THE LANGUAGE of Poetry;
A STUDY OF ENGLISH POETIC DICTION

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CHAPTER I. - ELEMENTARY NOTIONS.

Speaking of the rather coarse scene in Ben Jonson's Poetaster (Act V. Sc. 1) in which the affected poet is made to disgorge - literally - a great many flashy neologisms or learned accretions, Coleridge says -

"It would be an interesting essay, or rather series of essays in a periodical work, were all the attempts to ridicule new phrases brought together, the proportion observed of words ridiculed which have been adopted and are now common, such as strenuous, conscious, etc. and a trial made how far any grounds can be detected so that one might determine beforehand whether a word was invented under conditions of assimilability to our language or not. This much is certain, that the ridiculers were as often wrong as right, and Shakespeare himself could not prevent the naturalisation of accommodation, remuneration, etc; or Swift the gross abuse of the word idea."

He /

He might have added nor Addison or Swift words dealing with the military art lately imported from France.

In the too pungent scene referred to we have this wisp of dialogue -

Orianius (who is Marston) "-0 - retrograde - reciprocal - incus—
bus. O - glibbery - lubrical, - defunct - O! Magnificat-
spurious, - motteties - chilblain'd - clumsy. O -
balmv froth — — - puffie - inflate - tumidous-
ventosity - O - oblatrant - furibund - fatuate - strenuous-
pronumped - snarling gusts - quaking custard - obtusefact to!

It is not proposed here to write that essay or series of essays, but to ask the question suggested by the quotation, what are the historical limits of the poetical vocabulary from the Renaissance to our own day, and how has that vocabulary been constituted at various times? Critics have never at any time been blind to the aesthetic colouring of words, but so far as we are aware, no one has attempted to give, except in the briefest outline, an account of the changing phases of taste in this matter. The cognate matter of prosody has been voluminously treated in the historical manner, but it seems to have been assumed that the same could not be done satisfactorily for the language of poetry. The constituent and prevailing elements of language seemed to be so much less sharply defined than prosodic elements: One could not reduce them to notation. We could only see that at various times

we say nothing here of Ben Jonson's own language, though every student knows it abounds in curious words. See Chap. III. But we must note that Ben's innovations are for dramatic purpose. His foreign (chiefly Italian) words are used only once or twice and are not of the merely stupid kind as are those quoted, see
different tendencies prevailed, certain word formations, certain word groupings or artifices were popular. A new age dis-owned the favourite phraseological methods of its predecessors and invented new methods, or took a new stratum of words for its favourites. It is gradually borne in on us that there are different strata of words - that words lie layer on layer from the most rudimentary onomatopoeic formations to the most grandiose, and that the poet can run up and down as great a scale of variation, in the language he employs as the verse-master in his rhythms. It is noticed further that a comparatively small band of curious or novel words used artfully and insistently can move the whole mass of the poet's ordinary language, just as a few companies of skilled Janissaries can police a population. In this way the poets called Pre-Raphaelite effected a revolution in taste by the effective use - among other means of course - of a sprinkling of very common and very curious words, words of vertu and words of common use employed with a slightly uncommon emphasis.

Then it is discovered or re-discovered that the various colouring effected by mere words is of less importance than that obtained by collocation of words and phrases, that position and order are all-important. The student is loth to make the discovery that words by themselves, however gaudy or forceful, effect little in comparison with syntactic arrangement, that the hidden apparatus of speech, grammar and syntax,
is instrument of most various stops. An archaism like Swinburne in his cunning attempt to revive a past stage of speech in its grammar and syntax and word formation, makes this sun-clear. If the student has not already discovered it in his study of Shakespeare's speech, the study of Swinburne will force him to realise that mere words are of far less account than idiom and grammar and syntax, and that it may be a prerequisite of success for the poet in an age of grammatical denudation to wrench back the language to a previous state of richness. These are elementary considerations, but the teacher knows how difficult it is to make them effectively understood. A true understanding of the language in its aesthetic no less than its philological implications is necessary to the full enjoyment of our literature.

Apart from the actual forms and accepted meanings of words - and the poet can play more tricks with the meanings of words, can effect more enlargement of them and impose them more successfully on his successors, than he can vary their forms - and apart from the variations of idiom, grammar and syntax, there is a whole world of variation to be got from the poet's imposing economy or the reverse on his style. This belongs to Style in the large sense, rather than to the narrower limits of our inquiry. But we cannot altogether neglect it. The student of Tennyson, for example, soon comes to think of him as a master of epithet; in his early poetry he finds him over-indulging
the luxury of the adjective in those luscious scenes his youthful imagination, nurtured partly on Keats, delighted in. Then a work like *Dora* appears. The reader—we assume in this chapter the rather youthful but promising reader—is aware of a painful drop in style. If he is young he may resent such pitiful barenness, he may imagine that small art is necessary for such cold literality, but then perhaps he hears Wordsworth, never a generous critic, saying that in all his life he has vainly attempted to write in this pastoral manner. He goes back over it with more observing eye, and makes the alarming discovery that the poet of exquisite epithet, this Lord of Language, has not used a single epithet in this admired poem of one hundred and seventy lines. It is the only poem of any length in the language of which this can be said. Our student will notice perhaps that the companion Idyll *The Gardener's Daughter* is of a very different complexion. It is in the full-blown Tennysonian manner, rather too artful indeed,—

"The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine
And all about the large lime feathers blow,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings."

Then the Maiden herself—

"Those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ash-buds in the front of March."

With /

There is the adjective patient (wife) and hard (words) but the latter is really part of a proverbial expression "to give hard words."
With good artifice is the gardener's daughter tricked out, but Dora is merely "well to look at"! Seriously interested in the technical question, our reader now flies to Wordsworth's similar efforts - he is aware by this time that Tennyson is Wordsworth's disciple in this kind - to let us say Michael. He finds that while the older poet has the same bareness and the same literalness in the use of words, the same avoidance of imagery, he does employ a few epithets but those of no distinction.

"His days had not been passed in singleness,
His helpmate was a comely matron, old -
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life
Whose heart was in her house; two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work."

This repellent bareness is not the mere result of abstinence from epithet. Wordsworth is here working as close to his theories of poetic diction as he dare do and we are rather amused to find by his despairing tribute to Dora that he has not proceeded far enough in the process of denudation.

Tennyson has gone further with his absolute abstinence from epithet and imagery. But the understanding reader knows that he has preserved the poetical character of the work by other means, chiefly metrical, by his excellent blank verse, though...
even here we must expect no great indulgence of the senses. The observing student notices that Wordsworth works so near his theories that passages of Michael may be read as sheer prose—

"Therefore although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts,
And, with yet fonder feeling for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone."

If this had occurred in a prose passage, a critic in search of metrical passages imbedded in prose, would probably have passed it by. There is even in this poem an absence of those childish little inversions from which Wordsworth often expects, despite his theory, to obtain poetical feeling. We pass by also Wordsworth's numerous prosaic phrases, and his prosy sermonising, preferring to linger on those passages of genuine feeling which impressed Matthew Arnold. Having got so far, our hypothetical student, caught by Wordsworth's insistence on his poem being a pastoral, will recall other and widely different pastorals from Spenser to Arnold and later. He will note in passing that the latter singles out for highest praise the "bareness as of the mountain top" of characteristic passages in Michael and kindred poems, a bareness which to the neophyte looks rather like the bareness of a blank wall, or a slate roof. Yet here is Arnold extolling that arid line—

"And never lifted up a single stone."

Such a line apart from its context is nothing. It occurs therefore to the student that if Arnold is right, if this is a great though /
though bare line, there are two kinds of richness and beauty in poetry, the undoubted and external richness and beauty of a line by Keats.

"Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" and an undoubted interior richness and impressiveness which depends on the context and on the mood of the poem. This opens up a large question. We will only suggest here that the poetry of abstinence having an undoubted charm for certain temperaments, rejecting the immediate appeal made by alluring word or rhythm, demands for the purposes of criticism a larger unit. You cannot criticise it by lines, in the case of Michael, not even by blocks of lines, but by the total impression of the poem. The student however will have to settle it with his own artistic conscience whether poetry is an art which can afford to throw away so much of its time-honoured means of appeal, and depend so much on the interior pathos of a situation. Drama certainly can, and he will be advised to go back to the Jacobean playwrights for successful examples of this sort.

The modern passion for bleakness has given some support to Arnold's admiration for Wordsworth in these blank moods. Bleakness in mental outlook - a characteristic of our age - is mirrored in the bleakness of nature. But bleakness and ruin may be as vividly suggested in verse by pictorial elements as their opposites. Keats' Ode to Autumn is not more richly served in this respect than Browning's Childe Roland. Tennyson's Mariana in the Moated Grange is as powerfully supported by painted circumstance as his Mariana in the South. The poetry of desolation need not be less luxurious in the art sense than its opposite. Crabbe's description of the heath outside Aldeborough is as rich in poetical circumstances /
circumstance as Goldsmith's painting of the Deserted Village. Arnold himself affords the best examples in the abstinent mood.

"Then thin the pleasant human noises grow,

And faint the city gleams;

Rant the lone pastoral hut; marvel not thou!
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,

But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams;

Above the sun rises, and alone

Spring the great streams."

But this pictorial parsimony has almost always in Arnold its compensating traits of repetition and assonance; the manner is faultlessly fitted to the bleak mood. It is rather when he goes further and relying on the mood or situation alone, proceeds to strip his art of its beautifying elements that we come to what we are convinced was the goal of Wordsworth's ambition—that bare literalness which he found to some extent in Crabbe, and in its astounding nakedness in Tennyson's Dora. That nakedness he would not have found in another contribution to the 1842 volume.

The Morte d'Arthur. For in first treating the Arthurian theme the great Victorian poet is stirred to the same heroic mood as inspired Ulysses. Nobility, which Professor Elton decides is the final note of true Victorian work, is stamped on every line of that poem. When however in 1856 Tennyson wrote Morte it appears he is still under the spell of the Wordsworthian ideal. Its subject, mediaeval story in its crude form, invited him to dawdle in silly fashion, and though readable and not wanting in natural figures and description has rather too much of modern domestic

In the passage quoted the persistent inversion is a main and legitimate source of the effect
feeling and language, which has been the bane of so much Victorian writing about the middle ages.

"Yet never maiden think, however fair
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.

Here ceased the kindly mother, out of breath

Who after turned her daughter round, and said
She never yet had seen her half so fair."

He needed the heroic inspiration of Ulysses or Morte d'Arthur to rise to the noble manner and shake off this mawkish and (to use Professor Saintsbury's word) "missish" manner, which we have suggested he got from Wordsworth, though he might have found it even in that sacred text of the romantics, Coleridge's "Christabel." If the curious reader glances at the Morte d'Arthur, as it was later encased in the longer Passing of Arthur, first published twenty seven years later, he will find that the poet has, at will, raised the style of the encasing part to the heroic, and even occasionally grand style, of the original poem. There is no heavy humour here, no unbending to suit the domestic atmosphere. And yet it is on the whole a triumph, a final triumph of the plain syntax and plain idiom and natural word-order for which the Wordworthians contend.

Impressed, as he no doubt is, by Arnold's enthusiasm for Wordsworth's pastoral manner, it would perhaps suggest itself to our student to consult Arnold's own performances in the pastoral kind. Thyrsis is of course a monody and elegiac and therefore not quite of the same sort as Michael or Dora. But we will find there that the phraseology, although more varied and

See p. 284.
and more literary, with less prosaism, is still of the same general character. Abstinence is still the key-note, abstinence from too ambitious or learned phrase, and an almost ostentatious resolve to use simple idiom and the homely names of villages and weeds. But the poet has richly compensated for this — and elegy being near to lyric demanded some compensation — by elaboration of rhythm and many obvious devices which place the poem with the classic pastoral of Spenser and Milton, rather than with the school of Wordsworth.

"Too rare, too rare grow now my visits here
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing time, by new-built hick.
Here too our shepherd pipes we first assay'd,
Ah me, this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and ware of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went away."

The secret of this beauty apart from the rhythm will be readily admitted to lie in the adroit combination of common and literary speech. The poet seems to avoid no vulgar word but also he compensates with phrases of literary usage and import.

If our student is not weary of well doing, he will pass to our modern exponent of hard pitiless, unornamented writing — Mr. Wilfrid Gibson, and here he will find the manner which Wordsworth inaugurated carried to its logical conclusion. For example, let us take Mr. Gibson's The Drove-Road (from Livelihood) which is essentially pastoral, or at least, as much so as Michael or Dora —

"Hell, but it was cold;
And driving dark it was — dark as night, He'd almost think he must be getting old
To /
To feel the wind so. And long out of sight.
The beasts had trotted. Well, what odds!

The way
Ran straight ten miles on, and they'd go straight
They'd never heed a by-road. Many a day
He'd had to trudge on, trusting them to fate
And always found them safe. They scamper fast
But in the end a man could walk them down
They're showy trots; but they cannot last

And he'd been travelling hard on sixty year
The same old road, the same old giddy gait;
And he'd be walking, for a pint of beer,
Into his coffin, one day, soon or late—
But not with such a tempest in his teeth,
Half blinded and half-dithered, that he hoped!
He'd met a sight of weather on the heath,
But this beat all.

Here it will be admitted, is no concession to polite usages! Here is the language which a man who lovingly observes the manners and speech of Wordsworth's peasants, deliberately adopts. We are safe to say that Wordsworth would have been perplexed by such a rigorous application of his own theories. The language of Michael is decorous; this admits realistic flecks of Shepherd speech. Every now and then a dialect word appears Daft, dithering, dithered etc. and Wordsworth's selection of the real language of men, excludes these. All the same Wordsworth cannot escape a share of such praise or blame as attaches to Mr. Gibson's excessively bare and even ugly language. Fidelity to nature has led English poetry to this pass. Does Mr. Gibson even avoid a touch of vulgarity? We have no doubt that he would not be awed by the accusation. Fidelity, loving fidelity in the painting of ungenteel toiling lives is all he claims. Mr. Max Beerhold admitted and excused the vulgarity of some of his Labour cartoons on the plea that the thing imitated was itself vulgar or beastly. So will Mr. Gibson. We should say he is inferior because of his inveterate sentimentality /
sentimentality, rather than because he uses the vulgar phrases his poor heroes actually use. And now the critic mind will travel back to the origin of the pastoral kind in English poetry — not indeed to Barclay's and Googe's Eclogues, but to Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. He will ponder E.K's prefatory remarks and notes to that much-talked-of piece, and will notice that the praise is all for Spenser's successful attempt to enrich the blood of the language, and for his knitting-up the sentences into some sort of civilised syntax. He will hurriedly glance at the nineteenth century poets, and find (leaving Thyrsis aside) that the syntax is uncommonly simple, not at all knit-up. He will find that many passages in the Calendar are innocent of syntactic complexity especially in the more rustic sort, January February, September &c, where a more familiar note is struck, and where the language too is correspondingly uplandish. But he will note that the tendency of the later eclogues is toward the ornamentation repudiated by the later pastoral poets, and in art all lies in the tendency or direction. The conclusion would seem to be that neither Spenser nor any other poet in his age valued plainness for itself, but as merely affecting a closer imitation of natural surroundings, with perhaps sub-humorous intent, Critics place all the stress on the means by which Spenser evaded — either by archaisms or learned accretions — the true language of his day. Clearly he relied on the uncommon nature of his language for a great part of the effect of his poem. It matters not that the source of certain elements in his speech is in the dialects and the obsolete. The aesthetic intention is plain, and yet we must admit the colloquial basis of the Calendar and Faerie Queene, too colloquial at times. His admiration for Chaucer alone would /
Would have kept Spenser right here. Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Arnold make few --

inroads on dialect and old local speech. In short the Calendar is the first round in the fight for elevated diction and or rustic poetry syntax, just as Wordsworth's pastoral work is, if we forget later Crabbe, the first round in the attempt to denude language and style in general of all the airs and graces which had accumulated during our period of classical imitation. That such denudation in one branch of technique can be successfully borne, if the poet is cunning enough to exert himself in other directions, is proved by the great success of Thyrza and indeed of Arnold's work generally. A poet may depress one element of technique such as language and maintain the elevation of art by cunning bestowed on another as imagery or metric. But whether an art like that vouchsafed in Michael and some of Mr. Gibson's pieces which disallows or depresses the three main means to poetical excitement, whether such an art relying as it does on interior pathos or spirituality can permanently appeal to human sympathy is doubtful. The bareness as of the mountaintop can be carried too far.

But of all the things mentioned above calculated to produce this depression of art, not unambitious or even monotonous metre, certainly not the absence of fine imagery or fine word and certainly not excessive looseness of syntax (witness the success despite said looseness of the Idylls of the King), but the habitual use of proseic phrase in a metre which is not made monotonous, but which is no metre but prose rhythm disguised as

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The eighteenth century succeeded in laughing out of Court such elements for a time. See among things of the sort Churchill's Prophecy of Famine -- where the poet italicises his old words with malice -- prepense, sith, ken, among, I wis etc. On the other hand Collins in his Ode on Popular Superstitions indulges in a good many Scotch terms.

Wordsworth seeks all on the letter, see p.
metre, that is most deadly unless warred against by compensating delights elsewhere. Paradise Lost and still more Paradise Regained are, as Addison and Johnson pointed out, full of such flaws of prosaism, but in such a context of beauty that they are almost desirable, certainly pardonable. The Idylls err and sin phraseologically in almost as many ways as Endymion, but with such a noble variation of blank verse that we again pardon all or most. We look in vain for such compensation in Michael, and Mr. Dibson's Drove Road and are driven to find it, if at all, in that interior mood, to which we have referred. And some are brought up against one of the questions aesthetics must ask — unless we condemn such work outright — whether certain types of poetry, not dramatic, may by assuming or creating in the mind of the reader a mood of intense human and domestic pathos, strip themselves naked of every ordinary device which poetry needs to raise it out of the commonplace.

Wordsworth, it is now admitted, used the word 'language' without clear definition. He seems to have been thinking merely of the vocabulary which it has been suggested is of less importance than the hidden texture of the speech. We are now admonished to view his heresy in the light of his indignant and just re-action against the lees and dregs of eighteen century poetry, a poetry which in his view sank below self-respect in its toying and mawkish imbecility. It is not the virile and colloquial Pope he is re-acting against? He singles out Gray for punishment, but did not Gray sometimes deserve it? Did not Gray reach the limit?

But why did he select, one of Gray's earliest poems — the Sonnet of 1742 written in Memory of West?

He does of course rail a little against Pope as Keats did too in Sleep and Poetry.
limit of sufferable allusiveness and imitativeness, and was his theory of poetic diction not a challenge to the Freedom of art in any age? With superior dialectic and cooler reason Cole-
ridge could make the Wordsworthian theory appear as wrongheaded as even Professor Saintsbury would wish, and undoubtedly partly through the ambiguity referred to above, and partly from a narrow conception of the kinds of poetry, Wordsworth is in danger of appearing substantially in the wrong. But the commonsense of ordinary readers will always decide in his favour when the character of the poetry prevalent in his youth is considered. He combatted two main types of error - the use of the worn-out mythological language by which the sun is always called Phoebus and no reference is made to natural pheno-
mena but in the language of this decayed, once beautiful mythol-
ogy, and the habitual use of an inverted order of words. The use of the language of classical mythology is only one extreme instance of the violation of the principle of using the most direct and customary words to describe any object. In his own poetry Wordsworth sternly avoids this language. But he often flagrantly violates the prose ordering of his words and where he does so, it is too often without any of the 'mitigating neatness of his neo-classic predecessors. His inversions are the inversions of a child lisping its first exercises in poetry. They are not even artful enough to involve the penalty of eighteenth century inversions, viz: obscurity, and they achieve no compensating emphasis and vigour such as Pope achieves in typical lines like -

"Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found."

or /

See Gray's remarks on poetical diction - Chap.VII.

The reader remembers Byron's ridicule in Don Juan, and it must be admitted that Wordsworth is not always the poet who can describe natural phenomena in unaffected language without gaucherie. For a discussion of the passage in Spenser cited by Coleridge against W. Words-
worth's theory - or part of it - see Chap III. p.
or the melancholy air affected by Arnold by the inversions in the passage quoted above. But again we may say that the practice of modern poetry seems to give its approval to the Wordsworthian doctrine that, not only the vocabulary, but the word-order of poetry is on the whole that of good prose. The modern critic-poet would not affirm this as a dogma. In a cloudy sort of way he would assert to the proposition that in the better class of poetry there is a tendency to adhere to the natural order of words and to the common vocabulary. Almost all effects sought by the modern poet can be achieved in this way. 'Natural' order may be inverted on occasion of stress, as it may be in prose also. Only, any departure from the usual order of words must have due occasion, and the getting of a rhyme is recognised as no true occasion for such departure. In practice Wordsworth is often sillier in his inversions than any of the predecessors he censures.

Looking broadly at modern poetry, we should say that Wordsworth in the matter has gained too easy a victory. Except for traditional or "classical" poets like Mr. Herbert Trench, Mr. Lancelles Abercrombie, the late Mr. Elly Flecker and a few others, the rout towards loose ungirt syntax and childish word-order (so-called 'natural') and unselective diction (unselective to the extent that they will avoid no word because of its shape and associations) has become quite alarming. Pushed further in this direction poetry will be in danger of becoming the City of Beautiful Nonsense. We might instance, some of Mr. Harold Monro's efforts (Milk for the Cat notably) and Mr. Robert Graves. The Cupboard. The Poet Laureate himself despite his classical distinction...
distinction has a marked tendency to this sort of ultra-
Wordsworthian simpless. We have been told by certain
aestheticians that poetry (and art generally) is remembering
the childhood of man and of the world. But need such
memories be conveyed in the lisplings of childhood? We
speak of course of only one school of modern poetry, but it
seems to be for the moment almost the prevailing school.

It can be maintained with more than a show of reason
that Pope's language corresponds accurately to Wordsworth's
requirements. True, his treatment and his themes exclude
the higher exercise of imagination, but granted such themes
and emotions as Pope treats of, does he not to the letter
fulfil the demands of the reformer. Is he not the most
vivacious of colloquial writers, the most direct? That
his epigrammatic cleverness did not please Wordsworth is
nothing to the point. As a matter of fact the advocates
of simplicity, leaving Pope alone, (Wordsworth actually glances
a word of praise at Windsor Forest, including it in works
like Lady Winchelsea's Nocturnal Reverie, which have added
fresh natural images to poetry) agree in using Gray as their
whipping boy. Wordsworth rather unfairly took his early
sonnet (1742) on West as an example of false diction omitting
from his censure however lines 6 - 8, and the envoy. Professor
Grierson similarly places some rather unreal lines
from Gray's "O day, so cool, so calm, so bright," to illustrate the
purity of the latter.

In his essay called in Grossart's edition of
the Prose Works of Wordsworth gives us a glimpse of the ideas which lay behind the famous Postscript to the Lyrical Ballads. He directs his attack against "men of palsied and indurated hearts", and explains how it is that men of judgment who have been immersed in business, return to poetry in middle life with the expectation of being fired by the conventional graces and ornamentation which their youthful tastes had once admired. But the great poet cannot stand still. He demands just as nature does that the reader shall remain passive in his hands, and when the middle-aged readers who have not grown up, ask of him to provide the excitements and rapture which were all very well for the heat of youth, he must deny them such gratification. Then follows a brief but sufficient review of English poetry, and the conclusion of the whole matter is that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is enjoyed" - a remark borrowed (and acknowledged) from Coleridge. Later in an essay "Of Poetry as Observation and Description," he descends into the tedious question of due bounds of Imagination and Fancy, and decides that "Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and support the eternal." In a word Fancy is the lower gift which rather beguiles and dazzles after the manner of the Jacobean. Imagination is austere and ennobles.

Previously he had asked in orthodox fashion, What is a poet? and answered "a man speaking to men", only a man endowed with more enthusiasm and power. And he had given us /

In the Essay of the Principles of Poetry and the Lyrical Ballads (1799-1802.)
us the famous description of poetry, as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings ("it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility"). He explained what he meant by "poetic diction" by setting Dr. Johnson's scriptural paraphrase side by side with the prose original.

Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes
Observe her labours, sluggard and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice
Yet, timely provident, she hastens away
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day.

Contrast the "original" — Go to the Ant thou sluggard,
consider her ways and be wise; which having no guide,
overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and
gathereth her food in the harvest."

Such ideas reveal a philosophy of life and poetry.

We may take it that Wordsworth is the first poet to shape the modern conception of the immediate and vital connection between the two and to hint (it does not amount to more than a hint) at the necessity of a reform in society and one's whole attitude to life before poetry could worthily take up its habitation among men. In his contemptuous and hectoring lecture to the business men of Bradford, Ruskin told these good people that their lives were such as to preclude the rise of art in their town. Viewed from this point of view, we see that poetic diction to Wordsworth is a mere symptom of something radically wrong with our conception of life and art. In a letter to Charles James Fox, he, the malady viz: — "the rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society". He draws a picture of the old sturdy yeomen and adds mournfully "This class of men is rapidly disappearing." As an example of the austerity of the new
new art he aimed at, the art which was to be in immediate connection with Life — life defined, or at least the precious part of it, as the cultivation of the affections among the poor — we may take his own reference to the Leechgatherer. It is an example which will appear silly to some people. After referring to his own spiritual evolution from blank despair to the consolation of nature, he goes on —

"A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, expecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward? A lonely place, "a pond by which an old man was, far from all house or home;" not stood, nor sat, but was — the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible."

Further, in answer to the objections of friends "You speak of his speech (the Leechgatherer's) as tedious. Everything is tedious, when one does not read with the feelings of the author."

His own imagination is great, he tells us, without boasting, but certain situations in nature are so impressive as to preclude further imagining on the part of the poet. Here we imagine is the explanation of Wordsworth's ideas on Poetry, and therefore on diction (for the one is for him but a limb of the other). The poetry resides in the matter. The poet's imagination seemingly is to be engaged on finding out the truly impressive themes — and to the feeling heart, they are everywhere around us. These themes are of such compelling inner pathos, that the poet's armoury of tricks and devices for heightening effect are seen at once /
once to be unworthy. He allows himself to be the passive instrument of nature, and hence speaks a language simple to the point of imbecility, some would say - utter bareness.

Crabbe we hold was the chief influence in directing Wordsworth to these themes and that manner. But Burns and Fergusson - he was the only English poet to give sympathetic notice to Fergusson - influenced him too. Cowper, one may think, not so much.

\textit{If this be the true thought of Wordsworth, and he categorically denies that what we call prosaisms in poetry, are so in effect - we must respectfully part company with him as a guide. For his theory makes too little of Art, and too much of the religious sense of Nature. But we cannot part company without admitting that he seems to have on the whole triumphed in some parts of the field. The poet today makes consistent use of the old modes of phraseology. No poet today - certainly not the Poet Laureate - boggles at the introduction of what we used to call prosaisms. The meek and uncoloured phrase is everywhere, and the vivid coloured epithet in disgrace. The cult of simplicity overruns large tracts of the kingdom of the Muses. No words or phrases are now condemned to helotry. Broadly speaking, the effect of Wordsworth's campaign is seen in this, that the modern critic regards it as the last praise that a poet has achieved a complex effect by using a simple language and syntax and the 'natural' order of words. The tendency to praise for such things is a healthy one, but it seems to be carried too far in some quarters. The poet who regards words as the painter regards his pigments, that is as more or less divorced from customary associations and as observing /}
any order that his art imposes on them, will constantly protest against the Wordsworth doctrine. This is the type of poet who is nearer to Art than written speech, who aims at the effects of music and the plastic arts. He is at the furthest remove from Chaucer. For him there is no stated word-order. He regards himself as bound by no tradition of common speech. He is not an inheritor of a disciplined idiomatic tongue which reflects in countless ways the genius and history of the race, and which he must hand on to his successors unchanged, or changed merely so that smallest degree which is yet the poet's traditional boast. He has not his ear to the ground to gather up the consensus of living human speech. He has more regard for the physical shape of words, though he is not ignorant of the vertue of words and their age-long associations. He is thinking in terms of Art rather than the traditions and conventions of human speech. Chaucer we might take as the type of the first kind of poet, perhaps Browning as the other. In the one poet we look to find the true habit of durable English folk speech, in the other just such coherence to the word-board, the word-order, syntax and idiom of the tongue as suits his dynamic or sculpturesque art.

To the latter school belong not only poets like Browning whose minds are pre-occupied by the methods of the Fine Arts, who think aesthetically in terms of Art rather than narrative of speech, but extreme archaists like Mr. Chas. Doughty whose Hanswurst pretends to be like Swinburne's language a systematic and persistent restoration of an early stage of the English
literary tongue, but is really the most extraordinary instance in literary history of the making of a poetic medium. We still have occasion to refer to this work later, and need only say here that where the poet's creative impulse extends so far beyond the tendency found in most great poets to make a temperamental alteration in certain parts of the language, and works so desperately on its own word-medium, such a poet ranges himself with those who repudiate the Wordsworth doctrine in its very essence. Because they necessitate certain ancient idiomatic expressions, and even restore mosaic of idiomatic expression and old words, and manufacture more, they are often mistaken for those who are genuinely concerned to observe the ritual of spoken or written speech.

On the whole, admiration is retained for those poets who can achieve subtle or bold effects by being simple. Blake has perhaps affected the modern more than Wordsworth's precept and example. His aversion, it is true, are numerous and childish, but most so in his studies of the child mind, where such things are natural. Wordsworth probably got a good deal of his own simplicity from Blake - perhaps not a little from Burns. His debt to Burns is not always insisted on, though he himself acknowledges it. The Kilmarnock edition came out when the English poet was a boy of 16 and it afforded such a contrast to the prevailing sort of poetical nonsense! The revived study to-day of the metaphysical poets has also done a great deal to encourage utter simplicity.
of word. We can measure the distance we have travelled in this respect since the Restoration, by citing Dryden's "Paper of Verses," To the Duchess. He tells us that these were censured by the wits because "I did humi serpere - but I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words to set it off". His answer was "I knew I addressed them to a lady ----". Hence the simplicity or the language. The colours of words and elocution were in that day the very sinews of poetry. The epithet which we now grudge and belittle was then the main means to poetical excellence and indispensable in description. So Pope says in the Preface to his Odyssey, and no man knew better the qualities of speech, allowing for the aesthetics of his day, than he who had wearied out ten years or his life on translations. In his acute analysis and censure of Swift's diction, Dr. Johnson complains that he lacks epithets. As the last of the metaphysicians that was natural enough, for the school as a whole was, like some of our moderns, comparatively chary of the decorative elements of speech. The other great neo-classic translator, Dryden, complains that the narrow limits of the English heroic line preclude him from using more than - as a rule - one large handsome word in the line, whereas Virgil can accommodate two or three in the spacious hexameter. There is also the poverty of the monosyllabic English to contend with. Those who smile at this decorative view of language must reflect that Virgil in the
Aeneid is a decorative poet on a plane of aesthetic not so far above that of the neo-classics at their best. And despite the Wordsworthians, there are traditional forms of art which demand a decorative diction. We may say with our moderns they are lower forms of art, but so long as the Aeneid gives the pleasure it does to cultivated readers, so long we must admit the cogency of Dryden's complaint. Dante is more sparing in throwing about what Professor Saintsbury calls the large gold-pieces of language, and he admits a fair amount of low speech into the Divine Comedy. But on the whole epic seems to be a kind of poetry which will have its grand language. Having regard to the disuse into which the more handsome parts of our poetic vocabulary are falling in the hands of representative poets like Dr. Bridges, Mr. Masefield, and Mr. Gibson, Mr. Bottomley and others, we may think that the only safe refuge for this part of the tongue is epic conceived in the oldmanner. But the modern poet fights shy of epic. Modern drama has become largely a matter of nods and winks. The weird mood-poems of our younger pessimists make little call on the grand language; now and again an older tradition list like Mr. Watson tries to employ the greater cadences and the words of gold. No sustained use of them however appears anywhere. But when poets return, if ever, to the grand or grandiose mood in which epics are written, they will find it difficult to cold shoulder the "large gold pieces" of language. Davenant attempted to do so and gave us Gondibert! Cowley did so and we have the Davidest! Not so Keats! His Hyperion broke down because - as perhaps he imagined - the Miltonic inversions and the "gold clouds metropolitan" are an insufferable weight.

The sonnet for example has never been successfully written except in a rich language. Quatrains of fine sonnets can be quoted, which seem to challenge this, but not complete sonnets. Somewhere in the sonnet there must occur a far-gleaming or memorable phrase or turn of speech. See Mr. Herbert Warren's discussion of the language of the Divine Comedy in his volume Poets and Poetry and also Prof. Saintsbury's Article on Dante and the Grand Style in English Society Publications Vol. 111.
weight on a too slow-moving poem. They weighted the poem certainly, the Miltonic heaven-piled words, but the movement of it was already slowing to the inevitable dead-stop, because the action gave no true scope for epic display, and perhaps because his cadences are too ponderous, the breathing too deep. Of the grand language we may prophesy, the chief element that will return will be epithet.

Compound epithet has always been a favourite with the true romantic, though Coleridge — most submissive of poets to the critic's lash — discovered its unworthiness as early as his publication of 1797. Coleridge here pleads guilty also to turgidity but denies obscurity. He had discovered thus early — as what did he not discover? — that there is obscurity in the subject-matter for which the poet is not to be blamed (the obscurity of an abstruse subject), and obscurity in the style itself. A sun-clear style will not make Newton clear to the majority of minds. This is an important distinction which will have to be borne in mind when we come to talk of the great Victorians — Browning, Meredith — and — in prose — Henry James. If we want a clear instance, we might point to the obscurity of Gray and Collins. The former is obscure on account of his learned and historical allusions and, only in a smaller degree, on account of that "extreme consciousness of expression" he tells us he aimed at. He pleads in a letter that his allusions are matter of schoolboy knowledge. On the other hand Collins often is really obscure by reason of slovenly and cryptic expression. Instances of this are given later.

To go deeper in the matter of style and diction De Quincey thought that Wordsworth had made a notable advance.

De Quincey says — "By far the weightiest thing ever heard on the subject of style". See his Essay on Style, 1849.
advance when he refined on the usual definition of language as being the dress of thought. Wordsworth said the incarnation of thought. This anticipates in some way the modern view that matter and form are at a certain height of art, inseparable — or to go the full length of the paradox, the style is the matter of a poem of a certain class. The other common metaphor, language is a mirror or glass,* does not help very much, except as affording a glimpse of the eternal difference between classical and romantic art. A pane of clear glass might stand for the former. The thought passes to the reader's mind with as little intrusion or obstruction on the part of the words as possible. On the other hand the romantic poet relies on his words for lovely stained hues. In the preface to his *Laon and Cythna* Shelley deprecates the distraction caused by a mere word system.* The method of the true romanticist he declines. He will not be bound by a "System of mere words." But Shelley could not by mere wishing escape from the quality of his genius, which lay towards the romantic exploitation of words although in less degree than Keats. The poignancy and romantic charm of Keats' poetry is largely due, we hold, to the use of shadowing and exciting phrase where words in critical places have any but their dictionary signification. High romantic art indeed seems often to owe its power to the diffracting power of words, to their oversoul. Not that the classicism did not understand and avail themselves of this power of words. But they refrained more, preferring a harder medium and a less temperamental. Nor for them the variegated hues, the hypnotic suggestiveness, the poetical vagueness which are obtained by playing subtly with the meanings and shapes of words. This

*See in this connection some interesting remarks by Mr. H. J. Massingham in his Letters to X, letter 1.
fluid quality of words is obnoxious to the classic poet who desires fixity in grammar and in the meaning of words. Hence it is that the various attempts to set up an authority like the French Academy to set limits to the tongue have occurred in periods of reaction against domestic charm and mystification. Thus at the Restoration the proposal for an Academy was widely canvassed by the people who clamoured for a plain English. Dr. Johnson, it is true, in the next age opposed the setting up of an Academy, but more out of stubborn individualism than distaste for a strictly defined tongue. His Dictionary sufficiently attests his interest in definition,—his speak of his punishment of the classes of his 

Again in the 19th Century that part of Matthew Arnold which was classical, and which abhorred Keatsian license in words, urged on his countrymen the necessity of an Authority. Not only the occasional magic, but the more ordinary slovenliness of phrases of the romantics distressed him. He could not be fair to Keats. The over-loaded imagery and the violence done to the language by the latter aroused his dislike—a more developed dislike than that of the Blackwood reviewers, but none the less active.

The search for some analogy which shall explain the section of language, is of some interest. The commonest analogy is that of colours. Sainte-Beuve said of Rousseau he put green in French writing, meaning that he gave natural colouring to his words. We talk of the "colours of rhetoric". The mediaeval poets and versewriters were almost limited in
their critical language to the analogy which came down to them from the ancients. Perhaps of all our ages of poetry, the 18th Century found the analogy most true to its inner impulse. Colour is decoration and all the orthodox aestheticians of that age insist on the decorative function of word and imagery. It is an analogy which suits us least well who demand such organic significance in every element of technique and to whom the mere notion of mere decoration in art is congenial. We trace indeed the excess in some directions in past ages to this very analogy - the excess in epithets and imagery for example of 18th century poetry. Nor do we find any very helpful analogy from sculpture or the plastic arts, but we obtain a glimpse of the modern theory. Language, we say, is not marble, neither is it putty. Classical tendency would lean to the former, romantic to the latter. Those who prefer a hard material, that is a fixed and rigorous system of language - using the word in its wide sense - may be likened to the sculptor with his marble; those who desire any degree of liberty, like Keats, may, in extreme cases, reduce the language to the consistency of putty. Most of our great poets have been of this latter kind. It is curious to note that Wordsworth who is supposed to be our great romantic poet, is decidedly not of this latter class. He coined no words, he used the merest handful of archaic words, even in impassioned mood he rarely used words out of the common meaning, and still more rarely altered their customary form. In a word,
his tendency here is as decidedly classical as Keats' is romantic. It might be asked in what way was Wordsworth romantic? Least of all as a poet of the tender passion, or as a lover of past life. Those who have the impression that he is the poet of nature par excellence, would be surprised to learn how few of his pages are devoted to actual nature-painting. Proportionately here he falls far short of many eighteenth century poets. Was he romantic only in the freedom of his themes and his singing of humble lives? His prevailing tendency to philosophise is not at all a romantic one.

To return to the analogy of marble, we may be reminded that Pater in his Essay on Style leans to the heresy ("under the sanction of Wordsworth" - he might have added other noble names, Sidney and Shelley for example) that the restraint of metre is not a true and essential difference between poetry and prose. He is enamoured of the idea that the poem is like the sculptured group, already it exists in the block of marble. The artists' task is merely to chisel away unnecessary and irrelevant matter. This is of course an Aristotelian notion, but applied to the art of writing, it would encourage the poet either to a scrupulous economy of word and image, to fineness and thrift, or to such a use of language as the late Mr. Stopford Brooke protested against in the case of no less an artist in words than Browning. The poet in this latter case will readily forsake the ordinary methods of spoken speech, its natural idiom and word-order, to gain a nearer approximation to the thing imitated.
imitated. The effect on the ordinary reader may be that of wilful obscurity. He will cry out against a speech texture to which he is unaccustomed and which indeed seems violent and irrational. The perversity of the style repels him, and he will soon be doubting whether the matter is so intrinsically "difficult" as to require such unusual expression. He may end as many readers, not at all stupid, do, by waving much of this poetry aside as rigmarole. He will point to certain writers whose matter and mentality are as deep as Browning's and who yet have contrived to be traditional and simple in their utterance. In this he may miss the point of difference. Such readers do not realize that Browning is attempting a new art-mode, that is deliberately and forcibly doing violence to the customary modes of speech in order to make expression a closer imitation of the object described.

Perhaps a clearer instance of this art-form of poetry is provided by Landor. His genius lay towards the imitation of Art-effects in verse, and to this end he found classical syntax and idiom more suitable than those of a Teutonic tongue. His acute sense of workmanship ("the name is graven on the workmanship") reminds us of the renaissance insistence on that word. We suggest that he did not adopt classical syntax (as far, that is, as English will, even under pressure, allow of such syntax) out of desire for novelty or from mere perversity, but because he was aware that a better imitation of statuary groupings and art objects generally, can be effected in verse by using such phrase order and idiom then by using the colloquial English /
English grammar and syntax. In other words the classical tongues are by their word-order, by their vocabularies, and by their idiom and syntax more suggestive of the plastic arts than any Teutonic tongue.—

Now came she forward eager to engage
But first her dress, her bosom then surveyed,
And heaved it, doubting if she could deceive.
Her bosom seemed, inclosed in haze like heaven,
To baffle touch, and rose forth undefined;
Above her knew, she drew the robe succinct,
Above her breast, and just below her arms.

For the purposes of this sculpturesque art, Landor — and Tennyson in numerous passages of the Idylls — found that the delaying effect obtained by frequent use of absolute phrases and of participles.— Genius is of the greatest importance even though such usage is against the grain of the English tongue. At other times when art effects are not sought after, Landor slips into an easy, slightly prosaic simplicity of speech, which at once recalls Wordsworth when he is least wordy — when, in effect, Wordsworth most nearly approaches classical work.

Needless to say there is no touch of classical syntax or idiom in Browning, who is almost eccentric in his love of roughest English, and wrote his Aristophanes Apology partly to refute the doctrine of special — selectness of phrase and idiom. But in the end he is in the same galley as Landor. They both aim at Art-effects, and they both alter the current of ordinary speech to gain those effects. Landor’s alterations are in the direction of /
of Roman civility. Brownings in the opposite direction of Anglo Saxon roughness and looseness. But the impulse in both cases is the same, only the arts they imitate are dissimilar. Landor desires to suggest chaste classical shapes, such as Collins and Keats also were enamoured of. Browning is the complex modern realist sculptor or painter, rugged and perverse.

