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FROM BLAKE TO ARNOLD :
SELECTIONS FROM ENGLISH POETRY

FROM
BLAKE TO ARNOLD

SELECTIONS FROM
ENGLISH POETRY
(1783-1853)

WITH INTRODUCTION, CRITICAL ESSAYS, AND NOTES

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PREFACE.

A SELECTION like this is naturally based on accepted anthologies. The editor has especially referred to Mr. Henley's all-inclusive book of *English Lyrics* and Mrs. Meynell's more fastidious choice, *The Flower of the Mind*, the notes to which he has found most stimulating. Only one piece, the first chosen from Keats, has been included on other grounds than those of recognized poetic worth. It appeared important, as an illustration both of one element in Keats' poetic genius and of certain aspects of essential poetic theory, which the editor seemed to find more clearly exemplified in Keats than elsewhere in English verse.

That theory, in so far as he seems to himself to comprehend it, the editor has endeavoured to formulate in the first introduction, both because he considered this little book as likely to be, for some students, an introduction to poetry, and in need, therefore, of some expositions of the aims and means of that art, and because he himself derived no little benefit from the necessity of expressing, in connected sequence, thoughts which have been for some time habitual with him. He

need hardly say that he counts on the generous co-operation of teachers in elucidating these considerations to the student.

Books to which he feels bound to express especial indebtedness are: Messrs. Ellis & Yeats' edition of Blake, Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, and Mr. Laurence Housman's *Writings of William Blake*; Matthew Arnold's *Poems of Wordsworth*; Mr. Colvin's *Selections from Landor* and his *Keats*; Patmore's *Principle in Art*; the French translations of Poe by Baudelaire & Mallarmé; Professor Saintsbury's *Matthew Arnold*; and in merely philological matters, the Oxford and Century Dictionaries, and the concordances to Shakespeare of Mr. Bartlett, and to Milton of Bradshaw. The bulk of the linguistic notes is due to Messrs. Pickburn & Brereton; and Mr. Brereton has been especially helpful in comparing the text with that of the authentic editions.

SYDNEY, September 25th, 1899.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION, - - - - -	ix
WILLIAM BLAKE, - - - - -	1
To the Muses, - - - - -	7
To the Evening Star, - - - - -	7
✓ Song ("How sweet I roamed"), - - - - -	8
Song ("My silks and fine array"), - - - - -	9
• A Song of Singing (Introduction to "Songs of Innocence"), - - - - -	9
✓ The Tiger, - - - - -	10
Infant Joy, - - - - -	11
Cradle Song, - - - - -	11
Ah, Sunflower, - - - - -	12
Love's Secret, - - - - -	12
ROBERT BURNS, - - - - -	14
"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw," - - - - -	16
The Silver Tassie, - - - - -	16
• A Red, Red Rose, - - - - -	17
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, - - - - -	18
Lucy, - - - - -	23
To the Cuckoo, - - - - -	25
The Solitary Reaper, - - - - -	26
• Ode—"Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood," - - - - -	27
Sonnets, - - - - -	34

	PAGE
SIR WALTER SCOTT, - - - - -	37
Coronach, - - - - -	39
Time, - - - - -	40
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, - - - - -	41
Kubla Khan, - - - - -	50
• The Knight's Tomb, - - - - -	51
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, - - - - -	53
Rose Aylmer, - - - - -	55
On his Seventy-fifth Birthday, - - - - -	55
CHARLES LAMB, - - - - -	56
The Old Familiar Faces, - - - - -	57
THOMAS CAMPBELL, - - - - -	59
The Battle of the Baltic, - - - - -	59
EBENEZER ELLIOTT, - - - - -	62
Battle Song, - - - - -	62
ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, - - - - -	64
Hame, Hame, Hame, - - - - -	64
GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON, - - - - -	69
There be none of Beauty's Daughters, - - - - -	69
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, - - - - -	70
• Ode to the West Wind, - - - - -	77
• To Night, - - - - -	79
To — ("Music, when soft voices die"), - - - - -	80
Song ("Rarely, rarely comest thou"), - - - - -	80
A Lament ("O world, O life, O time"), - - - - -	82
Song ("A Widow Bird"), - - - - -	82
From Adonais, - - - - -	83
JOHN KEATS, - - - - -	88
Narcissus (from "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill"), - - - - -	95
Hymn to Pan (from "Endymion"), - - - - -	95
To a Nightingale, - - - - -	98
Voices of the Gods (from "Hyperion"), - - - - -	100

