yours is straight and endless—
> But mine is short and crooked to the grave.

Yet, alone and friendless, the poet has received from the island strength and fortitude to continue his task.

The poem is written in stanzas of six lines (rhyming *a b a c b c*), the last stanza (*a b a c d d c*) having an extra line, giving it finality and emphasis. The reader should note how repetitions and echoes subtly bind the whole poem into a unity: furl, fold, surly (stanzas 2 and 3), league-long (3 and 4), fiery, fire, strength (4, 5 and 6), march (6 and 7), etc. It is a most forcefully written poem and has a fine sonorous music—for example, p. 236, ll. 13-18, 29-30; p. 237, ll. 10-12, 25-30; p. 238, ll. 11-14; and

> Waving the snowy flutter of your spray
> And gazing back in infinite farewell
> To suns that sink, and shores that fade away.
>
> And in the whirring hollows of your granite
> That vaster Sea, to which you are a shell,
> Sighs with a ghostly rumour like the drear
> Moan of the nightwind in a hollow cell.

The whole poem is a succession of striking metaphors—its hundred or so lines contain no fewer than sixty.

Tristan da Cunha. The largest of three islands in the South Atlantic, about 1,300 miles south-west of St. Helena. It had a population of about 280, until all the inhabitants were evacuated upon an eruption of its volcano in 1961.

p. 236. **20. a giant cinder.** The three islands, of which Tristan da Cunha is one, are of volcanic origin.

21. shawling, acting as a shawl.

24. Pivot . . . swim. The shadow "pivots" round the island as the sun moves. The poet imagines the island as some huge sea-creature; hence "swims".

p. 237. **6. wandering birds,** *i.e.* his poems.

7. pyre, a pile of wood for burning a dead body.

10. Antaeus. The giant Antaeus, son of Poseidon (the Sea) and Gē (the Earth), was a great wrestler who drew new strength from his mother whenever he touched the earth.

18. van, the forefront of an advancing fleet or army.

21. masthead. The central peak of Tristan da Cunha is 7,640 feet high.

27. seraphs, *i.e.* clouds.

p. 238. **1. Memnon.** In classical mythology a prince of the Ethiopians. A huge statue representing him was said to give

forth a musical note when struck by the rays of the rising sun. As the statue faced the sun, so Tristan da Cunha faces the tempest.

5. syren, fog-horn.

7. nitre. The salt incrusted on the rocks resembles saltpetre.

10. tocsin, alarm-bell.

25. nets of seaweed. Tristan da Cunha is surrounded by a belt of seaweed.

p. 239. 4. awful, awe-inspiring (the literal meaning of the word).

Questions

1. What have you learnt from this poem of the island of Tristan da Cunha? How does the poet link all this with his own life?

2. Choose half a dozen striking metaphors from the poem and try to explain why you find them effective.

3. Select two stanzas which have particularly pleased you, and give reasons for your choice. Describe the stanza form.

4. "Why should you haunt me thus?" In your own words give as fully as you can the poet's own answer to this question.

QUESTIONS

General Questions

1. Write an essay on the Elegy, illustrating your remarks with reference to the poems of Milton, Cowper, Shelley, Arnold and Bridges.

2. What is meant by the "pastoral convention"? Discuss with reference to *Lycidas*, *Adonais* and *Thyrsis*.

3. Compare the narrative skill of Dryden with that of Chaucer.

4. Which poets have struck you most for their use of metaphor and imagery in general? Do you detect any difference in their uses of imagery?

5. Discuss *The Bard* and *Indignation* as examples of Odes.

6. Write an essay on the heroic couplet, illustrating your remarks with reference to the poems in this anthology by at least three of the following poets: Chaucer, Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, Cowper and Crabbe.

7. Choose one poem which deals with scenes of everyday life, and one which takes us into an unreal world. State briefly the substance of each poem. Which do you prefer? Give reasons.

8. Compare and contrast *Christabel* and *The Eve of St. Agnes* as poems with a medieval setting.

9. Do you find in the poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats any qualities that lead to their being described as "Romantic" poets?

10. Compare the pictures of village life given in *The Deserted Village* and *Peter Grimes*.

11. Describe the stanza form of *Adonais* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*. Do you notice any differences in the way this stanza form is used by Shelley and Keats?

12. What use do English poets make of their knowledge of Greek and Latin literature? Illustrate your answer with reference to Milton, Pope and Tennyson.