The beginnings of this deliberate art-mode are to be seen in seventeenth century poetry. The school of Donne-to-Cowley attempted this nearer approximation. The former poet has a marked resemblance to Browning. He also delighted in expression à rebours. He went against the grain of the language like Browning, he exploited cacophony, because like Browning, he desired to exploit ugliness - what is conventionally called 'ugliness'. His genius is like Browning's, essentially dynamic and dramatic. His successors had not his excuse in violating the accepted usages of the language. Cowley had not his

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Professor Grierson (Introduction to his The Metaphysical Poets - Donne to Cowley) says of the school as a whole that it marks a return to the actual language of gentlemen after the jewelled and ambitious language of the Elizabethan. That is of course true especially of the vocabulary and idiom, and applies absolutely to George Herbert. But of Donne himself and his more typical disciples, it is true to say that they put the utmost rigour on the tongue. Their phraseology is pure and of the middle sort, but their sentences are put to the torture.
dynamic force, his rugged power, nor had he the wider aesthetic which enables the modern artist to push back the frontiers of the really ugly, and so extend the territory of the beautiful which is the subject matter of the arts. Accordingly Dr. Johnson had an easy task in attacking his theory of imitation as disclosed in his use of words. Johnson naturally takes a limiting and superficial view of the matter because his aesthetic is superficial. He is concerned only with Cowley's attempts to make sound echo sense a peculiar matter of estate since Pope approved and exemplified the attempt in his Essay on Criticism. Johnson can understand the imitation of natural sounds in poetry, but not of other sense-phenomena, and certainly not of mental states. He was right, we hold, to censure as a whole Cowley's unidiomatic and harsh, poverty-stricken language. What was, we now allow, right in Donne, was not right in Cowley, who lacked Donne's compelling inner force. But Johnson never envisaged the problem as we see it. As a neo-classic he held for neat and customary language, plain things said plainly and deftly, with a certain classical Hard-dealing with the literary tongue, rigour and tort applied to it for any aesthetic purpose, he suspected. We to-day who have supped full of the other manner can sympathise with his attitude. Not the whole field of poesy, but many fair provinces we see subjugated by the new aesthetic, very often under cover of Wordsworth's sanction. The innovators say that Wordsworth threw down all barriers and a poet may use or manufacture any modes of speech to express
the distressful matter of his brain. But Wordsworth gave such sanction. On the contrary, he stood for customary ways of speech. We have not seen the last of this mood, which regards language as plastic material. Perhaps our aesthetic has received a permanent widening. Perhaps we shall always have poets who disregard the ordinary limits of and usages of speech to attain verisimilitude. Perhaps, as modern psychology becomes more complex, speech-modes which were intended to express primary ideas will have to be discarded to some extent. Some will say, modern aesthetics say, that it is not the poet's business to express difficult mental states, the states more or less darkly expressed by Meredith and Browning. The poet's business is precisely to recall us from a vexed modern psychology to primitive simplicity in which the speech-modes even of a peasantry are sufficient and beautiful. But this conclusion of modern philosophy will be disputed by the poets who do not find in the ideas and ideals of the Irish school a complete philosophy of their art. What we are witnessing in fact is a divergence of view and practice not unlike that which existed in Europe at various periods of phenomenal activity, at the time of Dante for example and again in the early 17th century. The high literary tongue goes one way and the vulgar goes another. The mentality of the Court at these periods becomes complex. Looking back we may call it oversubtilised, affected, out of the course of ordinary humanity, and bound therefore to disappear. But it does not so
easily disappear. The Petrarchan ideas with their traditions of fine language persist. Even the conceits of a Marino infect all Europe for a century. At such times ordinary discourse, let alone peasants' speech, is held to be impossibly low and inadequate to express the Court psychology. If the modern aestheticians are right, if poetry ought to disregard the complex psychology of an artificial society, if, with other arts, it ought to busy itself with primitive emotions, then the learned and "conceited" strain in high poetry from Dante and Petrarch to Milton, must regretfully be regarded as a mistake, an infinity of art mistakenly expended. But who is prepared to rule out not only Milton in great characteristic passages, but Shakespeare in many a sonnet and other passages where he adopts the high style and philosophical matter?

We have no Court in the old sense to-day, but we have a wonderfully complex mentality, a body of ideas much more widely entertained than any body of ideas in any previous age, save that of the ancient Greeks. Is that body of ideas to find no poetic expression, only a philosophic and scientific one? Whatever the answer may be, it is clear the simple speech modes recommended by Wordsworth will be found inadequate. Our poets will need recondite phrase to express recondite things. It is true there have been times when a philosophy or religion has been
expressed adequately in simple phrase. On looking backwards for a period when English poetry did employ ordinary language freely and even naively, Wordsworth rightly selected the so-called metaphysical period. Here in Vaughan and Herbert and Carey is the thing done to admiration. A religious philosophy is artfully and adequately expressed in the simplest language with a potency of charm unsurpassed in our tongue, till Blake revived the manner. How remarkable is the contrast between Shakespeare's or Spenser's philosophical verse and theirs. How involved, recondite and 'difficult' the one, how naive and touching in modest domestic dress the other!

To this we answer that the metaphysically expressed rather a religious mood than a philosophy, and that the mood itself was one of self-surrender, the yielding up of all the glories of sense, and return to childhood, and therefore the adoption of the simplest word and image and syntax was in itself conformable and indeed necessary to the poetic presentation of that mood. Far different is it with the intellectual-amorous states described in Modern Love or a hundred other presentations of mental states to-day. We have it is true, beautiful presentations of the simple, more poetic moods to-day, as we have, in this eclectic age, an assembly of all the schools. Therein we differ from the past. The simple, the naive is almost a prevailing school, but for the moment we are interested in that school which does accept
and rejoice in all the complexity of the modern mind, and which courts the accusation of over-subtlety or learning, or metaphysics in verse. Their dealing with language can never be simple. The ordinary modes of expression will "sink under them" as they did with Milton. They will accordingly be read by the few. That is the trouble with our modern schools; our eclecticism, we have broken up into numerous sects. Hence Dr. Courthope wisely drew his Great History of English Poetry to a conclusion in 1832. Our few little schools have few little audiences. Great as is the vogue of poetry to-day, its activities are so dispersed that we seem to see the poets surrounded by a group of admirers hymning each other's praises. Meanwhile the large appeal to a national audience is gone. This dispersion of poetical force is no doubt explained in part at least by the parallel dispersion of the national spirit. The same phenomena took place before the Civil War.

Apart from political or social influences, however, there is one consideration which has relevance to our subject, that is the evolution of the relation between matter and form. It is clear that the old frontier lines have become increasingly blurred. In the earlier ages the poet is - to use Mr. Chesterton's definition "the bard praising the warrior." As civilization proceeds he becomes also the teacher of the arts and crafts - hence Plato's
argument against the poet who pretends to be a master of various arts, military, and scientific. Epic tends to become a record of race culture. Such it is in Paradise Lost. The 18th century imitators of Milton brought the long didactic poem to a pitch of boredom it had never before attained. They succeeded a race of social satirists. Their mood was an expansive one. It chimed with the mood of their day. Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* had said that satire was an unworthy service of the muse, that it was dying out in France and likely to dwindle here. He was right so far as the mood of the moment went, but even as he wrote his own countryman Burns was indulging in that unworthy sort. Those who write on the romantic movement sometimes forget to include this didactic expansiveness in their categories of such acts which were romance or at least a preparation for romantic activities. True it changed its subject from the discussion of the woollen industry or the pear (Dr. Johnson's gibes at these industrial poems will be remembered), to man himself and all his faculties. One is not sure if that vast egoismus (instance by work like Wordsworth's *Prelude*) is not the main artery of the romantic movement. But anyhow the didactic-philosophic mood is dominant. In such poetry the line drawn between matter and form is absolute, and yet romance is not that species of art which tends to blur the lines. We know that whilst this didactic impulse is strong in the early great romantics, they are great as romantics for quite different work. Shelley's matter is indeed easily severable from his form, so easily
that critics have held his transmutation or paraphrase of Godwin's philosophy to be a poor matter, while giving the best praise to the form of his poetry. So Professor Saintsbury and others. But there are few instances of nature having given a man supreme utterance, who had inferior wits. Still we say that where Shelley is supreme, Godwin disappears. Are we to say that the more art becomes civilised, the less it tends to have a well-defined subject, story or what not? Arnold fought against the tendency in his Preface to Empedocles on Mount Etna and elsewhere. In his day the tendency was not so pronounced as it has since become. Impressionism and the pursuit of the intangible, and indeed unimaginable, were not so active. The Aristotelian theory of the imitation of some defined story or object still survived. In art the school of Manet and Monet challenged the theory. A canvas was beautiful for its own sake, for its design and disposition of colour, and not with respect to any imitated object. In literature even the short story has become, in certain master hands, a thing of silhouettes and vaguely suggested contours, rather than well-marked narrative. A story like Tchekoff's Yusuf, for example, is almost about nothing, fugitive impressions with the emphasis laid, in seeming arbitrary fashion, on trifles—and yet it is a striking success. The stories of Leonard Merrick and Cunningham Graham have something of the same quality. It is true we have a corresponding reaction to vigorous story-telling and highly objective description. Morris set the fashion here. Mr. Masefield.

Professor Saintsbury even suggests that if it were possible to isolate the germ of poetry, it would be in Shelley's verse, yet his 'matter' was crazy!
Masefield carries it on. His books are, as Scott's and Byron's were, almost social events, and Mr. Watson still loudly announces a "subject", or thesis, and sticks to it with praiseworthy zeal. But he is of the elders. The main movement is characterized by the tendency to confound the arts—the talk of symphonic poems, night-pieces, nocturnes, etc., is indicative enough. The jargons of the arts, once used exclusively are bandied about promiscuously— all counts in Nordau's and other indictments of degeneration. No doubt the setting aside of boundary lines is distressing. We cannot decide this question. We cannot say to the poet, You shall not indulge in those musical reveries, or pictorial phantasies which suggest the schools of Art. We cannot be so ungrateful for such things as Mr. Edward Shank's Fête Galante with its overwhelming suggestion of both music and painting, or for Mr. Robert Nichol's Seventeen—

A jay, with sky-blue shaft
Get in blunt wing, skinned screaming on ahead,
She followed him. A merry squirrel eyed
Her warily, cocked upon tail-plumed haunch.
Then skipping the whirligig of last-year leaves,
Whisked himself out of sight and re-appeared,
Leering about the hole of a young beech;
And every time she thought to corner him
He scrambled round in little scratchy hands
To peek at her about the other side.
She lost him, bolting branch to branch, at last—
The impudent brat! But still high overhead
Flight on exuberant flight of opal sound
Or of dissolving mist, florid as flame

And still the huge wind volleyed. Save the gulls
Goldenly in the sunny blast careering
Or on blue-shadowed underwing at plunge
None shared with her who now could not but run
The splendour and tumult of the onrushing spring.

Whatever we think of this as poetry, we must know that

+See Max Nordau's Degeneration
a new art is being attempted, and that its affinities are with painting and music. To attain these effects it must claim and exercise absolute liberty of rhythm, rhythms unattempted by Swinburne who was comparatively consistent once he settled down to a strange metre, and absolute liberty of word and phrase, to make and to mar, phrases hitherto deemed prosaic, or botcherly, phrases magnificent, in short all the tones, language is capable of. A sort of blunt-nosed language, such as no former poets used, now appears in strength, and it comes to satisfy the strong craving of the modern poet for the effects of the sister arts. So Mr. J. C. Squire in his The Birds.

And rooks their villages of twigsy rafts
Set on the tops of elms, where elms grew then,
And still the thumbling tit and perky wren
Popped through the tiny doors of cozy balls
And the blackbird lined with moss his high-built walls

A round mud cottage held the thrush's young,
And straws from the untidy sparrows hung.

It is quite true there is, in some passages an echo of the Elizabethans, a reminiscence of Drayton's Nymphidia, for example, of that exquisite fairy kind of verse in which the Elizabethans were cunning. Most modern verse is in The old despised and rejected rubble of the language which is eagerly seized upon for those strange effects of colour and tone.

The burden of all this is clear. We cannot get those fugitive impressions demanded by the new art without putting great stress on the language. When the matter was clearly defined and absorbed a good part of the reader's attention, there was not the same need to press rare and exquisite meanings, subtle nuances out of words. We now hear of the aroma and bouquet and even tonality of Hedonic tone of words and phrases. Words are /
are on the rack as they have never been before. The excitement of mere words is understood today as never before. They are recognised for the brave things they are, and it is not the beautiful ones to which, as of old, particular court is paid. The secret thoroughly learned today is that not the "sleek" words or lubricious (to use Dante's curious phraseology) but rather the shag-haired ones (hirúutá) are, with temperate use, powerful. Students of aesthetics recognise in this the modern craze for châractériastic rather than formal beauty. Writers like Mr. Bosanquet claim that the evolution of the term beautiful from ancient times has added what he calls châractériastic, i.e., significant detail, to the old formal notion of beauty. In certain quarters it would seem as if 'characteristic' were pushing out formal beauty altogether. But a movement which is common to painting and music and poetry is clearly a movement which had to come. We need not distress ourselves about it. We observe it coming on with the rise of the romantics. Quite naturally we associate the main body of the romantics with the discovery of new and deeper floods of melody. But romantic art is rapacious and, unlike classical, quickly exhausts its own moods. Browning, a true romantic, soon appears to shock Frederick Tennyson and the generality by his cacophonous verse. Now all the lower and declassed forms of speech are pressed into service. Words which never imagined they would again (that is since the Elizabethans) appear in high poetry, come in in battalions. In spite of protest, Browning has been absorbed in English poetry. 'Characteristic' has won the day. The general result has been that the poets' range of language has very greatly and happily /
happily increased, and the professional writers on aesthetic
to bless the movement with the phrase 'aesthetic width.'

This modern craving for caractèrestique is mirrored
in: the speech used by poets. In the eighteenth century
we see it creeping in in Cowper's detailed sketches of country
boys and waggoners, and still better in Crabbe's Tales.
In the latter we often get in wisps of conversation an
approximation to the actual speech of the vulgar — never
in Cowper, who was always the gentleman regarding the vaga-
bonds of the road with kindly patronage. Today the
demand is for the actual raw material of human speech and
gesture at its lowest. What we used to call
vulgarity and nastiness are reproduced freely by our choice
poets, as by Mr. Gibson in such a little poem as The
Orchestrà or Mr. Masefield in Right Royal. So those
who are disgusted by such vulgarity — as they deem it — in
such writers, we might quote Wordsworth in that astonish-
ing chapter in Imagination and Taste in The Prelude.

> There are who think that strong affection, love
> Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
> A gift, to use a term which they would use
> Of vulgar nature; that its growth requires
> Retirement, leisure, language purified
> By manner studied and elaborate;
> That whoo feels such passion in its strength
> Must live within the very light and air
> Of courteous usages refined by art.

Whilst he would not himself descend to the speech of the
gutter, he would insinuate a philosophy of men and his
speech, which would urge later poets to do so. Not only
poets, for the rage today in normally polite circles is
for the lowest pothouse idiom.

Without delivering ourselves into the hands of the
aestheticians and philosophers, we may note that the other
great school of modern poetry, the simple-sensuous school,
gives colour to their theory that poetry is the result of
happy /
happy intuitions and emotions. The philosophers wish to make poetry as it were, the female to philosophy's male, in a word to de-rationalise it. To take the hard thought out of it and make it like all art, a means of primitive and even barbarian refreshment to remind the civilised thought-tormented man of that other part of his being which he is in danger of starving - the instinctive element. As we have said above this would lead us to abandon many noble tracts of poetry, and lead us back to the old question, Was Mr. Pope a poet? Nobody who has read through the old classic exchanges in which Johnson, Byron, Campbell, Hazlitt, Bowles and others took part over half a century, will want to revive that argument. One need only note here that the idea suggested by these people is an old one. That the appeal of poetry is to the instincts and not to the intellect was argued for example in the sixties of last century by E.S.Dallas in his "Gay Science". Quite recently Mr. George Moore in his Avowal rediscovered the specious truth which has been admitted by philosophers for quite a long period.

He says --- "Works in which reason plays a large part do not satisfy us. Our instincts are deeper than our reason, and it is pleasant to remember that art rises out of our primal nature and that the art that never seems trivial is instinctive."

However Mr. Moore will allow reason a place too.

"The artist's instinct is the sail that carries the boat along and his reason is the rudder that keeps the boat's head to the wind. The simile seems to hold good. An instinct will carry the artist some distance, but if he have not reason, he will drift like the rudderless boat making no progress at all."
Romance we may say destroyed the rational and intellectual basis of poetry. Poetry could no longer be what Dr. Courthope would have it "an effluence of the national spirit", when it returned sufficiently far back on the track of civilisation. Poetry under the influence of Romance abandoned territories it had long ruled over. It gained territories to which it had a better claim. It abandoned the sciences, and to some extent satire. It gave up drama to the sociologists and farce-writers. With the knowledges went her need for a vocabulary as intellectual as that of prose. It has been steadily pushed back on its true inner self and function. It abandons rhetoric and becomes like the actress, low voiced and even monotoned. It is rather ashamed of colour and the palpable devices of rhetoric it abhors. It even fights shy of epithet, certainly of those brave accumulated epithets which enliven the pages of Shakespeare. It has given up palaces and culture and gone to peasants' huts to learn their speech. Poetry in the person of John Synge eavesdropping on peasants to catch the true accent of poetical speech is a rarely humorous spectacle.

Spenser and Milton are truly romantic, but they hold tenaciously to their office as instructors, preachers, thinkers and statesmen. They did not abandon the world to the politician. Blake first astonishingly attacked intellect in art, and law in government. He vehemently hated the schools with their institutional and rationalistic tendencies - Milton the poet and Reynolds the painter. The history of the sister art of

We may remember the eavesdropping on the peasants in the barn in Balzac's Country Doctor. But that was for their matter more than their speech.
painting illustrates something of the same evolutionary process from imitation to interpretation, and from interpretation to the modern anarchy.

Poets here and there will protest against the delimitation of their functions. Some will have it that there is nothing in nature or thought they cannot imitate or transmute. But this very process of transmuting philosophic truth into poetry has led to a great deal of tortured poetry of the schools, and that it has placed an excessive strain on the language is proved by even Shakespeare's comparative failure in this kind. His philosophic poetry, whether it is found in the Lover's Complaint or in the Sonnets or in his dramas is clearly a learned curiosity and no more. We shall have later on to examine the sort of special philosophic jargon the Elizabethans employ for this purpose. It is also clear that the substance of a modish philosophy may be conveyed by poets to their age. Indeed poets cannot avoid the implicit avowal of such philosophy. The snare is in the explicit treatment of a passing phase of philosophy or science. Tennyson fared little better than Shakespeare in his attempt to poetise the current philosophy. Shelley was too deeply read in Plato to renounce the doctrine of the poet's "teaching the truth of things". He says that "Shakespeare, Dante and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power". We all recognise the truth of this, but Shelley would, no doubt agree that it is when their masters are not consciously
philosophising that they are great. When they are direct teachers they often, like Lucretius, fail as poets. His own example bears this out. Tennyson was the last of the great poets who took it upon themselves to expound the current philosophy and science. The world of poetry has shrunk enormously. It is no longer coextensive with the activities of the human mind. From Keats' Sleep and Poétry which challenges the cosmic view of the poet's office to Yeats' similar repudiation of knowledge and ideas ("Literature is dying of ideas" he says somewhere) we see the same rapid differentiation of function. Sociology may be implicit in Mr. Wilfred Gibson's Daily Bread. It is not presented to us nakedly. So with the national spirit. In the eighteenth century England is still a unity. Its culture has a massive front, not yet eaten away by alien and subversive creeds and cosmopolitan pessimisms. The spiritual maladies were, surprisingly, not yet let loose on man. Settled laws and a proud antiquity - these are its dominant notes.

Not unconnected with this reading of the function of the arts and this movement towards the primitive, is the suspicion and contempt of learning and culture (middle-class culture, it is called) which is not at all confined to proletarian and insurgoent forces. The neo-catholics, if we may use that compendious term, are heart and soul engaged in this warfare. They reinforce earlier more mystical or rationalistic attacks. Wordsworth's Prélude is as we saw the first orderly repudiation, from the poet's point of view (and poet to him is complete man) of learning.
learning and culture in the old senses. His attack on the old forms of speech and culture in the *Préludé* Book XIII is almost alarmingly modern and subversive. He sneers at "men adroit in 'speech' who belong to the 'talking' world", and develops an attack which is not very different from Tolstoy's and later anarchists' on the middle-class culture of those who "flattering self-conceit with words".

That, while they most ambitiously set forth

**Extrinsique** Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
Whereby society has parted man
From man, neglect the universal heart"

But "Men may be found of other mould than these
Who are their own upholders, to themselves
Encouragement and energy and will
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
As nature passion dictates."

And yet we are told by Sir Henry Newbolt in the Report published recently English Teaching in England, that the modern workers in shop and factory and mine find Words-
worth's middle-class world hopelessly alien to them. They prefer Walt Whitman who 'begins the world anew', who discards altogether the old modes of phraseology and of feeling, which come down from the Renaissance. The quotations above, (and his prose *Lettres* to *Noble Lord* etc.), seem to show that if his world was alien to that of the modern proletarian, his theories are explosive enough to please our present-day *enragés*. Blake, as has been remarked, expressed in more splenetic outbursts his dislike of academic culture. Tolstoy even more savagely, and with that almost Biblical impressiveness, included the ordinary arts as practised in middle class society in the same time-wasting and hypnotic, conscience-deadening categories as tobacco and drink. The common man poisons himself /
himself by the latter, the refined hypnotises himself by the
sensuous appeal of the arts. Neitsche in his Birth of
Tragedy had accounted for the flowering of Greek Art in
much the same way, without reference to conscience. Taedium
vitae was sufficient explanation. The relevance of this
account, if it be not overdrawn, of modern feeling on art,
lies in the fact that amid a welter of movements and school
influences, two great and hostile tendencies appear. There
is the traditional imitative school in which we must place
not only Mr. Watson but Mr. Yeats, for all the fresh life he
has given to the beautiful old themes and manner and of course
Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Bridges and Mr. De La Mare, Flecker
and Trench and others. There are degrees of imitiveness.
Mr. Hewlitt and Mr. Chas. Daughtry represent the extreme.
In the traditional school we see the old phrases and rhythms
refashioned, the old delight in the old words, the old
curiosa felicitas and venerable but ever-pleasing devices.
In the other main school we have the poets who challenge
tradition and lean to anarchy. On looking closer into
their reputable work, we discover usually more of tradition
that they profess. How could it be otherwise? It will
be for the next age, or the next after the next, to say whether
their protest was, amid such clamour and mere disorderliness,
on the whole a fruitful demonstration.

In conclusion, one remembers the old and academic
debate some thirty years ago when Utopias were much discussed
how /

see - p. 17
how the poets, novelists and artists generally would fare when social bureaucracy has covered the earth — when the law's delays and so many of the pangs and shocks endured by mortals as are to be laid at the door of our present social system are removed. In the face of world-politics today such imaginings appear a grim jest, and yet men like the late Mr. Snow and Mr. Bellamy (in his Looking Backward) seriously discussed the matter. It being recognised that the poet and artist having subsisted imaginatively since the world began on the emotions aroused by war, love-lust and blood-lust, how will they thrive when these wicked adventures are no more? Will the interpretation of nature and the contemplation of the beautiful be enough? There will still be, we are told, the soul's adventures. But what a pale copy of the old bodily encounter! One thing the Great War has done, it has assured the poets that the raw material of their art is in no danger of giving out.

Language, the diction used by the poet, is the faithful shadow of his art, and to the connoisseur nothing is more interesting than to watch the changing fashions in this kind. From the eager endeavour after classical or Italian finery in phrase at the Renaissance to the extreme modishness of slang and the worst brutalities of speech today, we can witness the most startling changes. And this is clear to us, that language is as sensitive to variation of aesthetic outlook as any other element of poetic technique.

Sometimes

See also Oscar Wilde's The Artist under Socialism. Dr. Leete of Bellamy's Romance explains how his Utopians nourish their sense of art on the tales of the wicked past when dynasties and classes fought and bled.

To Shakespeare the phrases, the "glowing rhetoric" seem to have been all-important in the fashioning of the sonnet — (see Nos. ) But he is attacking a rival, and his attitude is not to be taken as critical.
Sometimes one is tempted to think it is most sensitive of all. We shall begin by describing in brief fashion the making of the polite language, and by language we do not, as Wordsworth seems to have done (he is ambiguous) mean the vocabulary only but phrase, idiom, syntax, and grammar.
In his preface to an edition of Sidney's poems, Mr. John Drinkwater describes the bewilderment of the poet who feels the impulse to sing, and yet lacks the inspiration and aid of a single great voice before him. It is difficult for us to realise the sad case of such a poet. It was Chaucer's case however, and he was driven to foreign fields for that aid and comfort of previous achievement which all artists crave for. It is not merely or chiefly the themes of poesy which are lacking in such a case. Neither the rhythms which the youthful poet cons in his heart are there, nor are the speech-moulds ready with adaptable and approved poetic phrase. It is easy for our modern sans-culottes, our Whitmans and Sassoons to demide this view of the art, and to say that adapted and approved poetic phrase is the one thing the poet should avoid, - that the poet should speek from his heart in his own customary language without regard to tradition, but the history of poetry gives little countenance to this view. There is no use appealing to the example of the ballad, for that naive species is as full of conventional, albeit unrefined phraseology as any other recognised species. The early Elizabethan poets were not quite destitute of poetic speech modes however, and even if they had been, they had a prose literature before them which was as rich a storehouse of poetic phrase as many an era of professed poetry provides. One could understand the shameful rhythmical poverty of the early Tudor age. Even after the publication of Chaucer in 1526 and again in 1532, we /
we can understand the plea that this great poet was presented in such slovenly and erroneous guise that he did positive harm to the verse of the poets who surrounded the court of Henry VIII. But we can only marvel at the equally slow growth of the true language of poetry. When modern writers from Tennyson to Mr. Watson are proud to rifle the old romancers and chroniclers for their phraseology, why should Barclay, Googe, Surrey and Wyatt, and even Sackville and Sidney not have done the same? Why, are we to profess pleased surprise when we find in the pages of these poets a growing, if intermittent stream of cadenced and individual expression, and why, must we ascribe that growth to the study of foreign models alone? Whatever the reason, it is a fact that rhythmical expertness and linguistic expertness proceed pari passu - that where the rhythm shows an advance on the lumbering structures of the poets of the times, the diction as a rule shows a corresponding advance. This bears out Coleridge’s theory that the excitement of verse is normally accompanied by a heightening of the other elements of poetical technique, and chiefly of diction.

We must be on our guard against the heresy that the mere accumulation of handsome classical or foreign phrases or words such as we meet with in the Faerie Queene marks in itself the process of the 'making' of the poetical language. In a sense the very title of this chapter begs the question. We now recognise that uncouth and beggarly as Skelton's tongue, or worse, Googe's appears, that tongue so

See Mr. Watson's naive confession of his robberies in the preface to his Muse in Exile.
so far as mere vocabulary is concerned could be made to serve the aims of the higher forms of poetry. With a very small infusion of fine phrase, their language could be used for the highest purpose of the poetical art. It is rather in the sewing together of words or phrases that they are lamentably deficient. And as a matter of fact there existed in their day and had existed for nearly a century that used high and senselessly ornate language, for high purposes, which we call the 'aureate'. Poets had the learned words of eloquent discourse, but they used them without art and barbarously, and they kept them for that definite species of style which well nigh succeeded in establishing perpetual breach between learned and vernacular poetry. But apart from that high style which they all sighed after, it is strange that the reading of Malory or even Froissart did not urge them towards the use of tolerable, though plain cadenced English. For Malory's language is a very plain one and yet so subtly cadenced as to move us to this day as few languages do. No doubt the feeble and constrained prosody forbade the free and natural combinations of phrases which are the glory of the prose romancers. Prose was free to be natural. Verse was not, and would not be until the courtly rhythms and cadenced speech of the continent had been introduced by the poets of Henry VIII's later years. Still we should remember that although in the later years of Elizabeth we are approaching an age of honied eloquence, in which poets vie with each other in the introduction of fine phraseology from abroad, we should remember, that that phrase was shortlived. By the turn of the century the school of Jonson and Donne is unloading a great part of the fine importations and talking very clearly and
and frankly in the language of cultured gentlemen. For them the language, the actual vocabulary and idioms of the pre-Shakespearian poets was sufficient, though of course, they use that language with an art quite beyond the 'ragged rhymers' whom Spenser bludgeons in the Tears of the Muses. When we talk of the 'making of the poetical tongue, we have in view merely that finer and more copious language which became traditional from Spenser's time and is properly used in the higher species of writing.

Skelton is dubiously regarded as a bold experimenter in doggerel metres and as a mere "pelter of words." Like Hawes, Douglas, and others, he pays tribute to the 'Poets of Anciency', The girl in Philip Sparrow says -

I am but a young maid;
And cannot, in effect,
My style as yet direct.
With English words elect.
Our natural tongue is rude
And hard to be enwowed
With polished terms lusty,
Our language is so rusty
So cankered and so full
Of frowards, and so dull,
That if I would apply
To write ornately
I wot not, where to find
Terms to serve my mind.

Nevertheless the laureate poet of Oxford has given us specimens of the aureate style which can compare with any other efforts in that amazing style. Sometimes as in his morality for Magnificence, he gives us the styles side by side. His ordinary satire work displays an extraordinary liveliness in mere words - plenty of shrewd and bitter vernacular speech intermingled with learned monstrosities. The pages of Rabelais remind us of this terrifying rabblement of words /
words with never a phrase that has pretensions to civility. Bits of Latin and French float about in the scum and only the bitter ironic intention warns us of a purpose underlying this unsavoury mess of words. His feat after all is just Butler's feat a century later. His comic rhymes, his learned absurdities and his walter of low English and the ingenious inventive capacity, all remind us of the cavalier poet. He looks mad, but he is the master of his art and that art consisted in a mad dance of words gathered up from all sources.

What Skelton did then was to mingle the two styles, the aureate and the vulgar, and the device will again be resorted to by satirists who desire to stab the objects of their fury in an atmosphere of the grotesque, and amid the sheer revelry of words. That he could attain pathetic effect from the same source - as in Philip Sparrow - is an added laurel, though we must add that in the more pathetic passages of that work, the poet becomes prettily vernacular.

I played with him Tittle-tattle
And fed him with my spattle,
With his bill between my lips,
It was 'my pretty Phips!'  
Mary a pretty kurna
Had I of his sweet muss!

But it may be admitted that for the general advancement of the English tongue in civility, Skelton's example was of little use, - or as little use as his experiments in doggerel were in prosody. We get a glimpse of his ideas on style and the language from the passage already referred to in which he pays the conventional tribute to the 'makers' of the past -

Gower's English is old
And of no value is told

Only for his 'matter' is the moral Gower now considered.

Also /
Also John Lydgate
Writeth after a higher rate
But he is diffuse and difficult to understand, he writes so 'haut;'

Chaucer's matter is 'solacious and commendable'
and "His English well allowed" (praised)

For as it is employed
There is no English void,
At those days much commended
But "now men would have amended
His English; whereat they bark
And war all thy work."

In short, when he is not eccentric, Skelton stands for
neat and customary English, not too 'haut' or difficult.
Here he differs from Hawes and others who were lost in
admiration of the 'aromatic eloquence of Gower, although
as we shall see Hawes really marks the desertion of the
aurate manner, and the movement towards the artful speech
of Sackville and Spenser.

Whilst the 'aurate language flourished, the old
epic strain of diction persisted as a mere literary fashion
in alliterative poems right down to the latter half of the
fifteenth century. The vocabulary of alliterative
poetry often surprises us by its comparative richness.
No doubt the necessity of having three alliterated words
in the line caused the poet to rack his brains for words.
He was imitating an antique style and it behoved him to sprink-
kle his work with venerable words. The anonymous poem
Life and Death for example has a richer vocabulary than
the general run of poems in Tottell's Miscellany. Some
words indeed have not yet been explained.

He abode before Barathron that berne while he
liked,
That was ever merk as midnight with mourning and
sorrow.
He cast a light on the land as leaves of the sun.
Then /
Then cried that King with a clear steven
'Pull open your Ports you Princes within!'

This poet got most of his antique words from the study of
Piers Plowman, but there is a residuum which may have
come to him from our ancestral poetry.

There, over that host eastward I looked
Into a hoohish bank, the brightest of others
That shimered and shone as the sheer heaven
Through the light of a lady that longed therein.

This has some quality of the romance we find in the
(probably) contemporary Morte d'Arthur of Mallory. Such
colour and richness of language as it possesses is very
different from the merely faciindious richness of such
works as Hawes' Passyyme of Pleasure. Hawes is in a
different tradition, that of Chaucer and his followers.
Like most of these followers, he protests overmuch his
barrenness.

I now simple and most rude
And naked in deprop'd eloquence
For dullness Rhetoric doth exclude
Wherefore, in making I lack intelligence

and

* an obvious imitation of Laylands;
  A voice loud in that light, to Lucifer cried
  Princes of this palace, pryest undo the gates etc.

* of Selcuth gems: brame, berne, frake, drurie, menie,
  Yeme weeds, no man upon mould, etc. are familiar to
  readers of the old alliterative romance. The Peas 298

& Again at stanza 298 -
  O Gower! fountain most aromatic!
I thee now lack for to depure
My rudenes with thy lusty rhetoric
And also I miss as I am sure
My master Chaucer! to make the cure
Of my pen; for he was expert
In eloquent terms, subtle and covert.
And yet he is not so naked, as witness -

The Chamber, where she held her Consistory,
The dew aromatic did oft degout,
Of fragrant flowers, full of delicacy;
That all ill airs did incense out.
A carbuncle there was, that all about
Enlumined the chamber, both day and night
Methought, it was a heavenly sight.

After the style of his school, he scatters his page with
the most admired carbuncles of aureate wit, facund pulchritude, connoctude, habitacle, beryl clarified, but he has also a fair number of the words and phrases Spenser adopted - devoir, encheason, delicate and dulcet complacence, covetise, apparrarelled royalty, chivalrous prowess, carnal frailty. Indeed no one reading Hawes can doubt that Spenser had caught something of his language, which is by no means mere aureation. On the contrary every now and then we get surprising phraseological experiments - mixed up of course, with a great deal of crude aureate stuff - which we are not likely to meet again till the last decade of the century.

The Scottish Chaucerians were richer in language as in other things, than their English brethren. The vocabulary of Gawain Douglas's Prologue to his Aeneid is really astonishingly rich not merely in the words and variants but in the rude relishing sound of the /

His use of the -al suffixes is notable: inferial, divinal, infinal, etc. Like many other 'minors' and even 'minimists' he is more interesting, technically considered, than the major poets. Critics have culled from his work a score or so of aureate 'carbuncles' and inferred that he was of that school. On the contrary he is moving towards a truly artful style and has not very much aureation. His case resembles that of Armstrong in the eighteenth century who by reason of a frigid phrase (gelid cistern - cold bath) has been regarded as the monstrous offspring, linguistically, speaking of James Thomson. His language however, is - when he is not speaking as a doctor - rather pure. In his Sketches and Essays he protests vigorously against novelties of diction.
the words. An uncouth jargon, the southern reader may
at first sight be inclined to call this language, but
on closer examination, he will admit the vigour and rude
plenty of it. Douglas was ambitious of introducing his
nake countrymen to the new culture. Almost ludicrous
are the mythological descriptions in the Prologues to
his Aeneid which he expands beyond all reason. Coleridge
might have cited such a passage as the following
to disprove one of Wordsworth's contentions - it exhibits
an even ruder language than the passage he chose for
that purpose (II. 11.) from the Faerie Queene -

Eous the steid; with ruby harnys red,
Abur the sey lyftis furth his hed
Of collour soyr, and sumdeli brown as berrv,
Porto alightyn and glaid our Emynery
The flank outbrastyng at his noys therlyys;
So fast photon with the quhynp hym quylylyys,
To rot Appollo hym faederis goldyn char,
That shrowdeth all the hevyrnyys and the ayr

This surely is a vernacular enough rendering of classical
mythology! Language is a curious amalgam of
grandiose and dialect elements. Sometimes it seems
the mere outpourings of the Latin dictionary without sense
or reason -

Defundand from hys sege etheryall
Glaid influent aspeccis cellicall;
Before hys regal his magnificens
Mysty vapour upspringand sweet risens,

Dunbar is not so fantastic. There are 'aureatious'

enough in poems like The Thrissil and the Rose, but it
is not senselessly 'aureate'. He has a good ear and
being a considerable poet, he is saved in his professedly
aureate /

Prof. Skeat says "Partly from his profuse
employment of Northern English words, and partly from
the freedom with which he introduces Latin and
French terms, the worthy bishop has succeeded in
producing many lines which puzzle even the experienced"
Specimens of Engl. Lit. XIX.
aurate work, from mere jargon. Even his poem to the
Virgin Mary (Ave Maria Gracia plena), which is an extreme
instance of aurate work is saved from being mere jingle and
nonsense by the sense of harmony. In his purely native
work, the Scotch dialect is used with the richest colour.
The Twa Marrit Women is obscure - as it well might be -
but its language is amazingly rich.

It must be admitted that Hawes' auritations are
very moderate and in fact, except when he comes before
the curtain and addresses the reader, he is not truly
to be described as of the aurate school, but rather as
an English poet who has a propensity for 'learned accre-
tions'. In the reign of Henry VIII we see the
'aurate' manner disappearing. Skelton keeps the two
manners, the aurate and the excessively vernacular quite
distinct. Surrey in his translation of the early books
of the Aeneid - a work which might have tempted him to
indulge in undue classicism, is thoroughly vernacular, not
so stubbornly or so richly as Chapman in his Homer, but
enough to suggest a resemblance with William Morris' dealing with Virgil.

It was the time when graunted from the goddes.
The first step roses most sweete in every roll
Lot in my dream before mine eyes, me thought,
With rufull chere I sawe where Hector stood;
Out of whose eyes there gushed streames of tears,
Drawn at a rate as he of late had be

As an effort in blank verse Surrey's translation is
considered rather primitive. If the ear does not in
Professor Saintsbury's words "quiver for the expected tip"
of the rhyme, it is not gratified by any great swell and
roll /

Used of the eighteenth century blank verse poets -
not of Surrey. The phrase can obviously be
put to comical use.
roll of the rhythm. But the language is good central English with at last, no vestige of the distemper of aureation. There is not much trace of Chaucer in it, little resemblance, except such as will exist between poets who use the best part of the English tongue freely. Surrey has a gift of sweet and cadenced phrase as we know from his other verse, but in his Aeneid translation, he has refrained from using it. The toil of translation, the unusual metre and perhaps respect for his original, prevented him from any display of that prettiness of language which he had acquired from study of foreign models. Hence the air of boorishness which sometimes reminds us of Chaucer's treatment of classical story—as in the Knight's Tale for example.

It was in the reign of Henry VII that the main stream of classical learning began to reach our shores and we were happy in having such a public-spirited band of pioneers as Cambridge then contained. Public spirit,
always a rare thing, seems to have wholly inspired these men. Ascham's words, explaining his use of the vernacular in Toxophilus are well-known - but we must excuse ourselves for quoting hackneyed critical passages - "Though to have written it in another tongue, had been both more profitable for my study and also more honest for my name, yet I can think my labour well bestowed, if with a little hindrance of my profit and name, may come any furtherance to my pleasure or commodity of the gentlemen and yeomen of England for whose sake I took the matter in hand. - And as for the Latin or Greek tongue, everything is so excellently done in them, that none can do better; in the English tongue contrary, everything in a manner so meanly both for the matter and handling, that no man can do worse." In Scotland Gavain Douglas deplored the poverty-stricken language into which he had to turn Virgil "at the request of one lord of renowne" asks -

Quhy suld I then, with dull forhede and wane
With rude engine and barrand, emptie brane
With bad harsh speche and lewit barbour tong
Presume to write quhar thy suet bell is rong
Or contirfait so precious wordis dear?

Ascham asserts his puritanism in the matter of speech. The authority of Aristotle is cited to urge writers to "speake as the common people do. Many English writers have done so, but using straunge words as latin, french, and italian, do make all thinges darke and harde."
The Tudor writers had a sense of shame in face of continental achievement. The classics filled them with a feeling of the hopelessness of emulation. However there were not wanting authors of a mere liberal stamp. George Pettie in /
in his *Petite Palâce* of Pettie his Pleasure answers Cheke thus—"If they (imported terms) should be all counted inkpot terms, I know not how we shall speak anything without blacking our mouths with ink; for what word can be more plain than this word (plain), and yet what can be more near to the Latin? What more manifest than (manifest)? and yet in a manner Latin. But you will say long use hath made these words current and why may not we do as much for these words which we shall now devise? Why should we not do as much for posterity as we have received of the antiquity?" To which there is no answer. Still to understand their attitude, one has only to look at a page of Stephen Hawes "one of the four columnar marbles, the four allegorical poems on which rests the *Faerie Queene*", as Mrs. Browning once said. Professor Saintsbury would not allow that Spenser owes Hawes more than a very small royalty. We are not sure however that the royalty is not fairly large in respect of diction. This diction is an agglomeration of the rotund latinisms, which poets of a certain kind again and again try to acclimatise in English poetry, and even in English prose. Hawes is in no respect outlandish here, except in the fact that he is not artist enough to carry off the thing. Such words as puleritude, facundious, tenebrous, sugratife, exornate, perdurable, celestine, occur in alarming numbers, but these words are of the kind that Giles Fletcher and Milton and the eighteenth century didactic poets, not to speak of later schools introduced in droves. It may be said /
said that until English foreswore the two copious use of such words, very little could be accomplished. And as a matter of fact Tottel's Miscellany is remarkable because it largely abandoned the habit, and contrived to show how English poetry partly by returning to the example of Chaucer, and partly by adopting some of the fine continental language of the sonnet, could be written without 'fyne rhetoric' on the one hand, or overmuch rusticity on the other. George Gascoigne in the first piece of critical writing we have, the Certayne Notes of Instruction, 1574, says - "eschew straunge words, or absolotea et inusitata unless the Theame do give just occasion; Marie, in some places a straunge worde doth drawe attentive reading, but yet I woulde have you therein to use discretion" and later "Therefore even as I have advised you to place all wordes in their naturall or most common and usuall pronunciation, so would I wishe you to frame all sentences in their mother phrase and proper Idiomew and yet sometimes (as I have sayd before) the contrarie may be borne, but that is rather where rime enforceeth, or per licentiam Poeticam, than it is otherwise lawfull or commendable." "This poetical license", he adds "is a shrewde fellow."

Hoby in the Introduction to his Courtier lays down the seemingly sound doctrine that only necessity, the actual lack of a word, is to justify borrowing, "and not to be sought for." Necessity for the artist in words is a very elastic term, but the age had small consideration for the artist as such. Is it conceivable, one surmises, that if the frowning doctrines of the Tudor purists had been accepted, if there had been no Tottel's Miscellany, no Induction, no Shepherd's Calendar with its /
its metrical and linguistic experiments, that English could have been got ready in time for the great age to be? Think of the interval, how short, between these narrow inhibitions we have quoted, and the writing of the early cantos of the Faerie Queene, and then of Shakespeare's early dramas! How was it that the English Language had so breathed and exercised itself in the intervening quarter of a century that the language of Hawes, Skelton, and Barclay and Googe, has become capable of conveying matter of such great import, of such profound spiritual value?

Without underrating French or even direct classical influences it is without doubt the influence of Italian added to that of Chaucer which chiefly made the change possible. One is tempted to descant on the inspiration of Italian, always predominant in moments of excessive animation in our Literature. Is it too much to say that in Chaucer's case the Italian influence made all the difference between convention and art, convention not only in fable and ornament, but in the turn of phrase, the density of syntax and the flexibility of the metre? Look for example at the opening stanza of the Clerk's Tale—rightly admired by Lowell. Here we might say is something accomplished which almost amounts to a miracle, and which almost with one stroke turns English into a civilised tongue, capable of responding musically to the slightest impulse of living emotion. The noble poise of the stanza, the adroit word and vowel arrangement, the varied rhythm and artful caesural pauses! The whole distinctive art of English poesy, we may contend, lies exposed in this stanza alone. For vivid /
vivid realism and energy of expression what can surpass such things as this taken from the Prologue to the Chanoun Yenances Tale —

"In the subberes of a toun" quod he
Lurkinge in hernes and in lynes blind
Whereas thise robbours and this theives by kind
Holden her privy fereful residence."

or for colour and animation, what picture can even equal the pursuit of the Fox in the Noune Pirestes Tale?