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
JOHN KEATS—Continued.	
<i>La belle Dame sans Mercy,</i> - - - - -	104
<i>The Ode to Maia,</i> - - - - -	105
Sonnets, - - - - -	106
EDGAR POE, - - - - -	108
<i>To One in Paradise,</i> - - - - -	115
<i>Ulalume,</i> - - - - -	116
<i>For Annie,</i> - - - - -	119
<i>The Haunted Palace,</i> - - - - -	122
<i>Annabel Lee,</i> - - - - -	124
<i>The City in the Sea,</i> - - - - -	125
MATTHEW ARNOLD, - - - - -	128
<i>In Utrumque Paratus,</i> - - - - -	132
<i>The Future,</i> - - - - -	133
<i>The Forsaken Merman,</i> - - - - -	136
<i>Requiescat,</i> - - - - -	141
<i>Isolation,</i> - - - - -	141
<i>Songs of Callicles (from "Empedocles on Etna"),</i> -	143
NOTES :—	
On William Blake, - - - - -	147
On Robert Burns, - - - - -	156
On William Wordsworth, - - - - -	157
On Walter Scott, - - - - -	164
On Samuel Taylor Coleridge, - - - - -	165
On Walter Savage Landor, - - - - -	168
On Charles Lamb, - - - - -	169
On Thomas Campbell, - - - - -	170
On Ebenezer Elliott, - - - - -	172
On Allan Cunningham, - - - - -	173
On Percy Bysshe Shelley, - - - - -	175
On John Keats, - - - - -	184
On Edgar Poe, - - - - -	199
On Matthew Arnold, - - - - -	204
INDEX TO NOTES, - - - - -	212

INTRODUCTION.

I. THEORETICAL.

IF the British race had never gained glory by any other feat, its name would still have gone down to the ages yet to come as that of the nation possessing the greatest body of high poetry, after the Greeks; and when I say *after* the Greeks, I would limit the preposition to its time-meaning, since it would be difficult to say which of the two literatures, Greek and English, is superior to the other in poetic value. And this is remarkable in the case of English poetic genius, that, even after the unique phenomenon of Shakespeare and the luxuriant Elizabethan period, after the solemn splendour of Milton—and these would have sufficed for the glory of a literature—these latter times were to exhibit a continuous blossoming of the imagination, in at least half-a-dozen poets of the first rank and how many others of high value.

It is to the men who revived poetry at the beginning of our century that this book would introduce you: before passing to chosen specimens of their work, I would present to you, first, a few reflections on the

nature of the poetic art; secondly, certain remarks on their relation to their direct predecessors in literature.

It is not here my intention to offer you any final all-embracing theory of poetry: apart from the inopportunity of such argument in a work of this kind, there is enough difficulty in the task to terrify him who would attempt it, and many a strong spirit has failed therein. Seeing that most often the philosopher or artist who has set out to expound the nature of art, and especially of poetry, has been happiest in isolated remarks, I would limit my ambition to the statement of a few general considerations on the most important points of our subject, considerations which are not necessarily novel, yet have been thought out consistently by the author of their present statement. To some amount of coherence they do therefore pretend; they must, however, be regarded as being merely the enveloping lines, as it were, of a figure not strictly defined.

The definitions of poetry are already many. From the artist's special point of view, that of Edgar Poe, *The rhythmical creation of Beauty*, is the most alluring. Of late definitions the most popular seems to be that which would reduce poetry, with all art, to the mere expression of emotion; poetry being distinguished from other art merely by its medium of speech, and from the ordinary expression of emotion in language by the rhythmical quality of its utterance. The statement of this theory is its sufficient refutation; to consider it more closely, however, will carry us over a part of our consideration of poetry.

The direct motive in poetry, as in all art, is emotion. It may be emotion arising from any occurrence in human

life, whether that occurrence belong to external existence, as the encounter with a person who becomes dear to the poet, or to the intimate life, as the devotion to an idea. The emotion, as expressed in poetry, must explain its accompanying or generating conditions, as a love-poem must contain some reference to the beloved: thus, then, in the higher poetry, other spiritual elements besides emotion are not excluded—the poet's ideas and conception of the universe, for instance—since ideas are interesting, perhaps, only as parts of man's passional life, as beliefs. But emotion must exist and be expressed, otherwise there is no poetry. Such is the necessary place of emotion in poetry, that of the motive, of the directing power. But the definition we are to consider would make it the sole subject-matter, its mere expression the whole art. Against which there are two fatal objections: the first, that out of the mere fact of emotion, general and unqualified, one can draw no necessary reason for the use of rhythmical language; seeing that, if our sole business be to express emotion, we can do so in all cases without employing rhythm, in many without employing articulate language at all, pain, for instance, being fully expressed in a cry; that it then becomes necessary to qualify the emotion as "poetical," thus returning to the original state of the question: the second, that we can cite many passages wherein emotion is uttered in rhythmical language, and wherein there is yet no poetry: it is then insufficient to call this art the expression of human emotion in rhythmical language. Thus, many a poet, under stress of emotion, in itself most noble, has produced verse rhythmical and technically faultless, in which yet there is no satisfaction

for the poetic spirit. Thus, Wordsworth (whom I choose because none has more sinned in this respect than he):

O for the coming of that glorious time
 When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
 And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
 While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
 An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
 Them who are born to serve her and obey.

(Quoted by Matthew Arnold, Preface to
Poems of Wordsworth, p. xx.)

We recognize that the poet was here inspired by most generous emotion and that he has undoubtedly expressed it: yet we cannot but confess that his words are merely so much prose, that there is no evident reason why he should have chosen the rhythmical language of verse.