13. What differences have you noticed between the poetry of Shelley and Keats? (Consider ideas, imagery, description, etc.)

14. Do you find anything in common between the ideas of *The Lotos-Eaters* and those of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*?

15. Which poem gives a better picture of the English countryside, *Lines written above Tintern Abbey* or *Thyrsis*? Give your reasons.

16. Choose three poems in which the poet is concerned, wholly or in part, with himself and his own feelings. In each case give, in your own words, the substance of his personal feelings.

17. Compare *Ulysses*, *My Last Duchess* and *Andrea del Sarto* as dramatic monologues. Which of Browning's two poems do you consider more successful?

18. Compare the importance of flowers in *Lycidas* and *Thyrsis*.

19. Do you think that *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *The Blessed Damozel* have anything in common? (Consider metaphors, colour, diction, onomatopoeia, alliteration, etc.)

20. Compare *Peter Grimes* and *The Sacrilege* as tragedies of ordinary life.

21. Choose four poems, one for each of the following headings: (*a*) a poem that tells a story well, (*b*) a poem that presents a lesson of life, (*c*) a humorous poem, (*d*) a musical poem. Show how each poem fits the heading you have chosen for it.

22. Compare *Lepanto* and *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* as poems with an eastern setting.

23. Compare *Lines written above Tintern Abbey* and *The Song of Honour* as poems of nature.

24. What do the views of Matthew Arnold, Lascelles Abercrombie and Aldous Huxley on modern civilisation have in common?

25. Quote two outstanding passages (about eight lines each and from different poems), of which one is remarkable for the sound of the words and the other for its pictorial effect. Say what, in your opinion, are the qualities that make each of these passages worth remembering.

Context Questions

Answer the questions below the following passages, naming the poem from which each passage is taken and its author.

1. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

(*a*) What features of the character of the speaker are revealed in this extract?

(*b*) Describe the scene which lies before the speaker.

(*c*) Who was Achilles and what were the Happy Isles?

(*d*) Explain the meaning of the following phrases: "It may be that the gulfs will wash us down"; "Tho' much is taken, much abides"; "One equal temper of heroic hearts".

2. Blind mouthes! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A Sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least
That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw,
The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim Woolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed,
But that two-handed engine at the door,
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

(*a*) Whom is the speaker attacking in these lines?

(*b*) Account for the introduction into the poem of the episode from which these lines are taken.

(*c*) Explain the meaning of ll. 5-6 and ll. 10-11.

(*d*) Explain the meaning of "Blind mouthes" and of "that two-handed engine".

(*e*) What qualities make this passage a vigorous piece of denunciation?

3. Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side.
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To temp its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

(*a*) Show the truth of these lines by describing the village preacher's treatment of three different people.

(*b*) Explain in your own words what is meant by the following sentences: "Quite forgot their vices in their woe"; "His pity gave ere charity began"; "E'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side".

(*c*) What other details does the poem give of the village preacher and his ways?

(*d*) Comment on the effectiveness and suitability of the simile at the end of this extract.

4. Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

(*a*) To whom do these lines refer? Quote from the poem one other striking phrase which describes him.

(*b*) Name two other people mentioned in the same section of the poem. Why are they introduced at this point?

(*c*) Explain the reference to Actaeon.

(*d*) Why are the "thoughts" described as pursuing "their father and their prey"?

(*e*) Comment on the simile in ll. 2-4. In what ways is it typical of its author?

5. She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

(*a*) Illustrate from this extract the poet's skill in building up a vivid picture by his choice of significant detail.

(*b*) Give a concise explanation of ll. 7-8.

(*c*) Give two or three other examples from the rest of the poem where the author makes us realise what the weather was like by showing its effect upon creatures or things.

(*d*) Mention any other medieval touches in the description of this ancestral home.

6. Nothing comes to rebuke us for
The hearts we wound with laws grievously,
The souls our commerce clutches
Cunningly into inescapable lime,
Embruted in wicked streets, made debase
In villainous alleys and foul hutches,
There trapt in vice and crime,
And for the wrong we did, who made them poor,
Set to pay infamous penalties in jails;
Not even for this the Spirit breaks his pales.

(*a*) Explain the meaning of the following words: "lime", "embruted", "hutches", "pales".

(*b*) Give in your own words the meaning of the first four lines of this extract.

(*c*) Mention some of the author's comments, in other parts of the poem, on an industrial civilisation.

(*d*) What does the poet believe is the remedy for the abuses he mentions?