"And cryden 'Out! harrow! and waylaway!
Ha, ha, the foxi!' and after them they ran
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garland,
And walkin, with a distaff in his hand,
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
So were they fered for barking of the dogges
And shouting of the men and wimen eek,

or for rustic but not less remarkable manner take the first few lines of the Noune Pirestes Tale.

A poure wydwe somdel stope in age
Was whilome dwelling in a narwe cottage
Beside a grove, stondynge in a dale
This wydwe of which I telke you my tale
Syn thilke day that she was last a wyf
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf

For litel was hir catel and hir rente
By housbondrie of swich as God hire sente
She found herself, and eek hire doghtren two
Thre large sowes hadde she and namo
Thre keen and eek a sheep that highte malle
Full rooty was her boure and eek hire halle.

This we may think is the English Wordsworth had in mind, but how much more fluid and vivid it is than anything in his much-praised Daniel, or for that matter in his own simple verse! Dionysius of Halicarnassus said that all lay in the ordering of the words not the words themselves. Here is the demonstration! Masefield can sometimes come near such unpretentious art as in the opening of The Widow of the Bye-Street.

But alas! English poetry had to travel many a weary mile before Chaucer’s secret was again discovered. Chaucer owed something of his vivacity in his use of the vernacular partly —

the example /
example of the Italian novellas. Here he discovered how native speech may be brightly and happily used, and with admired skill he conveyed the style into his English Tales. No doubt the Elizabethans owed something of their colour and vivacity in vernacular usage to the same cause - intermediately through translation.

We shall find Wyatt and other Court poets eagerly imitating Chaucer's phraseology, especially that of the Troilus and Cressyde and the Knightes Tale. The Chaucerian element in Wyatt's poems, notably his three Satires is very great indeed, and the borrowing is all in the direction of the vivid or quaint colloquial phrase, with which the Troilus abounds. Whilst it may be granted that the Troilus and Cressyde, the Knightes Tale and the Clerkes Tale, in parts, show definite Italian influence, an influence which has been fully instanced by various scholars, it will not be admitted that the easier, wholly delightful and vernacular style which appears in fabliau-like The Nome Preestes Tale, and in fact the greater part of The Clerkes Tale and the Prologue, shows any admixture of actual Italian phrase. Chaucer has the two styles and they often appear side by side in the same poem. But we may still think that he would not have arrived at that easy dexterity in the vernacular style so soon, if he had not been exercised in the foreign schools, and chiefly the Italian. This is not unreasonable if we compare the expression of the Romaunt which is certainly homely to the point of being hardly literary at all, but mere doggerel in parts. The Boke of the Duchesse, written wholly under French influence, shows some advance in expressiveness. But the moment we begin to trace another influence than that of the French, we perceive not only
marked improvement in elevated and philosophic passages (which now become more numerous) but that the poet has become absolute master of the familiar style, has in fact attained a mastery which has never been surpassed. The *Triolus* shows him most elevated, emulating with success the fine style of his Italian models though ever and anon dropping into his shrewd native manner, especially in his imagery. The *Clerkes Tale* is throughout, as the pious theme demanded much more rustic. There is less philosophy and far less fine language. But the syntax is so free, the simple words so exquisitely and naturally poured forth that we at once recognise in it a high artistic achievement, and not being able to believe in such beauty, simply as it is dressed, being the result of anything but costly and ever-vigilant art, we think that, but for his courting in the higher and lower styles taught him by the Italian Chaucer would never have come by this wonderful style at all. So much is common ground among the majority of critics. The vernacular strain was pursued in the fifteenth century by the more subterranean or local forms of poetry, by the ballad and the religious plays. There is, in many of the former, remains of a certain decayed finery in phrases here and there, a conventional element which suggests an art come down in life rather than springing straight from the artless people. When the *Ballad* was revised by Percy, Scott, Coleridge and the rest in the romantic age, these writers had the greatest difficulty in keeping out meretricious or sophisticated 'poetical' expressions and one may be pardoned for thinking that this was always the case with the English ballad. Meikle's *Cumnor Hall* which fired Sir Walter's youthful imagination is a good case in point. The poet striving to keep the balance between supposed artless strains /
strains of the true ballad and his native eighteenth century phraseology affords an excellent study in kinds. As for Scott, he frankly gives over the attempt and in the Bridal of Triermain and the Lord of the Isles provides the most awful jumble of false ancient and gimcrack modern imaginable. Still the ballad in the fifteenth century was free from the ambition of phrase which was converting poetry into a maze of aureate expressions. It has not the vernacular and familiar cunning of Chaucer, which is, despite its outward seeming, an artful manner. An analogy holds between Chaucer's familiar style and Bunyan's. Bunyan's was not the unlearned style springing straight from colloquial usage which it is often imagined to be. It is really what Professor Earle called a "quaintly figured" Puritan style, and artful in its own way.

The religious plays of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are nowadays praised for their comely but plain modes of speech. One can point to speeches in them which rise to a real height of dignified feeling, and yet use only the plainest language. Such are the admired passages in Everyman. But again, it is useless to explore the fifteenth and sixteenth century moralities for artful use of familiar expression. It is not there. If we do not find that however, we sometimes, as in Skelton's Magnificence find the same play housing the two styles - the dull vernacular style and the extravagant and learned poetic style of language. Just at that moment English was in serious danger of becoming bilingual. We cannot say that the danger finally passed till the great dramatists settled the matter in Elizabeth's reign.

The points we would stress in this brief survey are that the vernacular style is as capable of high art as the

*eighteenth century imitations of the ballad are often most ludicrous, - See for example Shenstone's Jimmy Dawson. In such an atmosphere did Percy compile his Religions.*
grand manner, and that we hardly get that even in the ballad or morality, much as we admire these things for their own sake, and secondly that if the Court poets associated in Totell's Miscellany had not gone abroad for models, for themes and technique, and so broken the evil spell of 'aureate' poetry, the Elizabethan dramatists might have arrived to find the language utterly unexercised in what we may call the natural art and modes of speech. It is therefore with feelings of reverence that we turn to the Tottell Miscellanists, to Wyatt, Surrey, Grimmel, Dyer and the anonymous band who round off the volume. And we would again remark that such public as was not unaware that a considerable change was being deliberately planned by these authors. They were not writing in the dark. Tottell was as deliberately carrying out a literary programme as the Leicester House literary people in the next generation or — on a much less scale of course, — the poets of the Pleiade in their own generation. Very soon after its publication, we find evidence that the reading public was aware of the change attempted by the writers of this famous collection. Puttenham's words are well-known — "In the latter end of the same king's reign (Henry VIII.) sprung up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt, the elder and Henry, Earl of Surrey, were the two chieftains, who having travelled into Italy, and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesy, as novices newly crept out of the schools of Dante Ariosto and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar Poesy, from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be said to be the first reformers of our English metre and style"
As a matter of fact there is scant trace of either Dante or Ariosto in these poets. It was the Petrarchan sonnets with their selected phrase and courtly feeling which these fine spirits had the honour of bringing into England. No one will quarrel with Sir Sydney Lees' statement of our debt to France in that age. But his thesis seems to many people to be pushed to extremes. "Paris presents itself as the chief mission-station of Renaissance culture."

One may feel that he makes too much of actual French influences on Wyatt and Surrey, certainly on the former. The influence was there, but it was at first rather a matter of imitation of verse form and sentiment and conceits than of phrase. And after all the most glaring defect of English poetry was its lack of polished phrase. Coleridge was no doubt right in holding that a heightened metric involves a heightened language. But we cannot discriminate between French and Italian influences in noting such hopeful phraseological novelties as undoubtedly appear in these Court Sonneters.

These hopeful appearances may be catalogued as:

1. Most significant - the abandonment of the aureate language and the alliterated style.
2. A new individual note of sentiment and a personal phraseology.
3. An occasional deft satiric touch with a feeble attempt at conciseness and epigram.
4. Fitful appearance of classical figures - mostly rudimentary, illustrations from some incident or name in classical story - here and there a touch of classical allusion.
5. A certain amount of embellished speech, but a rigid avoidance of the sugar'd rhetoric of the past age. A few notable compounds appear like dart-hurling death, people-pestered London, etc.

It is a matter of comparison of course, and the ordinary /
ordinary reader is probably more struck by the crude homely expression of Tottel's Miscellany than by the advance made towards cultured speech. As we have said their chief praise is to have abandoned the stupid aureate style.

Lastly - but important - these writers have learned to respect grammar. They avoid anacoluthon and the hideous deformities which arise from uncertainty as to idioms and syntax and the meaning and position of our difficult English prepositions and conjunctions. They are not always successful in reducing these particles to order, but they make the attempt. Puttenham, already quoted, refers to Wyatt and Surrey as "the two chief lanterns of light to all others that have since employed their pens upon English poesic" and says that "their conceits are lofty, their styles stately and their conveyance clearly, their terms proper, their metre sweet and well-proportioned, in all imitating very naturally and studiously their Maister Francis Petrarch". The Petrarch sonnets by uncertain authors are not very uncouth - here and there are fluent and courtly phrases.

O Petrarke hed and prince of poets all
Whose lively gift and flowing eloquence
Well may we seek, but finds not how or whence
So rare a gift with thee did rise and fall
Peace to thy bones and glory immortal.

Here is a density and coherence and harmony we have hardly been used to since Chaucer's attempts in the same direction.

Another Petrarchan sonnet shows a greater sense of art -

Each line of just proportion to her height
Her colour freshe and mingled with such slight
As though the rose sate in the lilies lap.

For this sonnet we may claim that here we have almost at a step arrived at such expertise as the Elizabethans reached in this kind. We do not claim for the matter of the piece an /
an advance in aesthetic. It is the conventional art, but conventions, work in the schools, was precisely what English needed then. The late Mr. Wyndham was inclined to underrate the work of the Tottel Miscellaneist. His aim—like that of Sir Sydney Lee—was to show that what of courtliness and beauty came to England in Elizabethan times was due to Rosard and his fellows. No doubt the later company of cultured poets, Sydney, Spenser, and Lodge looked to Paris as the ''chief mission station'' of culture. Miss A. K. Foxwell—Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat vol. II p. 6.n. says, "I differ from Sir Sidney Lee in the question of French influence." Miss Foxwell concedes more of this influence in the case of Surrey. She dissents from Sir Sidney Lee's view (French Renaissance in England VIII, 110) that "It was in France rather than in Italy that both Wyatt and Surrey acquired a substantial measure of the Italian taste and sympathy— At every turn of our story, Paris presents itself as the chief mission station of Renaissance culture." But Tottel shows that Tudor speech with a little assistance from fine rhetoric could express with some fluency the ideas of the Petrarchan sonnet. Critics have sometimes been led astray by the archaic strain and the lumbering long measures of certain poems in the Miscellany. When one of these uncouth pieces occurs before a more polished one, we certainly note the step from clownishness to something like grace. The thing called Against a Cruell Woman for example is a miracle of clowning—the jolting measure and dumpish phrase and silly alliteration. But in some even of these poems of archaic strain we find traces of the new phraseology—e.g.—in All Worldly Pleasures Fade.

The Spring is come, the goodly nymphs now dance in every place
Thus hath the yere most pleasantly of late y-changed his face,
Hope for no immortality, for wealth will wear away
As we may learn by every yere, yea hours of every day

For /
For Zephyrus doth mollify the cold and blustering winds
The Somer's drought doth take away Ye spring out of our minds.

The old measure is not incompatible with cultural expression.
Elsewhere in these poems, flakes of good phrase occur like
Wyatt's -

Man's wandering will and doubtful life
or
It (the river) trilleth down with still and subtle course.

or Grimmel's "Amid such peares, and solemn sights, in case convenient time
You can (good lady) spare, to read a rural poet's ryme.

which gives quite the modern touch.

The Reader of Elizabethan poetry knows how often
the renaissance idea of curious workmanship occurs, and
how in sonnets, and elsewhere the poets love to speak of them
:selves as craftsman, limners, painters and so on. It is
one of the renaissance motifs. The Pléade encouraged the
use of language and imagery taken from the arts and crafts.
The Elizabethans extended the vogue to include every
possible field of man's creative effort. In viewing
poetry as workmanship, not as a course in morals, they made
a great advance. This motif - borrowed of course, from
abroad - is discovered in Tottell in more than one poem, and
is expressed in not too clownish a manner.

By heaven's high gift incase revived were
Lysip, Apellas, and Homer the Great;
The most renowned, and each of them sans pere
In gravingyng, paintingg, and the Poet's feat
Yet could they not, for all their vein divine
In marble, table, paper more or less
With cheezil, pencil or with poynet fyme
So grave, so paynt, or so by style expresse
(Though they beheld of every age and land
The fayrest books, in every tong contrived
To frame a fourn, and to direct their hand)
Of noble prince, the lively shape describ'd
As in the famous work, that Enilda hight
The naamkouth Virgil hath set forth in sight.

Here /
Here we suggest is the beginnings of the art language of poetry. We are in a new aesthetic world, not far from that of the eighteenth century when poets thought of the Aeneid in terms of the sister arts and not mainly as instruction or moral. But the significant thing is the phraseology and the denser syntax. We are worlds away from the early Tudor poetry. The sonnet, despite Wordsworth's protest has often been scorned. But not the least of its good offices has been that of tutoring English in conciseness and mastery of phrase, as it did in Tudor times. One cannot relax in the sonnet as in the diffuse mediaeval allegory, and one must strive for brilliance of phrasing. We see its almost dramatic effect on English style in these transition years. Its excellent effects on prosody have been pointed out by Professor Saintsbury.

Since Wyatt is the pioneer of the Totlel poets we may be pardoned for dwelling on 'some' features of his language. Wyatt is after Chaucer our first master of nervous and colloquial English. He was an excellent classical scholar, a profound student of Chaucer, and in close touch with all the literary movements on the Continent. Nature had given him a liking and a gift for ready, forcible, expression, and after he attained tolerable mastery of his metres - his stammering to which critics have taken exception belongs more to his early period, - he attained a real and not merely relative mastery of tense expression. The study of Chaucer was common to the Court, but no one so immersed himself in the early master as did Wyatt. Miss Foxwell asserts that all the principles of his somewhat rugged versification can be derived from Pynson's edition of 1526. We seem to mark the decided improvement in his technique generally from the time of the later /

-Turberville, who could not write, says of him
-Our mother tongue by him hath got such
light
As ruder speech therby is banish'd quight.
later edition by Thynne in 1532.

His sonnets for example are full of Chaucerian reminiscence. No. 37 –

You that in love finde lucke and habundaunce
And live in lust and joyful jolitie,
Arise! for shame, do away your sluggardie
Arise, I say, do may some observaunce!

This contains echoes from the two works he enthusiastically studied, the Knightes Tale and Troilus and Cressseyde.

For may will have no sloggerdie or nyght

K.T. 1041,1041-2

Do wey your book rys up and lat as daunce
And lat us don to may some observaunce

T. & C. II,III, 2.

Wyatt's language is deliberately archaic and thoroughly English. He had the approval of the later critics, Gas-coigne and Puttenham. The former in his Epistle to the Reverend Divines Works, 1.5. says "I have always bene of opinion that it is not impossible eyther in Poemes or in Prose too write both compendiously and perfectly in our Englishe tongue – – – and therefore I have more faulted in keeping the olde English wordes (quamvis jam obsoleta) than in borrowing of other languages; such Epithets and Adjectives as smell of the Inkhorne." Puttenham likewise cautions the poet not to use big words "from the Latine inkhorne or borrowed of strangers ; the use of them is nothing pleasant". This critic approves the first two lines of Wyatt's Sonnet XII. –

I find no peare and all my warr is done
I fare and hope, I burn and friese like yse

because of their monosyllabic character, the character of the /
the sonnet throughout, comparing Petrarch's sonnet

Pace non trovo et non o da far guerra

of which Wyatt's is a translation, we may think the
English too unadorned. We may think that for poetry
of this kind, a sprinkling of handsome words is necessary.
But the Tudor writers thought otherwise. Gascoigne in
his Notes of Instruction advises the poet to "thrust as
few words of many syllables into your verse as may be"
alling as a reason that "the most ancient English words
are of one sillable." So Puttenham-"verses made all of
monosyllables do very well."

We have not the space to trace out Wyatt's numer-
ous phraseological obligations to Chaucer. They are
as numerous in the poems after 1556 as before. For
example the first stanza of the rather fine Though this
port-

Though this port; and I, thy servant true,
And thou thy self dost cast thy beams from high
From thy chief house, promising to renew
Both Joy and eke delight, behold yet how that I
Banished from my bliss, carefully do cry
"Help now, Cithrea, my lady dear
My fearful trust," an vogant la galere

is pure Chaucer, as in Troilus and Cresscyde 11 - 680.

And also blissful Venus well arrayed
Sat in her seventhe hous of heaven tho,
Disposed well.

and III - 1354-5

O Love, O charitie
Thy mother eke, Cithrea the swete.

In the late Penitential Psalm, the language of the Bible is
closely imitated or borrowed. Miss Foxwell claims for his
the Psalms "all the best qualities in Wiat" and even talks
of their "grandeur of language"

The Lord hath herd I say and sen me saynt
Under your hand, and piteth my distress;
He shall do mak my senses, by constraint.

Obey /
Obey the rule that reson shall express
When the deceyte of yower closing baite
Made them usurp and pourre in all excess

Shamed be they, all that so ly in whaite
To compass me, by missing of their prey;
Shame and rebuke redound to suche decayt.

The poet copies closely from the 1530 Psalter here. In assessing the various elements which went to the making of the poetical tongue, we must not forget the ever present and influence of "the Psalters/of the Bible as a whole." Sometimes Wyatt adopts the phrase of the 1530 Psalter, sometimes of the great Bible, and the difference between the language of the Psalms and of the Prologues which are paraphrased from Aretino is often considerable.

The Satires are masterly and exhibit the strongest traces of Chaucerian influence. The colloquial ease of Tralus and the Knights Tale is stamped on every line. The close study of Horace has added to the vivacity of the language. His own personality nevertheless shines through especially in those shrewd proverbial sayings of which he is so fond and which were to be a feature of Elizabethan work later on. Satire more than any other kind exercises a language in vernacular expression. In Wyatt's performances we note the revived use of a mass of such expression. Often rude enough as—

Grin when he laugheth that bearth all the sway or
None of these points would ever frame in me
or
This is the cause that I could never yet Hang on their sleaves that way, as thou mayest see,

"A chip of chance more than a pound of wit." Wyatt has been credited chiefly with having first introduced Petrarchan conceits into English. Some would regard this as a doubtful claim to fame, but there is no doubt that
that the sonnet did as much to exercise English in the choicer parts of poetic language as the satire did in the lower and shrewder parts. A critic says - "It is startling to find how inartistic Petrarch's intra-conceited style is at times when resolved into another language and robbed of the perfect grace of his setting."

It is true that we can better tolerate the enigmatic conceits of this kind when clothed in gracious words, the words of Shakespeare's sonnets or even Spenser's or Sidney's, garbed in the intolerably bare language which Wyatt had at command in his earlier period, the conceit appears frigid indeed.

How oft have I, my dere and cruell foo
With those your eyes, for to get peace and truye etc.

Proper'd you mine herte but you do not use
Emong so high things to cast your minde so lowe
This is beggarly. The sonnet demands a rich speech.
We do notice an improvement in the later sonnets (that is, after No. 19). The harshness of language is somewhat softened and a little of the civility of phrase we meet with in Sidney's sonnets appears, phrases like 'false fained face.' etc.

To sum up, we find Wyatt hardly so remarkable a portent as his late editors would claim. We would not talk of the "grandeur of language" of any part of his work, but he points the way in quite decisive fashion. Surrey has only to keep on refining the tongue, and to add to the store of choice phrase which was common to the civilized tongues of Europe. Wyatt restored a good deal of Chaucer's vernacular phrase. He is indeed more remarkable on this side than on that of refinement. We see in him the beginnings of that vivacious nervous colloquial speech of the Elizabethans rather than of the cultured language of European poetry.

Grimmald's contributions to Tottel are in some ways /  
ways very promising for the new technique. Here and outdo there are flashes of phrase that sometimes Wyatt. There is moreover a fine pleasantry and modernism in his sentiment –

Either thy fire restrains thy free outgate 
0 woman, worthy of far better state; 
Or people-pestred London likes thee nought 
But pleasant air, in quiet contrie sought.

One wonders sometimes why Grimmel has been brushed aside by the critics. Barnabe Googe did him more honour. It is his adherence to the old lumbering measures and to the alliterative system to which E. K. demurred in the case of the Sheperd’s Calendar, that hides the liveliness and modernity of his phrase. A piece like The Garden for example, how pleasant it is!

In praising certain things in Grimmel one does not mean to question the generally superior art of Wyatt and Surrey. **Wyatt is the stronger** though more stammering genius. Surrey’s praise lies in his adoption of new measures but also in a new lightsomeness of fancy and grace of phrase, which we miss in Wyatt. It is the purpose of this study to lay emphasis on the phrase. At no time should we scant the appearance of concise or novel phraseology so eagerly as now. Since Chaucer’s time there had been little of the sort of turn of speech which meets us every now and then in Surrey. In a sense the poets of this period are merely trying to restore the lost Italian or French grace of style and phrase which Chaucer had successfully attempted two centuries before. **Every student knows what excitement the rhetorical phrase aroused in the age succeeding Chaucer.** Idolatry /
Idolatry of the master led poets to place the whole emphasis on phrase alone and like Dryden (in some of his critical places) and like Wordsworth, they limited the scope of their interest in the matter to mere vocabulary. Chaucer had learned the "High style" with its "termes, colours, and figures" from Frances Petrark

"who's retorique swete Enlumyned al Itaille of poctrie"

The poetic aesthetics of his followers seem never to have advanced much beyond this servile adulation of the aureate phrase - their highly senselessly, embellished speech suggests that their test of the poet lay in his ability to employ this speech to prove his mastership of the craft. Dunbar adopts the style in some serious pieces, but the shrewdness of his genius forced him to the use of the vulgar medium when he was genuinely inspired and he employed it with extraordinary gusto.

As Skelton as Laureate of Oxford wrote in the high style, but his ribald genius preferred a style and phrase which are sometimes Rabelaisian. But few of these writers had much sense of the true artistic use of the well-turned phrase. The Tottel Miscellanists were not at all remarkable in their vocabulary. What they did was to show how with a mere sprinkling of fine foreign words the native medium could be turned to harmony and order and rather than mere sonority. Surrey's phrase is fluent and often pleasantly antithetic. He takes not the phrase, not even the line, but rather the quatrain as his poetical unit. The appeal of his pieces is pictorial and sentimental, and he uses the time-honoured artifices in the ordering of words and phrases, but not to excess or ostentation. We see the poetic speech being /
being at last hammered out on the anvil of foreign imitation or emulation.

These poets were aware that they were sons of the dawn. They had like Spenser the missionary spirit. Their appeal was to the courtly band who would understand. "If perhaps some dislike the stateliness of style removed from the rude skill of common ears; I ask help of the learned to defend their learned friends, the authors of this work, and I exhort the unlearned, by reading to learn to be more skilful and to purge their swine-like grossness, that maketh the sweet majoram not to smell to their delight." So the Printer to the Reader in Tottell.

With all this there is a great deal of boorish phrase in Tottell. As a matter of fact English poetry even at its Elizabethan height was not to lose its prevailing rusticity of language. The greatest things in our tongue are clogged with such phrase. It was not till the Restoration that the campaign for the purging out of mean diction and idiom fairly started. France had been earlier, in the field with her reforms. Five years after Marot's death, the Pleiade started its crusade for the beautifying of poetic speech, and later the Academy standardised the French tongue. Over-civilisation is however as great an evil as too much rusticity, and most moderns rejoice that our greatest era of creative imagination was over before the purifiers got to work.

Sackville is the intermediary between the Tottell group of poets and Spenser. At first sight of his Induction, the student is inclined to regard Spenser in the same light as Shakespeare's early detractors rightly enough regarded him, as one wearing other men's plumes. Later /
Later he sees the Induction in its true perspective, as a work which indeed both metrically and linguistically suggested the style of the Faerie Queene, but whose art falls far short of that work. It is fashionable to say that its gallery of allegorical portraits bears comparison with Spenser's gallery. They are etched as powerfully in places perhaps.

Sackville inspired the Mirrour for Magistrates that "bold and gloomy landscape" as Campbell called it. But the first version of 1559 has nothing of his. It was the issue of 1563/which he wrote the Induction and Legend of Buckingham. At first sight, we say, the reader asks what secret had Spenser that is not in Sackville's art, save the ampler and more sonorous stanza! Discounting the first feverish praise, we may admit that Sackville is fluent as no one since Chaucer had been, and he uses language as an artist. It is an essay in the gloomy art and the gloomier colours of speech are artfully displayed. It is concentrated and realistic and the stanza is truly the unit of composition. It has after the opening verses a discreet element of the archaic - just as much of it as Spenser himself affected in the Faerie Queene. And it is dramatic.

And fast by him pale malady was placed;
Love sick in bed, her colour all foregone;
Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste,
Ne could she brook no meat but broths alone;
Her breath corrupt; her keepers every one
Abhorring her; her sickness past require
Detesting physic, and all physic's cure.

This /
This is good enough, but looking closer into the texture of the poem, we see that, suggestive as it is, for richness of diction, for the gleaming lights, for the incantation and spell of words, we must wait till Spenser comes. And this sort of allegorical writing becomes tiresome, without such artful confectionery as Spenser knew how to serve up. Still in the realism of the Induction we may fancy we see the beginnings of that ghoulisnness which is a favourite ingredient of romantic art from Spenser to Coleridge and later—

The naked shape of man there saw I plain
All save the flesh, the sinew and the vein.

A line like "That to the hilts was all with blood imbrued" reminds us of Milton's "With blood of Scots imbrued" while

No peers, nor princes, nor no mortal wight
No towns, nor realms, cities, nor strongest tower;
But all, perforce, must yield unto his power.

faintly recalls the grand Miltonic device of accumulation. The manner of Sackville's Induction is all the more surprising if we consider the dull humdrum of his Gorboduke, unenlightened by a single elegant or energetic phrase.

Of George Gascoigne, Whetstone and Turberville, we must say a word, especially as in our opinion generally, rather in cult, the first named has been seriously underrated. Whetstone, shockingly so. And yet his Remembrance of George Gascoigne 1577 has some relish. It is written in the manner of those heavy /
heavy tales which make up Baldwin's part in The Mirror for Magistrates. Its interest lies in its extraordinary fabric of cruelest English, word and idiom. A mere curiosity now, it shows us from what a bog of loutish colloquialism English poetry had to dig itself, if it were ever to reach to refinement — and that on the very eve of Spenser's first appearance. Hardly a glimmer of respectable cadenced phrase lights up its darkness. This cannot be said of the poet he celebrates. Indeed Gascoigne in his day, was richly and in our opinion, rightly praised for the sweet savour of his "poetic Posies" of Flowers, Herbs and Weeds, and we must confess that as so often happens with despaired-of minors or minimists, he almost in parts repays reading. He is very copious and like most of the school very clear because unsophisticated. Sometimes he is even tart, generally rather dumpish. "Gascoigne's Voyage into Holland" is sufficiently lively to remind us of Wyatt. It is probably his best work. Indeed it would be difficult to name a better example of its kind in that age. The language especially in the humorous and satirical part runs easily with almost the tripping ease of Mat. Prior's similar efforts in the eighteenth century, and the critic is almost constrained in relief at finding so much of colloquial ease in such a sea of rude art as Gascoigne offers, generally, to make for him the ambitious claim of having discovered the adroit use of the familiar style more than a century before it reached its height in /
in Prior and Swift. We have not the space to quote from it, but let the candid reader ask himself if with such things as this and Wyatt's work, before him, English poetry did not then narrowly miss establishing that familiar style which needs no foreign decoration and for which we need seek no 'influences', but what native shrewdness endows a poet. This its satiric poem is similar in style and diction to Spenser's Mother Hubbard's Tale. Both works show discipleship to Chaucer. Another poem of his Dan Bartholomew of Bath, written in rhyme royal displays surprising ease in that stanza and shows an even closer following of Chaucer. It is difficult to tell how critics have failed to credit the author of this piece with a mastery of Chaucer's metre and language which had not been hitherto attained, the example of which was passed on to the true Elizabethans and may have helped to influence the liquid and honied flow even of the stanza poems of Lodge; Shakespeare, not to mention the Faerie Queene. To quote a stanza —

At last (with pain) the first word that he spake Was this; alas, and woe! he stayed His feeble jaws and hollow voice could make None other sound, his thoughts were all dismayed His hairy head full low in bosom laid Yet when he saw me mark what he would say He cried right out Alas and wele away!

Who does not perceive that a writer who could turn out numerous stanzas after this pattern has caught Chaucer's secret of prosody and phrasing, and that even without foreign drill in the sonnet or other kinds, English poetry could have come into its great heritage. Nevertheless it was better to have that breathing and coursing in/
in Continental forms. Only we would say that as long as English poets had the Chaucerian model of prosody and diction before them, they needed not to have been so humble before foreign achievement. Take Skelton's best work, Wyatt's satires where he is least under foreign influence, Gascoigne's better class work and the poems like Mother Hubbard's Tale in which Spenser is most English, and we have a body of achievement in the native tradition which might not have encouraged poets in the luscious, erotic highly painted styles, but which certainly constitutes the middle path of competent English work. In any case the public quickly tired of the embellished and rather sickly foreign phrases, as is seen by the numerous protests against 'glossing rhetoric' by the sonneteers engaged in that very manner. For this reason we repeat that the title of this Chapter may seem to some a misnomer — a begging of the whole question of poetic diction.

So sudden was the improvement of the tongue in these years that Gascoigne affixed marginal explanations to numerous words in the second edition of his drama Jocasta.

Sydney is for wit and fancy nearer the true Elizabethans. His sonnets are often reminiscent of the Tottel sonnets in sentiment and phrase. But there is really a great advance in fluency both of rhythm and diction, and phrases are flooding in which were to form the groundwork of the Elizabethan rhetorical manner.

Having the day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well, that I obtained the prize
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And /
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Townsmen my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight which from good use doth rise
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this
Think nature me a man of arms did make
How far they shot awry! the true cause is
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Here is matter for the Shakespearian sonnet language! Everywhere we light on phrase destined for august use—joy's livery, wanton wind, imp feathers, unflattering glass, etc. And then those compounds which he advocated in his Apologie for Poetry are here, feeble indeed, but setting a fashion. The opening lines of his second sonnet are a marvel of romantic art.

With how sad steps, O moon! thou climb'st the skies
How silently, and with how wan a face!

Mr. Drinkwater rightly says of this "It will be observed that there is no word here which is in the least uncommon, and yet by their disposition and through the conviction and feeling behind them, they take on a distinctive atmosphere and become poetical in the best sense of the terms:"

Doubtless a touch or so of this romantic use of common words may be instanced in Surrey (hardly in Wyatt) but in Sidney we begin to expect such effects. He may claim the honour of being the first romantic poet in England, at least in his use of words. Chaucer in Troilus and Creseideye is deeply romantic, but hardly in this special sense. And yet parts of the Knights Tale, notably the description of Emily's appearance in the temple of Diana seem to give the true 'romantic thrill'—

The lines quoted have a haunting quality curiously heard again in Coleridge's—

Hast thou a charm to stay the Morning-Star
On thy bald awful head, 0 Sovran Blane?

Introduction to Sir Philip Sidney (Muses Library) p. 60-1.
a poem in which we strongly note the same romantic over-soul of the language. With all his word-mastery Spenser hardly gives that special charm of romantic poetry.

We know of course from the Arcadia that if Sydney had not "Poetry enough for anything", he had enough to serve. The famous passage containing the description of the hilly pastures—

"Each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security; while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy, piping as though he should never be old, etc." proves that if the writer had been less busy with experimentation and imitation he might have been one of the more considerable poets. As it is, we must search the Arcadia for his teeming poetic phrase rather than his avowed poetry. Nor was the Arcadia lost to his age. In reckoning up the tributary streams which fed the Elizabethan flood, we must give it an honourable place. Shakespeare's debt to it is not confined to the episode he took from it for his subsidiary action in Lear. He must have gained something from its mere rhetoric and golden phraseology.

In Sidney we see the first appearance of that intellectual and conceited poetry which was to figure so largely in the Elizabethan muse. One cannot say that he has always happily transferred the Petrarchian matter to English poetry; certainly not so happily as it afterwards was conveyed by Shakespeare and his fellows. The praise is in his however that he presented his successors with models for various types of verse, and he carried the language to the point where great work could begin. One has only to name the hymeneal poem in the Arcadia to recognise the model of the great ceremonial poems to follow by Spenser, Ben Jonson and others. —

O heaven awake, show forth thy stately face
Let not these slumbering clouds thy beauties hide
But with thy cheerful presence help to grace
The honest bridegroom and the bashful bride,
Whose /
Whose loves may ever hide,  
Like to the elm and vine  
With mutual embracements then to twine;  
In which delightful pain  
O Hymen, long their coupled joys maintain.

The instrument is now forged.  
With such smooth and graceful forms of language and such varied rhythm  
Poetry may do anything.  
One may think too that the verse fabliau in the Arcadia written in the lower style of language may have given a hint to the author of Venus and Adonis -

With dumplin' look, hard words, and secret nips  
Grunbling at her when she his kindness sought;  
Asking her how she tasted courtier's lips  
He forced her think that which she never thought.

In fine, he made her guess there was some sweet  
In that which he so fear'd that she should meet.

There is even a suggestion of Keats' more domestic manner here.  
It is not only that Shakespeare uses this metre in the Venus and Adonis - The trick of the thing is in Sidney.

When once this entered was in woman's heart,  
And that it had inflamed a new desire  
There rested then to play a woman's part;  
Fuel to seek, and not to quench the fire,

But, for his jealous eye she well did find  
She studied cunning how the same to blind.

Needless to say the Venus and Adonis, one of the greatest poems in the language, is infinitely more various and indeed prodigal in all the decorative qualities than this little poem of Sidney's.  
But the critical ear will detect the same little tricks of antithetic phrase, strong caesural pauses, and themingling of fine language with the most characteristic and indeed freakish:

Then there are Sidney's more characteristic Petrarchian strains.  
Who does not remind himself of the Shakespearean sonnet with its involved intellectual language when /

In saying this, we are not forgetting the claims of Lodge's Glaucus and Scylla 1599 First of the erotic poems - We think Mr. Gosse (17th century Studies Art. Lodge) has made out his case for Lodge as the immediate influence on Shakespeare's 'firstfruits'.  
But there is something to be said for Sidney too.
when he reads —

Transform'd in show, but more transform'd in mind
I cease to strive, with double conquest foil'd
For woe is me, my powers all I find
With outward force and inward treason spoil'd
For from without came to mine eyes the blow,
Where to my inward thoughts did faintly yield;
Both those conspired poor reason's overthrow;
False in myself, thus have I lost the field.
Thus are my eyes still captive to one sight.
Thus all my thoughts are slaves to one thought still,
Thus reason to his servants yields his right,
Thus is my power transform'd to your will;
What marvel then I take a woman's hue
Since what I see, think, know, is all but you?

The Philomela poem has the true accent of Elizabethan
poetry at its meridian hour. —

Alas she hath no other cause of anguish
But Thereus' love, on her, by strong hand wroken;
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish
Full woman-like, complains her will was broken.
But I who daily craving
Cannot have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me;
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.

We recognise in these rather broken phrases, and the
peeled-out thought the very manner of Shakespeare and
his fellows. In fact there seems little doubt that
Shakespeare owes either directly or mediately a con-
siderable royalty to Sidney, who has not only brought on
the boards the main matter of the Petrarchian poetry
with its peculiar imagery, and often tortuous and
quibbling expression, but has supplied the very turns of
expression which are to be familiar for the next
generation. This may be further demonstrated from the
sonnet —

O night, the ease of care, the pledge of pleasure
Desires best mean, harvest of hearts affected;
The seat of peace, the throne which is erected
Of humane life to be the quiet measure;

A familiar Shakespearian model!

There is also the 'eyes' theme, so excessively
exploited /
exploited by the Elizabethans till Ben Jonson mocked it off the stage by the ridicule of "0 eyes, no eyes, but Fountains filled with tears." Shakespeare's first fruits are good examples of this indulgence in what has been clumsily called "pathetic optics". The novels are full of it too, and it may originally come down from the Greek romances of Longus and Heliodorus. Sidney's verse is full of the play on eyes.

**Beaty has force to catch the human sight;**
**Sight doth bewitch the fancy evil awaked;**
**Fancy we feel includes all passions might;**
**Passion rebell'd oft reason's strength hath shaked**
**No wonder then, though sight my sight did taint**
**And thought thereby my fancy was infected.**

This parade of logic is common to all the philosophic verse of the day. Shakespeare's well-known enigmatic Sonnet No. XXIV, carried the 'eye' theme to absurd lengths. We today cannot regard these ingenious exercises with much patience.

We have dwelt a little on Sidney because of all the influences which went to the making of the poetic tongue, perhaps the sonneteering craze was the most notable. Here English poetry followed in the footsteps of French. In the barren years between the death of Surrey and the coming of Spenser and Sidney, the French Pleiade had feverishly pursued their great object - to acclimatise classical matter and expression to their own tongue, and to this end their chief means of expression was the sonnet, and Petrarch their patron saint.

The first group of English sonneteers - that is after /
After Wyatt and Surrey consisted of Watson with his Centurie of Love (1582) Sidney with his Stella series not published till 1591, but commenced as early as 1580, and Spenser whose Amoretti are late work (1595) but whose prentice work in letters, the Visions of Bellay and the Vision of Petrarch consisted of fifteen and seven sonnets respectively, the latter being a word for word transliteration from Marot. Watson frankly admitted his foreign sources and being the earliest in the field is sometimes credited with doing for English poetry what Ronsard did for French. That his early sequence he produced a later one in 1593 - The Tears of Fancie - is a mere literary exercise, and that his 'sonnets' are generally not true quatrains need not trouble us here. For it was precisely this literary exercise which the English literary tongue wanted, and fortunately despite sneers here and there at plagiarists who, in Drayton's eloquent phrase 'filch from Fortes', none of our English sonneteers were in the least ashamed of their robberies. These sonnet sequences were soon recognised as an occasion for displaying not passion so much as the appearance of passion tricked out in the most artful and honied phrases. Ronsard and du Bellay, Desportes and de Pontoux were rifled for their phraseology and one may now complacently regard this conveyance of foreign finery, for it is difficult to imagine any other form of literary exercise which would have so well ministered to the desperate needs of the English poetic tongue at that moment.

Anyone for example who casts his eye over Spenser's juvenile translation of Marot - Visions of Petrarch, - /
Petrarch, — will note how awkwardly the Englishman transfers the phrases of his original. One must not forget that with all the richness of diction, Spenser never quite sloughed off his rusticity, but the early work is peculiarly unpromising. —

After at sea a tall ship did appear
Made all of Hebon and white Yvorie
The sailes of golde, of silk the tackle were
Milde was the winde, calme seem'd the sea to bee
The skie eachwhere did show full bright and faire;
With rich treasures this gay ship fraughted was;
But sudden storme did so turmoyle the aire
And xxxx tumbl'd up the sea, that she (alas) Strake on a rock, that under water lay

There is no advance here on — in fact we are back in the world of — Surrey's Aeneid. Even with the Frenchman's cultured phrases before him, this boorish stuff is all the young Englishman can make of it — he who came to possess the happiest ear for the harmony of English phrases. We may well bless the incessant drilling of the tongue in the foreign set, for otherwise it is inconceivable that in the short time now available from 1580 to the outburst of great Elizabethan song, the language could have been sufficiently breathed and exercised for its great work. The Elizabethan sonnet, as a rule demands a literary diction. There have been excellent sonnets which discard decorative phrase some of the most representative efforts in this kind of last century — and no age has done better in the sonnet kind — are almost fastidiously simple in their vocabularies. But if we look closer into them, we find with all their plainness of language, a certain costliness here and there, a touch of distinction, which is often very remote from the more obvious and swelling /
swelling beauties of the Elizabethan sonnet. To invent a language for their sonnets, to excogitate a new image or refurbish an old one, but above all to strike out some new combinations of great words was the glory of the sonneteer. Poets like Lodge, Barnes, Drayton, etc. were enamoured of the fine combinations of words they found in the French or Italian sonneteers and their chief care was to convey their rich phraseology into England. At every turn the expressions of Roisard, Desportes, de Pontoux and others are recalled in their sonnets. Lodge is perhaps the most instructive example of successful piracy among these writers. His Phyllis is in many numbers a slavish school exercise on the sonnets of Roisard or Desportes. Sir Sidney Lee has well illustrated what he calls the 'inveterate principle of transference' from Lodge's plagiarisms. The Englishman's language falls a good deal short of the Frenchman's in decorative quality, but that is partly due to the nature of the two tongues. The distinction and sonority, the splendour of diction, which the poets of the Pèlade aimed at, could not be transferred into English without loss, without at any rate a greater infusion of rusticity.

For example — Lodge, Phyllis IX.

The dewy roseate moon had with her hairs
In sundry sorts the Indian clime adorned;
And now her eyes apparelled in tears
The loss of lovely Memnon long had mourned
can hardly compete in decorative diction with Roisard,
Amours 1, XCIV

de ses cheveux la rousoyante aurore
Beparmement les Indes remplissait
Et ja le ceil a long traits rougissoit
de maint émail qui le matin decorg

So Lodge's rendering of Roisard's Amours 1,XXII—
(Phyllis XXXII) is a little boorish —
A thousand times to think and think the same
So two fair eyes to show a naked heart
Great thirst with bitter liquor to restrain
To take repast of care and crooked smart.

It is not merely that Lodge has not much decorative language at his command - English can do with less of that than French. He has no distinction. Delia displays what Lodge had not, a sense of cadenced phrase. Indeed he comes nearest to Shakespeare here. A comparison of his work with his French original often leaves one in doubt of the victory, which Lodge's similar efforts rarely do. Daniel has at command not only the purity of diction which all have recognised and some praised, but the strong stamp of individual phrasing. Lodge leaves us in doubt if English will ever have the equivalent of French airs and graces.

Delia makes us aware that the genius of English is toward a plainer fabric of speech, but also that effects can be attained in that more monosyllabic speech which are beyond the more splendid French. Look for example at his Delia No. XXXIII which translates Desportes' Amours de Cléonice LXII.

Desportes' sestet runs -

Cet orgueil désendant qui vous fait ne m'aimer
En regret et chagrin se verra transformer,
Avec le changement d'une image si belle
Et peut être qu' alors, vous m'auriez déplaisier
De revivre en mes vers, châtiez d'amoureux désir
Ainsi que le phénix au feu se renouvelle -

Daniel gives -

When, if she grieve to gaze her in her glass
Which then presents her winter-withered hue
Go you my verse! go, tell her what she was!
For what she was, she best may find in you.
Your fiery heat lets not her glory pass
But Phoenix-like to make her live anew.

Doubtless the French has an elegance and sonority which the

Rousard -

Cent et cent fois penser un penser même
A deux beaux yeux montrer a nud son cœur
Boire toujours d’une amère liqueur
Manger toujours d’une amertume extrême.
the English can as yet only feebly imitate. Indeed it ought not to put itself in competition with the Latin tongue here! Daniel gets a little compensating distinction from the use of compounds, which are doled out at the rate of about one to each sonnet and are often at least tolerable.