The definition of Mr. Théodore Watts-Dunton is at least fuller: *Poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language.* The word *concrete* here is the word which the other definition lacked. But even it is vague, as indeed the whole definition is. We find here various qualities of Poetry—the essential ones, it is true—but merely juxtaposed: the definition in no way makes clear how or why they demand each other's presence. But this perhaps is what no definition can do. It will be more useful for us to follow the course we have already begun. We found that the definition which we first took into consideration failed in that it did not qualify the word *emotion*. Let us ask: What is required to fit emotion for poetic expression? What, for instance, was it that Wordsworth lacked when writing the passage quoted? What is it that is necessary to convert

an impulse, already admirable in itself, into true poetical inspiration? The answer is, Imagination. A transformation of force is necessary, in the spiritual world, before an enthusiasm, moral or sensuous, can produce poetry; just as, in the material world, transformation of force must take place before heat can result from motion. Moral enthusiasm, love, anger, all belong to one kind of emotion, the extra-poetical: recast and altered by the imagination, they become poetry.

Let us then say that poetry is the expression of imagination in language, acknowledging that this is not a definition, but a text for explanation.

In the first place, seeing that the word imagination is used to denote the invention of things not existing in experience, and the creation of characters—which is part of the novelist's task—we do not advance much by its bare use. Let us, however, distinguish between imagination, pure and simple, and the invention of incident, either in verse or prose, invention properly so called, and the creation of character, a dramatic gift and quite unessential to poetry.

Considering now imagination, we shall find its simplest function, technically envisaged, to consist in the putting of thought and emotion into concrete *images*,¹

¹ The definition is empirical. Imagination has nothing to do with the fictions idea, emotion, sensation: it deals directly with the living spiritual unity or "mood" (p. xxii.), to which it gives the only possible expression. When you can extract from the expressed poem any residue of "idea" or the like, you may be sure either that you have not properly read the poem (which is most probable), or that the poem contains unpoetic elements. Of course you will find such residue carefully extracted for you in the notes to this book: but here all is empirical.

which images must be images of beauty, giving pleasure to a certain sense, the sense of beauty. There is no possible definition of beauty in terms of anything other than itself: one can only ask, Does this or this affect me in a certain way? Just so there is no other definition of light than that which enables the eye to see, and the seeing eye is final arbiter. We shall, at least, find out a little more concerning the nature of Beauty in the course of our inquiry.

Imagination is best explained by citing instances. Take Wordsworth when his moral enthusiasm has become poetical:

Stern Lawgiver! yet dost thou wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong. (*Ode to Duty.*)

This is quite different from the prosiness of the passage above quoted. The idea of Duty is not here an abstract conception, it has found vivid expression in concrete imagery. Flowers laughing in their beds are a beautiful living symbol of the joy which the poet conceives as attending on obedience to law; the ordered courses of the stars are no longer an object of dull measurement, but part of a living whole informed with an idea. Thought, emotion, and sense are here inseparably united, and their union is beauty.

It must not be thought that, because the poet should

deal with concretes instead of with abstracts, the mere ingenious handling of detail, however beautiful it may be in itself, is imagination.¹ Imagination deals with beauty as significance, the union of sense and spirit. It is a lower faculty, Fancy, which manipulates beautiful detail in an ingenious and charming fashion. (I need not allude to mere description, which is not literature at all, but journalism.) Thus, in a song of Shakespeare's, the opening lines

Full fathom five thy father lies :
Of his bones is coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :

are merely fanciful ; whereas the following :

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange ;

just because they are more abstract and more mysterious than the others, while yet keeping close to the concrete fact, are purely imaginative. They express the inner idea of all the beautiful fact explained in the first three lines.

Returning now to the statement that imagination is a unity of the spirit in beauty, I would from that point lead the student to a nearer apprehension of its nature, by way of a discussion of certain aspects of poetic form. The student will observe that a large part of the texture of every poem consists of what are technically termed similes and metaphors—comparisons, that is, between

¹ Mr. Watts-Dunton insists so strongly on the concreteness of poetry that he makes the highest, or "absolute," poetic vision to consist in seeing the details of another person's soul.

spiritual and material fact. Thus the passage of Wordsworth above quoted assumes many such comparisons, a general belief in kinship between the voice of conscience and natural law. Compare the little *Song* by Shelley, *Music when soft voices die*; or Wordsworth's lines on the "immortal sea" in his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. All poetry is built up on such simple comparisons, however much the comparison may be subtilized in expression. Each true poem gathers the images which are akin to the emotion prompting it. But this implies, does it not, the belief in a universal kinship of all beauty, of all beautiful natural and material objects with the pure impulses of the spirit? It is impossible for the poet to celebrate any one thing singly, without reference to its kin. Poetry is the evidence of the adequacy of the human soul to all that is beautiful: in it there is an exchange between the two, the soul receiving a body of beauty, and conferring on the material world true significance.