7. For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.

(*a*) Where does this take place? What is happening? What activity has the poet described just previously?

(*b*) Explain the meaning of: "altars of Japan", "China's earth" and "the smoking tide". What is the name given to this kind of description?

(*c*) Explain the "airy band" and describe some of their activities in other parts of the poem.

(*d*) Comment on the style of the poem and show how it is suitable to the poet's purpose.

8. The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

(*a*) Describe briefly how the poet met the old man.

(*b*) What were the poet's feelings (i) before he had met the old man, and (ii) after the encounter?

(*c*) Give the gist of one other striking simile in the poet's description of this man.

(*d*) Explain why it was that to the poet the man's voice was "like a stream scarce heard".

(*e*) What did the man say to give the poet "human strength"?

(*f*) How does the poet say he saw the old man in his "mind's eye"?

9. They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,

And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross.
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

(*a*) What is meant by "the white republics" and "the Lion of the Sea"?

(*b*) Explain the Pope's agony.

(*c*) Who were the three people mentioned in ll. 5-7? Explain the significance of their actions.

(*d*) Explain the meaning of the last two lines.

(*e*) Which lines of this extract give an effect of rapid, vigorous action? Explain how this effect is achieved.

10. This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

(*a*) Describe three different qualities of the speaker's character which are suggested by this extract.

(*b*) Describe other qualities of his character which are revealed in the rest of the poem.

(*c*) What circumstances led the speaker to "give commands"?

(*d*) What was the purpose of the visit of the Count's servant?

(*e*) Comment on the poet's style in this poem and its suitability to his purpose.

11. "And thou shalt have
A thyng that, al so God my soulé save!
In al this world ther is no creäture,

That eten or dronken hath of this confiture,
Noght but the montance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lassé while
Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile;
This poysoun is so strong and violent."

(*a*) Explain the meaning of the following phrases: "al so God my soulé save!"; "Noght but the montance of a corn of whete"; "in lassé while Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile".

(*b*) For what did the young man say he wanted the poison?

(*c*) What was his real reason for wanting the poison? What did he hope to gain by using it? What did he do with it when he had bought it?

(*d*) Briefly tell the events of the story between this extract and the end of the poem.

12. My heart has sunk, like your grey fissured crags,
By its own strength, o'er toppled and betrayed:
I too have burned the wind with fiery flags,
Who now am but a roost for empty words—
An island of the sea whose only trade
Is in the voyages of its wandering birds.

Did you not, when your strength became your pyre,
Deposed and tumbled from your flaming tower,
Awake in gloom from whence you sank in fire
To find Antaeus-like, more vastly grown,
A throne in your own darkness, and a power
Sheathed in the very coldness of your stone?

(*a*) Explain what you think the third line of this extract means.

(*b*) Why does the poet say he is "but a roost for empty words"? Why is he like the island in this respect?

(*c*) How did the island's "strength" become its "pyre"?

(*d*) Explain the reference to Antaeus.

(*e*) Explain two other ways in which, in other parts of the poem, the poet compares the island with himself.

(*f*) What is the poet's mood at the conclusion of the poem?

13. There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,

Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

(*a*) What was the "lonely tree"? Explain its significance in the poet's mind.

(*b*) Explain the reference to "Our Gipsy-Scholar".

(*c*) Refer to one other striking passage in the poem where flowers are referred to.

(*d*) Expand the phrase, "Then why not me?", to show that you fully understand its meaning.

(*e*) What is the central theme of the poem from which this extract is taken?

14. An awful fear his ardent wish withstood,
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood;
For such she seemed by her celestial face,
Excelling all the rest of human race;
And things divine, by common sense he knew,
Must be devoutly seen at distant view;
So checking his desire, with trembling heart
Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart;
Fixed as a pilgrim wildered in his way,
Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray;
But stands with awful eyes to watch the dawn
of day.

(*a*) How had the young man come upon "the goddess of the wood"?

(*b*) What effect did she have upon him? What were the reactions of his friends to the change?

(*c*) Explain the meaning of "awful", "ardent" and "wildered".

(*d*) Comment upon the effectiveness of the simile in this extract.

15. And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

(*a*) Who were Pan and Bacchus? Explain "The Mænad and the Bassarid".

(*b*) What famous classical legend is referred to elsewhere in the poem?

(*c*) Comment on the style of the poem.

(*d*) What ideas does the poem as a whole convey to you?