Sidney was by no means so slavish as Daniel and Lodge sometimes are, but in that which seemed essentially to constitute a sonneteer, the invention of images and of the rich diction to clothe them, he is seldom quite original. Often the borrowed themes are touched to finer issues than his originals, but on close examination, it appears that the stuff of his writing is suggested by his authors. And yet he gives the impression of originality, and he imparts to his sequence that lofty spirit of chivalry which had distinguished Surrey's work in the previous generation.

So vivid and express is his language at times that we are reminded at once of Shakespeare himself, eg. "Painted in my beclouded stormy face"

or 'That once came there, the soles of my annoys Are metamorphosed straight to tunes of joy'
or when he talks of Stella -

Thundering disdains and lightnings of disgrace.

we are reminded of the compacted force of Shakespeare's great phrase.

Again (73) is this not more premonitory of Shakespeare than any contemporary can boast -

she makes her wrath appear
In Beauty's throne. See now! who dares come near Those scarlet judges, threatening bloody pain?
O heavenly fool! The most kiss-worthy face

A line like "un desir teméraire, un doux languissement", seems feebly turned by "If a sweet languish with a chaste desire", and it seems doubtful if slavish translation can allow the free development of a tongue.

Merry-wanting storm, hunger-starven thoughts, vulture-grawen heart, winter-withered hue/ They are mostly of this pattern. Some he got in his originals like the well-known care-charming sleep.
Anger invests with such a lovely grace
That Anger's self! I needs must kiss again
May we not say that while Spenser helped Shakespeare
to many a languorous and cadenced phrase, while Marlowe
and Lyly and his older contemporaries gave him the
ordinary models for his dramatic phraseology, Sydney alone
presented him with the models of his speech, when it is
supposed to be most, inspired. Mr. Drinkwater is right
in pointing out that as a rule he obtains his effects not
by the use of neologisms, but by investing his words with
deeper significance. In short, we are inclined to regard
Sydney as a true but not "not only begetter" of the.

Before discussing the more decisive influence
of Spenser in the settling of the poetic modes of speech,
we may be pardoned a brief excursion on the movement in
France for an improvement of poetic language. When Le
docte brigade, or as it was afterwards termed the Pliade
set forth in 1549 with Du Bellay's pamphlet La defense et
Illustration de la langue francoise, they took a direction
exactly opposite to that taken by Wordsworth in the
famous Preface and Postscript to the Lyrical Ballads.
These two documents, that of Du Bellay and that of Words-
worth might be set over against each other as the
expression of the eternally conflicting modes of all art.
Dante's little book On Vulgar Eloquence would make an
eloquent third witness on the side of Du Bellay's thesis.
Dante and Du Bellay pronounce the judgment that the interval
between common speech and the language of poetry is and
ought /
ought to be of the widest. Wordsworth was not clear that there was any interval at all. Further, to remove the poetic speech as far as possible from the spoken dialect, resort must be had to every device known to the art of rhetoric. Wordsworth seemed to regard all turns and devices as offensive puerilities. The discovery that Du Bellay's tract is, save for a dozen lines or so, a literal translation from the Italian, only helps to prove the thesis of those who insist that every good thing ultimately traces itself back to Italy. The quarrel in its broader aspect is really between those who aim at a restricted language for poetry, and those who wish to use the whole language. The Elizabethans in spite of scholarly injunctions from France, used the whole language. In this connection a remark of Mr. George Moore's may not be inapposite. More than any other modern Mr. Moore has interested himself in the artistic vocabulary. "I envy in Kipling his copious and sonorous vocabulary, especially his neologisms; he writes with the whole language, with the language of the Bible, and with the language of the streets. He can do this, for he possesses the inkpot which turns the vilest idiom into gold—his language is so copious, rich and sonorous that one is tempted to say that none since the Elizabethans have written so copiously——- Shelley and Wordsworth, Landor and Pater wrote /
wrote with part of the language, but who else, except Whitman, has written with the whole language since the Elizabethans?" Mr. Moore quotes in illustration Kipling's wellknown jibe in the Island Pharisees—"flannelled fools at the wicket and muddied oafs at the goal". It is the object of all attempts to raise style to exclude just such racy and powerful language as this. It was not however the professed object of the Pléiade to exclude rusticity and meanness of phrase as it certainly was Dryden's object in 1660. The Pléiade was too intent on extending the poetic speech to think of exclusion. They indeed, proclaimed the capacity of the vernacular to do all that was required of it, after the civilising and enlarging processes they recommended, had been effected. Subtlety of phrase, classical precision and neatness, a certain lubricity were to be the poet's aim. A maze of golden phrase was to be adopted immediately from the classical and Italian tongues. Above all recourse was to be had to the technical language of the profession and even the trades. This reform the Elizabethans carried to rather grotesque lengths. But the Elizabethans never insisted on that sharp distinction of the language of prose and of poetry which was taken for granted by the French school. Greek words were taken in in excess by Ronsard and his fellows. Ronsard's pride in his novelties, his pretty diminutives, his compounds or vocables composez etc. was almost naive. It was the patriotic note he struck. His labour was all for France.

"Je fis des mots nouveaux, je rappelai les vieux
Si bien que son renom je poussay jusque'aux cieux
Je fis d'autre facon que n'avoien les antiques
Vocables composez, et phrases poetiques.
Et mis les posiss en tel ordre, qu'apres
Le Francois fut l'egal aux Romains et aux Grecs.

Oeuvres VII-127."
His aim being extension at all costs, he invited in a horde of archaic words, many of them domiciled in the various patois, as well as Greek coinages. The Pleiade was not united here. Du Bellay following his Italian original deprecated archaic and patois words, Rousard used them freely. The same difference of opinion and practice is seen in the two chief members of the so-called English Areopagus. Spenser in the Shepherd's Calendar uses old words and dialect words in such profusion as to swamp the learned accretions he also adopted. Sidney could not approve the practice. Nor does he use many of these words in his own pastoral work. The age which followed Rousard repudiated the sham classicism, and in Malherbe we have the first poet who has a severe sense of classical simplicity, equally condemning a wilful or artful rusticity with dialect elements, and tawdry classical neologisms. The things of which Rousard proudly boasts in the quotation above, Malherbe deprecates, - the excess of diminutives and the rage for compounding. In this last direction, Ronsard profoundly affected the vocabulary of English poetry. His imitations of the Homeric compound, and his accommodation of the language and names of classical mythology were eagerly copied by English poets. England had to wait for its Malherbe. Perhaps Dryden comes nearest to his stature.

Spenser is the poet who consciously undertook to do for the English tongue what Rousard did for the French. E.K.'s running commentary on the Shepherd's Calendar is thus of great interest to students of English poetic diction. Spenser's aim is on the whole that of Ronsard - to extend the tongue by use of archaisms and dialect words on the one hand.
hand and to define it by learned neologisms on the other.

The subject of the Shepherd's Calendar invites a much larger and grosser influx of the former than anything in the French poet's work. E.M. notes Spender's use of middle English words, bookish words dug out of old authors and not to be found in the dialects. In a wellknown passage, he attributes the poet's use of "hard and of most unused words" to the study of the "most excellent authors and most famous poets - in whom, whereas this our Poet hath been much travelled, and thoroughly read, how could it be but that walking in the sun although for other cause he walked, yet needs he mought be sunburnt." The passage in which E.K. commends the book to Gabriel Harvey, being one of the classical places in this connection we may cite it here. E.K. praises the "framing of his (the poet's) words; "the which of many things which in him be strange, I know will seem the strangest the knitting of them so short and intricate, and the whole period and compass of speech so delightful for the roundness and so grave from the strangeness. And first of the words to speak, I grant they be something hard, and of most men unused - and having the sound of those ancient poets still ringing in his ears, he must needs, in singing, hit out some of their tunes." The poet has not only incorporated archaic and dialect words. There is further a mystification of phonetic and grammatical forms taken from the dialects - chiefly midland - as well as forms current in Middle English, and some egregious blunders of a kind which any student can detect. But the ordinary reader is struck more by the vocabulary than by the grammar, though it would be difficult to say which contributes more to the quaint effect of the medley. The expert is inclined to turn away /

Professor C. H. Herford gives a list of these in his excellent study of the language of Shepherd's Calendar in his edition p. LVII.
away disdainfully from this gallimaufry of tongues and dialects. When E. K. does not gloss a term we may assume that it was colloquially known, although it is strange to us. A word like "dapper" for example unknown to or, at least, unused by Shakespeare is found in Palgrave as daper (= proper, mignon) On the other hand such a word as blonket (v.s.) glossed as "gray coats" we may assume to be a dialect word, probably North midland. There were many words too which may have existed both in dialect and in the old literary tongue—words like 'brag' used as an adverb (= ostentatiously) crane (= boastful), mizzle (drizzle of rain) tickle (unsteady) etc. E.K.'s aesthetics are a trifle mixed. He first commends the rustic and obsolete words for their own sake as having the beauty and authority of age. Then they are a "blemish in the joint of a well-shaped body, useful merely by way of an ugly foil to set off the brightness of brave and glorious words". At one moment they are "rough and harsh terms" in the next the poet deserves praise for restoring "such good and natural English words." Carried away with this idea he subscribes to the purist dogma that of itself, without foreign importations, the vernacular could supply a language brave enough for anything. As at present used it is "most bare and barren." But patching it with bits of other languages, borrowing here of the French, there of the Italian, everywhere of Latin, is reprehensible. Here E. K. ranges himself with the purists and repudiates the practice of the Pleiade, and of his own author. At the same time he desires embellishment, only that is to come by utilising the hidden resources of the tongue, not by going abroad for new. Of importance is the claim that Spender's speech is better knit together, his syntax less loose than that of his predecessors. The attack on the "rakehelly rout of
of our ragged rymers (for so themselves use to hunt the letter)" closes a singularly enlightened piece of missionary work.

Professor Herford in his edition of the Calendar has made a useful analysis of the language from which we copy some details here.

As for the cultured and novel words, the list is long. Some obvious ones are crumenal, flower de lice, overture, stanck (Italian - weary) etc.

Actual Spenserian coinages are - beastliked, derring doe, dreeriment, emperished, embrave, expert, heedlesse-hood, etc. - not a long list.

Learned words are, assay, availe, blaze (blazon), brocage, cabinet, chevisaunce, collusion, coloured, convenable, coronell, coronation, countenance, counterfeit, cremosin, crumenall, curelesse, delice, depeintaten, devise, dirige (dirge) element, embellish, embrave, emperish, encheason, entralle, equipage, expert, simplesse, surquedege, surview, tyranne, virelayes, faictour, formal, impaire, jouissaunce, mayntenaunce, melanpode, merciable, misconcience, musicall, Paramour, peregall, pleasaunce recure, rehearse, rybande.

It may seem a small thing to collect such a list of mere words, but let the reader reflect that we are at the birth so to speak of the poetic tongue. Most of these words had been used before in English poetry, but never in such a context as the Shepherd's Calendar, and never with artistic deliberation. Tottel, we pointed out was not deficient in literary words, but the proper praise of the Calendar, according to E. K. is that it rather eschews such words in favour of the old-denizened words. The reader need not be reminded that the Shepherd's Calendar, is not the last
last attempt to endenizen dialect words in English literary speech. Whenever a special demand for freshness is made, recourse will be had to old and local words. The exact parallel to Spenser's experiment is provided in our own day by Mr. Edmund Blunden, whose Waggoner published in 1921 is provided with a glossary after the fashion of E.K.'s notes to the Calendar. Like Spenser and unlike Burns and Barnes and Tennyson in the Northern Farmer, Mr. Blunden uses the ordinary literary speech, but besprinkles it with local words which he thinks should have a chance of being taken into the general vocabulary. Every person acquainted with the dialects has felt this in regard to certain words of relish. But Mr. Blunden is clearly hopeful of the experiment and his wise parsimony recommends his practice to our consideration. He has succeeded in enlisting the support of the Poet Laureate, no mean authority on the English Language and pronunciation. Examples of this sort are -

The grumping miller picked his way  
Stolch ploughlands hid in grief  
A hizzing dragonfly that daps  
Above his mudded pond.

The glinzy ice grows thicker through.

So he uses whirry, glintering, hagged, twired, jerking, brisked, thaine, &c. In the Fifth Tract of the Society for Pure English, Dr. Bridges welcomes such experiments. The Society indeed exists partly for this purpose, to recall old words and admit good local terms to the Literary tongue, in short to do what Spenser attempted in the Shepherd's Calendar. Dr. Bridges corrects a number of Mr. Blunden's novelties. The dialect poet Barnes wished to see the complete naturalisation of words like, drong, clote, smeech, tuns, greyles, and numerous other Dorset words. The rich soil of our dialects certainly provides a tempting field for latter day poets who are driven more /
more and more by the necessities of modern aesthetic to seek strange or virile effects. How far can the poet help to endure such words? Spenser failed to give his strange diction a life beyond his own poem. No individual poet can do that, and perhaps not all the poets working in concert as members of the Society for Pure English. A dozen editors could with persistence, effect something. But editors naturally avoid anything savouring of the eccentric. It is of small avail to point out how excellent is such an epithet as glinzy for ice, suggesting as it does both glint and slipperiness, or dimpling and lispering. We must leave the matter in its unsatisfactory position, but assure the poet of a welcome for any individual and really successful efforts in welcome for any individual and really successful efforts in this direction. Therewill however be people of taste who cannot even go so far, being wedded to the love of language neat, pure and customary. No lament over the progressive decolorisation of the tongue, will move them from that position. We note how the centre of gravity of Spenser's diction alters in the Faerie Queene where this list of fine words has grown enormously and the archaisms diminished while the dialect words almost disappear. It is in the discovery of a vast ornamental vocabulary used not for the first time, but for the first time artfully that the Faerie Queene is remarkable. The archaic element in that poem is not nearly so noticeable as this grandiose element, though we shall see there is a vast amount of mean word and phrase in it. It is, as has been said in the due selection of ornamental pairs of substantive and epithets that the poet may be said to have started our poetical vocabulary which later degenerated into the Gradus ad Parnassum. How much Shakespeare was indebted to /
to Spenser for his early exornations of phrase is a moot point. It is clear that the debt was larger than people have thought. By 1592 Spenser's influence was at its height. Lodge shows many signs of his influence, Drayton much more. Shakespeare was just beginning to find himself. A close comparison of the phraseology of his early things with the phrasing of the Faerie Queene reveals a large indebtedness. These were the more immediate influences of Lodge and Marlowe, but for that candied eloquence, which is most notable in Shakespeare's early work, surely we must look to Spenser if to anyone for at least suggestion. Lodge influenced by Spenser in turn helped to form Shakespeare's early and luscious manner. His Glaucus and Scilla as Mr. Gosse pointed out in his Memoir of Thomas Lodge strongly suggests the style of Venus and Adonis. There can be no doubt that the young Shakespeare borrowed from Lodge his tone, the mincing sweetness of his versification, and the 'precious' use of such words as lily, purple, crystal, and primrose."

Her dainty hand addressed to draw her dear,
Her roseal lips applied to his pale cheek,
Her sighs, and then her looks and heavy cheer
Her bitter threats, and then her passions meek;
How on his senseless corpse she lay a-crying
As if the boy were then but new a-dying.

This it will be conceded is the very Euphuistic manner and language of Venus and Adonis.

Marlowe in his Hero and Leander is thoroughly euphuistic, but his spacious manner helps to carry it off almost as well as Shakespeare does in Venus and Adonis. No doubt the latter work owes a good deal to Marlowe's poem - the mingling of extremely colloquial English which at times reminds us of Leigh Hunt's Tale of Rimini, and of precious and conceited words and /
and phrases, is quite in the manner of Venus and Adonis.

"Come thither, as she spake this her tongue tript, For unawares (Come thither) from her slipt, And presently her former colour chang'd And here and there her eyes through anger rang'd And like a planet, moving several waies Loving, not to love at all, and everie part, Strove to resist the motions of her hart. And hands so pure, so innocent, nay such, As might have made heaven stoop to have a touche Did she uphold to Venus, and againe Vow'd spotless chastitie, but all in vain Cupid beats downe her praiers, with his wings Her vowes above the empty aire he flings."

As to the special devices of style we note that the later Tudors are infected with almost every malady to which style is heir — in them we have a foretaste of the acute almost diseased intellectual trickery and word and idea juggling of the metaphysical age to follow. This word-juggling is a rather sickening element in some of Spenser's best poems, as also in Shakespeare's "firstfruits." It is as if the poets had emptied the petty rhetorical devices of Puttenham's Art of Poetry into the lap of their otherwise vigorous muses. No age of our poetry has been more foully defiled by such ape-like and mechanical trickery. Word-hunting which Puttenham marks as a chief beauty of poetry — he gives seven varieties of it — senseless and artless anaphora — excessive and stupid alliteration and excessive parenthesis are responsible for the defeathering of many a bright passage in dramatic and elegiac poetry besides Spenser's minor poems and the Venus and Adonis. The unhappy craze was reinforced by the artificial elements of Euphuism and Arcadianism though these two species of the false beautiful are very distinct from each other. In a word we are engaged with that false Dressa called Wit, as yet Puttenham quaintly defines the classical figure of Repetition /
Repetition thus — "When ye turn and translate a word into many sundry shapes as the Tailor doth his garment, and after that sort do play with him in your dittie." This figure is not of course new, but only in the form of anaphora does it occur in Chaucer who got it from the Italians. One is bound to say he uses it more sparingly and artfully than do the Elizabethans. The most silly excess in the use of the figure is to be found in Gascoigne's blank verse Steele Calas which senselessly runs on for whole pages in this tasteless manner. We will have to wait for Milton for the really classical and artful use of it, as we have to do for so many things. Sackville's Induction has a touch here and there, not altogether unhappy. No doubt the Renaissance poets imagined they were artfully copying the ancients in their clumsy efforts. The form of Repetition they chiefly affected was anaphora, that is the beginning of several lines with the same word or phrase. Venus and Adonis has a great deal of it. It was the chief vice of Spenser's mature manner, though he has several examples of the more artful Miltonic kind called doubling in the Calendar, which Milton may even have copied. Milton rather avoided the simpler anaphora which deforms so many passages in the Faerie Queene. We shall have something more to say of this in the next chapter.

There is one element of the rhetorical style lacking in the Shepherd's Calendar. Compounds are not used. Sydney first used them on any scale. The admired device he took from Ronsard. In his Apologie for Poetry he both commends the English tongue for its facility in this kind — equal to Greek he says — and uses a fair sprinkling of them — one of which is

\[+\]

E.g. Sh. Cal. XI. 58-9 Dido my deare, alas is dead
dead, and lyeth wrapt in lead.

\[+\]
is very good - 'winter-starved', and others have at least remained in the language. Dryden afterwards, like Coleridge, condemned this habit of compounding; he possibly did not realise that it was a power inherent in the old tongue. Or possibly he was merely speaking out of the sharp sense of disillusionment he felt for his youthful gods, e.g. Du Bartas, Chapman, and the rest who carried the device to insane lengths. The influence of Sylvester's translation of Bartas' La Semaine on English diction was certainly considerable right down to the Restoration. Milton's early poems especially the Psalms and Paraphrases do not escape it. Compounds of a rather stupid type are sown broadcast over Sylvester's work - indeed the compound and the onomatopoeic reduplication of syllables, and the use of juggling rhymes and abysmal pauses are the chief elements of a style which in its worst excesses captured Dryden's and seemingly even Milton's youthful admiration. In repudiating his boyish fancy, Dryden naturally included the compound in his anathema. It must be admitted on the other hand that Sylvester's work has a surprising number of happy hits, and Milton and others did not hesitate to borrow from it. The modern view, one may suppose, is that the compound is a short-cut to vivid expression and that it may become, in fact does become in Keats and Swinburne, a rather cheap device. Used moderately, it is capable of great beauty. When we come to discuss the use of compound by the modern romantics, we shall find that Keats uses it chiefly for pictorial purposes and Swinburne chiefly perhaps.
for the eloquent sound. In the former it is capable of giving a swift, if romantically vague, picture or suggestion of a picture. Whilst the Shepherds Calender is bare of offence in this direction, the Faerie Queene is rather lavish in its compounds. In Sydney and Spenser we do not get much imitation of the true Homeric compound, as we find it (sometimes to excess) in Tennyson's early poetry. Genone is the first of Tennyson's classical studies which are sprinkled with such compounds, as Lily-cradled, river-sundered, dewy-washed. In Swinburne we find a profusion of such compounds formed on every conceivable model - Greek, Anglo-Saxon, Jacobean, etc. Spenser came under the influence of Du Bartas, but being the artist he was, he avoids the eccentric use of these devices which disfigures the work of the Huguenot poet, and through him the work of the religious poets of England for a generation. Meaneness, verging constantly on the ridiculous is the prevailing quality of Sylvester's work. When the grotesque is joined to the mean in phrase, we have a style of art which approaches the vulgar. And yet Donne's great art was nurtured partly in this school. He exploits the qualities of cacophony and stammering meanness of which Sylvester is all compact, but like Browning, he does exploit them as an artist. In fact he is the first poet to do so. It is said commonly that his disharmony is his means of expressing his breakaway from the Petrarchan philosophy of love. There is no doubt of the novelty of his art, though we must protest against Coleridge's clever characterisation of him as "rhyme's sturdy cripple." Where others, Petrarchians and Platonists had cloyed the ear and eye /
eye with beauty, he would come in with his purposed discords, and his purposed meanness of word and image. He was the first English poet - leaving Skelton's ribaldries aside - to discover the modern principle that the kingdom of the ugly is aesthetically as rich a field for exploration as the kingdom of conventional beauty. His great example - not alone, however for the tide was turning that way in any case - was sufficient to give English poetry that queer twist away from harmony and mere grace which distinguishes it during the Caroline period. Despite his prevailing mean texture of speech and his incessant jolts and jars, we note the almost piercing nature of his epithets, quite graceless often, but startling in their force and modernness. It is no longer the mere antithetic epithet, traces of which we noted in Surrey and still less the languorous epithets of the Faerie Queene. There is some attempt now to make words corrosive, to burn and bite into the skin. To this end, the poet allows himself any degree of oddity.

Thus in the half century from Tottel's Miscellany to Donne, we see the full process by which the literary tongue was perfected, and the creating of the admired Elizabethan speech to which Mr. George Moore and Mr. Yeats urge us speedily to return. In Tottel we see some sorry attempts at making epithet both individual and harmonious and with even a touch of antithetic liveliness in it. We note in these early poets a few rather passable compounds, and notably in Surrey a fair number of well and truly turned phrases and an uncertain touch of classical allusiveness, all as yet a little uncouth. Twenty years after the publication of Tottel, we see the language putting on body and decking itself out in foreign splendour. A little later on we find 1/
find at the moment when Shakespeare is preening his wings for flight the tongue is infested by the disease of eccentricity - excess of compounds, wordhunting and other devices, of neologisms of every violent sort till writers like Ben Jonson wrathfully protested. The subject matter of Ben's Poetaster is partly the castigation of modish follies in the use of speech. To some it may seem strange that the greatest hour in English literature should have coincided with such an excess of blatancy. Nor was it the case that the greater ones restrained themselves. It is the lesser men who were the purists, the Draytons and Daniels. The latter formward earns a weak sort of fame, largely due to Wordsworth's patronage, though in his own day he was called meritoriously the "well-languaged Daniel" He certainly shows remarkable verbal abstemiousness in that Rabelaisian age. His speech is still quite modern. It is of the Middle sort which never becomes antiquated. But better perhaps to err grossly and be read!

There are of course great tracts of Elizabethan dramatic and other poetry which are free from the rage of modish eccentricity, and in fact as that great age proceeds towards decline, we find in the Fords and Massingers a remarkable movement towards linguistic restraint, so that which has been said of Daniel, may also be applied to the later dramatists. Passion was then on the wane. The centre of gravity was shifting from emotion to Intellect, from identity of the spectator with storm-tost human frailty to mere psychological interest in queer cases of vexed mentality. Perhaps the earlier passion-primed phrase /
phrase of dramatic art demanded a language which knew no restraints and was even rotten with the affectations of the schools. Certainly the drier later phase asked for only the bare elements of restrained conversation.
CHAPTER 111.

- SPENSER -

We have already suggested the importance of Spenser's contribution to the poetical tongue, but as he is by common consent one of our greatest wordmasters and indeed the true father of the traditional learned or cultural speech, it will be necessary to refer more at large to his dealing with language.

Sir Walter Raleigh says somewhere that in reading Spenser we float along on a tropical river of fine words, and in effect suggests that there is in the Faerie Queene verse little call on the understanding. To apprehend lazily the meaning of these fine words is the reader's easy task. Syntax, which might be obstructive, is in fact as simple as the ideas. Spenser is our Apollonian poet par excellence—to use Nietzsche's term. These idle dream-shapes are occasionally broken in upon by some word-blast, which however, does not as a rule involve much mindsweat. Only when he is presenting Platonic notions does the poet make any great call on our wits. Therein he resembles the Shakespeare of the Sonnets and Rossetti of the House of Life. It is curious how many English poets normally concrete and romantic, have buttressed their simple romantic work with the hard-thoughted symbolism of the neo-Platonists. Spenser, it is to be feared, is not generally read in bulk. Perhaps he makes too little demand on the intellect, with the result that we become so relaxed that we cannot read very far. The state of hypnosis which according to some writers, is aimed at in romantic art is quickly reached. These "dreams" that pass before the half-shut eyes soon cause the eye to shut wholly. No doubt in his own day this was not the case.

Except in places where, to introduce some complexity, the poet has indulged in more than his ordinary childish inversions.
M. Jussesrand's picture of the courtiers spending a delightfully lazy afternoon with the Faerie Queene in the recess of some window at Greenwich Palace, is as truly as it is finely imagined. Those trumpet blasts which are the call to duty in a world where Englishmen were more and more asserting their authority, those descriptions of foreign parts which were the scene of so much heroic endeavour on the part of Englishmen, and the veiled picture of contemporary character and incident would no doubt make the great romantic epic a very different thing for the Elizabethan gentlemen. It had meaning to them which is now lost to all save the scholar. It must now be judged solely as poetry, and the texture of its art is scanned by far less lenient eye than when it throbbed with contemporary excitement and the noble sentiment which was then in the air.

In his essay on Spenser in Springs of Helicon Mr. MacKail refers to those numerous passages in the Faerie Queene in which inspiration is at low ebb and where the flattest stuff - full of absurd prosaisms and childish or lax syntax - is presented to us. No doubt the huge canvas is responsible for much of this. Coleridge was perhaps right - the long poem should have waste places, or at least passages less highly wrought. The epic poet, some would say, is to be judged by the vivacity of style he imports into these waste places. Judged by this rule, Spenser falls far short; when the excitement of action or of display dies down, he generally becomes loose.

'A Literary History of the English People.'
lapse and relaxed, and not seldom ridiculous. But even from the golden mouth of Spenser it is unreasonable to expect an unfailing shower of jewels. Gemmed work of the sort is not to be evenly maintained. Hence the rich romantic manner is as a rule unsuitable for epic, though highly suitable for the long erotic poem of the last decade of Elizabeth, which encourages a sensuous dalliance with perfumed language. Spenser was the first English poet who played artistically with the tongue. He was somewhat conscienceless in the means he used for getting the effects he aimed at from his word-system. He was a thoroughly romantic poet, and meaning meant less to him—save in his moral or philosophic passages—than to most of his contemporaries. There is a nemesis awaiting the romantic poet who inclines more and more to imitate the effects of music or of the pictorial arts, and the nemesis is absolutely certain to overtake him in the long poem. Nevertheless the marvel to the ordinary reader is that Spenser maintains such a level as he does and that he has not far more lapses into stupid prose.

Further, be it said, that lapses into prosaism were common in his age, rich as it was in sheer inspiration. English was then striving to become a polished tongue and to rid itself of the natural boorishness which we moderns rather like, which indeed is cultivated by certain of our younger /
younger poets today with their elaborate pose of informality. Foreign importations were the main means to this end. How significant we regard the occasional approaches to cultured poetic speech in Tottel's Miscellany! Hardly can we expect the language to purge itself of gross phrase overnight.

At the same time Spenser is a virtuoso in speech. He shows a schoolboy's delight in often absurd etymologies, as where he writes cowardice - cowherdice to complete poor Coridon's humiliation in the pastoral episode of the 11th book. Note also the spelling nosethrils for nostrils, which Keats adopted from Spenser. His art shows thorough awareness. There can hardly have been a more conscious artist, or one more intoxicated by the often pleasing shocks which his frequent crude realism or adroit mis-use of the tongue administers. He had a natural understanding of /

It is found in poets before Spenser. S. G. F. Storey. He uses the word cowardice in M. Hist. 1956. P. 316.
of the psychology of language. He knew how far rareness and beauty of word and phrase are compatible with the unpleasant realism, which he often seems to seek. As a rule he does not hesitate to use words, which would ordinarily offend, to describe offensive things. Doubtless his study of Ariosto was partly accountable for this grosser side of his work. Doubtless also the puritan in him accounted for a good deal as it had in Milton's case too. The fair face of ideal beauty is liable to be marred in bitter polemic, and the puritan has always shown a disposition to expose the ugly and deformed without much consideration for the effect on the reader or spectator. Passages of this sort will occur to every reader of the Faerie Queene, their broadness unrelieved by the comic or ironic effect achieved by the great Italian poet. and not at all excused by the underlying moral purpose. As for his attempts at the archaic, Mr. Mackail well says, they would disgrace a modern schoolboy. Romantic posterity has looked on them with an indulgent eye. They are often as stupid as Chatterton's. His songs and ditties (the forms complained of by Dryden) his oftsons (a creation of his own) and sithences, and above all his infinitives in-en are to us very obstructive to fair appreciation. Ben Jonson was undoubtedly right. "In affecting the ancients (he) wrote no language." But like our own 19th century romantics, he did a service in enlisting a large number of 'old-dennizened' words, many of them fair Anglo-Norman words. Truly he overworks them. But it would be difficult to see how our Keats and Rossetti could have written without such "stunning words
for poetry", to use Rossetti's phrase, as girland, guerdon, pageant, chariot, belgards, purfled, delices, vermail, pursuant aumayled, and a hundred others which occur to every reader, and which became later the sacred blazonry of the intenser 19th century romantic.

All these words are heavily overworked. This is the epic writer's difficulty - the language tends to break down under them, or rather the poet cannot afford the art or care to avoid the continuous use of a well-worn vocabulary. His range of words lapses into a favourite Only the greatest poets have resisted this temptation. Not only vocabulary but tricks of phrase and style. Especially is this the case when there is lack of variety in the matter. An epic of personal prowess and hardihood like the Iliad or large tracts of Scott's work, almost of necessity forces the poet on such a worn-out diction, especially if there is the faintest weariness on the part of the writer. One of the merits of an epic poet is his skill in avoiding this formidable rock. Dryden in his Epistle dedicatory to his AEneid complains of this difficulty. In the later books he found it impossible to vary his language. And the AEneid has a fairly varied matter. The authors of rope's Iliad are in the later books quite nameless in the matter of employing the same hackneyed language. nor could they otherwise have got through their task. Like the modern leader-writer they had not the time or inclination to avoid the standard clichés and stop-gaps. So with Spenser. Weariness asserts itself in the third book - wonderful and
richly varied as that book is. In the Sixth Book the pastoral seems to revive his art. A poetry which depends chiefly on pictorial effect naturally runs to epithet. And as the situations are mostly stock situations, if we may use the word, we have all the vocabulary of horror and pathos, and the stock is soon rifled - hence the vast mass of constantly recurring words dreadful, horrible, rueful, pitiful, grisly, ashy, tender, &c. which greatly offends some readers. Keats who is the first modern master of rare epithet falls into the same pit. His fondness for the inartistic awful, enormous, dreadful, and tremendous (he even uses untrencous) is curious in such an artist. Perhaps the example of Spenser led him astray. The Morris of the Earthly Paradise has an even greater propensity for commonplace epithets, which he sprinkles with liberal hand. Keats might also plead the example of Milton for the use of such epithets but Milton somehow brings it off as in the closing lines of Paradise Lost.

"With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms."

The word is powerful here.

Pope said something on this head in the interesting Postscript To the Odyssey. He has been discussing "how far a poet in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances without vulgarity or trifling" and continues, "Epithets are of vast service to this effect and the right use of them is often the only expedient to render the narrative poetical."
The question referred to here goes down to the roots of the neo-classic theory of art. Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Discourses and Johnson in his Lives of the Poets are at one in their reproduction of such detail as Pope contemplates. It is an interesting speculation how far the representations of Homer helped to dig the grave of neo-classicism, in spite of Pope's and his collaborator's dulling down of Homer's stark realism. This they did largely through their epithets.

Spenser's muse, we say, ran much to epithet. Even Puttenham had warned the young poet against excess in this direction. Nor had the poet learned Milton's art of skilfully disposing of his superabundant epithets.

Tennyson resembles Spenser in puritan temper. This accounts in him for some rather crude outbursts of temper, and for the occasional indulgence in the presentation of the ugly or morally repulsive. But Tennyson had learned from Virgil, the great classic who, by fastidious workmanship, had solved the question of epithet in epic. Virgil rarely wearies us with repeated epithet. Tennyson, like Shelley, has a well-marked list of favourite words but they are not, epithets. Victorian verse is the most devastating thing in verse. Further, the Spenserian stanza too often coaxes the poet into the use of a stock language. Once Spenser is started with an rhyming word like guise we are pretty certain to run through the set - wise, wiser, &c. or fold, - enrold, hold, behold, &c. The other weaknesses of
this superb stanza are obvious - the wrenching of words and meanings and the childish inversions.

On the other hand the Alexandrine helps greatly. It is pointed out that many stanzas seem hopelessly flat, till the sonorous last line retrieves the situation. We may see this clearly from a comparison with Sackville's Induction which has no Alexandrine. The truth is that Spenser (in certain large tracts of the Faerie Queene) worthily admired word-artist as he is, will not bear close examination, if anything approaching classical or even commonsense tests are applied. This is even truer of the syntax than of the vocabulary. Many passages in the Third Book especially are simply not English of any time. Nor is it merely a wrenching of the natural usage and order of words to secure peculiar beauty. No, on the whole it might be predicted of Spenser as it is of Shakespeare (though not to the same extent) that when he is best he is least abnormal in his treatment of language. It is often simply stupid and overwearied work, or as Mr. Mackail calls them elegantly "untransmuted lumps of prose" from the chroniclers Shakespeare nodded a good deal here too. The complacency with which our age views aberrations is not the result of making allowances for the age in which he wrote, when language was not yet settled, but is due to worship of quaintness, a weakness from which eighteenth century criticism were remarkably free. Hence their farcical view of the poetry of Chaucer and Spenser. But the fineness of sensation /
sensation for which Keats, his modern counterpart, sighed, is
Spenser
fully realised in
and because of that outstanding virtuosity in language which distinguishes him, we are willing to pardon everything. We need not here do more than refer to his amateurish affectionation of the obsolete. Every student is familiar with that side of his work. But not so many are aware how much he indulges in the wretched euphuism of his day. We use the word "euphism" in its wider sense, to characterise that widespread mania for toying with words and rhetorical figures which is the most remarkable feature of Elizabethan literature, prose and verse. The prevalence of this puerile fashion has been variously explained, but the simplest explanation is perhaps the best as it applies broadly to all the western tongues at this period. The somewhat rustic English had lately, through the revival of learning, come in contact with the literature and the grammar and rhetoric of the classical tongues. Half understanding and wholly fascinated by the beauty of these writings, they immediately applied the whole textbook of rhetorical devices to their own work. Like a parcel of savages, they decked themselves out in the beads and gogaws which they found in the old Rhetorics. And they started a school of writers of poetry and rhetoric, who of course solemnly copied out all the devices, divorced from real example, which they found in the ancients. Note for example, Puttenham's enthusiasm for tropes and figures. The highest names in poetry did not escape the infection any more than the lowest. Shakespeare's "first fruits" the Venus and Adonis and the Rape of Lucretia are full of the deformity produced by applying incessantly and carelessly those little tricks...
of speech which are, in good art, intended to be used sparingly and almost undiscernibly. It is all very tawdry, such stuff as this.

"All these and thousand thousands more
And more deformed monsters thousand fold
With dreadful noise and hollow rumbling roar
Gan rushing in the foamy waves enroll'd."

And there is a good deal of it in the Faerie Queene and more in some of his minor poems. Word hunting and coursing of the latter (the ordinary English device of alliteration) and notably the figure of anaphora, invaded every kind of literature, and Spenser no more than Shakespeare was above the silly affectation of the day. Truly Dryden was right in demanding a thorough purge of the poetic speech at the Restoration! He and his followers went too far in hunting down every imaginative element in speech. George Chapman in our modern view was right when he protested against puritanism in speech and declared "that Poesy should be as pervious as oratory, and plainness her special ornament was the plain way to barbarism." But the mass of trickery and sounding verbiage which everywhere confronts us, in even the great Elizabethans, called for the sharpest use of the knife.

Spenser as the poet of physical states, the incomparable poet of dream-shapes, has exhausted the language of sensation, especially the language of lassitude, sloth, and voluptuousness, and of those crude mental shapes fear, horror and pathos. It is here that

X

Chapman felt strongly on the subject and as the translator of Homer, he had every right to do so, "Yet as worthiest poets
Shun common and plebian forms of speech;
Every illiberal and affected phrase
To clothe their matter and together tie
Matter and form, with art and decency;
So worthiest women should shun vulgar guises."

Thus brave Chapman in The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois I, I.
that his lordship of language is quite beyond challenge. It is here that his words are "rolled on the palate fine". The poetical voluptuary desires no higher pleasure or expects none. But Spenser is rather unlike Keats here. He can, and does, vary the cloying sweetness of his words with a frequent rough lick of the tongue. Whether this was mere art, the supplying of an a rebours element to avoid the sickness of surfeit, or merely the rusticity of the tongue against which he does not seem to have struggled, is a nice question. In his descriptions of the noisy rout and of the harmony of the birds for example, there is a lack of the particularity in which the Victorians later specialised. There is rores, rumblings, loud chaunts, and shrill whistlings. He is a lover of sound, and all sounds are equally delightful. He talks of our "senses softly tickled". He speaks much of harmony; Zephyres lowd whisteled; wearmome turmoyle; rare melody, the billows rore outrageously; dreadful noise and hollow rumbling rore:

"a rueful cry
Of one that wayled and pitifully wept
That through the sea resounding plaints did fly
And lowd to them for succour called evermore."

"Mermaids chaunt making false melodies."

"An hideous roring far away they heard."

"the threatful wave
Doth rore at them in veine and with great terour rave."

These words and passages suggest a far-off imitation of nature, repeated as they are so often as to become conventional. Between Spenser and nature there is a glass of some opacity, but music he will give us, if he dull down /

That is in the Faerie Queene. In the marriage poems and the four Hymns, Rusticity is largely avoided.
down the lines and tones of nature. He understood the use of discord for its own sake. Keats too, it may be said understood the use of rusticity in these cloying passages. Some critics are so bent on noting only this poet's early errors of taste and his mawkishness, that they will put down all cases of this sort to lapses into prosaism or vulgarity, rather than to effort at artistic relief. Keats had read himself into the Elizabethans, and he had noted how close even in their fine writing, they are to the commonest change of everyday speech. Doubtless it was not this element of their poetic diction which primarily appealed to him. But in the process of imitating them, and especially Spenser, he mingled fine speech and vulgar in something like the proportions we find in the diction of elder poets. Wordsworth, we need hardly say, was attracted to the Jacobean, to "well-languaged" Daniel, for example, solely by their clearness and their simple diction, Mr. Abercrombie says, - "The magnificence and surprises of diction have their best chance of proving their mettle when they are immersed in and infected with the nameless indefinable electricity of common speech even where they seem to challenge /

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challenge grammar. As instances he takes a phrase or two from Comus - 4, which is written in Elizabethan English:

"And yet come off!"

"if you have this about you"&c.

The early 19th century critics did not quite understand this mingling of fine heroic poetic speech with common stuff, though they display a contempt for grammar and a love of crude phraseological daubing which irritated De Quincey. In rebutting Wordsworth's arguments on poetic diction, Coleridge it will be remembered quoted a passage from Spenser. Coleridge assumes that Wordsworth will not challenge the authority of Spenser, for the passage illustrates just this mingling of ordinary and the extremely rustic language, which might be supposed to please Wordsworth:

"By this the Northern wagoner had set

His sevenfold teme behind the steadfast starre
That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To all that in the wide deepe wandering arre;
But cheerfull Chaunticleere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did fill."

This is surely homely enough, thought Coleridge. But Wordsworth, one thinks, would object to the convention of the mythological passage, however rustically expressed. Here is one of those mythological passages in which the Elizabethans, above all Spenser, delighted. It illustrates their use of a
comically 'low' language in dealing with mythological passages. Why they should have "tarnished the brightness of Hellas" in this way is puzzling. Why should the mere mention of classical divinities have been the signal for a preposterous diction? Byron in Don Juan ridicules Wordsworth for similar incongruity of phrase.

Canto III, XCIX

"If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain And Pegasus runs restive in his 'Waggon', Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain? Or pray Medea for a single dragon?"

Rupert Brooke in his book on Webster calls attention to this persistent refusal of the Elizabethans to apprehend the true nature of the ancient mythology. Did the Elizabethans regard mythology as giving an opportunity for jocosity, or was it simply native boorishness which made them treat the old names and fables thus? It certainly was not any theory about calling a spade a spade. In Sylvester's Du Bartas we see the same manner grown still more lubberly. We know that Phaer, Stonyhurst, and Philemon Holland did not remotely apprehend the delicacy of classical work. Their diction is grotesque, inadequate, just as Wm. Morris's is of "first precept" however excessively boorish. The battle between rusticity and classical refinement will of course go on always in a country like England, where the native groundwork is caustic vernacular and 'goods plenty' rather than artistic selection. Spenser betrays his true English character, and that despite his harmony and feeling for pictorial beauty, in these classical passages. Are we therefore to understand from these mythological passages that Spenser merely shows this
inability of the Englishmen of his day to divine the true
delicacy and beauty of the classical literatures? That he
could understand and reproduce the delicacy of the work of
the French Pleiade, but not of Virgil and Horace? When he
imitates the Pleiade writers in his sonnets and the Shepherd's
Calendar he not unsuccesfully conveys their matter and
feeling in their own level of language, or something approach-
ing it, and his Prothalamion, Epithalamion and Four Hymns
have passages of extreme delicacy of workmanship. When he
touches the classics proper, it is too often to degrade them
in the way in which Morris purposely vulgarises them.
Francis Thompson has an image of a semi-mythical character
which is the grotesque in excelsis. He talks of "the beaten
yok of stars". But a mass of imagery and language equally
grotesque can be cited from the works of many Elizabethans,
notably the clownish Sylvester, and the succeeding race of
metaphysicians, often more subtly grotesque. But then they
specialised in the grotesque! Endymion is a hunting place
for examples of awkward mishandling of the classical divin-
ties. Keats is however only adding a mawkish strain to the
old Elizabethan grotesque in such things as this Niobe group:

"Perhaps the trembling knee
And frantic gape, of lonely Niobe
Poor lonely Niobe! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks!"
How dreadful! one says, Spenser is never so bad! Keats indeed has here 'tarnished the brightness of Hellas!'