This I hold to be the fundamental imaginative act, and I perceive implied in it the creation of a perfect life. Were the spirit in each of us thoroughly adequate to all beauty, the strife between soul and sense, between man and nature, would be abolished—the paradisaical state would be now a reality. The tendency of all true poetry is to free from the manifold small disturbances of life the large, rhythmical states or "moods" of the soul—the abiding figures whose union is the type, the ideal or perfect human figure, which it is not given to any one man to be: poetry is inspired by what Shelley calls the "life of life." Since we do not live such a life we create it in art, and poetry becomes our "complementary

life." It can now be understood why beauty is the object of poetry, since such perfect life is not a thing to be proven by argument, nor to be inculcated by moral precept, but to be felt spiritually as a divine pleasure. Perfection is always Beauty. Further, to recur to a technical question, we perceive the necessity of the rhythmical form of verse, since what is really expressed in poetry, the kinship of all beauty, is a system of harmonies and rhythms, the relations between all elements of beauty. And the directing emotion of a poem, in obedience to which these elements unite, is always expressed more by the music of the verse than by the logic of the words.

An instinctive feeling of this mysterious correspondence of things guided those anonymous poets, the creators of the ancient myths. Their personages, fragmentary expressions of the perfect human type implied in all poetic creation, are always human interpretations of natural fact, embodiments in outer beauty of human life, of those ideal "moods" which alone are vast, clear, and simple enough to be adequate to natural aspects. Not merely because the sun sets, but because the splendours of the sunset evoke vast feelings of dying magnificence, fading glory, and passion come to its term, did the setting sun become the hero going to his great doom after a life of kindly might. Not merely because the dawn fades in the brilliancy of morn, but because the dawn-light suggests shy tenderness, did the dawn become the trusting maiden abandoned by the hero called to glorious life. The student may consult the introduction and notes to the poems selected from Keats to see how a great poet may reinforce his own natural

gift by feeling back along the myths towards that instinctive insight into the idea which man and nature go to make up. And our belief in this fundamental poetic reality, this intimate and complete cohesion of all that is beautiful, is strengthened when we see how the old simple myths have, under the treatment of great poets, been found yet capable of expressing the deepest and highest thought and emotion to which humanity has in later times arrived. Witness the old fairy-tale of Eros and Psyche, of the princess wedded to a spouse whose form she does not know, whether divine or monstrous, whom to look upon is to lose, found adequate, while yet remaining unchanged and ever fresh, to adumbrate all the secret experiences of the soul in the mysteries of love, human or divine.

Another aspect of imagination then is that, by its union and intension of all mental forces, by its pre-occupation with the great "moods," it returns to, or tends towards, the well-springs and sources of life, where all life is lovely and free from strife or discord, which is ugliness. But just because no man may be complete or perfect, and since none therefore may become in life or poetry a final symbol of ideal humanity, we must seek the expression of that life, not in any one poem nor in any one poet's work, but in "that great Poem," as Shelley called it, "which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world"—and are still building up, since the work can only be finished with humanity. The man who should write that Poem, otherwise than in the hints of scattered imperfect poems (imperfect in the light of the poetic idea), would cease to be man, being a

paradox, an artificially natural creature—since poetry is an artifice whereby to gain glimpses of a naturalness denied us in life—a divine monster. But in this Poem, as it is being created, even the work of the meanest has its place: if once he has had a moment of unalloyed simplicity and singleness of soul, of communion with a “mood,” one true lyric emotion, he has caught a ray of that light which none can see in its entirety. Since, then, we must accept our humanity, since we cannot always, or even often, live the perfect life, since there is in our existence a great residue of imperfect days, it follows that our poetry has largely Beauty not as its direct subject, but as its justifying aim. We use poetry to express not the perfect Beauty, but our want of it, our aspiration towards it. Setting it far off in some imagined empyrean, the poet may even by a paradox, treat with fierce irony of life devoid of all shadow of it or desire for it. More often his theme will be the tragedy of such beauty as this world affords, or the fate that dogs the soul intoxicated with perfection.

I have not defined poetry: I disavowed, at the outset, all intention to do so. I have wandered, rather than pursued any fixed course, round the boundaries of our subject. Yet I trust that the wanderings have been over firm ground, and not too devious. If you should ask me, after all, to define poetry, I should say that it is a beautiful mystery, and perhaps the definition would be found not incomplete.

II. HISTORICAL.

English poetry, at the period which we are about to study—by specimens, it is true—was largely romantic, as before at its other great time of blossoming, the Elizabethan period.

The history of nearly all modern literature is that of a conflict between what are known as the classical and romantic ideals. The first name is used to designate a method of art which rules the literatures of Greece and Rome, the second to denote the characteristics of mediæval literature. The distinction is by no means an exhaustive one: nor are we to suppose that the works of antiquity are purely classical—Euripides and Virgil are largely romantic—or that modern romantic poetry is altogether devoid of the classical virtues, for the best tragedies of Shakespeare, for all their profusion of incident, are as rigorously arranged in accordance with a controlling idea as any Greek drama.