16. How that befell no mortal knew
From Marlbury Downs to Exon Moor;
No mortal knew that deed undue
But he who schemed the crime,
Which night still covers. . . . But in dream
Those ropes of hair upon the stream
He sees, and he will hear that scream
Until his judgment-time.

(*a*) Who had performed "that deed undue", and why?

(*b*) Why will the speaker be haunted by "those ropes of hair upon the stream"?

(*c*) Explain the use which the poet makes, throughout the poem, of the natural setting for the story he tells.

17. Four great walls in the new Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

(*a*) Who are the four people mentioned in the third line?

(*b*) Explain in your own words the thought of the first six lines.

(*c*) Explain the significance of *both* sentences in the last line.

(*d*) Tell briefly the circumstances which brought the painter to his present situation.

(*e*) Mention some of the views on art expressed in the poem

18. The face flowers open in her emanation.
She is the suave and curving Kingdom of Heaven
Made visible, and in her sugared song
The ear finds paradise. Divine, divine!
Her foot is feat with diamond toes
And she—divine Zenocrate—
And she on legs of ruby goes.
The face flowers tremble in the rushing wind
Of her loud singing. A poet in the pit
Jots down in tears the words of her Siren song.

(*a*) To what does the phrase, "the face flowers", refer? Explain how the poet makes use of this image throughout the poem.

(*b*) Explain the meaning of: "emanation", "feat" and "Siren", and the reference to Zenocrate.

(*c*) What words does the poet give to the singer in her song?

(*d*) What dangers does the poet see in popular entertainment today?

(*e*) Describe two other music-hall acts which appear in the poem.

19. One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used no net nor hook;
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gliding waves still fix'd his lazy look:
At certain stations he would view the stream,
As if he stood bewilder'd in a dream,
Or that some power had chain'd him for a time,
To feel a curse or meditate on crime.

(*a*) Why did certain parts of the river affect the fishermen in this way?

(*b*) Briefly tell the events which had brought him to this condition.

(*c*) Comment on the author's description of natural scenery in the poem from which this extract is taken. To what extent did that natural scenery influence the main character of the poem?

20. "Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!"

(*a*) Explain the purpose of the journey.

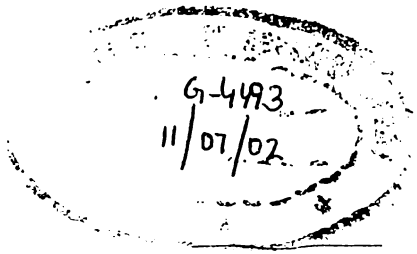
(*b*) Explain briefly what the speaker saw in his dream. How do you think the dream should be interpreted?

(*c*) What was the Baron's reaction to this speech? What was his attitude towards his daughter?

(*d*) How successfully do you think the poem creates an atmosphere of suspense? Refer to at least three examples.

Key to Context Questions

1. Ulysses. *Lord Tennyson.* (Page 174, line 23—page 175, line 3.)
2. Lycidas. *John Milton.* (11. 5-17.)
3. The Deserted Village. *Oliver Goldsmith.* (61. 23-34.)
4. Adonais. *Percy Bysshe Shelley.* (124. 10-18.)
5. The Eve of St. Agnes. *John Keats.* (145. 19-27.)
6. Indignation: An Ode. *Lascelles Abercrombie.* (223. 22-31.)
7. The Rape of the Lock. *Alexander Pope.* (41. 3-14.)
8. Resolution and Independence. *William Wordsworth.* (92. 8-14.)
9. Lepanto. *G. K. Chesterton.* (215. 2-9.)
10. My Last Duchess. *Robert Browning.* (178. 23-34.)
11. The Pardoner's Tale. *Geoffrey Chaucer.* (6. 31—7. 2.)
12. Tristan da Cunha. *Roy Campbell.* (237. 1-12.)
13. Thyrsis. *Matthew Arnold.* (192. 15-24.)
14. Cymon and Iphigenia. *John Dryden.* (16. 29—17. 3.)
15. First Chorus from "Atalanta in Calydon". *A. C. Swinburne.* (200. 1-8.)
16. The Sacrilege. *Thomas Hardy.* (206. 29—207. 4.)
17. Andrea del Sarto. *Robert Browning.* (186. 9-15.)
18. Theatre of Varieties. *Aldous Huxley.* (235. 11-20.)
19. Peter Grimes. *George Crabbe.* (79. 24-32.)
20. Christabel. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* (109. 22-27.)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