The point we desire to make is that Spenser, like Chaucer and like Milton, has his feet firmly planted in homely English. So have the best of our moderns. But the present-day writer has a more subtle sense of the congruities of speech, of the scale of speech values. Chaucer, for example, even at the highest moment of his art, when he has the gran estilo of the Italian before him as a model, continually slips into rusticity, and we like it. Of love, he says it is—

"Now up, now down,
Like bucket in a well."

And in many another passage of his *Troilus and Cressawayde*, that superb work in which he comes nearest to the high style of the Italians, he stumbles into domestic and boorish phrase or simile.

If we wish to see Spenser at the height of his art, we must select a passage like that in Book 6 describing Acrasia's bower, many touches of which are taken from Tasso's description of the Garden of Armida. Never has language been put to more luscious and melting use than in this descriptive passage. All the poet's powers are strained in

In the *Knighte's Tale* where he is wrestling with heric epical matter, and where alone he attempts to introduce the machinery of the Gods, one notes how comically domestic his language and style are. His Saturn and Venus are on a level with the human characters of the piece, and in no way distinguished from them. — Read the passage beginning—

"Myne deare doughter Venus quod Saturne —
in the conflict of art. Beautiful and novel language prevails, but colloquial and even boorish elements are quaintly intermingled and the pseudo-archaic is even exaggerated. - LXVI -

The wanton maidens him espying, stood
Gazing awhile at his unwonted guise;
Then th'one herself low ducked in the flood
Abashed that her a stranger did advise;
But another rather higher did arise;
And her two lily paps aloft displayed,
And all, that might his melting heart entice
To her delights, she unto him bewrayed;
The rest, hid underneath, him more desirous made.

LXXI -

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade
Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
Th'angelical soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the water's fall;
The waters' fall, with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud with the wind did call.
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

If we can overlook the frequent 'dids' and 'dos' which the eighteenth century critics reviled in Cowley and the elder poets, and if we are prepared for the recurrent jars and jolts offered by boorish words and lines like that underlined in LXVI, there will be no reluctance in admitting that for sensuous description in such passages Spenser is still unsurpassed. His command of all the elements of language, the soft murmur of his pictorial and musical phrases literally enchant the eye and ear, and when we turn to the eighteenth century imitators we see why they had to fail in even colourably though approaching his art throughout the Castle of Indolence comes near in some places. We see why these imitators descended,

It was not to be expected that Thomson could or would sustain a fac simile of Spenser's manner throughout this long poem. Indeed he soon gives up trying after a close imitation, and even in the fine opening stanzas certain phraseological elements betray the age of the poem. Spenser had not talked of "a wood of blackening pines," or of "stream blackering through the glade," and the fine word flushed ("For over flushing round a summer sky") and 'listless' ('listless climate made'); deck the vernal year, crimsoned ("For over flushing round a summer sky") and 'listless' ("listless climate made").
descended to the ludicrous in their applications of the manner of Spenser, in such high wrought passages.

People have asked why Spenser retained so much of what we must regard as boorish or childish, — the element which made the neo-classic writers view him in heavy facetious vein. His inversions are perhaps most vexing.

Note the puerility of a like like —

"Right hard it was for wight which did it hear"
in a divine setting. We know from his other verse that Spenser did not require to do this — or at least not so consistently. Of the Amoretti we say nothing, because the sonnet naturally rejects loose elements. That the
Prothalamion and Epithalamion are as highly wrought as anything of their kind, and are as sensitive in their rejection of crudities is perhaps natural. The Four Hymns are fine enough, but less selective, less sensitive.

They are far removed however from the frequent insensitiveness of even the finer passages of the Faerie Queene. The Mother Hubbard's Tale is in a different manner, partly reminiscent of Chaucer's colloquial style. The Daphnaiada is nearer the romantic and is loose enough. But none of the lesser poems explains the dallying looseness /

We do not mean to indicate here the fine rusticity of a passage like —

"Begin from first, where He encrumbled was
In simple cratcb, wrapt in a wad of hay
Between the toilful ox and humble ass
And in what rage and in how base array
The glory of our heavenly riches lay,
Love
When Him the silly shepherds came to see
Whom greatest princes sought in lowest knee
which might make our modern imitators of medieval simplicity despair.
looseness into which the great epic occasionally flounders, and which made the eighteenth century misconstrue their Spenser. We must take it that Spenser found himself often in the poetic doldrums, teased out the thing when inspirations were at low ebb, and often amused himself at the expense of his art. The other view is to accept these flounderings as genuine 'Gothic'—to use the old term—art, and to deny that the poet lets us down for whole pages at a time. The simplicity of Chaucer was his aim and he often mistook a laxity and boorishness, such as Chaucer rarely displays, for simplicity.

Tawdry mythological embellishment we have seen was the vogue. Indeed Spenser deserves credit for his comparative restraint. Fairfax who follows Spenser in the style/his remembered translation of Tasso often insists on making Aurora rise blushing out of Tithonus' bed, which his author never did. He starts the VIIIth Canto thus—

Now were the skies of storms and tempests cleared
Lord Aeolus shut up his winds in hold,
The silver-mantled morning fresh appeared
With roses crowned and buskined high with gold.

(E l'alba uscia della magion celeste
Con la fronte di rose e cop' del d'oro.)

We have already referred to Spenser's debt to Tasso's poem, instancing the Garden of Acresia in the last canto of Book II, which is an imitation of the close of Tasso's Fifth Book. Fairfax was so attracted by Spenser's /

Book III—
The purple morning left her crimson bed
And donned her robes of pure vermilion hue.
Spenser's imitation that he uses his actual phrases in his translation, which was published in 1600.

Spenser's stanza LXV runs—

"As that fair star, the messenger of morn
His dewy face out of the sea doth rear
Or as the Cyprian goddess, newly born
Of th'ocean's fruitful froth, did first appear;
Such seemed they, and so their yellow heare
Crystalline humour dropped down space—etc.

Fairfax retains the underlined phrase, but to crystalline humour prefers crystal moist (cristallino umore)

Stanza 62 of the XVth Canto affords an example of the conceited kind which is not too frequent in Tasso, but which amounted to a disease in English poetry during the last decade of the century.

Rideva insieme e insieme ella arrossia
Ed era nel rosso piu bello il riso
E nel riso il rosso che le copria
Insino al mento il delicato viso.

Neither of the English poets turns this well—

Spenser—XII, LXVIII—

Withal she laughed, and she blushed withal,
That blushing to her laughter gave more grace
And laughter to her blushing, as did fall.

Fairfax following Spenser omits the awful stopgap italicised, but gives the passage a further conceited turn in the last line

Withal she smiled, and she blushed withal
Her blush, her smiling, smiles her blushing graced
Over her face her amber tresses fall
Whereunder love himself in ambush placed;

Fairfax has a naive habit of expanding the Italians descriptive /
descriptive passages, giving us often four words for Tasso's two. For example — "e vi fa seggio fresco a molle" becomes "Professed them sets sweet, easy, fresh, and soft." But it must be added that his words in such accumulations are simple and often monosyllabic. His authors encouraged him here.

Indeed it is easy to see where Fairfax got his copious and very adequate language. His admiration for Spenser stares us in the face. May we not say that but for Spenser having established the high language of poetry in England before him, Fairfax would not have succeeded as he does to admiration, in his really great translation. And it is not merely the finery of Spenser's language he adopts. On the contrary, his Tasso has a strong colloquial basis. True he will often give you three words for Tasso's one, but the words will be good English words and the idioms pure. He slightly irritates as Spenser does, by his excess in stressed past participles, and by other small Elizabethan eccentricities, but the marvel is that in an

It is amusing to observe how he copies all the little phraseological oddities of his master down to prosaic ineptitudes like —
He called for armour, which incontinent
Was brought by him that used the same to keep

A study of Fairfax's language would yield good results, especially in his influence on Waller and other Restoration writers was great.
an age so given to the monstrous in language, Fairfax is so pure. The credit of it must in part be given to the poet of the Faerie Queene. We cannot say that all Spenser's disciples are so pure.

Spenser's prosaisms are much of the same nature as the lapses described above. "untransmuted lumps from the prose romances of the period" is, as we saw Mr. McCrill's description and explanation of these tedious lapses, which are only too frequent in the Faerie Queene. To the same cause we may perhaps trace the prevailing sermo pedestris of Tennyson's Idyls of the King. Amazingly flat and vulgar are certain passages in the Faerie Queene. Perhaps we ought to trace in such passages the following the Italian influence rather than that /
that of the Chronicle's. They have something of the Bernesque touch which Byron in *Don Juan* adopted, and of which Leigh Hunt made luridious use in the *Story of Rimini*.

"Then as it were to avenge his wrath on me When forward we should fare, he flat refused To take me up (as this young man did see) Punching me with the butt-end of his spear."

So in the whole description of Belphoebe (II, III, XXII et seq)

"Below her hand her wits did somewhat traine". Such passages are not infrequent. As has been said, the Third Book, brilliant as it is, has much poor stuff - broken and chaotic syntax, stupid inversion persisted in through whole stanzas, and rusticity peeping out at every line. To illustrate and conclude, we have here,

1. A mass of colloquial tags 'by hook and crook', 'through thick and thin', 'might and main'.

2. A great deal of awkward small change 'so as', 'as like', 'like as', &c. which give a peculiarly prosaic and dumpish effect.

3. A number of pretended colloquial idioms which are not idioms. Therein Spenser resembles Wm. Morris and other moderns who in their zest for good old English, do not hesitate to create idioms as easily as they make phrases and archaisms.

4. The usual number of tortured words and even downright inventions.

5. The "stunning words for poetry" like *aygulets*, *gonfalon*, *girlands*, *charet*, *purfled*, *belgards*, and the forms which show the virtuoso in Spenser, salvage - &c. Note also his use of words like *nostrillae* (nostrils) and *cowardice* &c.
The overworked and often misused archaisms, wone, sithence, algate, eitsoones, lief, whylcause &c. The ridiculed part of the apparatus of archaism, whether in Spenser or Shenstone or Coleridge.

The wicked syntax and childish inversions. Wicked, because of all poets he has least excuse for them. A Miltonic sonnet or a profound Ciceronian syntax, but Spenser's thought in his Faerie Queene is rarely deep. Professor Masson said that the order and syntax of verse is that of good prose. This is subject to obvious adjustments. But such departure from that order and syntax as we find often in Spenser is bad.

The awkward and inartistic attempts at anaphora and other rhetorical devices. Even Chaucer shows more art in his use of such devices, which he copied from the Italians. He uses them with some attempt at pathetic or emotional effect, Spenser hardly at all.

The numerous prosaisms and often sheer ugliness of sound. This latter in Spenser's case is commonly due to fatigue.

To sum up, the Third Book, gemmed as it is with fine passages, shows how fatal the long poem may be to art. The marvel is that Spenser so continuously delights our senses not that he often disappoints us. Further, and this applies to several points above, the reader of the prose romances of the age preceding, of Caxton, Berners, and Hallory, knows that English had not yet satisfactorily settled the use of the small change of language, the conjunctions and correlative and adverbal phrases. This indeed is language's greatest difficulty in proceeding from rusticity to refinement. These modifying
and adjunctive elements are fixed last because they denote a certain stage of intellectual culture. A good deal of awkwardness in their use is therefore natural during the intermediate stage, and probably Spenser perversely emphasised the awkwardness. A page of Malory or even Bacon's Henry VII will show what is meant. The proof that Spenser is rather perverse is that in the fine passages which are so numerous as to give the tone of exquisite harmony to the whole work, there is little trace of this boorishness. It is in the flats when he wrestles with meaning, or when he attempts concentrated narrative and when the imaginative excitement is lacking, that the passages complained of occur.

"Like as Bellona (being late returned
From slaughter of the Giants conquered
When proud Encalade, whose wide nosethiltl burnd
With breathed flames, like to a furnace redd
Transfixed with his spear down tumbled dedd
From top of Heaven by him heaped hye)
Hath loosed her helmet from her lofty hedd,
And her Gorgonian shield gins to untye
From her lefte arme, to rest in glorious victorye".

This tousled and tumbled verse is all too frequent in the Faerie Queene. Some critics may discern in it a successful attempt at verse architecture. This divagating manner was certainly admired by the early romantics. Again the prose
romances from which we must assume that Spenser took something of his style, just as Tennyson did later in the Idylls, are full of anacolouthon and awkward parenthesis. On the whole Spenser is sufficient of a grammarian to avoid too frequent anacolouthon. This is of course when used artfully as in Milton a regular rhetorical device. We cannot however recall any instances of the artful or purposed use of anacolouthon in Spenser. He came too early for that.

Or take this, III, IX, 12,-

"Like, as the rest, [he] late entrance deare besought
But, like so as the rest, he prayed for nought
For flatly he of entrance was refused."

of. "he flat refused" in quotation above.

Or III, IX, 13,-

"He came, which full of guests he found whyleare
So as he was not let to enter there."

Or I.X.XI.-

"more than that why they in bands were layd."

We can understand from the last line what Dryden had in mind when he said that ornament was not to be had from old Tustonic monosyllables.
We do not intend to make a study of Spenser's vocabulary here, but anyone acquainted with Elizabethan glossaries knows that with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Marston and Middleton he carries off the chief honours of innovation. Ben's innovations however are of a different class, being chiefly foreign words used once in a dramatic context and not at all intended, as perhaps Marston's were, for naturalisation. Spenser is fond of "learned accretions" taken from foreign rather than classical sources, and of reviving Anglo-French words. Thus he has escheat, essoyne, esloin, peise (weight) parget, and numerous other words of the kind, along with brame, brausle, anmagld, charet, chamelot, aveture, avale, avaire, peregall; etc. etc. A page or two of such a useful book of words as Skeat and Mayhew's will instruct the reader in what he has been perhaps only vaguely aware of in reading these poets and dramatists, viz - their enormous indraught of foreign words - Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and in less degree, French. The saturation of English at this moment is amazing. But when we note that most of these importations are used only once or twice, it is clear that they never were truly entered in

All the same it is curious that Jonson should have presumed to correct other men when his own work is so full of learned and foreign curiosities like aquenity, argailé, antiperiptasis, amphiboly, anadém, adelantado, dispunct, perpetuana, nullifidian, brachygraphy, discumber, berlina, etc. See Poetaster. Of Middleton we need only say that he has a mania for foreign-looking words, a mania which he shares with most of his brother dramatists - words like carnadine, carnifex, metereza, camonoclo, panax lantedo, etc. It was the fashion among the dramatists to use Italian and Spanish words. Jonson uses them out of high spirits and always in comic or contemptuous vein. Marston has also a heavy account to settle on this score.
in the language. They are there as a literary curiosity or monstrosity, and are to be put in the same category as the other numerous affectations and caprices of Elizabethan speech. We are concerned with them only in so far as they colour the poetic speech. Can we say that Spenser's importations, numerous as they appear in the glossaries, decisively affect the dictional colouring of his pages? We would be inclined to say that they are outweighed by his pseudo-archaic touches, and that they never for a moment endanger the thoroughly colloquial basis of his style. Take a page at random and, as like as not, you will not notice any such novel word, but you will certainly notice the archaic, often stupidly archaic, touches and the affected simplicity and homely proverbial strain of the speech. That is, we need hardly say, when he is not girt up for art's supreme conflict, as in his pageants and sensuous descriptions, where he may be setting himself in competition against the great Italian poets. Here for example we take at random from the Third Book the stanzas XXII - XXVII of the eighth Canto. Not a foreign word in the whole /.
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whole passage', but a good deal of pseudo-archaism. Two or three proverbial lines appear to remind us that the age ran to gnomic wisdom. Far from affecting us by its polished and gleaming language and fine music, the passage is really — and it is not very exceptional — extremely rustic and some would say shockingly incult. We quite understand why the Neo-classic age regarded Spenser sometimes as a comic poet. They seem to have overlooked those numerous burnished passages in which his art soars beyond the sottishness of the above passage, and which we have accepted, perhaps too confidently, as the genuine Spenser.

The word avizing occurs, but it is M.E.

I note read aright, sith, tho, lin (cease) wild (vile) misseem, etc.

Hard is to teach an old horse amble true, and — The driest wood is soonest burnt to dust.
Spenser's vocabulary of fine words is the main repository of traditional poetic diction. Mr. de Selincourt's analysis of Keats' vocabulary in the appendix to his fine edition shows how large was his indebtedness to Spenser. It is chiefly the beautiful words found in the Chronicles that strike us - they are mostly Anglo-Norman words, "stunning words for poetry". The coinages are of a different sort from those of the Fletchers or of Milton - they are less ambitious, and often their novelty lies merely in the addition of suffixes like -ful, -ment. The prefixes im-, dis- of which these poets made much extravagant use, are rare in Spenser. Further, he did not go direct to the classics for words as they did. He has few or none of the Greek words, which they invaded into the tongue in squadrons. He was content to do some useful reserve work and to look to the modern Italian and French for new words. His chief importance historically, as we have seen, lies in this, that he thought of language as ornament, and that he not only brought into poetic use a large body of beautiful words for lack of which English poetry was languishing, but he wedded them to harmonious epithets, and so helped to start Shakespeare on his conquering path. Nor are his epithets merely harmonious. They are sometimes romantic in the narrower meaning of the word - that is, they have atmosphere, although we cannot often claim that they reach the romantic suggestiveness of Keats or Coleridge. Swinburne perhaps went ahead of both his forerunners. For Spenser, see J. L. Silk.
runners in the manufacture of compound epithets, - of which there is little in Spenser though a fair amount in Keats, but unmindful of Coleridge's caution, he carried this to excess. He also gave his epithets what we may call a subtle psychological turn which is rare in Spenser, but some readers object to this as unnatural. Certainly, Keats with his compound epithets and other novelties, which hover on the brink of eccentricity, sometimes outdare the great Elizabethan, but he too often carries off his most brilliant success in this line - and he so often fails - with a feeling of escape from disaster.

As for Spenser's essays in the offensive and the ugly, these might form an admirable study in puritan art, and they are not without connection with Keats' youthful lapses of taste. The Quarterly and Blackwood critics ascribed these failings to the underbred nature of the Cockney school. This is true to some extent of Leigh Hunt, but possibly the close study of Spenser is responsible for something too. Spenser is often coarse, as we judge, in his references to women. It is a matter of word and phrase rather than thought.

Since Spenser is the great origin of romantic diction, and since a host of poets have looked to him for youthful inspiration, it may be well to say a word here on X romantic epithet. A writer says "Spenser's epithets (with

D. W. Konnie, art. in Essays and Studies (English Association Vol.I p.93, from whom much of what follows is taken.
very few exceptions) are remarkably simple and obvious. Shelley's are abundant and often remarkable; but he is less a poet of adjectives than Keats. His world is one of incessant movement; he knows nothing of outline; you cannot paint his scenery or mould his figure; his angels are spirits; his ministers a flame of fire. In the style of such a poet epithet is subordinate; for the function of epithet is to fix and determine; the quality which I distinguish by an epithet is a characteristic, a quality which will stay to be looked at and named, which will tarry the painter's or sculptor's leisure."

In a word the writer denies romantic epithet to Spenser — with exceptions. Keats carried romantic epithet to an extreme, as witness, his use of words like "piazzian", "gold clouds metropolitan", "vineyarded", and "psalterian" &c. The romantic poet is under no necessity to define. He will throw out novelties of this sort in the hope that some hazy meaning will attach to them, and often they are brilliantly successful. The passages in which these words occur are,

(1) "Malciber’s columns gleam in far piazzian line" Lamia 1. 312.

(2) "Faded in and vineyarded from beggar-spies". Isabella 17.

(3) "Worn, tremulous, devout, psalterian". Lamia 1. 114.
Romantic colour or magic in epithet can hardly go further and we must not look for such things in Spenser. Shakespeare alone can top such language. There are inventions, but there is another use of epithet which is also romantic, of which Keats is fond, and which the pre-Raphaelite poets notably Rossetti and Morris, carried further, viz. the significant use of a small group of adjectives, cold, fine, pale, rich, fair, &c. so as to give them a certain loaded meaning. This is indeed a well-known mark of the pre-Raphaelite poets.

"Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold".

Eve of St. Agnes, 15.

"Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers - Lamia, 1, 145.

"Ah, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms
Alone and palely loitering?"

"I saw pale kings and princes too
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all."

So rich -

"Now more than ever seems it rich to die
To cease upon the midnight with no pain."
Shakespeare who surely will not, like Spenser, be denied expertise in the use of romantic epithet, uses the word in somewhat similar way in Timon of Athens,

"Yet rich conceit taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave."

The above use of 'pale' and 'cold' &c. is analogous to the strained and pained beauty of the pre-Raphaelite painters. Be it noted that for every sure hit in this sort of game Keats has two or three palpable misses.

Now must it be said that Spenser is a stranger to the true romantic epithet? Hyperbole he used occasionally. In the Epithalamion he uses this figure very successfully, and throughout the Faerie Queene when he takes time to breathe, he gives abundant evidence of skill in epithet. But it is quite true he rarely reaches out to the full romantic epithet, with its sense of magic and vista. Sidney, we saw, has more of this than Spenser. The adroit and accurate use of epithet had been a test of the poet even in the Middle-ages. Chaucer has several passages of the inventory type - lists of trees or birds each with the appropriate epithet. By and by the poet's business came to be regarded as in some special way bound up with epithet. Hence the Gradus ad Parnassum, where every noun has its appropriate poetical epithet. Some hold that the simple characteristics afforded by epithet mark the beginnings of the poetic art. Spenser, like Chaucer, has his diploma pieces here.
"The ill-faste owle, death's dreadfull messengere;
The lovers' night-raven, trump of dolefull deceit;
The lether-winged Batt, dayes enemy;
The ruefull strich, still waiting on the bere;
The whistler shrill, that whose heares doth dy;
The hellish Harpyes, prophets of sad destiny." +

It must be admitted that in these formal essays he some-
times shows little more advance on the art of Chaucer. Perhaps
he is more successful in the flower-list in the April Elogue,
which compares favourably with the famous flower passage in
Lycidas, and he is more successful in shorter passages.-

"sweet Rosemarys
And fragrant violets, and Pânces trim."

Chaucer has nothing like this. It is easy to see where
Shakespeare and Milton learned the art of setting forth
postical lists.†

his flower passage in Prothalamion quoted later
is the best in this kind. Milton first, after Shakes-
ppeare, shows characterisation of a high and artful order.
And yet the passage is the ear gratified and the senses sur-
prised by Spenser's word painting that it seems churlish to

† See also his tree-list (T.O. 1.1.8) quoted for
Chaucer.
deny him the artful use of epithet, except in rare moments, as when he talks of the beautiful wantons in Bk.III, canto 5, XXXIII.

"And every of them strove with most delights
Him to aggrate, and greatest pleasure snaw;
Some fremd fair lookes, glancing like evening liights;
Others sweet words, dropping like honey dew;
Some bathed Misses, and did soft embrow
The sugard licour through his melting lips;"

or II, XI, XIX,

"As withered leaves drop from their dried stocks,
When the wroth western wind does reave their lookes"

Keats took the adjective wroth from him in the great line
"Tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted, wroth".

or better III, II, XLVII.

"So that at last a little creeping sleepe
Surpris'd her sense; Shee, therwith well
The drunken lamp down in the oyl did steepe
Ane sett her by to watch, and sett her oy to wepe".

Here surely/is the true mystery of romance! These highvroug passages occur wherever the senses are to be played upon. The poet may not have known the last devices of word-magic. Milton

cf. "Some as the rubin (ruby) laughing sweetly red"

11 - LV. LIV.
had still a few tricks of poetical rhetoric to add, and a more highly wrought consistent harmony to display, and he has of course to develop the grand architecture of the verse paragraph. But the reader must be difficult to please who is not ravished by Spenser's word painting. He is the first English poet to use words as pigments. He is connoisseur and virtuoso. Further, as we suggested rather dubiously above, he does show very markedly, though not with striking success (English prosody was not yet ready for that) the attempt to give the easy effect of the verse paragraph, as in Milton, to his stanzas. This often instigates the cruel wrenchings and inversions his rhyming system forces on him.

We have taken the IIIrd Book of the Faerie Queene for purposes of illustration, but it must not be imagined that Spenser's art is unvarying over the six books. A work carried on over the great part of twenty years - and these germinal years for English poetry - could not but show distinct evolution. In a word we may say that the First Book is far simpler in composition than the later ones. The fine words are more rare, the syntax very much easier, and the art generally less ambitious. The archaic element is more naïve. The puritan intention is likewise more marked and the connection with the Bible is more obvious. Indeed, the Bible seems to suggest a good deal of the phraseology. When the
18th century writers burlesqued or half-burlesqued Spenser, it is this early manner not the voluptuous later style they model themselves on. This is certainly true of Shenstone and Thomson, and may suggest that far from being in at the death of the Blatant Beast, these writers rarely got beyond the first book.

For example, let us take Canto X. XXXIII-XXXV, a passage which is almost quakerish in its plainness.

XXXIII

"She was right joyous of her just request,
And taking by the hand that Faerie's sonne,
Gave him instruct in every good behest
Of love, and righteousnesse, and well to donne,
And wrath and hatred warely to shun.
That drew on men God's hatred, and his wroth,
And many soules in dolours had pardonne
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path".

XXXIV

"Wherin his weaker wandering stepes to guide,
An auncient matrone she to her does call
Whose sober looks her wisdome well describe;
Her name was Mercy, well known over all,
To be both gratious, and eke liberall;
To whom the careful charge of him she gave
To lead aright, that he should never fall
In all his wayes through this wide worldes wave
That Mercy in the end his righteous soul might save".
How crude the inversions are here! How unnatural the disposition of the words, and now plain the diction and now monosyllabic!

Or take the passage a few stanzas on describing the seven Head-men in the hold Hospital.

XXXIX

"The third had of their wardrobe custodie
In which were not rich tyres nor garments gay
The plumes of pride, and wings of vanitie;
But clothes meet to keene keene could away,
And naked nature seemely to away;
With which bare wretched wights he dayly clad,
The images of God in earthly clay;
And if that no spare clothes to give he had,
His owne coate he would cut, and it distribute glad"

The alliteration is the only ornament here and a poor sort of alliteration it is. That the great master of melody and assonance could write such lines is surprising. But it is early work, and looks rather like a poor caricature of Spenser — an 16th Century Caricature. There is also more than a suspicion of the manner of Chaucer poetry, both in the simple subject and the short-cut manner of the general abstraction from any thing like commonness.
"The fourth appointed by his office was
Poore prisoners to relieve with gratious ayd,
And captives to redeeme with prise of bras,
From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had stayd
And though they faultie were, yet well he wayd,
That God to us forgiveth every houre
Much more then that why they in bands were layd,
And he ha harrowed hell with heavie stoure
The faultie soules from thence brought to his heavenly bowre".

The sixth line here reminds one of a child's spelling lesson, much more then that why they in.

But we need not labour the point. And whilst it is true that at any moment in the later book we may be plunged in such bogs, the recovery is equally sudden and glorious. In the first book the recoveries are more rare and less splendid.

The second book shows a great transformation. Here are found many of high artful similes or classical lines and a fair amount of that splendid language, which is a chief boast of the Faere Queene. The great pictorial artist is everywhere in evidence, and the mingling or tender pathos, of wonderful scenes drawn direct from the poet's imagination, and of finely wrought scenes from classical mythology, make the prentice work of the first
book appear rather simple. And here first we meet with that motif which becomes more and more intense and pervading in Elizabethan art - the true renaissance idea of artful or curious workmanship.

II, XIII, XLII

"Thence passing forth, they shortly doe arrive Whereas the Bowre of Blisse was situate A place pickt out by choice of best alive That nature's works by arte can imitate; In which whatever in this worldly state Is meet, and pleasing unto living sense, Or that may daintest fantasie aggrate, Was poured forth with plentiful dispence, And made there to abound with lavish affluence".

XLIII

"It framed was of precious yvory That seemed a work of admirable witt; And therein all the famous history Of Jason and Medea was ywrit; Her mightiy charmer, her furious loving fit; His goodly conquest of the golden fleece, His falsed faith, and love too lightly flit The wounded Argo, which in venturous peace seas bore all the Flower of Greece."
The echo of Chaucer is distinct enough here. Those classical panelings for example, which make up the best part of the first book of the House of Fame suggest something of this kind.

"And I saw next, in all this fare
How Creusa next, waun Meas wyf
Which that he lovede as his dylf,
And her yonge sone Iolo,
seek
And Ascanyus also,
Fledde Perth drery chere
That hit was pitie for to here;
And in a foreste as they went,
At a twining of a wone
How Creusa was y-lost, alas!"

But more notable is the renaissance love of glowing pictorial art which is so remarkable in Sidney's Arcadia—and more marked in the next stanza. The attempt to animate pictorial art as in the Cydias scene in Antony and Cleopatra, often leads to falsity, if not fatuity. Some writers have traced its early appearance to the Greek romances of Longus and Achilles Tatius. It appears in Spenser as witness.
Ye might have seen the frothy billowes fry
Under the ship as thorough them she went,
That seemed the waves were into Yvory,
Or yvory into the waves were sent;
And other where the snowly substance sprrent,
With vermeil, like the boyes blood therein shed
A piteous spectaclet did represent,
And otherwhile with gold besprinkeled
Yet seem'd the enchanted flame which did
Creusa wed."

Professor Elton has drawn attention to the lack of reality in Spenser's sea pieces, and considering the age of bold seamanship he lived in, it is remarkable that he can 'do so little with that element. A passage which occurs to the critic is that in Colin Clout's Come Home Again where he describes the ship that bore him from Ireland as if it were some fabulous monster of childish imagination

"And as the sea (quoth Coridon) so fearful?"
'Fearful much more (quoth he) than heart can fear
Thousand wild beasts with deep mouths gaping direful
Therein still wait poor passengers to tear.

Behold an huge great vessel as we came
Dancing upon the waters back to land
As if it scorn'd the danger of the same;
Yet was it but the wooden frame and frail
Glued together with some subtile matter.
Yet had it arms and wings, and head and tail
And life to move itself upon the water
Strange thing how bold and swift the monster was - etc.

This picture has obvious likeness to the passage quoted above from the Faerie Queene. Both suggest rather recollection of a scene worked on the arras or painted on a fresco than an actual sea scene. And yet Spenser /,
Spenser had known the reality. Why does he choose the feigned and pictured manner? Because the pictorial art of his day was, if not a corrupt art, at any rate an imitative and highly conventional art. We note that the language of both these pieces, especially the latter, is excessively homely, and rather reminds us of Shelley's Letter to Maria Gisborne. Even in presenting unreal shapes in a false art-style Spenser must be rustic.

In the VIth Book Spenser's art in this deliberately descriptive sort reaches its height. At least on half a dozen occasions in this book the stage is set for a notable descriptive piece. Look at the lovely rustic scene in the IXth Canto,

"Upon a little hillock she was placed"
or the more studied scene of the Graces' dancing in Canto X,

VI, X, VI — "It was a hill plaste in an open space"

The VIth Book is much more pictorial than the others. Its adventures too are of a different cast than those of the earlier book. It is in truth a versified romance after the style of the Arcadia, with pastoral characters, brigands, knightly figures, and mobs mingled together. It is a superb study.
study in colour and the language used with assured grace and voluptuousness. There are none of the tedious flats that disfigure the other books. In abandoning the allegorical style and taking up the kind of adventure story which was then becoming popular, Spenser at last discovered the kind of art in which he could best show his supreme mastery of pictorial language.

The minor poems exhibit other sides of his genius, especially that side which leaned to mystical ardour. The *Four Hymns* show something of Shelley's attempt to paint the sacred mysteries of art and love. The Renaissance Art motif is everywhere.

211 "He could that Painter (had he lived yet) And pictures Venus with so curious quill, That all posteritie admired it, Have portrayed this, for all his mastring skil; Ne she her selfe, had she remained still And were as faire, as fabling wits do fain Could once come neare this beauty soveraigne."

This intense feeling for the fineness of Art ("curious workmanship") is also seen in the *Prothalamion*. 
"There is a meadow by a river's side
A flock of nymphs I chanced to espy,
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby
With goodly greenish locks all loose untied
As each had been a bride;
And each one had a little wicker basket
Made of fine twigs, entwined curiously
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket;
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalks on high.
Of every sort which in the meadow grew
They gathered some; the violet, pallid and blue,
The little daisy that at evening closes,
The virgin lily and the primrose true,
With store of vermeil roses,
To deck their bridgrooms' posies
Against the bridal day, which was not long;
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song."

The flower passage is conventional and hardly so well done as the Lycidas piece. But the repeated use of words with fine, curiously, feateously show the poet's absorption by art notions. Small wonder he enchanted Keats! Language is not yet used with its enchantment perhaps, but no one can read these lines without perceiving that so many of its sounds are yet unimproved.
In his little dramatic sketch the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, Mr. Bernard Shaw makes Shakespeare say "I tell you there is no word yet coined and no melody yet sung that is extravagant and mystical enough for the glory that lovely words can reveal," and later "Know that vile as the world is, and worms as we are, you have but to invest all this vileness with a magical garment of words to transfigure us and up-lift our souls till earth flowers into a million heavens." We know this to be in substance true. Longinus said it for us long ago - "for beautiful words are in truth the very light of the soul." Mr. Shaw could not have put the words in more appropriate lips. Let us therefore look at the special quality of the language with which Shakespeare clothes the radiant creatures of his mind.

In the first place, the luxuriousness of Shakespeare's poetical expression has not escaped notice or even censure. As compared with the Greek dramatists, he appears ultra-poetical. This excess of the poetical element often interferes with the dramatic quality and even congruity of his work. It is not simply that this voluptuous quality of speech is often indiscriminately conferred on all sorts /
sorts of people from gardeners and monsters to kings and military chieftains – that is an old quarrel – but action is often smothered under a weight of poetical nosegays. In strictly dramatic passages the imagination, say these critics, should not run riot. A too tropical language in such moments defeats the ends of drama, whose healing and sanitary purpose is achieved by other means. It is even contended that a certain bareness – "bareness as of the mountain-top", as Arnold put it – is desirable in high tragedy, so that the springs of the action and the human motives, which partly bring it about, may lie as clearly exposed as possible. The atmosphere should be rather grey than sparkling. A certain monotony or rather monotone in the recitation, certainly a very much subdued rhetoric, is perhaps best.

The object of high tragedy is not to tease our imaginations. Novelty of

The same objection is made by some to the Sonnets, where Shakespeare sometimes seems to be the quarry of his own teeming imagination. See Mr. Wyndham's Poems of Shakespeare – Introduction.
words and images and excess of these things interfere with that high poetic purpose. In high tragedy we are in a world beyond the flowering hill slopes. We are demigods, and, as such, have no overwhelming need of the beauty of the world below to lull our senses into forgetfulness. In other words, tragedy is, in this view, an ascetic form of art. Such tragedy may be sure Shakespeare with all his genius could not write, because he is too much in love with life, and perhaps because he was English. In the Renaissance age no one could write in that vein, which perhaps requires previous age of satiation and culture. In a small way we have achieved it. Our actors have become even taciturn and avoid all rolling rhetoric or moving poetry like the plague. Some of them say it makes them feel silly to drop into the poetical vein. Mr Shaw's dramas are sometimes an exception. A strain of impassioned rhetoric, maintained through half pages at a time, has rendered some excellent parts in his dramas almost unactable. Shakespeare produced a new type of tragedy in which the pleasures of imagination had equal place in the final effect with the terror and pity of the underlying action. The spectator, while not allowed to share the pitiless fate which brings human affairs to fruition and disaster, is yet transported by figurative delights. So far, it may be said, as these delights of the imagination obscure the inner workings of fate, the spiritual solace which justified this form of art and which in the old language followed Katharion for the purging of emotions, will be lacking or indefinite. In a word, these two elements which are on the whole evenly distributed in Shakespeare's tragedy are somewhat conflicting. It resolves itself in the end into the question whether we view tragedy as essentially a religious (in the high sense) form of art, or as something much more human. There is no doubt of the view that the Shakespearian must take.

Gray seemed to approve this highly imaginative cast of language in Shakespeare, but Dryden, fresh from the study of French classical drama, objected that Shakespeare's page was "pestered with similes". Arnold, in

"Every word in Shakespeare is a picture."
the Victorian age, made a full-dress attack on Shakespeare's over-luxuriousness. He was careful to admit that the Elizabethan had what he regarded as the essential elements of a great poet - adroit selection and conduct of the plot - but he says roundly that Shakespeare's example has decoated the 19th Century romantics, by encouraging that slovenly excess which, for example, mars a good deal of Keats' work. Keats is the typical imitator of our ancestral poets, and his conduct of the story of Isabella, so poignantly told by Boccaccio and which Keats smothered under a load of exotic beauty of word and image, is a warning to all later poets.

The thesis is on the whole sound, but to the English taste Keats' thick beauty is more grateful than good design in telling the story. The failure of the neo-classic experiment seems to prove this. Very few English readers would desire that Shakespeare should be lopped of any of his graces. We may be ungrateful enough to complain of the tedious passages which figure in some of his plays, but we cannot bring ourselves to condemn passages of pure beauty even where in some measure they interfere with dramatic cogency. It must not be supposed that such passages occur in equal measure throughout the Plays. The development of his art shows that Shakespeare was proceeding towards a new aesthetic, which although it could never attain to the comparative bareness of Sophocles, was steadily extruding the more decorative elements he found in Golding's translation of Ovid and other sources. In certain later dramas, not perhaps the last, his technique even becomes gnarled, contorted and obscure. His progress is from formal beauty - as in Midsummer Night's Dream - to such dramatic and beauty-scorning later things as Troilus and Cressida and Coriolanus. But this obvious change affects, in the first place, rhythm and formal imagery rather than the tropical quality of the language. Indeed whereas this tropical quality is not at all noticeable in Midsummer Night's Dream wherein the language is almost normal, it grows in almost intolerable profusion in a later Play like Antony and Cleopatra, while in Troilus and Cressida the language is twisted about like a bar of hot metal under the hammer. But this late play shows the extremity of the disturbance so far as the vocabulary is concerned, as it also...
also shows some disturbance in Shakespeare's generally serene mind. Later in The Tempest, he again sinks to - for him - normal dealing with words. We feel that Arnold was too hard on Keats, his judgments too romantic excess, is the name which is graven on the workmanship. "Load every fit with ore," he says in a letter to Shelley. For every malformation of the vocabulary which Endymion shows, can be pleaded the authority of the Elizabethans. Still as applied to the others of the romantic school, the judgment is a sound one, though it would be unfair to impute all the posturing and verbal antics of the 19th Century Romantics and Spasmodics to the imitation of Shakespeare or Milton. But whenever poets of hot judgment and inferior genius model themselves on the exuberant vein of the old poets, they fall into this error. They fail to understand that, while traces of such malformation are present on almost every page of Elizabethan poetry, the anages which we remember as great have generally a minimum of such blemish.

To illustrate the excessively tropical nature of Shakespeare's middle manner, let us take the merest wisp of dialogue from Hamlet, where the dramatic energy of the language is intense.

Now, Sir, young Fortinbras
Of unimproved metal, hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolves
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't.

In the rhythms of this play we find that formal harmony has been sacrificed to dramatic force. Unison, which to the modern aesthetician is often strength - even the grotesque of Chambers - begins to spread itself through the articulated speech and rhythm. The luscious youthful poet of Venus and Adonis and Midsummer Night's Dream is now flying at higher speeds. But he cannot discard imagination, though he can condense the images at break into an often rugged word. The reader whose imagination is at leisure will at such a hirsute word as Skirts have conjured up a view of the rugged coast of Norway, while shark'd may delay him a little though he

Language of the Tempest is very rich of course, the colloquial nature of the tongue finely wrought in with the more select. The poet is not free - he never was entirely - of small conceits, etc., as where Miranda says "When this (dog) burns, I will weep for having wounded you" and Ferdinand exclaims "Admiral Miranda! Indeed the top of admiration!" but the actual language is not put to the pack.
has an impression of the power of the ugly word. Perhaps such language constantly recurring takes too heavy toll of the imagination. Dryden had this in mind when he talked of Shakespeare being "pestered with similes".

Read a page of Sophocles or of classical French drama to understand how excessively the English poet leans to strangeness in phrase rather than common usage. On the other hand, if we are to talk of taking too heavy toll, of what power of the mind will a writer like Shakespeare not take too heavy toll? Or take the extraordinary opening scenes of Antony and Cleopatra. -

**Philo** - Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure; those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd, like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, renews all temper,
And in become the bellows and the fan.
To cool a gipsy's lust.

**Caesar** - The stale of horses, and the grised puddle,
Which beasts would cough at; thy palate then did Deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed'st; on the Alps
It is reported, thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on; and all this -
It wounds mine honour that I speak it now -
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

Truly we say of Shakespeare in his own words - (Lover's Complaint) -

He had the dialect and different skill
Catching all passions in his craft of will.
ere is a Vulcan at his smithy. Flaming words are struck out in showers. It is useless to complain, as we do of lesser mortals, that the language is in a molten condition and fashioned at will by the imperious craftsman. We shall return to this play later.

One need not here dwell too curiously on the evolution of Shakespeare's art, but may suggest that Love's Labour's Lost, Midsummer Night's Dream, Antony and Cleopatra, and Troilus and Cressida illustrate very well the chief phases of that evolution, both in respect of diction and metre—"we might add also figurative qualities. In the first we have the immature poet tricked out in the foppery of court speech. It is a thoroughly modish play, every scene stamped by the spirit of Renaissance Euphuism. The play really turns on the question of court-and therefore poetic—speech, just as Ben Jonson's Poetaster does too. It might be viewed from a certain point as a satire on that state of society in which for the armed clash of the knightly tournament, he substituted the weapons which silken words afford.

This fellow pecks up wit, as pigeons peas.
And utters it again when God doth please;
He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs.

This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,
That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice
In honourable terms; nay, he can sing
A mean most meanly; and in ushering,
Mend him who can.

As for the women, Boyet says
The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
As is the razor's edge invisible,
Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen,
Above the sense of sense; so sensible
Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings
Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter things.
which affords an instance in the play on sense of the thing. This mood, so alien to the manly spirit of the classical pioneers, Ascham and Cheke and the rest (though traces of the actual stylistic trickery of Euphuism are found in Ascham) represents the spirit of the schools after it has passed through the court. That humanism should emerge in such a coxcomb's guise is due to many things besides the accommodating genius of John Lyly. A study of Lyly's prose comedies and of his great work Euphues and His England gives us the clue to a mass of Shakespearian phrase, to say nothing of the wit combats, finesse and intellectuality of which Love's Labour's Lost is wholly compounded. This study has of late been undertaken by various scholars, and no need do no more in this connection than indicate the quality of Lyly's language. It is not a stilted language. On the contrary, it is almost as colloquial as Ascham's, though it has an amer (often monotonously regular) rhythm running through it. It is not at all classical in syntax; on the contrary, it is often almost rustic in its long passages of comparisons - though the comparisons themselves of course are often, but not always, too learned - and of gnomic wisdom. In a word, except for the full and too regular rhythm and the far-fetched comparisons, it is clear, colloquial, loose speech.