Classic art is the product of a mind believing in a settled world of reality, order, and law, a world in which one habitually lives, feeling at home there. This spirit expresses itself in literature by a certain air of peace, rest, composure: and from it a noble style is most easily born. Milton is, in English poetry, the great representative thereof. The technical qualities of classic art are a clearness of style and, particularly, a simplicity of arrangement. The parts are subordinated to the whole in order that the idea may become evident. Beauty of incident and detail is often sacrificed, if it should even seem to threaten

the absolute plainness of the idea. The classic artist is distinguished from the romantic, not by the possession of ideas, but by the quality he chooses to insist upon of those ideas. He will have no idea that cannot be seen, as it were, in clear everyday light, without mystery or penumbra. No one disputes his right to have them so. But he would be wrong if he argued that such ideas alone answer to reality. All ideas, and more particularly clear ideas, are a creation of the intellect. What we possess in reality is not such concepts, ideas, or thoughts, but moods or states of mind, which exist as united, and are of varying degrees of clearness, from the most mysterious to the most everyday. The intellect is an instrument for analyzing and decomposing them. Thus we disintegrate them into idea, emotion, and sensation. But the imagination should rather deal with the unity, the living reality. The fictive processes of science exist merely to help the imagination towards better apprehension of this unity. Of course, the classic poet does not put us off with pure idea, or he would be no poet. But he accentuates one aspect of the imaginative reality, subordinating and restraining his emotion.

This is a great and noble method of art, as much in accordance with human nature as any other. But it is not the whole method, and is consequently capable of faults. Such are, in the *classicists* (as distinguished from the true classics) an insipidity, arising from the demand that everything should be presented under an aspect of *immediateness* and clarity, when, perhaps, the nature of certain things is that they cannot, without losing their true character, be made

immediate: and an artificiality, since the classic method tends to impose upon the inspiration a law from without, a ready-made convention, instead of a law growing directly out of it. All art is in some degree conventional, but the convention should be found in the matter of art itself.

Now the romantic artist is distinguished from the classical by his sense of mystery and wonder. His art often begins in naive curiosity, the desire to explore strange outlying realms—real or legendary—to escape from the world of fixed law, which often wearies him. He therefore naturally accepts the reality of spiritual states which can only be suggested or adumbrated. All means of expression and suggestion are welcome to him. An often used comparison, drawn from the graphic arts, illustrates this: the romantic is like a colourist in painting, using that means of expression which is most emotional—and, let us add, most natural—whereas the classic is more of a draughtsman, the line being an intellectual means of expression and as much a fiction as the clear concept, since nature does not bound or separate objects by lines—unless it be by Euclidean lines of no breadth. The possession of the romantic inspiration by no means prevents the acquisition of the classic merit of arrangement: Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* and *La belle dame sans mercy*, both poems of pure romance, are as rigorously ordered as any classicist exercise. Indeed, all good poetry of this century unites both kinds of qualities. The faults of the romantic spirit are: that in its quest for beauty with an element of strangeness in it, it often is satisfied with the merely strange and sometimes with the purely

horrible, where the classic might miss beauty by overmuch attention to the formal concept; also, that its childish curiosity and delight in strange beauty causes it often to forget the significance of beauty, the idea. Thus, to recur again to the myths, a classic may miss the signification of a myth, but not through want of having sought for it: whereas the puerile mediaeval imagination often took the creatures of mythology as given, as existing *per se* in an amusing world of fancy, and, half believing in them, played with them, often distorting them into grotesques. This tendency to be absorbed in incident and detail, without reference to the necessary idea, is a besetting sin of the romantic spirit, and sometimes becomes mere brainlessness. From neglect of the intellectual element in art comes again a lack of control, of composure, and consequently of style; emotion, being unrestrained by thought, runs loose into trouble, restlessness, and vulgar rant.

Another point of difference between the two schools, and one of significance for this period of English verse, is their treatment of nature. The classic poet generally relegates nature to the background: the romantic makes of it an integral and intimate part of his mood; the earlier part of this introduction will give the student what I conceive to be the right view of this subject. The true art, embracing man and nature, is the symbolic, which both classic and romantic art become, at their best. By it the mood, in its essence, is always presented (or suggested) completely, as a unity, and its beauty is constituted by all those correspondences between nature and spiritual life, out of which the myths arise. The difference between the romantic and classical treatment

of nature is so marked that by this test alone we can distinguish the romantic passages in Greek or Latin poetry.

In the Elizabethan age, to which Blake and Keats during the period which we are about to study, turned, English poetry was romantic, exaggeratedly so. Its character is largely lyrical, even when dramatic: thus the personages of Shakespeare and of many of his contemporaries not merely express themselves in dramatic verse, but in moments of crisis become, on their own account, poets, and vent their feelings lyrically. This disrespect for literary form—peculiarly English, as far as the drama is concerned—was allied with a tendency to exaggerate individual oddities¹ (*humours*, as they were called) and a tendency towards preciousness and conceits, an affectation of ingenuity which everywhere accompanies the youth of romantic literature. Elizabethan literature itself, threatened to be choked by the conceit and the romantic poetry written after Shakespeare's death, finally died of its own ingenuity. The "conceit" arises from this, that a poet is not content to limit his image to the natural relations constituting it, but, dwelling on it with absurd affection and drawing it out with perverse cleverness, loses himself in a labyrinth of remote analogies, fantastically strange and sometimes absolutely silly. The extreme example, perhaps, of the "conceit" in English verse is the often beautiful poetry of Richard Crashaw (1615-1652), and the classic instance is his ode on

¹The classic tendency being to turn the moods into abstract types of character, psychological sculptures: whereas they are really intellectual raptures.

the *Weeping of the Magdalen*, wherein the eyes of Magdalen become "two walking baths," "portable and compendious oceans," and her tears, being drawn off in bottles by the angels, are "a brisk cherub's breakfast."