In Love's Labour's Lost we see these qualities of speech with a difference. The vocabulary is English of the middle sort which no fashion ever. The syntax is clear and simple, and the grammar is correct. On the other hand, it is intolerably euhuistic in the worst sense. Whereas in a later middle play like As You Like It, or The Merry Wives of Windsor, we find stray patches of dialogue in the silly vein of the "wit" combat - which often resolves itself into the most execrable play on word repetition, Love's Labour's Lost is largely compounded of such stuff. It is worse than almost anything in Lyly, who started the style in England but could not see what a monstrous affectation it would grow into by the time Shakespeare came to write. How it came about that a writer with Shakespeare's endowment could wallow in such modish nonsense has puzzled some people. Especially is this the case when we note that the "lesson" of the play is to avoid foppishness of speech and to fall back on a sort of quakerish yea and/
And may. Byron's abjuration of such speech is well known -

O, never will I trust to speeches penned,
Nor to the motion of a schoolboy's tongue
Nor never come in vizard to my friend,
Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song.

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise
Three filed hyperboles, spruce affection,
Figures pedantic.

There is also one of the sonnet motifs. See especially Nos. LXXVI, LXXXIII and LXXXV - VI, where his "tongue-tied Muse" exclaims against "the strained touches Rhetoric can lend" and recommends the "true plain words by thy true-telling friend."

Why is my verse so barren of new pride
So far from variation or quick change
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?

Sidney, we saw, sharply ridiculed similar modish eccentricities. This has to be noted that Shakespeare in was no originator and no crusader. He fell with every fancy of his times. When the fashionable folly was this wearisome mode of dialogue, he outdid the fashionables; when the mood was for Ovidian graces and mythology, he gave us our fill of these; when taste was for the blood and mystery drama, he wrote the most striking dramas in that kind. There is some comfort in the thought that so great a genius could not escape the limitations of the time. One only fashion he seems to have resisted.

In his later years, when the citizen drama was supreme, he wrote no citizen play.

Some general remarks may be made on his progress as an artist in words.

(1) It is important to note that eccentricity of diction as a rule accompanies eccentricity of metre; on the other hand, restraint follows restraint.

(2) Down to at least the writing of Midsummer Night's Dream as his metre is rather rigid or correct in a wooden sort of way - compared with what it afterwards became - so the diction /

See also Drayton's Idea No. 31 and his Elegy to H. Reynolds where he praises Sidney who "did first reduce our tongue from Lyly's writing then in use, Talking of stones, stars, planet of fishes, flies with words and idle similes.
tion and grammar, in fact all the elements of style, are fairly normal. Praise so liberally and justly bestowed on Daniel for his pure modern English, is no less deserved by Shakespeare's early things:** A Midsummer Night's Dream** for example.

(3) This disproves the notion that the language in Shakespeare's time was an exceptionally fluid condition, and its forms not yet ascertained. A word, we may say that when Shakespeare's plays trick with the language, does it of set purpose.

(4) As regards the figurative element of the early plays, we may note that it is chiefly decorative. Tropical language ("every word in Shakespeare a picture") is not so much indulged in. Every word is not a picture, and a role bears no more than its normal poetical meaning. Decorative images taken from classical mythology, especially Ovid, are lavishly sewn about. Intense figures taken immediately from life are not yet so notable.

In other words, as Shakespeare's imagination grew warmer, he tended to intense the formal image into the trope, though of course abundance of formal images crowd the pages of his later work too. It is a matter of intensity.

(5) **Troilus and Cressida,** no less than **Antony and Cleopatra,** shows how far Shakespeare had travelled from the purer, more reposeful language and imagery of his early work. A bitter east wind blows through this work. The language is in places grotesquely latinised or moody or obscure. Often it is mean and flippant. He seems to delight in putting such ill-masked jargon in the mouths of famous Greeks as if to satisfy his creeping anthropo.

(6) **The Tempest** turns back at the last to the true Elizabethan speech which is so lovely in **A Midsummer Night's Dream.** But it is now the master to relinquishes the great instruments of rhetoric in favour of a sort of halting rustic speech, much as Ruskin in **Unto This Last,** and his later poetic work lays aside the magnificent poetic rhetoric of his early maturity and talks simply. So Prospero in V. 1.

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves;

By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make,

Whereo/
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime
Is to make midnight -mushrooms; that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew.

Steed Caliban's speeches - the reader by "willing suspension of disbelief,"
proves the incongruity of putting such beautiful words in such a mouth -
so full of that delightful language. Doubtless the masque element in the
play with its invitation to nature description accounts for the similarity
of the language to that of Midsummer Night's Dream, which is more of a
natural masque than a comedy. The speeches of Iris are the very stuff
young Milton's masques and pastoral things.

IV.1 You nymphs, call'd Naiads, of the wandering brooks,
With your sedg'd crowns, and ever-harmless looks,
Leave your crisp channels, and on this green land
Answer your summons. . . . . . . . .
You sun-burn'd sicklemen, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow, and be merry;
Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on,
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one
In country footing.

Such is the pretty traditional language of Elizabethan pastoral - so tradi-
tional as to be a conventional strain of language, but none the less lovely
or that. Conventions do not always kill beauty. The reader is aware
at there is another and a loftier strain in the Tempest, hardly to be
bound at all in Midsummer Night's Dream - the full rhetoric of Prospero's
masque speeches. The two languages are kept rigidly apart. He now
sees high poetic rhetoric for prose.

In Midsummer Night's Dream the influence of Lyly is by no means abated,
but it is becoming a more purely dramatic influence - at any rate it is less
heard in the texture of the speech. The verse is still, as has been said,
if the rather primitive block type. The English, both in respect of
language and syntax, is remarkably central and indeed modern. Titania's
all known speech is a typical stave of this running well of poetry.

[Text]/ But see note p.4. It is not suggested that Shakes-
ppeare entirely relinquishes the tense realistic lan-
guage in the Tempest. The opening scene disproves
that and in parts he almost dynamic power over the
tongue show's itself in b-2 - tropical and elliptical expression
now as in Antony and Cleopatra. But there is a cooling down.
These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met me on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or on the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious frogs.

A delightful verse is clearly marked in its essential character. The
verse is musically though not grammatically endstopped. There are no
decasyllabics and only one weak ending. The language is English of
a simple yet ear-charming cast which the Elizabethans knew so well how
to exploit, and after which our neo-Elizabethans, struck with envy, strive
retimes not unsuccessfully. The rhyming words are concrete monosyllables.

In the plays of his early maturity, Shakespeare indulges to the full
appetite for mere beauty, for obvious not difficult beauty, to use the
usage of the modern writer on aesthetics. The striving for "difficult"
beauty was to come later after the soul's vexation. Accordingly the
aesthetic impulse in such plays as 
Midsummer Night's Dream is at the lowest.
A poet found later that to achieve dramatic intensity, he must throw away
most of the mere finery of dress. Beauty in the higher sense as defined
by our moderns would probably be praise more appropriately applied to the
true type of dramatic verse, rough-hewn as it often appears on the surface.

Midsummer Night's Dream indeed teaches us much in connection with
Shakespeare's art. Here is the beauty of the full-blown rose. He could
not have advanced any further in this direction. If we want a comparison,
I should note Mr Middleton Murray's contention that the Hltonic manner
as full-blown that it came to a stop. No further development was
possible, whereas Shakespeare's verse left it still possible for imitators
adventure further. That is the trouble with the more obvious kinds
beauty. Our own age-wise poets therefore seek the more difficult
ness of the nymph, and track her through swamps often noisome enough. 

This manner was inevitable after this beautiful poem, if progress in the
was to be maintained. This play and its companion plays are like
Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels, full of the country note, phrases every-
are ripe with the experience of the farmyard and "villagery". Like

mag and Aegina, it rings with the language of country employments and
true English quality is mingled, not incongruously, with
mythological stuff he found chiefly in Ovid - it blends very prettily
in the sweet English words and folklore. In short, was there ever
created a more simply beautiful thing? Our world here is the world

rient of ruinous passions (for the "goings-on" of the two Athenian
spies are like the terrible events in William Morris' Earthly Paradise,
unheeded, because muffled in this atmosphere of cloaking beauty) or
ness in any form. It is a world set to music. Mortal grossness is

ly laughed away. Like other innocent things, it indulges in garrulity,
re-play, and nonsense verse. Seldom does the verse afford the full

any of Shakespeare's world-shaking verse. In compensation we have the

mal brightness of morning in such passages as Theseus' speech

"My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind", etc.

as a rule the verse has something primitive about it. Almost in 

seem to see it struggling out of the early stage of dramatic blank verse 

the slime on its shoulders. Clumsy inversions and expletives are 

here, and a simplicity of syntax almost Shakespearean. So Theseus, who 

just been quoted in noble speech, drops in Act IV, Sc. I. to -

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Ægeus, I will overbear thy will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit.
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away, with us, to Athens: three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.
The presence of so much rhymed verse of a rather primitive type often persisted in through difficult dialogue again reminds us that Midsummer Night's Dream is early. On the other hand, the considerable prose element points to some degree of maturity. But for us here the "tongue-twisted simplicity" of the play is the notable thing. Whilst there is abundance of "witty" juggling with the technical languages - music, "the stage", sports, heraldry, whilst the surface art and the language belong to the same period as the Venus and Adonis in connection with which it should be studied; and whilst the native language is of course used to adorn, there is no breaking of the mould - either of vocabulary or syntax. Indeed the percentage of foreign or classical words is relatively small, and the list of positive creations or alterations of form must be negligible. The modern reader will find some difficulty in the full understanding of the play from the criss-cross of technical reference. He will be jolted about by country expressions taken from the deep heart of midland England, but he will nowhere find such intellectual word creations as everywhere bestrew Troilus and Cressida. And the reason is not far to seek. Shakespeare is still, in some degree, under the influence of Lyly, whose language is colloquial and usual, if brightly or "vittily" patterned. Moreover the emotional content of these early plays in no wise demands such an enlargement of the tongue as the stress of the later necessitated. The same is true of the metre. In the later plays the poet almost breaks the back of English verse in his endeavour to attain dramatic verisimilitude. Naturally as his art became more intellectual, as in Coriolanus and Troilus and Cressida, the pretty English of Midsummer Night's Dream became quite inadequate because the language of the intellect did not exist in a fixed form in his day. In like manner the syntax, which is just adequate to express the thought of a Hamlet or Macbeth or Prospero, cannot be that simple mode of speech which satisfies in Midsummer Night's Dream. Metaphysics cannot use 'simple' English. Intellect it may be said kills beauty in art. By the time we come to that extraordinary play Troilus and Cressida, almost all attempt at formal beauty is abandoned, though...
though here and there a flash of the old concrete loveliness like "Time
ought, my Lord, a wallet at his back" survives. This play, which surely
cited Shakespeare to romance and the elemental beauty of things is
versely intellectual and all awry in its presentation of romantic love.
the attempt at aesthetic effect is at its lowest, so the language is
ominantly ugly.

The same process is seen in the evolution of Milton's art. His early
English fruits, - thoroughly English despite classical touches - are
shed in Elizabethan diction and a fairly simple syntax with only an
ominal burst of rhetoric. Later the Paradise Lost is stiff with
iclass decoration, and his intellectual modes of thought (for which the
il-mind of Blake hated his art) force on him a Ciceronian syntax. The
y, as Addison said, sunk under him. Like Shakespeare and even more
Buskin and Tolstoi, his old age returned to a humbler strain of language,
his last great work Samson Agonistes is still curiously inwrought with
lassical syntax. The poet had so thought himself into the Latin idiom that
ould not abandon it even where the marked simplicity of the words proves
he is abandoning the grand rhetorical manner.

Troilus and Cressida, so often mentioned here, is the most intellectual
plays; it is the play which has the greatest display of mere mindstuff.
aturally it displays also the greatest interference with the English
ge. Strewn thick as Paradise Lost with awkward Latinisms and desperate
curities, it might be quoted with Browning's later things as an instance
the fate that befalls even a Shakespeare when the balance of emotion and
 intellect is upset. Better the sheer sensuous beauty of Midsummer Night's
:innocent as it is of all depth or wisdom, than this harsh ugly cub,
ill will say. But Troilus and Cressida has its admirers, and those scenes
ich are not hopelessly deformed by the type of intellectual language
ated, have relish enough for the crudest appetite.

We would not be understood to say that this sombre play is all compact
of this teasing-intellectual stuff, dressed out in a repulsive latinised
ition. There is much of that, but in the great speeches it is mingled
uch pregnant and vehement tropical language as Antony and Cleopatra.
In metre and diction and the character of its imagery, it would belong to the same period as the latter play. Its outlook on life is similar.

PRINCES.
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes
In all designs begun on earth below
Fails in the promised largeness; checks and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd;
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infest the sound pine, and divert his grain
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.

Nor, princes, is it matter new to us,
That we come short of our suppose so far
That, after seven years' siege, yet Troy walls stand;
Sith every action that hath gone o'er,
Whereof we have record, trial did draw
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,
And that unbodied figure of the thought
That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works,
And call them shames, which are, indeed, nought else
But the protractive trials of great Jove
To find persisitive constancy in men?

Great speeches in support of authority and order follow in the same vein

Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask,
The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree, priority and place,
Insistency, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order

*If the ascertained dates were not against us here, as to some extent are the prosodic signs also - T. & C.*

is dated 1601-2, and A. & C. 1607-8.
Great Agamemnon,

This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking.
And this neglection of degree it is,
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose
It hath to climb.

Here is a power in these speeches like some massive creature shouldering its way through the jungle. But of beauty there is little. The whole tends to obscurity, as do many speeches in Antony and Cleopatra. But the remarkable thing in Troilus is the perverse latinisation, especially in the usual suffixes. A passage like this (V. II. 116)

**Ulysses.** Why stay we then?

**Troilus.** To make a recordation to my soul
Of every syllable that here was spoke.
But if I tell how these two did co-act,
Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?
Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,
An esperance so obstinately strong,
That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears,
As if those organs had deceptive functions,
Created only to calumniate.

As full of the sort of language Ben Jonson was to censure in the Poetaster.

This is not the place to make an extended analysis of Shakespeare's style in general. All we are here concerned to show is that as the poet's ambition to paint the depths of the human mind grew, he was driven to disrupt the tongue and make a vocabulary and syntax for himself. It is not for mortals to censure this as we might do in the case of a lesser poet like Spate, but we may note that once started, the habit was a difficult one to break off. Once having left the path of the plain but not inelegant English set for him by Lyly's English, with added adornment from Spenser and Golding's Greek and other poetical sources, having once set up a language for himself first modelled on Marlowe's grand language, he proceeded to break the mould of English speech, as Dryden querulously affirms. It must not be supposed that the phases of Shakespeare's art are so well-marked as to preclude a
The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfum'd, that
The winds were love-sick with them: the oars were silver
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat, to follow faster;
As amorous of their strokes; . . . .
. . . . . . . . . she did lie.
In her pavilion, - cloth-of-gold of tissue -
O'er picturing that Venus, where we see
The fancy out-work nature: on each side here
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool
And what they undid, did.

O, rare for Antony!

A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands
That variably frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature.

Italicised passages are Shakespeare, the others North. A severe critic might say the blemishes, the soft and tasteless additions are Shakespeare's, the many objective strokes Plutarch's. Readers of the Arcadia know how often such puerilities occur there, and that they so often occur in just Titian-like paintings of which Sidney was so fond, and of which this passage is a fine example. The Greek romances indulge the same Asiatic saliency. Since we have the passage before us, we may also note how even a picture of voluptuous beauty, the poet's new dramatic style allows him to finish his lines on weak words, pronouns, prepositions and the like - a liberty he did not so often take in the early plays. The caesural pause anywhere. There are also the touches of would-be euphuistic smartness that they did, undid and bids the sense.

Another passage illustrates the enigmatic quality, the desperate obscurity by which Shakespeare loved to tease our understandings. In the third scene of the second Act, Antony soliloquises

Be it art, or hap,
He (the Soothsayer) hath spoken true; the very dice obey him;
And, in our sports, my better cunning faints
Under his chance; if we draw lots, he speeds;
His cocks do win the battle still of mine,
When it is all to nought; and his quails ever
Beat mine, inhoop'd, at odds.

The general meaning is clear, but the student will not be satisfied with general meanings. As often happens, the obscurity is due in great part to modern ignorance of the technicalities of ancient sport.

To illustrate the astonishingly tropical nature of the language of this period, note Antony's better speech in Act IV, Scene XII -

All come to this? - The hearts

That/
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, did discard, melt their sweets
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is barked
That overtopp'd them all.

Such torrid language has never been equalled in English poetry, or such epithets crowded on the mind as in Cleopatra's speech IV, XIV.

Eros,
Would'st thou be window'd in great Rome and see Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down His corrugable neck, his face subdued, To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
The baseness that ensued?

That lava-flow of burning words is here! and yet just the faint touch of obscurity in the last clause!

The linguistic as apart from the prosodic test for settling the comparative date of Shakespeare's plays and for settling the authenticity of doubtful plays has of late attracted some attention. In the present writer's opinion it is a very helpful test if we do not pretend to anything like certainty. To illustrate the possibilities of this test, we cannot do better than follow - with caution - Mr H. C. Hart in his analysis of the irasological peculiarities of Henry VI, Part I. We may claim at once that the metrical test for this play is not so decisive as the linguistic. For example, to prove that Shakespeare had a hand in several scenes of Henry VI, Mr Hart gives a list of expressions which have the Shakespeare hallmark. Mr Hart assumes that this hallmark is for the student of Shakespeare so distinctive that mistake is unlikely. A list he gives for example, includes the expressions churlish, carping, revolve and ruminate, Now antic Death, flesh his sword, late-betrayed, lend ... eyes to weep, Brea'ter ages, choked with ambition, - and many more. One may, however, agree that these phrases have a true Shakespearian ring without for a moment conceding that no other writers were likely or able to use them.

Nash, Nash, and Peo are also supposed to have had a hand in the play,
and here we think Mr Hart is on firmer ground. He instances phrases only used by these poets. The colours of their speech are for him evidence more cogent than the swing of their prosody. Nash, for example, is featured in Act I, Scene II, by a certain Rabelaisian quality of speech.

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<td>11.2</td>
<td>They must. . . . have their provender tied to their mouths.</td>
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<td>11.9-12</td>
<td>They want their porridge. . . . look like drowned mice.</td>
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Nash, for example, is most fed in Act I, Scene II, by a certain Rabelaisian quality of speech.

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hilar passages from Nash's works are quoted in support. On the other hand, Greene's diction was marked by a certain luscious extravagance - almost hyperbolical extravagance which suited well the affected euphuism of his novels.

It is no doubt uncritical to cull expressions of a certain sort and say they are unmistakably Greene's or anybody else's. But where actual phrases occur several times in Greene - who was of all these people fondest of the recurring phrase, having in fact an Epicurean fondness for turning over good phrases on the tongue - the argument begins to strengthen. For example, whereas in I Henry VI, IV.1 we find none of these things, but a plain running speech such as we find in abundance in Shakespeare's early plays - verse, it is true, without any poetic merit, but of that Shakespearean quality that it at least covers the ground with the minimum of eccentricity, in the third scene of the fifth Act we are in the region of Greene's facile phraseology. Except for the short second scene, this whole act is full of reiterated and showy phrase. His epithets are easily noticed, being often too cheap - which indeed is the prevailing character of a good deal of his work, - phrases like golden palaces, gorgeous beauty, princely majesty, princely liberty, etc. Greene's genius lay in the pathetic. He was a sentimentalist with a certain weak facility and a good deal of make-belief. He attained great popularity by precisely what the late Mr Charles Garvice frankly conferred to doing, - writing a good romantic story on well-worn lines and adopting all the stylistic oddities of the day - a very flashy artist and very different from the more robust Nash. Shakespeare, it is suggested, may have acted as dresser of his work by cutting out and toning down a good deal of his flashy stuff.

This/
This act, it is further suggested, contains fair evidence of the influence of Spenser. Greene was not much affected by the literary chrestomathy which Spenser first on a large scale introduced. As a master of language, Greene did not grow much. The phrases that made a brave show in his earlier work often do service in his later. He made one desperate lamentation from his early euphuistic style towards greater realism and was content with that. His style was formed before Spenser had the ear of the public. With Shakespeare it was otherwise. He could hardly have known Spenser's mature manner when he started in 1589, but he had no doubt read the work which made the most direct bid for a new poetic dialect. The shepherd's Calendar made the hoped-for sensation. Both in its dialectal disposition and in its courtly phrase, it impressed the public. Peele's Arraignment is evidence of that author's admiration for the Calendar. But besides this, Spenser's more mature work had been handed round a considerable circle before they were published, and just as the novel metric of Coleridge's Christabel was communicated to Scott before it actually saw the light, so the diction of Spenser's manuscript poems may have affected Shakespeare's early manner or at least helped him to a fulness and richness of phraseology found only in the poet of the Faerie Queene. Shakespeare we are convinced took a good deal from Greene in his earliest stage, but after the period of say I Henry VI. he may have in Mr. Hart's words "turned his back rigorously on all Greene's diction and expressions, shunning them as he would the laque - that is after 1591-2. He was then ripe for the more courtly and inspired influence of Spenser. This influence is partly ephemeral, partly permanent.

I Henry VI. save the fifth Act, shows a fair number of Spenserian turns of phrase, and the earliest of the plays show how easily Shakespeare adopted tricks of contemporary phrasing even where, as he does sometimes, he mocks at their extravagance. Mr. Hart gives various instances of this early Spenserian influence - affected inversions in the Spenser manner, and such constructions as never followed by a comparative and compound like thrice-always, all-vehemently, of which Shakespeare was fond.

More important, and of permanent effect, in not only Shakespearean but English poetic diction are verbal formations in -less, -ful, -y, and -ed/
Although we must enter a caveat against Mr Hart's remark that at the time this play was written the language was in a state of pronounced flux, we must admit that most writers took unconscionable liberties with it. Our caveat only extends to the observation that the more or less fixed language was there, as is proved by Lyly's work and indeed by Love's Labour's Lost itself. Only writers chose to depart from the beaten track. We need not, however, take exception to the remark that no writer had such mastery over these manipulations of word-meaning and word-shaping as Shakespeare.

It was Spenser who first began to play with the tongue as a painter does with pigments. He chopped and changed, not always paying regard to sightliness or euphony. We do not refer to his very legitimate application of the suffix -less to words like quench, wit, hap, cause, etc. That was hard to come and the tongue had certainly to develop all its possibilities in that direction, but he first, in experimental fashion, applied a host of suffixes and prefixes often tastelessly.

English poets soon discovered the power that resides in such formations especially the un- and -less forms. Mrs Meynell, writing on Shelley, who was much addicted to the same practice, remarks that the English tongue possesses in these two forms a very powerful lever denied to the romance tongues. Keats, enamoured of all the old devices, uses this suffix in three novelties in Hyperion. The first where he talks of Saturn's realmless age is good, the second liegeless air not so good and gloomless face is as his 'unfrementious' verse. Shelley often abuses these suffixes and prefixes especially the -less-formation, e.g. Adonais.

Keats, a great admirer of Spenser, carries the habit further, and is to be credited with several very pretty and useful examples of the usage. Marlowe strains the language still further in the direction of poetic inventions and introduces the peculiar Elizabethan passive sense - timeless, timeless, etc., and he extends it to disyllables - the native habit stopped at monosyllables - remediless, removeless, resistless, etc. Now all this is good invention. But others like Sylvester, made such inventive practices rather absurd, and prepared the way for the neo-classic reaction to pure and customary forms. The earliest challenge to the word inventors...
from Ben Jonson, whose Poetaster is largely a diatribe against neo-

classicism.

Shakespeare of course takes over all these word-devices. His liberal

attitude is amazing. In the ordinary tongue these formations in

-less and

ful, etc. exist for use only. Now a higher poetic utility is introduced

with literary effect clearly in view. Spenser, as we saw, applied the

suffix-ful in a rather uneesthetic way, as in wailful, gustful, spoilful,

painful, etc. Shakespeare, it must be confessed, is often as unhappy

-ful as ceaseful, faultful, mistful, dareful, etc. Then there is the dumpish

-ish, apparently an idle arm for the most part, until Golding and

subsequently Spenser handled it and polished it by use. It is an ugly cub

which can only be used with art. In Golding—whose influence on the poetic

tongue was greater than most people imagine—it is used very woodenly.

The whole the aesthetic motive of Spenser and Shakespeare in these

formations is shown, despite their mistakes, by their comparative avoidance

-ish. So with the old second singular of the verb—we find such horrid

forms as meantest, dippest, and oughtest and wentest, in the early plays,

at later the aesthetic quest caused the habit to be dropped. One suffix,

never, came as a godsend because it actually helped to replace the old

and "e". The "y" suffix was used extensively because it filled the void

left by the fading away of this vowel. The falling-out of the final "e"

caused a radical change in the music of English speech—a change which

a language originally too consonantal was, of course, for the worse.

The habit of using y-formed adjectives begins to be noticeable in Tottell's

cassellany—it is very conspicuous in Spenser, and often results—as with

other linguistic experiments—in hideous words like cooly, leany, heedy,

erry, etc. But a great many are excellent and were retained in the tongue.

Shakespeare's early works—the Vacation Exercise especially—show a good deal

of the formation—"cooly Tyne seems bad enough". Curiously in Milton, and

of the 18th Century imitators of Spenser and Milton, it is the hideous

variety of such formations that marks their works. Collins, but not Gray,

who had ideas on language were rather conservative, despite Johnson's censure,

one really bad instances, but nearly all the 18th Century didactic

writers are prone to the terminal "y" habit. Shakespeare, to use Mr Hart's
That "sets a friendly seal of approval on Spenser's trick," but not in
one's Labour's Lost, nor, full as it is of the very foopery of speech (on
basis of really charming and rustic English) in Venus and Adonis to any
noticeable extent. He has here teasty, misty, flinty, windy, and a few
others, but all these have been retained; whereas in the first verse of
Venus and Adonis we find four instances of the new compounding habit.

It is in Midsummer Night's Dream that we first come across "y" forma-
tions in any number; and even there he has only wormy, sphery, starry, rushy,
nagy, batty, brisky, unheedy. Nor in any of the later plays is his
approval shown by any but a moderate and artistic use of this suffix.

Salab, the play which puts such tremendous strain on the tongue, shows little
of it. Troilus and Cressida, which most departs from spoken
speech, has more.

As we have suggested, the mood in which the poet wrote this work is peculiar.

Mocking the Greek heroes and turns to acid ridicule many of the things and
persons we traditionally respect, therein anticipating Mr Bernard Shaw's

treatment of the ancients. It is not a popular play, but is rich in certain
things, notably its language and occasional illustration. The language is
often more than shrewd; it is shrewish. At the same time, it is in parts
clumsily latinised than anything in Johnson's English. It is also in
this very obscure - often a tangle of verbiage and periphrasis where the
poet seems unable to speak plainly. But whether in the one vein or the
other, the shrewish nature or the clumsy latinised, it bears Shakespeare's
mark in every line. It is indeed a remarkable study in phraseology,

which more will be said later.

Of The Tempest, a very late work, it has already been said that there
are two distinct strata of language -

1. The intellectual language or rhetoric of Prospero;
2. The masque language and some of Caliban's speeches which adopt the
conventional (if one may use such a work of such free and beautiful stuff)
language of the English masque and pastoral. It is in this latter that we
find a nest of "y" formations.

In the lovely introductory speech by Iris we have "turfy mountains",
"April," "rocky-hard," "watery arch," "bosky acres, " "dusky die."

This reminds us of a similar nest in Oberon's speech in Midsummer Night's
Pream

Eams

In tiltterer, early

Essentis
d

Furies and pastorals he outdid them in Midsummer Night's Dream; when they

lived gravely to the loftier issues of soul-conflict, he conquered the

highest peaks of tragedy only to find that the newcomers, Beaumont and

Bircher, were challenging his sovereignty by declining on a type of romantic

definitely flatterer to taste of the Court. He did not then disdain to

over the lists for the last time. Cymbeline and Winter's Tale are of that

loftier kind, but with a difference! So it is with art fashions -

Venus and Adonis could belong to no other decade in English poetry than the

Age of Elizabeth. It is literally crammed with the vera vestigia of that

Bernesque: and artificial period. (1) Among other well-marked features,

displays like Midsummer Night's Dream much acquaintance with field sports,

and in fact it overdoes the exploitation for poetical purposes of outdoor

activities. (2) Amid all the gaudy drapery of the age - and Shakespeare

clearly thought well of himself that he was "upsides" with others here -

the basic language of Venus and Adonis is curiously pedestrian, a speech

other like that of the Bernesque school - this, side by side with a

tragedy hunting of the word and a childish parallelism after the Spanish

type.

This for example might have been written by Leigh Hunt, Byron (in

vulgar) or any of the early 19th Century slovenly romantics

"Now let me say 'Good night,' and so say you;

If you will say so, you shall have a kiss."

"Goodnight," quoth she; and, ere he says, "Adieu,"

The honey fay of parting tendered is:

Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;

Incorporate then they seem; face grows to face.

Those critics who censured Keats for similar outbursts of Cockney

Buntness, evidently did not know that the style is really traditional.

The Bernesque manner is perennial in English poetry. It appears in

Byron's Fables, and more observably in Not W'ilhams AlbiinoD Bellama (1637)
"I know not love," quoth he, "nor will not know it,
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it;
'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it:

For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs, and weeps, and all but with a breath.

Such was the current notion of wit in the closing years of the century.

No sonnets have a good deal of the same stuff.

(3) The figure of *anaphora* is sadly abused as it is in Spenser's work too, but as usual in his *First fruits* Shakespeare carries the trick to childish excess. Sackville's Induction, one is glad to say, avoids this figure, the earlier Steel Glass of George Gascoigne carries it to eccentric lengths.

(4) There is a good deal of current euphuism in the piece, particularly in its similes. This curious style is built on simile, not metaphor, and its similes are often of the homeliest character, although they can be very stretched and unnatural. There is much of this in Venus and Adonis, though of course such a luscious work from such a hand could not avoid being both tropical and brilliantly illustrated. Its beautiful art is shown in such striking phrase as - "And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye". In such homely figures as

"An oven that is stopped or river stay'd
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage"

are marks of the overflow of euphuism from prose into verse. This indeed is the most striking curiosity of the poetry of the last years of the century - the invasion of verse by all the tricks of euphuism. - so "A lily blusht in a gaol of snow," or "ivory in an alabaster hand", "Once more the engine of her thoughts began," (cf. Hamlet's letter to Ophelia - "Whilst this machine is to him") - In such language as amorous blushes, lily hand, alabaster hand, honey secrets, rose-cheek'd Adonis, we note the preciousness which is a sure mark of all this erotic poetry and especially of A Lover's Complaint, of which more anon.
Occasionally a hint of the idea'd, and therefore obscure language of the sonnets appears, e.g. -

Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse:
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty;
Thou wast begot, - to get it is thy duty -
which reminds us of the debt-to-nature motif of the sonnets; so the
Renaissance motif of craftsmanship appears, just as it does in the sonnets -
Look when a painter would surpass to life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife.

That equally curious element — which we may conjecture came originally from the Greek romances of
Ages and Haliodorus who are full of it, and passed from them into the
Christian prose romances. —

What a war of looks was then between them!
Her eyes, petitioners, to his eyes suing;
His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them;
Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing.

There is the exhaustive exploitation of the technical language - from
the theatre, sports, heraldry, etc., which Du Bellay recommended to the
such poets.

The reader will pardon this detailed analysis of the art of a poem
that, however striking it be, is clearly imitative throughout. The poet,
has been said, was probably proud of his proved ability to outdo his more
named contemporaries in their own artificial manner, and one does not need
to look far in the dramas themselves to see traces of this conventional art.
By there, it is so kept in place by the language of passion and of reality
often to pass unnoticed.

It may be desirable to indicate the nature of that technical and
vaguest language which Shakespeare uses so often, and which is a stumbling
block to the young student.

Terms of venery, terms of heraldry and armour, terms of law are the
best elements of this language, but the playhouse, and in fact every
activity of Elizabethan life, even palmistry, contributed something to his store of figurative diction. Then there is that symbolical or 'shadow' language which is used largely to express the Platonism of the sonnets; and lastly there is the special language of euphuism. Books have been written to illustrate those various elements of the Shakespearian vocabulary. For an introduction to the subject the reader cannot do better than glance at the chapters in Shakespeare's England dealing with those special activities.

The sonnets with their illustrations of the current Platonism of the day are full of the language of contemporary art and philosophy. They are often easily obscure. Here occur as a ruling motif the attacks on the "false painting" of his day. He exhausts the vocabulary of ἀλήθεια in deploring this false art (LXVIII), with its "compounds strange (LXXVI), and strained touches of rhetoric" and "sonnets of praise richly compiled".

It is plain sailing, but when he proceeds to celebrate ideal beauty and truth, the Platonic ideas of beauty, truth, time's disfigurement, body and soul, we are soon in as dense a mist as In Memoriam plunges us into. When a poet advances to the really difficult denial of the reality of time, as in Sonnets CXXIII, CXXIV, and CXXV, we are in the darkest night. All that the patient and loyal investigator the late Mr George Wyndham could say of these sonnets was "They must once have been intelligible". Here are terms mystical import like "state" "case," "canopy," "accident," "idea," etc. was the fashionable fad, this discoursing on what Marston called The endless ens. It was sufficient to show dexterity in using the cheap rhinestones of Platonism. Clearness was not demanded; so in the poems which Marston, Drayton and Shakespeare contributed to Chester's Love's Martyr the reader is impossible to decipher. Shakespeare's is the densest

Property was thus appalled
That the self was not the same
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Introduction to his Poems of Shakespeare, page CXXVII.
Strange that Shakespeare should have fallen a victim to such intellectual
foppery!

In the great Sonnet (LXIV) for example occur:

When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay,
We are aware that words are being used in esoteric fashion.

The theme of identity leads the poet into deeper bogs. His philosophic
terminology is borrowed from others, from Spenser perhaps whose Hymn in
Honor of Heavenly Beauty is steeped in Platonism, and perhaps Hoby's Courtier
not to speak of foreign adaptations of that prevalent philosophy. He was
addressing a special audience of wits who were read in the terms of the
school. The like mystical confusion is found everywhere among the poets of
his school, only Shakespeare seems to be denser than the rest. We must
view these sonnets therefore as exercises of the schools, and not expect too
much from them. He illustrates those philosophic themes from the real not
the shadow world, and here he is often extremely puzzling, as in the well-
known number XXIV.

Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stell'd
The beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is beat painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictured lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done;
Mine eyes have drawn they shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
They draw but what they see, know not the art.

Here is an instance of that strange fashion which might be called "pathetic
tics", the changes being rung on the "eyes" — a favourite Elizabethan conceit
freely from the Greek romances. Apart from that, note the confusion
Shakespeare is not the only sonneteer who plays with such words and imagery. Drayton and Constable and Daniel have a good deal of this sort of thing. There is also the enigmatic use of the word shadow (which is our flexion) much used by the Renaissance Platonists to body forth the Platonic conception of the idea. Sonnet XXXVII shows a wonderful mingling of current philosophy and heraldry and the euphuism of the day.

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crown'd sit,
I make my love engraven to this store;
So that I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,
That in thy abundance am sufficed,
Any by a part of all thy glory live.

Look, what is best, that best I wish in thee;
This wish I have: then ten times happy me!

In the plays he uses this philosophical comparison of shadow and substance a good deal. He was fond of showing off his acquaintance with current ideas, but then he is equally keen in other fields of contemporary knowledge. This is the Shakespeare that emerges from the Sonnets - a man expert in the sciences of his day or at least having a gentlemanly knowledge of them. The Stratford playwright was fit to discourse with any fine gentleman or university wit. The eighth line of the Sonnet is pure heraldry. Drayton is even more openly philosophical. His sequence is called Idea, and he addresses one sonnet To the Shadow.
In such work Shakespeare loved to play on the ambiguous meaning of words, not only in the Sonnets, but in the Plays too. Only in the Sonnets we get the concentrated essence of his art. A phrase for example like "the lines of life" in Sonnet XVI, 9-12.

"So should the lines of life that life repair" may mean the poet's verse, or children (as Dowden conjectured) or lines of portraiture, or also (as Mr Wyndham suggested) lines of palmistry. He quotes the Merchant of Venice - II.2.146.

"Here's a simple line of life." The poet plays a good deal with the word "lines". So he plays on the words sense and respect. - Cf. Love's Labour's Lost.

Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen Above the sense of sense; so sensible Seemeth their conference.

As to terms of heraldry, Mr Wyndham found the key to a good deal of this specialised language in Guillim's Display of Heraldry, 1610. Words like arms, colours, intituled, coat, field, accidents, achievement, crest, or, vick, blazon, staves, etc. are played on interminably by Shakespeare everywhere, but most curiously in the Sonnets. The Rape of Lucrece has a good deal of it too, and here Guillim's book helps us to understand some of the terms. - cf. lines 55-58.

When beauty boasted blushes, in despight
Virtue would stain that or(= or) with silver white.
But beauty, in that white intituled
From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field.

The Plays are sprinkled with heraldic terms throughout. Allusions to the law are so plentiful that some have thought that Shakespeare must have served in a lawyer's office. Cooler critics point out that his law is often faulty and that other poets are almost as allusive in this way.

Several books have been written on the subject, the latest by Mr

Shakespeare the most suggestive.

Sonnet CXXXIV is typical, lines 7-11.

He learned but surety-like to write for me,
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take
Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake.

The statute has its legal meaning.

How Shakespeare's euphuism runs riot in these keen exercises in Renaissance "wit"! For example in VIII.14, "Thou single wilt prove none" is explained by CXXXVI.8 "Among a number one is reckoned none" evidently contention of the arithmeticians of the day. In the pursuit of Shakespeare's meaning the student must track him through all the fads, fashions and serious follies of Elizabethan England - an incomparable exercise for the student of social manners, but wearying to the ordinary reader.

His method in the Sonnets was to take an image from a trade or art or profession and pursue it through the fourteen lines, dragging in various technical terms. He was never more in the court fashion than now. Several of his allusions are so recondite that at this date we can hardly recover the meaning. A phrase like "bore the canopy" in that terribly obscure sonnet (Number C.X.V) illustrates Mr. Wynham's remark -

"Contemporary letters offer examples of such allusions to allegories, anecdotes from the ancients, to heraldic conceits, and to Platonic catch-phrases, which are no less obscure than the like allusions in Shakespeare's verse."

To doubt literature will cause posterity some bemusement on this score, but one may think that we do not bestrew our verse or letters with quite so much current jargon. Shakespeare and his fellows seem to seek curiosity for its own sake. Professor Raleigh, impatient of the mere 'parallel-hunter', says of the Sonnets "These poems are sonnets. There is nothing else conventional about them except their critics". But Professor Laintbury, who will not be accused of being conventional demurs. "A majority of the sonnet phrases, sonnet thoughts, sonnet ornaments are simply coin of the sonnet realm, which had passed from hand to hand through Italian, French and English." No form of the poetic art, not even the Natural has been so conventionally decorative. Even the attack on its artificiality/
Artificiality became conventional. Sydney in his Fifteenth Sonnet says—

Ye that do dictionary's method bring
Into your rhymes running in rattling rows
You that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes
With new-born sighs and denizen'd wit do sing
You take wrong ways.

Brayton and the later sonnets at least enlarge the sonnet themes and in Milton it has become a trumph as Wordsworth said.

Perhaps in the majority of the sonnets, one image taken from law or alchemy, letters, or music, or philosophy suffices. Sometimes the simile is a domestic one. But occasionally the image changes as in CXIV where it advances first the flatterer, then the alchemist and lastly the taster to drinking.

The Venus and Adonis is rich in the language of field sports and manage, rich Guillim's "Display of Heraldry . . . . . with his own addition of explaining the terms of hawking and hunting" explains and illustrates.

Such words are curse, curvet, holla, musit, cope, cry, mate, at a bay, etc. In theatre and the law contribute to the imagery. The famous passage describing the hunt (lines 977-9240 proves Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of the field.

CLIV. When he hath ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,
Another flap-mouthed mourner, black and grim,
Against the welkin volleys out his voice;
Another and another answer him,
Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

This is of course one of the proudest poems in the language. Despite the wealth of Ovidian decoration, the atmosphere is brilliantly clear, objects being sharply defined, and nature closely observed.

The technical language of these early poems and sonnets is, as we saw, explained by such books as Guillim's Display and The Guide into Tongues (1617). It is hard on the young student that before he can master this poetry, he must apply himself to these technical languages. He does not realise at
first that the words random, cry, mated, etc., are terms de chasse, but
he had better plunge into this language right away, because it colours all
his plays more or less. How is he to understand fully the second scene
of the second Act of Hamlet without a slight knowledge of "Tongues"?

Take the Lucrece. - Here is still some language of the field, but more
of heraldry and law. Mr Wyndham says (Poems of Shakespeare, page 226)

"Whenever Shakespeare, in an age of technical conceits, indulges
in one ostentatiously, it will always be found that his apparent obscurity
arises from our not crediting him with a technical knowledge which he un-
consciously possessed or it of heraldry, of law, or of philosophic disputation".
It may seem painful for us at this time of day to have to puzzle out the
fact that virtue's white and beauty's red produce heraldic or; and so
explain the line. Lucrece 56 - "Virtue would stain that or with silver
white".

The whole passage comprising stanzas VIII to XI is steeped in Heraldry.

IX. But beauty in that white intituled,
From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field:
Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield;
Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,
When shame assail'd, the red should fence the white.

Other passages or words might be quoted to show how Shakespeare,
following the precepts of the Pleiade, set himself to rifle the vocabularies
of every branch of knowledge.

Stanzas XXIX and XXX, for example,

XXIX 0 shame to knighthood and to shining arms!
0 foul dishonour to my household's grave, etc.

XXX Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat;
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,
To cipher me how fondly I did dote.

We may think Shakespeare does well to express Tarquin's disordered
prehensions in terms of the conventions of chivalry. Such anachronisms
+ not unpleasing. Chaucer had used them widely, and Shakespeare was
diously well read in Chaucer. But it is characteristic of the later
that he uses the very terms of the heraldic code, whereas Chaucer is
concerned with its spirit. Tarquin's chief terror that his "golden
" would be defiled by "some loathsome dash" seems to us rather comical,
considering the height of terror raised by the poet.

In CXIX he returns to the blot on his escutcheon -
Reproath is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar.

the mot is the motto on the scroll.

Music is also used for the colouring imagery
1 - My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;
A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests:
Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
Distress likes jumps when time is kept with tears.

2 - So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear
For burden-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill.

In short, there could not be a better illustration of the art Du Bellay and
his fellows had in view than these poems. The Ovidian graces and rhetoric
were mingled every where with a diction and imagery taken from the arts and
professions.

The second scene of the second Act of Hamlet has been mentioned as being
more than usually stiff with such references. The letter to Ophelia with
its address "To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautiful Ophelia!
and its close "Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him
Hamlet" is in the euphuistic vein.

Then in the talk about the players Rosencrantz (11.2.331) says "there is,
ir, an airy of children, little crises, that cry out on the top of question
of are most tyrannically clapped for!" - A vexing passage for R. student.

It is but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know
+ And ascribed to this use mainly. See Knight's note, where event are foreseen
"R. meason of hors right in February 1629"
against its authenticity chiefly on linguistic grounds. It is on this account an extremely interesting work. The conclusion we would arrive at is that there are too many examples of truly Shakespearian expression for altogether to rule it out, but that there are - apart from the prosody - provocative passages the phraseology of which we might state on oath is not Shakespeare's. The inevitable inference is that A Lover's Complaint is a case of retouching.

The poem opens

From off a hill whose concave womb re-worded,
A plaintful story from a sistering vale,
My spirits to attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd tale:
Ere long espied a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

As anyone suppose that Shakespeare wrote such stuff? "From off a hill" must feel is not his; nor is "re-worded", for though Shakespeare was as deeply involved in poetic euphuism as any of his fellows, he observes a certain congruity in his verbal extravagance.

We suggest that the second stanza was Shakespeare's, and doubt if one but Shakespeare could have written it -

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
The carcass of a beauty spent and done:
Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
Nor youth all quit; but, spite of heaven's fell rage
Some beauty peeped through lattice of sear'd age.

The tone and phrasing and metrical turn of this is Shakespeare's and no
Whilst the linguistic test for play is no doubt a useful one, it is in danger of being pressed too far. We note for example among the arguments set forth by a middle-rank reviewer (following Mr. J., to put it fondly that the heroine like Shakespeare, will Richard III. is the heroine in itself of certain elements of a section of the play. The heroine is a

... I saw a thousand fearful wrecks; Ten thousand men with fishes shrowded upon; Wedge of gold, great anchor, deal of pearl, Inestimable stones unvalued jewels All scattered in the bottom of the sea. But this is certainly like heroines - this is A Midsummer Night's Dream - and does not narrow talk of "inestimable drugs and precious stones"? Each argument grows and by competent critics shown to what a passing test may bring is whether verbal or linguistic. Is it not to consider that it is used for poets to treasue up likely phrase phrases from their predecessors - often unnecessary reproduce her
Almost every significant phrase here could be fully instance on his other works, especially the "first fruits". This is true of the first three stanzas, especially the fourth.

Sometimes her levell'd eyes their carriage ride,
As they did battery to the spheres intend;
Sometime, diverted, their poor balls are tied
To the orbed earth.

However we divide the honours, such as they are, of the poem, there is no doubt that as a whole it is full of that "lavish honey" of phrase, and in precisioity of word which is the strongest mark of the erotic poetry of the age - "twisted metal amorously impleached," "sickly radiance," "profuse of affections hot," "amorous sport," "watery eyes," "burning faces," "swooning paleness," etc. But in passages like the following refuse to recognise Shakespeare's hand.

Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind;
Like fools that in th'imaginatinon set
The goodly objects which abroad they find.

The diamond - why, 'twas beautiful and hard,
Where to his invisid properties did tend.

A writer of such passages had a certain command over the peculiar phraseology of the erotic school, but he does not display Shakespeare's mastery dealing with it.

It remains to give a very few instances of the poet's hard-dealing with ordinary as opposed to technical words. Shakespeare's vocabulary is not only vastly larger than that of any other poet but he presses more meanings out of common words. Elizabethan English was more lax of course than modern. His contemporaries use words as he does, but he overtops them in this respect. There are of course, objections to putting such a strain on the vocabulary as Shakespeare does. In inferior word-artists and artists like Keats the habit is often injurious. Matthew Arnold was perhaps right in decrying the example of Shakespeare here, but all art
the poles of adventure and restraint.

The common word *take* for example has several meanings to-day, but in Shakespeare it is given several supernumerary meanings, as in these instances:

1. *take* = charm
   
   Play'd to take spectators          Winter's Tale  III.ii.36.

2. *take* = infect
   
   And there he (the hunter) blasts the tree, and *takes* the cattle.    Merry Wives of Windsor  IV.iii.31.

3. *take* = pretend
   
   *Take* you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him.             Hamlet      II.i.13.

4. *take* = improve
   
   Come, Warwick, *take* the time.                           3 Henry VI.   V.i.48.

5. *take* = take refuge in
   
   For God's sake *take* a house.                  Comedy of Errors.  V.i.48.

6. *take* = bewitch
   
   Then no planets strike
   
   No fairy *take*, nor witch hath power to charm.          Hamlet       1.i.163.

These are only some of the supernumerary meanings of this word in Shakespeare. Besides these, there are numerous verbal formations like *take in*, *take off*, etc., which further enlarge the scope of the word. *Take* is a good specimen of this enlarging power of Elizabethan speech. But most common words like *make, breathe, know, just, jump, idle, hold, high, hand, hair, ground, show, thick, frame, free*, etc., those English monosyllables about which so many hard things were once spoken, have an incredible number of bad meanings, most of them colloquial, but many no doubt of the poet's fashioning. The ugly word *jump*, for example, is used in senses which have quite lost.

1. *associate* - "I will not jump with common spirits."              Merchant of Venice.  II.ii.32.

2. *tally* - "It jumps with my humour."                           1 Henry IV.    I.ii.69.

(4) concur - "Place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump that I
am Viola."  Twelfth Night.  V.I.245.

(5) exactly - "Bring him jump when he may Cassio find."
Othello.  II.II.361.

Adjectives like thick, rich, free, idle, etc. have an extraordinary
magnitude of meaning in Shakespeare. We all remember passages which
positively made by the rare use of these words, e.g.

(1) "Come thick night,
"And pall thee in the dullest smoke of hell."  Macbeth.  I.V.49.

(2) "So forlorn, that his dimensions to any thick
sight were invincible."
2 Henry IV.  III.II.263.

(3) "In their thick breaths, rank of gross diets."
Antony and Cleopatra.  V.II.211.

(4) "Say and speak thick (i.e. distinctly)
Cymbeline.  III.II.55.

(5) "Night thickens; and the crow
Makes wing to the rocky moor."
Macbeth.  III.II.50.

Rich has been commented on by Mr D. W. Rannie in the article on Keats' Keats referred to above. It is a word of great potency in English

The famous example of Timon of Athens -
Yet rich conceit taught thee to make
vast Neptune weep for aye on thy low grave."
only one of many instances of its rich use by Shakespeare. Rich here
in opposition to "niggard nature".

The reader understands of course that this is a quite boundless subject
research and that we are only indicating its possibilities in the brief-

A word like close has peculiar implications, some drawn from music
"proceeding in a full and natural close, like music"  Henry V.  I.II.180),
from arms ("furios close of civil butchery"  I Henry IV.  I.I.13).
is one of those common words with which the poet works his magic.

Strange is another of those words that the poet bends in all directions.

Basic meaning of the word was still "foreign" as in -
"One of the strange queen's lords". Love's Labour Lost. IV.II.125.

is a beautiful word and in Shakespeare takes on such meanings as un-

telligible ("this is as uncivil as strange" Twelfth Night. III.IV.231); 

rant ("but thy fortunes are unlearn'd and strange. Timon of Athens, 

III.56); distrustful ("Why do you look so strange upon your wife". 

III.Well. V.III.166), etc.

adverb is also used with great effect and variety.

Many words like table, pitch, figure, colour, chase, line, engine, etc., 

with several meanings, some technical. For example, table may 

as in the Bible, ("written . . . . on the fleshly tables of the heart") 

ply a surface for writing on. Or it may mean a game of chance ("when he 

ays at tables (he) chides the dice in honourable terms" - Love's Labour's 

V.11.328); or again, it may refer to palmistry ("if any man in Italy 

fairer table. . . . I shall have good fortune." Merchant of Venice. 

III.144.).

Mr Rannie in the article on Keats referred to above notes how the 

antis poet forces rare values out of words like rich, pale, cold, etc. 

ably Keats learned the secret of this from the Elizabethans. Rich we 

already noted. The student will remember uses of pale in Shakespeare 

give equally rare effect. So with cold. - Cf. "The cold fruitless 


But enough has been said to indicate the broad lines of Shakespeare's 

ling with words. We have traced Shakespeare's methods from the time 

he did so, there is not the shadow of a doubt. Spenser, Lyly, Marlowe, 

Golding, all yielded him a royalty of words and phrases. Mr H. C. 

in his preface to 3 Henry VI (Arden Shakespeare) has traced his borrow-

from Marlowe's word-hoard and shown how after Greene's diatribe in 

Shakespeare gradually lays aside the special tricks of the Marlovian 

ulary, though parts of it he retained throughout, for Marlowe's 

ological habit came nearest to his own methods. It is a curious 

acle this, the lifting not only of plots and situations, but of the 

nings of phraseology. The Elizabethans had to trick themselves out
plumes of some sort. The idea that they used language naturally is a taken one. They were always on the hunt for new finery. Mr Hart says: "As soon as a play was a success, the language seems to have become new by rote and common property amongst the dramatists, stored in the list of memory to be turned on tap at will. Not everyone however had Shakespeare's memory, or his skill in adapting its stores. These scraps Marlowe continually occur where it is obvious he had no hand whatever, if they are often used with a different sense and in a context that is only Shakespearian. ... All of them did it. But as no one needed as Shakespeare did, it seems more noticeable in him."

The remarks apply more particularly to the three parts of Henry VI. It may generally be said that the great Shakespearian phrase is originally quarried out of other men's language which shows very clearly that the work of his ruder predecessors our greatest lord of language ad been sadly shortened of his great fame.

The rhetorical - using the word in a good sense - tradition is carried by Beaumont and Fletcher, especially the former. A robust age loves metric as a savage one loves noise. Shakespeare gave us everything, candid rhetoric, words which are pictures or gestures every one, and a pleasant well of pure running English. And as Mr George Moore suggests of Kipling, he used the whole language, not a part. In that kind of idiom which we describe as a pure running stream of traditional English, Fletcher is also a master - so is Dekker. We can as surely separate Beaumont's stiff brocaded diction from Fletcher's easier flow, as we can distinguish their differing metrics. These poets perfected their romanticism by working towards the French conception of the drame bien fait, but they learned their speech from Shakespeare, and became so expert in that idiom that often we feel the pulse of Shakespeare beat in it, e.g. Bonduca.

Ten times a night
I have swum the rivers, when the stars of Rome
Shot at me as I floated, and the billows
Tumbled their watry ruins on my shoulders

Chancing my battered sides with troops of snares,
that he picked up his expressions by eavesdropping on the Court is rather whimsical. Literary tradition, apart from his own vast inventive power, gave him all he wanted.
is natural in a primitive age (which the Elizabethan was) to love rhetorical rhetoric, but already in the younger dramatists, in Ford and usiner for example, the taste is extinct, or shortly to be so. The es are burning down. Just as to-day we note the absence of distinctly rhetorical phrase in our younger poets, so in these dramatists eloquence has place to studied poignancy of the individual word; dramatic gestures slow painful words like the dropping of anguish words and avoidance closed rhetoric "the painted meat of smooth persuasion" as Ford says (?) in The Broken Heart. Massinger's English is more restrained and modern that of almost any poet of to-day. This may seem a strange statement, yet anyone read The Great Duke of Florence, and decide for himself. Of give there are Elizabethan fashions of speech, omissions of the relative, class would not allow, and old idioms. But the vocabulary is absolutely new. In this play we have found only one strange word - bluslless minea(IV.1.); suffixes are not thrown about anyhow like the clown's in the circus to stick on any head. Let the reader peruse a scene of usiner and then a page of a modern poet who has lectured on the desirability of being colloquial. He will be astounded at the perverse novelty-making of bye Abercrombie as compared with the Elizabethan's blameless page. Let him construe a page of Mr Doughty's Mansoul and he will understand the heights or depths of dictional curiosity some moderns have attained. Later Elizabethan dramatists are an excellent antidote to this modern vice. Indeed one does not know how to praise Massinger's quality sufficiently. The enclitics and stopgap phrases which mark the true Elizabethans are gone along with the compounding mania and the lawless coining. The shakespearean verbiage, senseless heaping up of epithet and what not have in favour of the thing directly said, and done with, and yet the graces

A few other oddities appear which would now be thought the mildest departures from colloquial speech, e.g. adulterate, tramontanes (strangers) of imp, censure (in the Elizabethan sense of opinion), courtship (in the sense of breeding), packing (collusion).
speech are, on the whole, not starved. In short, we are coming nearer the Greek ideal of speech, though of course in other ways we are far away from the Greek manner.

Take the dubious picture of Lidia in Giovanni's speech (III.1)

I'll give you, sir,
As near as I can, her character in little.
She's of goodly stature, and her limbs
Not disproportionate; for her face, it is
Far from deformity, yet they flatter her
That style it excellent; her manners are
Simple and innocent, but her discourse
And wit deserve my pity more than praise;
At the best, my Lord, she is a handsome picture
And, that said, all is spoken.

my tastes, this will appear bare and prosaic, but what a relief after true Elizabethan excess and tortuosity. It is strange that people like Wordsworth who selected Daniel for special honours in this kind, should have unloaded some of their enthusiasm for neat and customary speech for Massinger and Ford.

Further, it is clear from the example of these two poets, and even of Beaumont and Fletcher, that the process which the Restoration is supposed to have rather violently inaugurated, whereby Elizabethan tumult and gaudy verse were repudiated in favour of standard and non-conceited speech, had already set in, and had Dryden in his famous Defence of the Epilogue locked those later dramatists - he does refer to Beaumont and Fletcher - rather than Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, he would not have been able to make out of a seemingly unanswerable case as he does against the language of the preceding age. Not only is the more obvious swelling of language avoided by Massinger and Ford, but all that difficulty with the prepositions and the particles of speech which is painful even in Antony and Cleopatra, got rid of. Sentences are no longer rounded off with a stupid preposition, and the sentences themselves are lucid and of manageable length.

Here smoothness, hence condensed speech, but also one may think, some loss
Doubtless we praise here through feeling of surfeit with an
her more brilliant manner. In other words, the impulse towards formal
ity has for the moment exhausted itself. Neither in metre nor in
page will these ascetic poets bend to pick up beauty's flower. If
are quoted, it is for the dramatic poignancy of un rhetorical words,
or the phrase itself. A grief, deeper than language can convey,
has hinted at, rather by default of rhetoric than rhetoric. At times
comes close to that grand sublime which Arnold imagined he saw in
worth, like the well-known

Sigh out a lamentable tale of things
Done long ago, and ill done; and when sighs
Are wearied, piece up what remains behind
With weeping eyes, and hearts that bleed to death.

Master of brief mysterious words, F ord has been called, and at times
is so. But he rejects easy beauty. Here are no Ovidian flowers, no
lings from Euphues or Arcadia, no poetic trifling. The Renaissance
rite for visual beauty which first appeared in a filed and ornate
was here and there in Tottell's Miscellany, which took fire in Spenser's
hen phrase and flared up in Shakespeare's great language, has died down
this rather sullen utterance of Ford's. The Petrarchan graces are
. Except in the large draught he makes on legal phraseology, Massinger
almost flowerless. In his work there is no halting as there is often
Ford's. He can express almost anything clearly. But the rhetoric,
glorious rant and the enchantment are gone. Here and there it leaps
ilitfully. Then we are back again in a rather grey world. Colour has
i. The Elizabethan age is over, but in compensation we have a
ology, a sad lucidity, problem interest, and a feeling of modernity
rasing which is cast at a low level and maintained at that throughout.

George /
George Chapman indeed raises an eloquent voice against the tendency to plainness. In the Regen of Busse D'Ambos, he makes the vile Montsurrey say to Timbra—

Yet as worthiest poets
Shun common and plebeian forms of speech;
Every illiberal and affected phrase
To clothe their matter; and together tie
Matter and form, with art and decency;
So worthiest women should shun vulgar guises.

which however may very well be taken as counsel to avoid grandiose no less than vulgar speech. #

We may see in him the carrying on of the Marlovian and Shakespearean tradition of great language. He stands a tiptoe reaching out to such expression, but here and there he comes near to his masters despite a certain impediment in his speech, which modern critics have rather exaggerated. Dryden in a well known passage tells how as a youth he had been cozened by Chapman's grandiose style. In later manhood he found it to consist of "a dwarfish thought, dressed up in gigantic words; repetition in abundance, looseness of expression, and gross hyperboles, the sense of one line expanded prodigiously into ten; and, to sum up all, uncorrect English and a hideous mangle of false poetry and true nonsense."

There is nothing like the zeal of the converted!

We /

Having in mind the language of his Homer, we are a little astonished at this outburst, especially if we compare it with the contemporary Tasso by Fairfax.

Wm. Lyon Phelps, Introduction to Mermaid edition of Chapman p.29 — "He is plainly tongue-tied."
We do not find Chapman so outlandish. It is true he cannot keep up his grand flourishes. They fall away into confusion. But his Shakespearian ambitions of phrase is not always vain, and at least his thought is always manly.

Swinburne praised Middleton, "This admirable poet" for his noble eloquence, of inventive resource, and suggestive effect, of rhetorical affluence, and theatrical ability." No one will deny that this dramatist has at hand a goodly range of vivid and even audacious images and phrases. His dealing with these has been called 'imperious' De Flores' angry outburst against Beatrice's suitors (Changeling 11.1) illustrates Middleton's abusive but powerful tongue -

De F. I must confess my face is bad enough, but I know far worse has better fortune, and not endured alone, but doted on. And yet such pick-haired faces, chins like witches, here and there five hairs whispering in a corner, as if they grew in fear of one another, wrinkles like troughs, where swine-deformity swills, the tears of perjury that lie there like wash fallen from the slimy and dishonest eye. Ugly enough - and Middleton has a strong penchant for the grotesque - but vivid also!

The vocabulary of the Elizabethans cannot be adequately discussed here, but a brief indication of its striking and exotic features may be suggested. Something has

Yet shall you see it here, here will be one young, learned, valiant, virtuous, and full-mann'd.

One on whom Nature spent so rich a hand, that, with an ominous eye, she wept to see so much consumed her virtuous treasury.

Or, more in the big Shakespearian manner -

methinks the frame
And shaken joints of the whole world should crack
To see her parts so disproportionate
And that his general beauty cannot stand
Without these stains in the particular man.
has been said on the subject in the previous chapter. The Elizabethans used the whole language, as Mr. George Moore remarked, and, we may add paradoxically, more than the whole language, for they lard their dramas with a great many foreign words, chiefly classical and modern Romance words. There never was a time when English poetry—especially dramatic poetry—was so avid of exotic and foreign words. They are stuffed in in the most naive fashion, and are a sign of high spirits and the delight in adventure. Perhaps the best way for the student to study this linguistic phenomenon is to begin with a book like Skeat and Mayhew's Tudor and Stuart glossary, and then pass to Foster's A Shakespeare Wordbook. He will not only discover a world of exotic and foreign words employed to built up the drama, but another subterranean world of colloquial and rogue words and phrases, hardly a trace of which remains in the spoken or written language today, will impress him with the vast bounty of words needed for that great work. The task of getting to terms with this vocabulary is therefore a heavy one, but the student can obtain some sense of the matter, by studying a specimen dozen pages or so of the glossaries. Here for example is a page of Skeat and Mayhew (113) beginning with three or four Greekisms: Diacodion, diametral, dispason, etc. The first of these is apparently not used by the dramatists, but Ben Jonson, who is in himself a kingdom of classical and foreign words, uses the other two.
pretty and fairly commonly used diapred follows. The page then illustrates in half a dozen Latin formations the difficulty and confusion arising from the endenizening of classical words in English. Here are Didacity - (raillery) Dision - (dominion); diffide in - (distrust); diffused - (scattered).

The difficulty was twofold - viz. What English form was to be given to these classical words? and What meaning was to be attached to them, for generally classical words were taken in with a slight twist to the meaning. The only continental word in the page is Diego (Spaniard), and it is characteristically used by Ben in the Alchemest. Our impression is that this is short-commons for the page, and that the average page of Skéat and Mayhew will yield more than one such word. Then there are four words out of the total fifteen taken from that subterranean world referred to above, viz. Dich ("Much good dich thy good heart," Timon 1.2.73) which apparently stands for 'd'it you' - do it you! The Dickens: the dense. Dickier: half a score Diery: harmful ("with dreadful diery dent")

This glossary confines itself to difficult words, and from its bulk gives an exaggerated impression of the strangeness of the Elizabethan and Jacobean vocabularies, but the student so constantly stumbles over such words, that the conviction is forced on him, that only the most rigorous study will enable him to cope with this "God's plenty". His embarrassment rises chiefly from the three or /

"And diapred like the discoloured mead" Spenser, Epith. 51.
or four causes noted above.

1. The difficulty of knowing in what form or with what sense classical words would ultimately be received into the tongue. For example note on p. 211 the first eight words: Intuse (bruise); Inundant (overflowing); Invest (to inveigle); Invent (find); Invest (enfold); investion (investiture); Invixoed (unconquered); Invivos (pathless).

2. The welter of continental words introduced and used generally only once or twice.

3. The mass of colloquial and dialect stuff pushing its head up from below, and now quite incomprehensible.

4. Add to these the special technical languages amply instanced in this chapter, and we may wonder how the ordinary reader grinds through his Elizabethians at all.

We are conscious that in this brief study of Shakespeare's language, we have dwelt on what used to be called his deformities rather than on his splendid and easy primacy among the poets. Of that we are all sufficiently aware. It needs no illustration. Further, we have not done more than suggest that his grammar and syntax are not our grammar and syntax. To explore the grammatical texture of his speech with any prospect of satisfaction in a single chapter devoted largely to more obvious things, would be impossible. That is a task for the expert. The late Dr. Abbot gave us
an outline sketch of the subject in his book on Shakespeare's Grammar now nearly sixty years old but Franz' exhaustive Shakespeare Grammatik still remains the authoritative work. When we come to examine the restoration in the grammar and syntax of English poetic speech attempted by Swinburne, we may be able to refer to the subject more at length.
The tendency to discard rhetoric which appears in the later dramatists is even more strikingly seen in the poets of the new age. Two things chiefly helped on the reaction against rhetorical expression—the study of classical satire and the practice of it in English, and the new religious mood which regarded mere rhetoric as a despicable art, or at least a thing of the world to be laid aside by the self-mortifying saint. Who can think that George Herbert, late Public Orator at Cambridge could not have garbed his verse in handsome language? Of set purpose he lays all rhetoric aside and writes in coolest, clearest, generally monosyllabic English, so that Professor Grierson is tempted to call him at times 'stuffy' while drawing attention to the miracle of pure (gentlemanly) English in such a gem as—

"O day so cool, so calm, so bright."

There had been, we saw, conventional murmurs against glossing rhetoric right through the Shakespeare age. Now the full force of the reaction is upon us. Donne rebelling against the whole technique of the older school with all its grace and braveries, turns realist, and for a time cynic, and discarding the old glory of phrase essays to triumph in another and more difficult kind of beauty, than even Shakespeare had any idea of—a sort of troubled beauty. He was not at all tongue-tied, had not like Chapman, with his 'polygonal flintstones'.
Ijntstones' s seeming impediment in his speech. That he could accomplish great things in the old manner and with the old fluent phrase is proved by certain beautiful things in the lyric kind. He consciously chose the obscure and tortured utterance for things darkly divined. He is often as far away from the lucidity and modernity of Massinger as the earlier Elizabethans. His language is often great and difficult, but not we think obscure in any true sense. Though he commonly uses an excessively colloquial speech and uses it harshly, he does not do so like Johnson, from any theory of being plain and customary, but rather because he found he could be more crabbed and energetic in homespun than in elegant phrase. The great Metempsychosis shows how he could blend this shrewdest native speech with sparse but striking coinages. In the 'furnace of his raging line', words glow with a strange incandescence. His learned inventions appear like strange sea monsters. The pregnancy of phrase which in another less passioned poet would appear as merely odd and cryptic, strikes us with brutal force—and it is force we seek from Donne. These qualities of language are reinforced by similar qualities in his metrical system and imagery—the harsh obstruction, the abrupt pauses, the quick changes from tripping to running, and then to embarrassed and impeded movement ("rhyme's sturdy cripple"). Donne's powers rise to their true height in the Second Anniversary, and as for his imagery, is /
is that not often taken to be the most startling element in his style, and does it not as often reach the lowest limits of the bizarre or grotesque, as it sometimes touches the highest mysteries of thought? Here in the great Second Anniversary is as grusome an image as any to be found among the dramatists, and here in the earlier satires he says —

But as an itch
scratched into smart — — —
— — — hurt worse (Sat.1v. 88-90)

He is not averse to words like 'itch' (cf. p. )
Or again his morbid imagination strikes out this image

And though his face be as ill
As theirs, which in old hangings whip Christ,
still
He strives to look worse. (ib. 225-7)

Donne is not however such a strange monster to those who have marked the tendencies of the poetic drama. His rank and sweaty imagery is often found in Shakespeare, and those who come nearest to Shakespeare, and his tense, cryptic speech is often paralleled in contemporary drama, in Middleton for example, who shows the same daring for brief moments.

Such various /

# Has the reader noticed how often Donne uses the simple words and, but, as so? They are almost keywords to his art!

Lines 9-11 "As sometimes in a beheaded man
Though at those two Red Seas which freely ran
One from the trunk, another from the head" etc.

Execution again gives him an image in Satire 1v - 230
This ghoulishness is characteristic and will revive in the early Romantics Coleridge and Shelley.
powers they are! Here is a line which Professor Saintsbury would
be to call the greatest in English religious verse.
These hymns they issue may increase so long
As till God's great venite change the song.

the famous -

Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.
Then there is that greatest of deathbed passages which describes the
poet's ecstasy, contemplation of death to the point of madness.
Think then, my soul, that death is but a groom
Which brings a taper to the outward room

Think thee - laid on they death-bed, loose and slack,
And think that but unbinding of a pack
To take one precious thing, thy soul, from thence.
Think thyself parch'd with fever's violence;
Anger thine age more, by calling it
Thy physic; chide the slackness of the fit.

familiarity of word and image in the face of the last mystery of our
life is surely remarkable, and yet we may venture to say that no oraison
fame has ever outmatched the dark solemnity of these lines.
The older critics used to quarrel about Donne's art. De Quincey
said of the "diamond-dust of rhetorical brilliances" strewed over his
poetical verses. Gilfillan talked ruefully of the "spilt treasure" of
genius. Since Professor Crierson's fine and scholarly edition of the
opinion has settled to the view that Donne marks a new aesthetic, a
risingly modern aesthetic. The Petrarchan fineness and smoothness
nearly challenged. The curve of beauty is everywhere indented. The
edged and jagged edge is displayed. Purposed cacophony rules. Not
a modern would defend his obscure and extravagant conceits, pregnant
with mystical thought. People might be found to-day
would regard the description of the Apple in Eden "Prince of the orchard,
as the dawning morn, Fenced with the law, and ripe as soon as born"
as tolerable. The admiration for Blake and the Jacobean mystics has carried us a long way on the road to the city of Beautiful Nonsense. In any case, we are agreed that Donne coined even his grotesque phrases by excess of power. It is perhaps not so much in his rebellious and powerful phrase as in his imagery and his "not keeping accent" that Donne seems so strange a creature among the late Elizabethans. As we have seen, Shakespeare himself steadily progresses towards realism, and away from mere curvilinear beauty. It is the wit reflected in Donne's phrase that strikes us most, and his "sensuality aerated by a brilliant wit" to use Professor Grierson's phrase. He exploits the lower reaches of the tongue, and of course observes no 'rules' of poetic diction. He is harshly elliptical. With all his profoundly original imagery, he is on the whole a monosyllabic poet.

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Holy Sonnets, No. XLI

Better my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine and seek to mend
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh! to no end!
Reason, your viceroy in me, I should defend,
But he is captivated, and proves weak or untrue;
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed unto your enemy. Divorce /
Divorce me, untie, or break the knot again;  
Take me to you, imprison me; for I  
Except you enthral me, never shall be free  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

His teasing out of metaphors taken from civil and military employments is thoroughly Elizabethan. It is the method of the Sonnets. Harmony none eschewed. He is not the poet of grateful reverie. His barriers of music are set up everywhere, either in the shape of commas or parenthesis sets us a veritable hurdle-race.

Progress of the Soul - VIII.

Yet no low room, nor then the greatest, less  
If, as devout and sharp men fitly guess,  
That cross, our joy and grief, (where nails did tie  
That all, which always was all everywhere  
Which could not die, yet could not choose but die).

Shakespeare's Phoenix verses are similarly cryptic and philosophical.  
Like the Fletchers and other Jacobean religious poets, Donne is content with the language as he finds it. He coined little, because he had made the discovery that the powers of the tongue in its lower reaches were ample enough for such a poet as he was. And how modern he can often be!

A sudden still land-wind in that self hour  
To sea-ward forced this bird that did devour  
The fish.

The free inhabitants of the pliant air.

Yet why further illustrate the genius of such an artist? If proof of his mastery of the common eloquence of discourse is wanted, the Sermons will furnish it abundantly. People have now abandoned the theory that Donne like Chapman suffered from an impediment of speech. He chose to be rude and forceful and inharmonious, but that he could be the opposite of these things is proved in every page he wrote.

For an explanation of the Jacobean turning away from rhetoric, see the rise of classical satire. Such work as Hall, Marston and

+ [Note: Sonnet (metaphysical style, down to Soul, p. 581)] suggests an influence of Shakespeare who turned by the Jesuit grace for a major of rank force.
the early Donne were engaged in, could only issue in a challenge to the rhetorical-poetical school. It has been remarked that those English imitators of classical satire carry the frankness of that colloquial and beyond the limits of civility observed by their antique models. Terribly obstructed are Donne's own satires by the harsh caesural pauses which divide the blocks of his flinty language, and by the difficulty of constant and violent ellipse. Add to this the wealth of allusion now real, and now after the manner of the time, fantastic, and we have a series of poems which for perversity vie with anything in Browning or Meredith. He seeking for classical concinnity and classical order adds to the difficulty of these pieces. Satire IV -

My mind, nor with pride's itch, nor yet hath been
Poisoned with love to see, or to be seen.
I had no suit there, nor new suit to show,
Yet went to court; but as Glaze which did go
To mass in jest, catch'd, was fain to disburse
The hundred marks, which is the statutes curse,
Before he 'scaped; so't pleased my destiny -
Guilty of my sin in going - to think me
As prone to all ill, and of good as forget-
Full, as proud, lustful, as much in debt,
As vain, as witless, and as false as they

Which dwell in court, for once going that way.

This is from the satire he imitated from Horace's famous satire on the borse, but its colours are far more sombre, and the flinty words come dropping out in painful contrast with Horace's easier speech. The desperate misanthropy of the late Elizabethan age, of Donne, Marston, Hall and Ben Jonson, demands the ugliest vehicle of words and rhythm. Beauty has fled and healthiness. So far as their satires are their own, and not imitated from classical satire, these writers are diseased. It is the most painful school of our poetry to contemplate, and it has not the charitable cloak which Charles Lamb flung round the Restoration drama. The general moral background of a species of art may be evil, and yet by regarding it as a convention/
convention (as Lamb did that of Restoration drama) we may come to tolerate it. The moral for purposes of art only be regarded as conventional, but if the evil is rubbed into every ugly word and image, the case is hopeless, and no plea of convention can save the work from being offensive. It was however in this hateful school that Donne learned to use the language so that the veins stand out. Later on he becomes more desperately allusive, and more fantastical in his imagery, but also he allows himself more covering of words, is not quite so much like the

It is a pleasing exercise for enthusiasts to explain away the obscurity of their admired author. They say that Browning, outside Sordello, is not really obscure, that Meredith is not so difficult once you have mastered his thought. Obscurity may be in the subject-matter (in which case it is a trivial fault), or it may be in the style, in which case it is a damning fault. The In Memoriam is often chargeable with the latter kind of obscurity. We should like to maintain that Donne is obscure in the former, his criminal way. When the reader's mind has become stored with the vast apparatus of scholastic and contemporary allusion which is the scaffolding of Donne's poetry, and when his mind has become sharpened to expectation of violent transitions and hazardous ellipses, he then begins to perceive that Donne has a miraculous power of plain logical speech. The Elegies, for example, being rather bare of the vast conceits we find elsewhere, show this gift to perfection. Indeed we may doubt if any poet has spoken with more "masculine persuasive force" than Donne does in those powerful tenebrous pieces. How could a poem of the first order for passion and powerful imaging read more plainly than the famous Elegy XIII His Parting from Her or the Elegy on his Mistress, or where is a tale told in more lively and orderly fashion than the Tale of a Citizen and his Wife (Elegy XV)? Here are no hazardous ellipses - everything, words and syntax included, are as orderly as a tale by Nat Prior. And yet what a passion throbs in these productions and what a triumph of picturing and dramatic words: Elegy on his Mistress.

When I am gone, dream me some happiness;
Nor let thy looks our long-hid love confess;
Nor/
Nor praise, nor dispraise, nor bless, nor curse
Openly love's force, nor in bed fright thy nurse
With midnight startings, crying out, O! O!
Nurse, O! my love is slain; I saw him go
O'er the white Alps alone; I saw him, I
Assail'd, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleed, fall and die.

His Parting from Her

Was't not enough that thou did'st dart thy fires
Into our bloods, in flaming our desires,
And madest us sigh, and blow, and pant and burn
And then thyself into our flames did'st turn?
Was't not enough that thou did'st hazard us
To paths so ambush'd round with household spies
And over all thy husband's towering eyes
Inflamed with th'ugly sweat of jealousy.

In the pieces and in the lyrics the powerful poet grows civil, adopts a
regular, fully-passioned rhythm, and uses the monosyllabic diction as only
the greatest masters can use it. There is no obscurity here. On the
contrary, we submit (and not only with reference to these great things)
that few poets have had Donne's insistent logical clearness in dealing
with hard and pregnant matter. He never sees things in half-light as
did Vaughan and others of that school. His schoolman's pride in logic
forbids him to be really obscure in the actual presentation of the matter.
The matter certainly is frequently densely obscure. A poem like the
Lecture upon the Shadow is as clearly unfolded as Love's Lecturer could
make it. The Logician in Donne at every step insisted on at least
grammatical clearness. Even the Progress of the Soul, which is often
spoken of despairingly, has a rigid enough system, overlaid, though that
so with a tangled web of difficult allusion which only an acquaintance
with scholastic thought can make really clear. But of the insistence on
logic and syntax - crabbed syntax often - there is no doubt.

Yet nor low room, nor than the greatest, less,
If - as devout and sharp men fitly guess -
That/
That Cross, our joy, and grief - where nails did tie
That all, which always was all, everywhere;
Which could not sin and yet all sins did bear;
Which could not die, yet could not choose but die -
Stood in the self-same room in Calvary,
Where first grew the forbidden learned tree,
For on that tree hung in security

This soul made by the Maker's will from putting free.

I doubt this is difficult, a criss-cross of parenthesis and complex syntax, but it is quite logically set out. The last four lines are obscure only because we may be ignorant of Donne's peculiar philosophy. Indeed this prevailing logical cast of Donne's mind dominates his poetry as much as the "metaphysical" quality. We often talk of the school of Dryden as if they first essayed the art of reasoning in verse. But what of such passages - and they are numerous - as this in Donne's Progress of the Soul XI.

So fast in us doth this corruption grow
That now we dare ask why we should be so.
Would God - disputes the curious rebel - make
A law, and would not have it kept? Or can
His creatures' will cross His? Of every man
For one, will God (and be just) vengeance take?

What English syllogisms run clearer? Dryden sat at Donne's feet, though of course he later turned away from him and other "darlings of my youth" and we may assert that he learned the syllogistic method in poetry from Donne. No, it is rather Herbert and the vaguer mystics who are obscure.

With all his mysticism, Donne is a logician in verse, and when we have learned to expect such harsh ellipses as we find also in Browning, we discover that his relentless logical drill bores through any hard rock.
of the language of the metaphysical school as a whole, Professor Grierson says: "If purity and naturalness of style is a grace, they deserved well of the English language, for few poets have used it with a more complete acceptance of the established tradition of diction and idiom. There are no poets till we come perhaps to Cowper, and he has not quite escaped from jargon, or Shelley, and his imagination operates in a more ethereal atmosphere, whose style is so entirely that of an English gentleman of the best type, natural, simple, occasionally careless, but never diverging into vulgar colloquialism, as after the Restoration or into conventional, tawdry splendour as in the century of Akenside and Erasmus Darwin." He goes on to compare a passage from Gray with one from Herbert. Gray seems to be the whipping boy in such comparisons. Professor Grierson attributes the movement towards vernacular English to the work of the satirists, Marston, Hall and Donne himself in his youth. But if the metaphysicals show a complete acceptance of the established tradition of diction and idiom, it is generally at the expense of the literary traditions. In so doing they hark back to the example of Chaucer, but if Donne is to be taken as their great exemplar — though Herbert's art is fundamentally different — we cannot so easily concur with Professor Grierson's view of the "purity and naturalness of their style." 'Pure and natural' Donne's diction is, but does he often display Chaucer's colloquial ease? Herbert often does so. Natural diction and even idiom is not enough to give the air of colloquial ease. If the language is choked and impeded by parenthesis or the writing of word order or by violent ellipses, as Donne's is, we cannot describe to it the natural ease which is Chaucer's peculiar merit.
It is not our purpose to dwell long on the other famous masters of this school. We cannot however, neglect them altogether if for no other reason than that some of our most promising moderns have gone to school to them. Even Masefield, frank Chaucerian in places, has now and then a gleam of something, a pregnant simplicity of language concealing a knotted thought which recalls no one so much as Donne or his successors, or Blake.

In the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth.
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her.

If the grave's gates could be undone
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of which she did for me.

[poem called C. L. M.]

We had better abandon for the moment the name metaphysical, and talk as Dr Courthope does of the School of Poetical Wit. This school had several sources of inspiration. We have already alluded to the astonishing range of Sylvester's Du Bartas, and its influence on Milton's earliest things in his Paradise Lost. Its wretched taste and verbal buffoonery do not blind us to its occasional flashes of something like inspiration, but its slips, puns and paradoxes in the end turned to the injury of the next generation of poetry. We can only say, however, that it helped on the inevitable universal tendency to wit, and no doubt Crashaw would have written his most tasteless conceits, had neither Sylvester nor Du Bartas ever lived. Other translators were helping towards the same end. Admired master of the language/
language of Spenser as he is, amplifies the conceits of Tasso beyond the bounds of decency. Dr Courthope who has sought so deeply into the origins of this strange growth compendiously defines it as "The artistic resolve to elaborate a single spiritual paradox; to polish it into the most perfect form of which it is capable, to illustrate it with every variety of image; to adorn it with metaphor, and to approach it from a number of different sides until its poetical substance is exhausted." The impatient reader may add "and long after it is exhausted". Perhaps the writer is not on such good ground when he imputes the tropical growth of this sort of wit in English poetry to the desire for licence, political freedom being dead. We may ask when precisely had it been alive? But the age after the great drama ran to dialectic, and this usually barren exercise happened in poetry to flower into our astonishing metaphysical school. Wit social, wit theological, and philosophical and wit classical usurped the stage up to the Restoration and beyond it. For the moment we must confine ourselves to the language but this is no great deprivation of liberty, since the language is the immediate mirror of the spiritual tendencies of the school. In this case it is true "Wit's words wisdom bewray."

Surveying the whole field, we may say that the movement seems to mark the almost dramatic rejection of fine language. Hence Coleridge could with justice remark that whilst they expressed the most elaborate thought in the simplest vernacular English, the poets of his youth - and his modest repentance in his edition of 1797 proves that he would include his own early efforts - employed the most gilded language about little or nothing. One poet at the entrance to the school is an exception. Giles Fletcher's Christ's Death and Victory is sprinkled with the large sort of coinages which Milton afterwards imitated in his Epics - disparagoned, displored, depur'd, emparadised, distained, empurpuled, etc. He carries on the Spenser traditions, while his brother Phineas, although his subject in The Temple Island might have tempted him towards monstrosity, is singularly
"neat and customary". He rather finds his account in the lower realistic language. It may be allowed that these writers are hardly "metaphysicals" in the true sense. They are not of the school of Donne, and only occasionally show any gleams of the new poetry. They are of the school of Spenser. In Spenser we sometimes found a heap of small language thrown at us - "so as they were not let" etc. - instances of which we gave in the third chapter. This we find in the true metaphysicals, as where Donne uses the four words or, all, it, you, or and that, there can be - which is enigma till the strong nerves of this piece are revealed. In the case of Spenser such ugly cubs are the effect of ungirt work, in the school of Donne rather of rugged compulsion, of search for brevity at all costs. Enigma rules in such monosyllabic stuff as we often find in Donne -

"if half ten

Belongs unto each woman, then
Each woman may take half us men;
Or - if this will not serve their turn - since all
Numbers are odd or even, and they fall
First unto five, women may take us all".

The science of numbers thus desperately reduced to verse teases most readers to distraction. Where is now the beautiful and languorous dialect of Spenser, where is even common sense? But every now and then comes in Donne the lovers full phrase, the romance of a far-journeyed and sensuous eye.

Thou shalt not peep through lattices of eyes
Such life is like the light which bideth yet
when the life's light is set.
Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.

And this helps to allay the indignation of the unregenerate reader, who
loves logic in verse but coldly at any time, and least of all when it is drilled through the solid rock with such persistent force, involving mountains of labour by its obscurity and involved syntax.

We can, if we like, select half-a-dozen or so typical lines of the neoclassic school of verse, and submit that the mass of that verse can be reduced to these generic types. Such might be

Sunk in Thalestris's arms the nymph he found
And for what they left me, since they left me
Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings
Who conquered Nature, should preside o'er wit
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do
Nor praise, nor blame the writings, but the man.

The caesural pause is the chief instrument of differentiation here.

The same is not true of Donne's verse because his voluminous variety of verse forbids, but there are distinct formularies -

We can beginnings but not habits choke.

And make his life but like a pair of beads.

Be then thine own home, and in thyself dwell (In any where).

Love either conquers or but meets a friend.

A quintessence even from nothingness.

The new philosophy calls all in doubt.

It is curious to note that many of his typical lines are echoed by typical neoclassic lines. Often these occur in lines together -

He kept his loves, but not his objects; wit
He did not banish but transplanted it;
Taught it its place and use and brought it home
To piety which it doth best become;
He showed us how for our sins we ought to sigh
And how to sing Christ's epithalamy.

Two or two of the separate lines above are early neoclassic in their tone. Then echoes them in many a line.
This curious correspondence between two such diverse schools of writing leads us to the conclusion that the application of pure logic to ideas in verse will naturally fashion out these molds, and that when Donne's mere turbulence and passion and curiosity are exhausted the neoclassic spirit will be upon us. His prevailing mode of language is similar to that used by the best practitioners of virile neoclassic verse - the shrewd vernacular, only he uses it with ten times more pregnancy, and with a certain elfish turn which was far from the aim of the explicit neoclassics. But they are, despite the rage for classical lucidity, often as obscure and elliptical as Donne, in trying to be epigrammatic and logical. They of course do not allow themselves the luxury of a word of vertu such as he very often in the magniloquent fashion of the day allows himself. Nor do they indulge in love of "mean" and painfully harsh language, his do's and did's and go's, which appear in greater profusion in Cowley, the last of the school. But without stretching the comparison too far, this we may say, that the movement towards plainness which is the true boast of the virile neoclassics was begun half a century before the Restoration. In Donne it is a cryptic harshness, in Herbert it is a smoother reed but the language is even more monotoned. The frequent glancing lights and incandescent glow of Donne's great language have cooled. Spiritual exaltation and Christian humility have effected this. They have "checked the blood" of rhetoric. And this lowering of the blood was communicated to Vaughan, who writes to his friend, whose holy ever-living lines

Have done much good,
To many, and have checked my blood
My fierce wild blood that still heaves and inclines
But is still tamed
By those bright fires which thee inflamed.