Against such ingenuity run mad a reaction followed. What is known as the classical school of English literature began in the middle of the seventeenth and extended down to the later decades of the eighteenth century. Its best poet is Dryden, its best-known glory Pope. But it should rather be called the classicist school. The true classical master in English verse is Milton, and he reacted against none, being himself, as Shakespeare, whom he loved, was. The so-called "classical" school was not classical, because imagination was wanting in its verse. The verse of this period is an elegant presentation of the ideas of the market-place and the court, with refined and witty comment thereon: or it satirizes mere circumstance of social life. A striking characteristic is that writers of this time entitled their works, *Poems on several occasions*: there being no "occasion" for writing true poetry except the poetic genius and inspiration of the writer. Another is the amount of literary criticism now done in verse: Pope, as, just before him, Boileau in France, imitated with his *Essays and Epistles* that least poetic among well-known, and even among some less-known, Latin poets, Horace. Since common-sense—they called it "wit"—was the most-prized quality of these "classical" poets, their style was formal, ruled by laws from without. They even renounced all the rich possibilities of English rhythm for the monotonous measure of the rhymed heroic

line ambling along by couplets. The worst fault of this school was that, resolving after all to be poetic, it invented that misbegotten jargon known as "poetic diction." The seventeenth-century conceit was bad enough, but then the seventeenth-century poet had not bound himself down to the use of one everlasting conceit. He could be natural, imaginative, fantastic, affected, precious, and silly by turns. Now to call a horse "an impatient courser," a cold bath "a gelid cistern," a caterpillar "the crawling scourge that smites the leafy plain," is the operation of a mind more prosaic than that which begets conceits. And to confine oneself for ever to the use of such "elegant" periphrasis, and never even by any chance to call a spade a spade, is to end in a dull silliness from which the older maker of conceits was preserved by his own ingenuity. This end was an honour reserved to the later classicists of the eighteenth century. And if such language as theirs be not "conceit" in a worse sense, mechanical, joyless, unimaginative, then the word should not be attached to the seventeenth century extravagance.

This indolence of style was the effect of poverty of imagination and the cause of further impoverishment of imagination, which in turn reacted on style. Certain it is that when Blake sounded his "trumpet-note before dawn," the poem *To the Muses*, English poetry was in a state of extravagant impoverishment. Blake's lucky ignorance of most "classical" poetry and his early acquaintance with the Elizabethans made of him the precursor of a poetic age, second to the Elizabethan only in that it possesses no Shakespeare,

superior to it in number of individual geniuses. Burns, in Scotland, re-awakened the lyrical spirit as Blake had aroused it in England. Then came Coleridge and Wordsworth, the latter waging inexorable war on the "poetic diction."¹ These men had had their earlier precursors, Gray and Collins, in the very middle of the eighteenth century: but their work was too small in bulk to come with large impact on the inert age. The real change in English verse dates from the two last decades of the last century.

It must not be supposed that all the poetry written during the period under survey was romantic. There is no incompatibility between the excellences of classical and those of romantic art. It is also peculiar to the nineteenth century, the heir of all the ages, that classical and romantic style should exist side by side, that both should unite to form the style of a single poet. Lyricism, the lonely and personal note, the worship of beauty—these things are not necessarily romantic. It was an accident of English literary history that the so-called "classical" school should pass over them, choosing rather good sense, "social" and "clear" style, satire. The fact that they were explorers and discoverers aroused in the writers before us a romantic enthusiasm, strengthened when they found themselves akin to the great romantics of Elizabethan times. That they re-discovered nature, forgotten during the "polite" and urban days of literature, was another potent factor therein.

Coleridge and Scott are, of all these men, the most thoroughly romantic. They resemble particularly the

¹ The stock periphrasis, namely.

contemporary German romantics or, in France, Chateaubriand, in their cult of the legendary past. Byron was the turbulent romantic: the generation that arose in France, within five years of his death, inherited his attitudinizing habit of revolt. Shelley was a romantic with a tincture of classic influence.

The two men whose life and activity cover this whole period were thoroughly classic in their art. I mean Wordsworth and Landor, both of whom lived to the publication of Arnold's poetry, the term of Landor's existence including even the period of all Arnold's good work, though Wordsworth's good work was done between the years 1798 and 1818, and Landor's work in verse was small in value compared to that of others. Of these two, Landor was classic by training, Wordsworth by some necessity of his own nature, though his attitude towards outer nature is thoroughly romantic. But the bare simplicity of his mind, his preference of everyday life to legend, made for a classic style.

There remains Keats, whom I hold to have been the best endowed of all, the most interesting phenomenon of his time in poetry. Beginning as a romantic, without any other than English models before him, he soon made his own the excellences of classic, without yielding any of the powers of romantic, poetry. He died while on the way towards a great impersonal expression of Beauty, a magnificent symbolic art. He is not merely the great poet of the *Odes* and *Sonnets*, of *La belle dame sans mercy* and *Hyperion*, but more—the greatest of all “the inheritors of unfulfilled renown.”

INDEX.

[The numbers refer to the pages in the notes on which the word indexed appears.]

A

A', 156.
Achilles, 208.
Adamantine, 171.
Adonais, 176.
Air, 153, 191.
Airts, 156.
Aisle, 206.
Alone, 205.
Alternate, 164.
Alternating, 204.
Annabel Lee, 203.
Annie, 201.
Apples, 188.
Are, 182.
Aspire, 155.
Astarte, 200.
A-swooning, 188.
Attila, 172.
Axe, 153.

B

Babylon, 203.
Bacchus, 190.
Baiae, 197.
Baiae's bay, 175.
Bale, 185.
Balm, 157.
Band, 182.
Bard, 184.
Bards, 147, 197.

Battle, 170, 172.
Beaker, 190.
Beams, 182.
Beauty, 195.
Beck, 211.
Beechen, 189.
Beguile, 211.
Being, 160.
Benediction, 160.
Berwick-law, 156.
Billow, 210.
Birthday, 168.
Blinks, 174.
Blows, 162.
Blythe, 174.
Bonie, 156.
Boom, 171.
Boon, 162.
Boreal, 200.
Bosom, 163.
Bourne, 189.
Bowers, 203.
Branch-charmed, 193.
Brand, 170, 181.
Breath, 183.
Broil, 195.
Bulwarks, 170.

C

Cabin'd, 206.
Callicles, 207, 209, 210.

Carle, 164.
 Carousing, 169.
 Ceasing, 193.
 Centaurs, 208.
 Chambers, 147.
 Chaos, 195.
 Charnel, 177.
 Chatterton, 178.
 Cheer, 154.
 Child, 153, 160.
 Children, 160.
 Cilician, 210.
 Circle, 167.
 Circumstance, 195.
 City, 203.
 Clearness, 184.
 Clouds, 183.
 Clown, 192.
 Clustered, 190
 Coil, 175.
 Collared, 172.
 Comes, 193.
 Compact, 195.
 Completions, 187.
 Condoles, 171.
 Cons, 159.
 Cool, 184.
 Corn, 192.
 Coronach, 164.
 Coronal, 159.
 Correi, 164.
 Cortez, 197.
 Count, 204.
 Cronies, 169.
 Crown, 170.
 Crystalline, 175.
 Cumber, 164.
 Curse, 182.

D

Dame, 196.
 Dank, 186.
 Dare, 154.
 Darien, 197.
 Darkling, 191.
 Deck, 153.
 Deep, 160.

Demesne, 197.
 Dian, 200.
 Dispossessor, 196.
 Diurnal, 157.
 Do, 147.
 Dove, 157.
 Down, 206.
 Dread, 154.
 Dream, 177.
 Dross, 178.
 Dryad, 189.
 Dryope, 188.
 Dulcimer, 167.
 Dun, 148.

E

Eagle, 211.
 East, 159.
 Eclipse, 171.
 Eglantine, 191.
 Elfin, 196.
 Embalmed, 191.
 Enceladus, 196.
 Engendering, 195.
 Enmossed, 187.
 Envisage, 195.
 Erst, 210.
 Evening, 163.
 Ever, 167.

F

Fain, 173.
 Familiar, 169.
 Famine, 172.
 Far-foamed, 194.
 Fays, 191.
 Fealty, 197.
 Feud, 198.
 First-endeavouring, 194.
 Fail, 167.
 Flame, 182.
 Fleeter, 171.
 Flickers, 201.
 Flora, 189.
 Font, 164.
 Foray, 164.
 Forest, 190.

Forester, 187.
 Forests, 154.
 Forlorn, 184.
 Freight, 160.
 Fret, 161, 190.
 Fretted, 159.
 Frieze, 203.
 Future, 205.

G

Gang, 156.
 Ghastly, 155.
 Ghouls, 200.
 Gigantically, 203.
 Girted, 187.
 Given, 203.
 Gore, 210.
 Grove, 194.

H

Hamadryads, 186.
 Hame, 173.
 Havoc, 171.
 Hearken, 186.
 Hectic, 175.
 Height, 160.
 Helpless, 210.
 Hemlock, 189.
 Heroes, 208.
 Hie, 206.
 Hippocrene, 190.
 Hoary, 164.
 Homer, 197.
 Hungry, 192.
 Hyperion, 192.

I

Ida, 147.
 Illyrian, 210.
 Immortality, 158.
 Incantation, 176.
 Incense, 191.
 Indifference, 160.
 Influence, 148.
 Inheritors, 178.
 Insensate, 157.
 Islands, 197.

Ismenus, 210.
 Isolation, 206.

J

Jets, 210.
 Jubilee, 159.

K

Ken, 197.
 Kind, 159.
 Kindles, 178.
 Kubla Khan, 165.

L

Lament, 176.
 Language, 199.
 Laps, 206.
 Leaf, 175.
 Leas, 187.
 Legended, 201.
 Leith, 156.
 Lethæan, 201.
 Lethe-wards, 189.
 Leviathans, 170.
 Long mused, 204.
 Lucan, 180.
 Lucy, 157.
 Lullaby, 201.
 Luxury, 198.

M

Maenad, 175.
 Maia, 196.
 Mail, 206.
 Main, 188.
 Manna, 196.
 Marbles, 197.
 Marges, 207.
 Mary, 156.
 Mass, 178.
 Maw, 188.
 Mead, 209.
 Meandering, 167.
 Melodious, 189.
 Merman, 205.
 Midnight, 191.
 Minds, 156.
 Ministrant, 188.

Mirk, 174.
 Momently, 166.
 Moses, 205.
 Mount Abora, 167.
 Mount Lycean, 189.
 Muses, 147.
 Myrtles, 201.

N

Naiads, 188.
 Napthaline, 201.
 Narcissus, 184.
 Nature, 160.
 Night, 168, 176.
 Nightingale, 189.

O

Obscure, 205.
 Oceanus, 194.
 Olympian, 211.
 One, 163, 182.
 Only, 161.
 Oozy, 194.
 Opiate, 176, 189.

P

Paeon, 189.
 Pains, 160.
 Palace, 202.
 Palsy, 190.
 Pan, 185.
 Paradise, 199.
 Paratus, 204.
 Passion, 187.
 Pavilioning, 181.
 Peers, 188.
 Pelion, 208.
 Pelt, 188.
 Pent-up, 187.
 Perforce, 195.
 Perilous, 192.
 Persons, 159.
 Phœbus, 152.
 Pigmy, 159.
 Pined, 155.
 Pipy, 186.
 Pleasure, 211.

Pomp, 193.
 Poppied, 187.
 Porphyrogene, 202.
 Pride, 152.
 Prince, 152.
 Procession, 204.
 Proteus, 162.
 Provençal, 189.
 Psyche, 199.
 Pumice, 175.
 Pyramid, 181.

Q

Quicken, 176.

R

Race, 168.
 Rapt, 210.
 Rarely, 176.
 Reaper, 157.
 Rebekah, 205.
 Red-litten, 203.
 Reeds, 186.
 Region, 147.
 Remount, 204.
 Requiem, 191.
 Requiescat, 206.
 Rhyme, 191.
 Rich, 191.
 Riou, 171.
 Rome, 181.
 Roof, 186.
 Rose Aylmer, 168.
 Rose, 156, 174.
 Roses, 201.
 Routing, 188.
 Row, 156.
 Ruth, 192.

S

Sallies, 159.
 Satiat, 181.
 Saturn, 194.
 Scoriac, 200.
 Scythian, 172.
 Searest, 164.
 Seats, 205.

Senators, 193.
 Senescent, 200.
 Serene, 197.
 Service, 156.
 Shadows, 182, 203.
 Shaw, 156.
 Shone, 170.
 Shout, 157, 189.
 Show, 195.
 Shrouded, 155.
 Sibyllic, 201.
 Sicilian, 197.
 Sidney, 179.
 Sigh, 171.
 Silence, 148.
 Silks, 153.
 Sing, 184.
 Sinuous, 166.
 Sister, 175.
 Skies, 183.
 Sleep, 162.
 Slumber, 157.
 Song, 153.
 Sophist, 194.
 Sovran, 211.
 Spasm, 205.
 Sphinx, 210.
 Squatted, 188.
 Stage, 159.
 Star, 148.
 State, 157.
 Sternly, 172.
 Still, 196.
 Stress, 178.
 Strings, 148.
 Successions, 178.
 Sun, 159.
 Sunflower, 154.
 Sustains, 178.
 Sweet, 152.
 Sympathy, 161.
 Symphony, 167.

T

Tabor, 159.
 Tantalised, 201.
 Tassie, 156.

Tawdry, 172.
 Tendril, 184.
 Throe, 205.
 Throne, 181.
 Thunderer, 211.
 Tiger, 154.
 Time, 164.
 Titanic, 199.
 Torse, 172.
 Transfuse, 182.
 Tree, 159.
 Trembling, 187.
 Triton, 162.
 Truth, 195.
 Turtles, 187.
 Typho, 210.

U

Ulalume, 199.
 Unapparent, 178.
 Unhappy, 210.
 Unplumb'd, 207.
 Unsubstantial, 157.
 Unwilling, 198.
 Uplift, 189.
 Upward, 188.
 Urn, 177.

V

Van, 171.
 Vasty, 206.
 Vesper, 181.
 Viewless, 190.
 Virginal, 210.

W

Wails, 164.
 Waking, 204.
 Wane, 164.
 Wars, 208.
 Waste, 162.
 Wax, 164.
 Way, 204.
 Weather, 188.
 Web, 182.
 Weep, 210.
 West, 203.

Westminster, 162.
Widow, 176.
Wind, 162, 175.
Winds, 178.
Winking, 190.
Wisdom, 209.
Woman, 166.
World, 162.
Wots, 205.
Wouldst, 176.
Wretch, 181.

Y

Yere, 174.
Yet, 161.
Yew, 153, 206.
Yore, 159.

Z

Zenith, 175.
Zephyrus, 185.
Zone, 196.

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