Poetry which does not celebrate Life, but rather breathes the most ardent contempt of it, might seem fated to sterility. But the history of religious poetry from Latin times down, has proved that this mood of renunciation may be for the poet as rich a vein to work as passionate acceptance of life. The theme Life is Loss looks unpromising and likely to end in violent paradox.
paradox or a lowheartedness which would cool poetry below the level of inspiration, but it soon appears that genuine, though often morbid, emotion can make a way and reconcile us to mountains of paradox. Further, we soon perceive that the euphuistic paradoxical manner invented in the Elizabethan age is at least as well fitted to express the morbid moods of the world-weary religious as it is to express the pagan loves of mythological characters. And the adoption almost from the start, certainly from Southwell, of an ascetic phraseology helps to make this poetic mode as effective and poignant as any we have record of. The religious mystic would seem to be almost of necessity thrown back on the meaner and baser elements of speech. Southwell's The Burning Babe, quoted by Dr Courthope, demonstrates the community of poetic interest existing among the true religious in all ages.

"As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow
Surprised I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye, to view what fire was near
A pretty babe all burning bright did in the air appear."

This, it will be conceded, is the mood and language of Blake in his simpler manner. The childish vocabulary, syntax and inversions are part of the manner, and proceed direct from the mood of renunciation which inspires this art. This movement is of especial interest coming so soon after the successful attempt to give English the elevation of Renaissance art. It seems as if the English mystics said - rhetoric and finery are good enough for poetry which celebrates the indecorous loves of mythology, a language mean of word and care of fine imagery is alone fit for the songs of Sion. But they did not find that the paradox and word-quip were to be rejected. Nor did they find that the contemporary habit of drawing illustration from every trade and occupation was unworthy. On the contrary they revelled in this, especially if there were a touch of rudeness in the analogy.

The movement being, despite its prevailing asceticism, broadly but simply ritualistic, we find that certain simple elements of Christian worship are elevated. The words altar, priest, host, love, cross, Lord, sacrifice, dove, fire, law, become in some poems of the school sacred words, along with all the words describing the bloody circumstance of the Passion,
thorns, nails, cross, spear, whip, blood, etc. But we will look in vain in Herbert for those ecclesiastical words of august sound and import which bestrew the pages of Francis Thompson whose poetry has been well described as a row of lights before the altar. On this side some will think these writers, especially Crashaw, rather morbid. Persons who have not the gift of religion often take a strange distaste for the "literature of the blood." But in recompense there is in writers of this school a good deal of that Biblical satisfaction in the fruits of the earth described in lines like these:

Fat soil, full spring, sweet olive, grape of bliss,
That yields, that streams, that pours, that dost distill,
Untilled, undrawn, unstamped, untouched of press
Dear fruit, clear brooks, fair oil, sweet wine of all.

It matters not that these things are only images of Christ's sweat. To the non-religious this will appear offensive, but the student soon realises that in a school of such excruciating imagination any elemental thing is liable to be analogised out of existence.

Apart from the actual painful and quivering language of the Cross, some of these poets revel in a purposed meanness of word and phrase to describe themselves in their unregenerate condition. In the next century Dr. Isaac Watts, of doubtful fame, could say -

Lord, I am but a lump of earth.

So another asks "Why, what are men, but quickened lumps of earth?"

And Herbert will admonish us

Look on meat, think it dirt then eat a bit
And say withal - "Earth to Earth I commit"

(Church Porch, XXII)

There is much of this in Donne. Poor human nature and its
its fleshly garb are as ruthlessly derided as is the fine Platonic conception of love. These poets out-do each other in the abuse they heap on the flesh. Doubtless the idea of the indestructibility of the regenerate soul, the "one precious thing", compensates somewhat. The poet's gaze is earnestly turned to the moment when the soul will "Shake off this pedantry of being taught by sense and fantasy." So Wordsworth in a later day reviled "the eye, the most despotic of the senses" and yet he is the instigator of a movement which meant essentially the rediscovery of the senses.

Herbert, more than any other, stript his Muse of the more conventional graces. He will use with curious virginal effect words like box, chest, tools, cupboard, step. Romantic poetry and metaphysical had this in common that in certain moods they articulate the innocent babblings of childhood. In the case of the former, the instigating cause is the reaction against a prolonged period of intellectual poetry; in the latter the cause is self-abnegation and the humbling of learned pride. But the effects are similar, and this is the reason why Wordsworth found rest for his soul in the Jacobean school which he could not find in the intervening age.

With all his plainness of words, Herbert is /

Vaughan's Retreate for example.
where underwrites evidently has the modern meaning.

He can be very prosaic, scorns to avoid prosaism indeed.

This loss springs chiefly from our education.

He is very prosaic, scorns to avoid prosaism indeed.

(Porch XVII)

He is full of cheat, trunk, box, cupboard, can (for liquor), glass, cup.

It used to be remarked of Newman that in his Oxford sermons he attracted men by showing a shrewd acquaintance with worldly pleasures and not pretending ignorance of the real world. There is something of this in Herbert. Withdrawn from the world, he makes all worldly occupations and charities, pains and pleasures administer to his muse, and the effect is often quaint in the extreme, as where he sings:

The marrie world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together where I lay
And all in sport to jeer at me.

It is this combination of childish syntax and utterly simple phrase with "itty" but homely analogies which make him the greatest of English religious writers, and a model for Keble and Trench.

No reference is too homely for him, and the more august the occasion, the more domestic he becomes as in Antiphon.

Some may dream merrily, but when they wake
They dress themselves and come to Thee.

A greater contrast to Francis Thompson, who exploits the most august and grand language of the Church can hardly be imagined. Herbert is a treasury of idiom of a sort we could hardly have imagined could be used in poetry. It was an age of homeliness, but somehow we take it from Herbert more readily than from Cowley or L'Avenant.

Both heav'n and earth

Pay'd me my wages in a world of mirth.

I scarce believed

Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived.

When I got health, Thou took'st away my life,

And more - for my friends die:

My/
My mirth and edge was lost, a blunted knife
Was of more use than I.

Thus thin and lean, without a fence or friend,
I was blown thorough with every storm and wind.

Such is the power of the quality we call "quaintness", that we relish
such things where ordinarily we find them offensive. Was Herbert quaint
to his own day? His age was rich in idiom, much of it rather clumsy.
He exploits it all, clumsy and otherwise. Never classical, though he
wrote Latin verse, he wanders between almost imbecile simplicity and
the enigmatic as where he says -

Wine becomes a wing at last.

But this is the way with most mystics. Their sayings are either dark
or childlike. The Church Militant, written in the heroic couplet, is
an amazing treasury of "witty" expression.

Plato and Aristotle were at a losse
And wheel'd about again to spell Christ-Crosse.

Prayers chas'd syllogisms into their den,
And Ergo was transformed into Amen.

Herbert is the purest of the school, but perhaps Vaughan is for our special
study even more interesting. His intelligent notion of his art is con-
veyed in his lines to Mrs. K. Philips.

Where language smiles, and accents rise
As quick, and pleasing as your eyes
The poem smooth, and in each line
Soft as yourself, yet masculine
Where no coarse trifles blot the page
With matter borrowed from the age.

The classical spirit is more marked in Vaughan. He hardly reaches
Rerrick's curiosa felicitas of phrase, but he has classical concinnity amid
all his welter of words, and here and there actual classical phrase can be
picked out. But what amazes the reader is the verbal richness of the
all he ploughs up, and his dexterity in turning it over; especially in
these passages where, after the fashion of the age, he broods over worry
circumstance. "Vaughan is a far less neat and finished
artist than Herbert" Griperson (Metaphysical
Poetry XLV). Though, but he has more-crowded matter, is
more frequent and attempts classical Methods of
expression more often.
But thou (for after death I shall be free)
Fetch home these bones, and what is left of me,
A few flowers give them, with some Balme, and lay
Them in some suburb-grave hard by the way,
And to informe posterity who's there,
This sad inscription let my marble weare,

Here lyes the soft-smil'd luctuor of love,
Whose envy'd wit did his own ruine prove.
But thou (who e'r thou beeest, that passing by
Lendst to this sudden stone a hastie eye)
If e'r thou knewest of love the sweet disease
Grudge not to say, May Ovid rest in peace!

This is a richer world than Herbert's. Ingenuity in the use of the wide
lower reaches of the tongue can hardly go much further. True we must
judge the language "harsh", if our tongues find, as they must, best,
Lendst to this sudden stone a hastie eye
If e'r thou knewest of love the sweet disease
Grudge not to say, May Ovid rest in peace!

How much of this precious colouring did the English poetic language surrender in
the next generation to the doctrines of the glib neo-classics! One is
totally sure that Vaughan is not the richest treasury of native language of
that age. And when, owing to the example of Herbert, he turns from man
to God, and abjures the tainting arts "With all their softe, kinde arts
and easie strains", how sure he is in the use of that finer language of the
spirit!

How do I study now, and scan
Thy, more than ere I studied man
And only see through a long night
Try edges, and the bordering light!

Like Shelley, he is attracted to this white light (a Platonic notion) as
though to the candle
fairy language used by Shakespeare in his fairy pieces and by Drayton. It is the hedgerow English of *Nymphidia* trimmed up in garlands gay and for ever lovely.

Strip her of spring-time, tender-whimpring maids
Now Autumn's come, when all those flowrie aids
Of her delayes must end; dispose
That lady-smock, that pansie, and that rose
   Neatly apart;
But for prick-madam, and for gentle-heart,
And soft-maiden's-blush, the bride
Makes holy these, all others lay aside.

It is the earth-god who sings material joys. No longer do we hear Vaughan's mystical music. Herrick's singing robes, negligently worn, are yet more girt up than Vaughan's. We are passing away from Donne's powerful and craggy speech, though we are still prevailingly English, and monosyllabic, and though the cacophony of English inflections and constructions is not avoided. We hear also in Herrick snatches of the powerful Shakespearian language as

Their many vertues volumn'd up in thee

Dry your sweet cheek, long drown'd in sorrow's rain.

and we notice along with his classical graces how he loves to place beautiful classical words in his monosyllabic lines.

Seest thou those diamonds which she weares
   In that rich Carkanet;
Or those on her dishevell'd haires
   Faire pearles in order set?

See where she comes; and smell how all the street
Breathes vine-yards and pomegranats; O, how sweet!

"street" is one of those unusual words like *shop* which occurring in an ideal context give a pleasurable shock. So Spenser used it in the *Basilanion*. The mingling of ceremonious and beautiful classical speech with quaintest folk words is one secret of Herrick's art.

Next/ We do in *The White Island* and other things.
Next, when as thou see'st
The _candid_ stole thrown o'er the pious priest;
With reverend curties come, and to him bring
Thy free (and not decorct) offering.
All rites well ended, with faire auspice come
(As to the breaking of a bride-cake) home;
Where ceremonious Hymen shall for thee
Provide a second Epithalamie

( _Julia's Churching_ )

Before the press scarce one co'd see
A _little-paeping-part_ of thee.

he is not the first poet to use classical words in their original sense,
as in _The Cloud_

Seest thou that cloud that rides in state
Part ruby-like, part _candidate_.
(Cf. _candid_ stole above).

_Y_ of the _Morris-dancers_

Yet with strutting they will please
The _incurious villages_.

_it_ he is the first to do it deliberately and with art. How far beyond
the Dryden of _Anna mirabilis_ he is here, and how he understands the art
of interposing a sudden imposing classical word in a simple setting.

But that eternal poetry

_Repullululation_ gives me here

_How sweetly flows_
That _liquefaction_ of her clothes.

Clear was the hearth, the mantle larded yet
Which wanting, lar, and smoke, hung weeping yet.

_and_ then the joyous or poignant phrases

That _brave vibration_ (of Julia's dress)

Bear small as comfort, _dead as charity_.

_f_ reely one of his own "luckie fairies" directed his pen. There is nothing
quite like it in English poetry, though we notice despairing emulation on the part of some of our neo-Elizabethans today.

In conclusion we may say that no age of English poetry has exhibited more of **curiosa felicitas** in dealing with the lower parts of the language. Their subtle divination of the just qualities of homely word and phrase is beyond praise. When we look to what is to come by the successive stages D'Avenant, Cowley, Dryden, when we see the dancing fairy words of Herrick and the powerful phrase of Donne translated into their metallic or base language, we know that the first great romantic age is over.
Of some of the later or lesser Caroline poets we must say a little because certain of them afford examples of the most eccentric use of language. Professor Saintsbury had indeed cause to make merry over such verbal oddities as we find in people like Nathaniel Whiting. Indeed an interesting thesis might be written on the extraordinary lingual caperings of these lees and dregs of the school. Every school in its sad decay offers an interesting study in language, but more, we are safe to say, does so well illustrate the immediate connection between diction and the dwindling inspiration of the schools as that now under review. We need not speak of Henry King and Thomas Stanley and the others who follow fairly closely on the track of the great metaphysicals. They seem — especially King — to echo now Herbert, now Donne, while in Cleveland, all the sluices of language are up, from rogues language to fine classical. In a poem like The Mixed Assembly, the diction, rich in its disordered flow, is a regular gaol-delivery of words. Witty, it is but prevailingly low. It is indeed the language of the embittered, almost foul-mouthed factionist and pamphleteer and points the way to Butler's Hudibras. The pregnancy of the words he used in those card-castles of wit which are, so much the réductio ad absurdum of the metaphysical method as to half induce the feeling that he is burlesquing the style, was admiringly remarked by the editors of Cleveland Vindiciae in 1677. "And now instead of that strenuous masculine style which breathes in /
avoids or cannot rise to the happy 'conceited' language of that lyrist. The conceited or inflated turns of speech which are so well mingled with the homeliest language in the famous To Althea, and which nobody would— to use Johnson's expression—'wish away', are rarely attempted by the modest poet, and he does not very often or very aptly use Herrick's trick of dropping a gold word metropolitan into a simple setting. His pages are on the whole free of learned words. At the same time he is not altogether lacking in that verbal felicity and quaintness which is a hallmark of the school. But he has less of it than the others and this unremarkable nature of his language had perhaps something to do with the neglect into which he fell. Professor Saintsbury is no doubt right also in ascribing the similar neglect of Henry King to the fact that he too trod the middle way and leaned to no extreme, and yet belonged to a school of poetry which in some ways lived on extremes. But there is more liveliness in him than in Stanley and, this is reflected in his language, which does not like Cleveland's dazzle with curiosities or the monstrous, but is of that neat and customary kind recommended by his master Ben Jonson. He has something—a great deal— of Donne's dramatic energy and something of his crabbedness occasioned usually by omitting articles and particles where he can, but he avoids obscurity, and he is not over conceited. His long Elegy upon Charles the First is a sort of pamphlet in verse which anticipates Dryden's early political manner. In its language and logic it is very close to the political prose of the time.

Charles/

Nature, ignorant of this
Strange antiperistasis—
Would her falling frame admire (Snowball)
Charles never endured the Truth which he professed to be unfixed by bosom-interest.

Bold as Jeho,ro'phat, yet far'd to fight and for his own, no unconcerned right.

Should I recount his constant time of prayer each rising morn and evening regular

You'd say his practice preached, 'They ought not eat who by devotion first not earned their meat.

Thus Hezekiah he exceeds in zeal though not (like him) so facile to reveal

The treasures of God's House, or his own heart, to be supplanted by some foreign art.

From this survey the kingdom may conclude his merits, and her losses' magnitude;

Nor think he flatters or blasphemes who tells that Charles exceeds Judea's parallels.

The diction and what we may call the logic of this piece come near to the satirical manner of Dryden. In such verse - and there is much of it - King is clearly deserting the metaphysical tabernacle. And yet the style is not prosaic in the bad sense, - at least not more so than Dryden's verse is. Good writers in the new Restoration style contrived to use the diction and logical structure of political prose without being chargeable as a rule with actual prosaism. Cleveland had shewn the way in The Rebel Scot, and other things, and Dryden may have taken more from him than from King. But Cleveland has more of eccentricity in his diction and much more of the conceit. He is much more ragged in speech and if we must own it, livelier and more readable. Indeed he is one of the masters of the lower regions of language.

But Nathaniel Whiting is, so far as diction is concerned, the complete clown of the school of Caroline poets. Allowing for the satiric undertone of his Albino and Bellama, we must still think that its uncouth jargon, with never a gleam of genuine poetry, puts quite out of the pale of letters, unless we like to regard it solely from /
from the point of view of literary history, in which history the curiosities and even monstrosities have a place as well as the positive achievements. Professor Saintsbury tells us that Whiting for all his extravagance, triviality, and so forth, has occasionally an odd gift of phrase; and instances—

"Pandora was not treasured up in faces," and N. W. has certainly a faculty of cleverish phrases. But such lines as

The Thracian shepherd was a silly ass
or
The sea-born planet popped out her lamp
And 'tis she herself outshined by her, did rage.

It is not only that his vocabulary is like that of Herbert, for example, low-toned. It is indeed in words applied by a detractor to L'Estrange's language—"a mean and flippant jargon" and the meanness and flippancy is attained by use of those truncations of words and vulgar ellisions which mark the journalistic prose of the late seventeenth century, especially in translation.

She's many trulls, like Menelaus' wife
And she such light-skirt things for chaste ones sells.

The connection between Albino and the prose novel of the next generation is not a fanciful one. The modern reader of Albino is also strongly reminded in respect both of general tone and language, of the works of the Leigh Hunt School, of the Tale of Rimini for example. No doubt the resemblance is due to the influence in both cases of the satirical Italians of the school of Berni. Whiting is not at all metaphysical in the narrow sense. He rather belongs to the amorous conceited school and has not a little of the Sylvester manner, especially in treating of Pagan's

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Pagan Mythology. Even Spenser and Shakespeare were often ridiculous in their reference to Dan Phoebus and his cast. Sylvester uniformly degrades the old deities. But what of Nathaniel Whiting? -

The curled tapers of the firmament
Did cease to twinkle, but gazed with fixed eyes,
In their own orb refusing to be pent
And strove to leap upon the lower skies;
May, did of the second air like comets lang
To dart their crisps at beauty's only span.

The sea-born planet popped out her lamp,
And 'tis seen herself outshin'd by her, did rage - &c.

No doubt there is here an echo of Shakespeare's language
--- twink, spang, crisp.

Professor Saintsbury says of the first line quoted (it) "is not exactly contemptible, I fancy". Perhaps, but it is very much like Sylvester, and like those early psalms of Milton's when he was of that school too, and talked of the "froth-becurled floods".

But enough has been said to show that this eccentric poetaster affords a valuable study in the poetic language. As he is the last we shall name in the Caroline school, we should point out that he has his roots in the older and more barbaric styles in vogue at the turn of the sixteenth century, when Marston was giving Ben Jonson cause for uneasiness, and that he also seems to point forward to the spate of vulgar and often unclassable English of the writers of L'Estrange's time. But he never by any chance comes near the real 'metaphysical' master in their powerful but decent use of the lower reaches of the tongue.
CHAPTER V. Milton (1).

We need not here go very fully into the nature of Milton’s vocabulary. The late Professor Masson adequately performed this task, so far as mere colour and weight of words is concerned, in his essay on Milton’s Versification and Language, prefixed to his edition of Poems. His conclusions on the subject of Milton’s Versification – the most difficult of prosodic subjects – have not been so widely accepted as his remarks on the Language, which in the present writer’s opinion are generally sound.

Whilst for the moment we do not speak of the actual Miltonic Vocabulary, it must be insisted that the versification itself has hardly had more important results in English poetry than has the word-coloration. For disciplinary and imitative purposes Shakespeare has had far less ostensible influence on poetry than Milton, though we note Mr. Middleton Murray’s opinion that the Miltonic manner was exhausted by its originator, and led imitators into various cul-de-sacs, whereas Shakespeare’s was capable of continued adaptation. It may be that this is a compliment to the greater poet’s unapproachable art. Less artificial, less of an artist in the school sense, Shakespeare has despite all his ylots and errors remained a vast tradition of cosmic perfection. On the other hand Milton’s art lies nearer the surface. A very large part of the activity of succeeding English poets, specially in the eighteenth century was given up to imitation of this art, now on the linguistic, now on the prosodic side, generally with poor result.

Speaking of the former, we find as in no other poet quite so distinctly, different strata of language; now it is the lovely colloquial /
colloquial Elizabethan, now it is the ample and soaring language of great rhetoric. In the eighteenth century imitators we find the unaesthetic school of Thomson, Granger and Dyer, adopting the cumbrous latinised style, - employing it, as Milton often does too, on mean matter, so as to be ridiculous, - without having the genius to wield it properly, and the result in their didactic or episodic poetry is not good. On the other hand the aesthetic Gray and Collins, rejecting the bow of Ulysses, call from the minor (or Elizabethan) poetry a great deal of that early loveliness of language, which earned for it the name of Doric-mollities-delicacy - and the result is on the whole good.

Milton's progressive classicism is noted by all. His roots are in the Elizabethans, but he refined on their efforts with the touch of classical delicacy which is for ever associated with Lycidas and L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. The rise in what Professor Masson called musical density of syntax, from those early choice things to the style of the epics is great. This might be accounted for simply as the difference between the styles of lyric and pastoral poetry, and the grander epic muse. The Ciceronian density of syntax is at its height in the early speeches of Paradise Lost. The difference between prose oratory and the eloquence of impasioned verse was not so clearly defined at the Renaissance as it is now. We may also conjecture that the example of the great prose models of the age - Taylor, Browne and Milton himself - had in the interval between the minor poems and the later, fully matured in Milton's mind, though by the time Paradise Lost appeared, a very different order of oratory prevailed. Here and there in the
the early poems a dense enough block of verse can be found, but not until he discovered the ordonnance of the verse paragraph, did the poet indulge much in this Ciceronian vein. In other words the art of the early poems is immediately based on the choicer side of Elizabethan poetry, but we think more so in neglect of its language than of its metre. In describing this language as harsh, Johnson was simply following out Dryden's full-dress attack on the language of the Elizabethans. He was especially offended by that added touch of the cryptic and classical, that seeking after splendour and allusiveness of diction, which he found in Gray's imitations of Milton's language. But he does not remark that Gray is but Milton played on a thinner reed. Johnson is quite consistent in his censure of the two poets. Constat sibi may be written over his most censorious remarks here. His neo-classical theory demanded that language should be first all clear, and then, in Ben Jonson's words 'neat and customary'. Both poets offend in this respect. They are not primarily concerned with being clear and plain, but with being artful.

In Milton then that process, which, we noted, starts in the poets of Tottel's Miscellany, that toying of the 'barbarian' with concise and artful modes of expression, has reached its height. There will be nothing for it after him, but to begin unloosing the language once more, and that will mean working in the direction of plainness and calling a spade a spade - always a dismal process for the artist, and especially dismal in that age before the moderns had mapped out a new aesthetic, and discovered how to attain beauty while repudiating the rules of rhetoric and without departing from the colloquial speech.
speech. The downward process from the excessive artfulness of a Milton to the plain style, is marked by the rout of tasteless and vulgar stuff, both in prose and verse that the closing seventeenth century displayed. Gray in the eighteenth century and Tennyson in the nineteenth tried once more to impose classical artifice on the English tongue, and for themselves, with fair success. So long as the classics are the staple fare of our schools and Universities, there will always be poets of the first class who will lean to trickery and rhetoric, unenglish though the practice may be. For that matter we might say that art is unenglish. The obscurity arising in such poetry from imitation of classical brevity will, if not excessive, be pardoned by the classical reader. It is not so obscure to him, and it reminds him of cherished and beautiful modes of expression. Milton is one of the poets who is addicted to a favourite range of words. As Mr. George Moore would say, he does not, like Shakespeare and like Kipling, use the whole language. This as a rule will generally be true of artful poets, like Milton and Gray. Gray's vocabulary is very restricted, as must be the case with a poet who held that the language of poetry is never the language of ordinary speech. It is part of their artifice so to restrict the vocabulary. The same is true of Shelley. Milton's general vocabulary is big enough of course, but he recurs again and again to a favourite range of words. Professor Masson gives a long list of such words. With such a subject as Paradise Lost we are not surprised that the changes are rung so often on words like, earth, Heaven, orb, saint, and a host of other like words. Neither in Shelley's
case, which is almost more marked in this respect, certain words and types of words having an irresistible attraction for him, nor in Milton's, is this practice very injurious, but in the long run it justifies a qualifying element in our praise of them. There is almost a hint of hypnotic suggestion in these favourite words. Certainly the attraction of Shelley for such words as paven, pavilion, woven (and all the family of words which suggest patterning or interweaving) is very remarkable, though we may think that a habit shared by such poets as Milton, Shelley and Tennyson, and we should add William Morris, can hardly be a serious one. It is different however in the case of a second-rate poet like Davenant or in a translator of Pope's Homer, or of the Aeneid, or perhaps the William Morris whose Earthly Paradise bears strong evidence of fatigue and carelessness. Fatigue is first shown in the diction. Where a poet, especially a translator, is anxious to finish his task, he finds the due selection of happy words an intolerable business, and slips back on easy reiterated phrase. The work rapidly becomes lifeless. Epic poetry because of its sameness of subject, and its vastness of canvas, will always be liable to sink here, under a load of indifference and fatigue. Davenant's Condibert is an almost grotesque example of this, the more so as the reiterated phraseology is of a base nature. How such a work could gain readers in the age of Milton, would be a problem, if we did not remember that every age shows a tendency to cherish second-rate and vulgar idols.

Whilst it is perhaps a false standard to measure poets by, wealth and variety of vocabulary are generally safe guides.
guides to a certain degree of power. We cannot remember many cases of poor writers endowed with a great vocabulary. Poverty of vocabulary or careless use of a great one — such as Dr. Courthope alleges against Mr. Kipling — is a sure guide to second-rate talent. The wretched vocabulary of Davenant who wrote in an age which had been using or attempting to use "the whole language" and not only so, but ambitiously extending the language on all sides, is a sign of his poverty as a poet. His Gondibert has all the signs of the age, especially in its eccentricity. Although it is packed with the base technical language of business and the counting-house, it is a meagre language. In Morris' case perhaps the reiterated and — in places — restricted language is merely a sign of rapid and careless workmanship. Elsewhere he displays wealth enough of words, and in the Sigurd and his translation of the Aeneid, goes far beyond the tolerable in his fashioning of a new language taken from old English Epic and other sources. In part also, Morris' love of certain words oft-repeated may be related directly to the curious conventional symbolism of the Pre-Raphaelites. When we find the words, wan, dim, pale, gold, fine, fair, etc. occurring constantly, we feel we are in the presence of a marked a convention as the weird and ugly blondes the Brotherhood loved to paint.

As for Davenant, since we have mentioned him, — and he is extremely interesting as the last link in a chain — in his pursuit of Metaphysical Wit, "the soul's powder" as he calls it, he ransacks Heaven and earth for figures and diction. In Gondibert, which is not a very long epic — too long nevertheless — he rings the changes on elemental words like death, life, nature, sun, heaven, while fame and court occur incessantly /
incessantly in this very political poem. So public, statesmen, council, rival, office, usher, surveyor, party, monarchy, the vulgar, — in short the language of political science, which is to colour the poetry of Dryden and his age is already appearing.

There is a curious modernism too in the use of certain words, e.g.: the word modern itself, science, elements, polemics, politics; private and public are frequently juxtaposed and of course all the language of Trade and alchemy are here. Gondibert is more interesting as a study of words than as a poem. The student will probably regard it from this point of view as the first serious vulgarisation of the language of epic, so marked are the inroads of business and modern jargon. Dryden's Annus Mirabilis is strongly marked by this sort of language. Hardly a long poem known to us so shamefully reiterates a restricted phraseology as does Gondibert, and the character of this language indicates the pre-occupation of the coming age with state-business and the ledger. For epic poetry the language, copious and various, is of paramount importance. Unless a poet has a vast stock of words he had better not begin. Perhaps Davenant's failure to carry the poem beyond the third canto is to be attributed to a feeling of monotony produced by this reiterated range of words. So Keats was unfortunately discouraged from going on with Hyperion. It was, we know for sure in his case, purely a matter of weariness induced by his Miltonic imitations.

We have spoken of Gondibert because it must have been in the mind of anyone who should hazard the epic strain in the years immediately preceding the Restoration. Here the language of epic, sinks woefully. It was the task of Milton to restore it to greater elevation than ever before and yet the age of Addison /
Addison censured it on the score of its many examples of meanness. There are in fact, many touches in it of the author of Gondibert. We can only see the elevation which we sometimes deem absurd. His neo-classic critics saw rather the evidence that he had not quite purged his poem of the bad and puerile influence of his immediate predecessors in the epic kind.

Nobody, we may assume, ever felt the constant repetition of certain words in Milton to be a serious blemish. The recurrence of phraseological tricks may be more of a flaw, especially his play on words, which sober Addison censured. Various writers have traced Milton's language — a "made" language if ever there was one — to such sources as Spenser, the Fletchers, especially Giles, and Sylvester. The influence of the last named is seen more in Milton's early religious poetry. The Nativity ode has doubtful touches.

XXVI. So when the sun in bed
Curtained with cloudy red
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to th' infernal jail
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-sick, leaving their moon-loved maze.

The last verse with its talk of sun, and stables in a mythological connection is even more characteristic. This admired poem, whose language recalls Venus and Adonis is much as Sylvester shows once more how genius can take up the absurd fashions of the day and make beauty out of them. It is Jacobean à la mode, almost foppishly so, in every respect, with that Elizabethan tendency to degrade the classical mythology by a too homely allusiveness.

Already also we note the favourite tricks which were to reappear in the nineteenth century romantics much to the disgust of the orthodox Crokers and Milmans and Giffords.
The stressed-ed adjectives, formed from nouns, are often pretty as in 'mocked Ashtaroth', 'timbrelled Anthems', etc. Compare Keats' 'slabbed marble', 'globed peonies', etc. which are sometimes successful, generally not.

So we have the fine compounds and the consistent use of the un-prefix which will always be a temptation to the English poet. But in the Paraphrase of the CXLV Psalm, we have Sylvester unashamed.

That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled
And sought to hide his froth-becurled head
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil
As a faint host that hath received the foal
The high huge-bellied mountains skylike rems etc.

Here is the grotesque of which Sylvester's imagery is three parts compounded.

These features, especially the compounding, appear in all Milton's early verse. Sylvester did not, of course, invent the art of compounding. But he extended it in the direction of the grotesque, though some of his creations are quite good. In the flush of youthful genius Milton plays about with the device. Occasionally in these early things, he strikes a really good compound, but not more often than we should expect. In the more trifling early verse are found little more than skillful echoes of the Elizabethans. Here are found some of Milton's rare exercises in the humorous, grimly humorous in On the University Carrier. The tone of this poem and its language remind us of the famous death-bed passage in the Second Anniversary.

Think then my soul, that death is but a groom
Which lights thee a taper to the outward room

Think Satan's sergeants round about thee be
And think that but for legacies they thrust.

This is meant seriously, but jesting with death was common in
the age.

But lately, finding him (the carrier) so long at home, And thinking now his journey's end was come, And that he had taken up his latest inn, In the kind office of a chamberlain (Death) showed him his room where he must lodge that night, Pulled off his boots and took away the light, If any ask for him, it shall be said 'Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed.' The 'inn' metaphor for life was a favourite since Spenser's time. Cf. Sonne's 'Inn anywhere.'

He also imitated Ben's fine lapidary style in the Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester. The interest of these pieces is in seeing the young poet looking round for a model. Of the language of *Lydidas* we need say little. Johnson's censorious judgment - given in good faith however - has been long set aside. All are now agreed on its exquisite delicacy of language. We can understand why Johnson, objecting to certain strained or hyperbolical or classical expressions in Gray - such as 'redolent of joy and youth', would object to 'melodious tear' 'blind mouths,' and 'forced fingers rude' and the classical idioms and elliptical expressions throughout. The epithet 'harsh' seems rightly to apply to the diction of the opening lines:

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude And with forced fingers rude Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

In his essay on Cowley, Johnson tells us that the diction is the first thing that strikes us in a poem, and if that is not pleasing, nothing else can make amends for it. To find such phrases at the very entrance to an elegy might well upset the old critic. The modern taste is different however.
however, we even applaud the realistic language of the speech of the reverend sire Camus. The language is prevailingly English and even monosyllabic, and never has that homely vein of language been used with more delicacy. The L'Allegro and Il Penseroso for the most part, use the same homely strain of speech with occasional and lovely classical touches for relief. L'Allegro is the most rustic thing Milton wrote. The language, country-tewed as it is, receives a curious elevation in Milton's hands. It is impossible to admire too much the classical (in the wide sense) stamp which the poet's genius has given to this very homely speech. Not Spenser, hardly even Shakespeare, had conferred on it such rich dignity.

But it is in Comus that we see the full Miltonic manner emerging. The grand, poetic rhetoric now begins to appear in the intellectual speeches, and in the songs we discover the diction of Gray and Collins, and later, Shelley, when these poets are most artful. We said beginning to appear, for the poet still observes the limits and usages of the ordinary heightened speech. He is content with that and invents very little. 'Imbodies and imbirates,' ' unplausible,' 'surprised,' 'inspired,' 'curst,' 'mickle' ("mickle trust and power") are among the very rare exceptional formations. They are not of course, new in the poetical vocabulary. A number of his compounds, of which he was rather fond at the early period are good. He does not yet feel the necessity for a 'made' language. Needless to say he refines on 'neatly customary' speech to a degree never attempted by his predecessors, Shakespeare excepted. His reluctance to 'make' words or even to use already /
already received coinage; must have been deliberate, for he had the example of the Fletchers before him, an example he followed rather closely in the epics. Echoes of the great Elizabethans occur everywhere in the poem, but he excels in one notable direction, where he breaks out into that fierce familiar or vulgar speech, which is so noticeable in his prose pamphlets. There had been, as we saw, a foretaste of this powerful vulgar speech in that solitary outburst in *Lycidas*, but nothing like the sustained energy of it in central passages of *Comus*. The pamphleteer asserts himself, and under the stress of moral indignation bestrews his page with vernacular words of shrewdest bite.

*Comus.* 0 foolishness of men! that lend their ears To those Judean doctors of the Soile-surf And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub. Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth. And set to work millions of spinning worms That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk, To deck her sons; and, that no corner might Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins She hatched th' all worshipped ore and precious gems To store her children with. 

And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool, What need a vermeil-tinted lip for that, Love darting eyes, or tresses like the morn? The use of a word like *shop* shows Milton's Elizabethan cast of mind; *green shop* is somehow beautiful. The Elizabethan poet would not shy at such a 'mean' word. Shakespeare uses it /
it freely as in that difficult Sonnet XXIV thy bosom’s shop. It was of course banished poetry at the Restoration and is only now being honourably restored by our neo-Elizabethans, Mr. Abercrombie for example uses it in ideal connections. It has always been used in the lower kinds of poetry.

Even the domestic expressions in the latter part of the quotations are somehow elevated by Milton’s art in a way denied to similar expressions in Cowper and Wordsworth. Their heavy styles cannot with grace carry off such attempts in the familiar. The reader will note the effect Milton produces by the repeated use of ugly ‘u’ sounds. budge, fur, tub, hatched, grudging, all occur in a dozen lines or so. There is just a memory of the school of Sylvester in the passage.

The sea o’erfraught would swell, and th’ unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light

and of the Elizabethans generally in

Beauty is nature’s brag and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.

Shelley’s realistic poems, especially the Letter to Maria Gisborne has something of Comus’ mingling of fine selected phrase and the frankly colloquial, but he has not that touch of fierceness we note in Milton’s low language.

There is something also of Shakespeare’s manner in the Comus as:

Her words set off by some superior power;
And though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o’er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn’s crew.

This might have been Caliban speaking in the Tempest.

so –

except of course when Cowper is writing in familiar vein.
so - "backward mutters of dissevering power"
or - still she retains

Her maiden's gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts and ill-luck signs,
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make.

When we add to this the rarer beauty of the songs, we have to recognise in Comus as complete a mastery of the resources of the tongue in all its elements as any poem exhibits. A certain daring goes hand in hand with absolute certainty in noble sound and feeling.

The songs are distinguished by some beautiful compounds, coral-paven, rushy-fringed, tinsel-slippered, amber-dropping, etc. In Paradise Lost the poet often eschews compounds for pages together and then gives us a few rather poor examples like, "the heaven-warring race", "all-powerful "King," "hell-hounds etc.", "ever-during dark," etc. In short, the poet has largely discarded this mighty weapon of his predecessors and of his own early poetry. Shelley following Gray and Collins revived the habit. Paradise Regained, which is written in a lower key, hardly uses the compound at all. It is perhaps a pity that Keats in attempting the full Miltonic manner did not notice that the great poet progressively restrains himself in this direction, as in other directions also.

To the songs of Comus more than any other single model, the school of Gray and Collins was indebted for its characteristic language.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave
In twisted braids of lillies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save.

Listen /
Listen and a pear to us,  
In name of great Oceanus;  
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,  
And Tethys' grave majestic pace,  
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look  
And the Carpathian wizard's hook,  
By scaly Triton's winding shell,  
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell,  
By Leucothea's lovely hands,  
And her son that rules the strands,  
By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,  
And the songs of Syrens sweet,  
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,  
And fair Ligea's golden comb,  
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,  
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;  
By all the nymphs that nightly dance  
Upon thy streams with wily glance,  
Rise, rise, and leave thy rosy head,  
Prom thy coral-haven bed  
And bridle in thy headlong wave,  
Till thou our summons answer'd have.  
Listen, and save!

and still nearer their style -

Along the crisped shades and bowers  
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;  
The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours  
Thither all their bounties bring;  
There eternal Summer dwells,  
And west-winds, with musky wing,  
About the cedarn alleys fling  
Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.

There are effects here which the eighteenth century poets could not reach, and stylistic touches they would not affect, but on the whole it is their model. It is also the model of one of Shelley's cherished strains. He is full of coral-paven, pavillioned, translucent, interweaving, and all that family of beautiful words which exercised a charm over his mind. Thus we conclude that by the example of his early poetry and chiefly the songs in Comus, Milton inspired one notable movement towards the revival of romance in eighteenth century poetry, and by the example of the language of his epics, he landed English poetry in the bog of eighteenth century didactic rigmarole.

When we come to the epics themselves we feel as if we were approaching some structure of unexampled magnificence.

Not /
Not Babylon
Nor great Alosirio such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories.

Wealth and luxury indeed pervade the whole work. The appetite for glory may be the last infirmity of noble minds. Our modern turn of mind makes us think that the truer trend of noble mind, of our Ruskins and Tolstoys, is away from glory and towards simplicity. That idea had not penetrated the Renaissance age. The curious strain of the grandiose which appears in Turner's landscapes - perhaps the most remarkable manifestation of glory in art - (and especially in his very bad poetry), a tendency which urges the artist to pile marble steps into the heavens and tint the air with brilliantest oranges and the sea with dark mysterious blues, in short, all the things that strike the eye in a canvas like the great Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus, we find in Milton's epic art.

The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height; and straight the doors
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement; from the arched roof
Pendent by subtle magic many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky.

Let anyone repeat these words before, let us say Turner's "Building of Carthage," and he will admit that they most subtly apply to Turner's art. This painter, with his appetite for glory, through imitation of Claude realises the Renaissance spirit in its proudest moment. Art is greater than Nature; the mind working through design and structure and technique can raise more gorgeous trophies than are to be found in the crude matter of nature.

It is a happy circumstance that for once and for all, the English poetic art has thus openly and passionately courted /
"courted the magnificent" as it has done in Paradise Lost.

In our own day any attempt in this direction would be rewarded by a smile. Alike in Oratory, and the arts, even sculpture, we have abandoned the grand. Happy are we then in the possession of these twelve books of undiluted magnificence. Nor does the poet's pinion flag - the last two books with the great Virgilian Vision of the future is as sustained as the lofty first wherein "the top of eloquence" is reached.

As in an organ, from one blast of wind
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.

We say almost undiluted for as everyone knows, as Addison and Johnson pointed out, there are level stretches of something like verbosity, and even the ridiculous, especially in the eighth book. But after all these are not either protracted or frequent, and there is everywhere a God's plenty of the true sublime. It is surely a degenerate taste that dismisses this as barbaric finery, these swelling periods and voluptuous phraseology. Yet here and there one hears voices to this effect. No doubt as compared with the low and creeping stuff some moderns put out under the name of poetry, poetry which seems ashamed of an honest, rotund phrase or rhythm, Milton's organ voice seems theatrical and, in fact, poetical bombast.

It is recognised that not even the language of the Faerie Queen better deserves the title of a "made" language than does that of Paradise Lost. It had a power of propagating itself which is quite unexampled in the history of any poetry. The eighteenth century didactic poets, the nineteenth century naturalistic, and some of the later spasmodic poets - /
poets - Bailey's Festus and Balder are modelled on it - adopt with meagre result this great style. It is true this humorous progeny is almost all sickly and a cause of offence. Because of its obvious artifice the style can be colourably imitated by any poetaster. The same is true of Pope's colloquial style. But anyone who imagines because the outward signs of these artful signs are obvious and imitable, that therefore a true imitation is easy, will be woefully mistaken. The great Miltonic language has been condemned, so much as it has been taken up by poetical bores and pedants. But in the hands of Milton, like the mysterious 'two-handed engine at the door', it struck once and struck no more. The language indeed sunk under him, is Addison's picturesque way of stating the truth.

It is not our purpose here to make a detailed study of the language of Paradise Lost. The late Professor Masson and Dr. Courthope in his chapter on Milton's Versification and Language in the History of English Poetry have adequately covered the ground. We must limit ourselves to some general remarks and illustrations. The best way is to take a few passages:

And first the passages instanced by Addison as mean - Book 2, 948 - 50 and Book V. 396.

So eagerly the fiend
O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense or rare,
with head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way.
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies,
and

A while discourse they hold;
No fear lest dinner cool;
It may be admitted that Milton does lapse into conversational asides - often in a single word.

"unsavoury food, perhaps"

To spiritual natures

And he will not shrink from the homeliest word, this poet

who /
who is supposed to be more responsible for poetic diction than any other single poet.

So

"For drink, the grape
She crushes"

or

"For dinner, savoury fruits."

But this frequent lapse into conversational phrases is the very heart of modern affectation. The poet will cool his chariot wheels in the cooler element of prose — for a moment. Often his words are linked up with somewhat childish artifice.

V. 232 To respite his day-labour with repast
Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
As may advise him of his happy state.

The modern reader brushes aside Addisonian cavils. We rejoice in the something which lies a trifle athwart the grain. We find the chain of monosyllables which make up the first passage quoted wholly artful — this momentary staying of the great language to dally among abrupt Anglo-Saxon monosyllables is grateful to the palate. We can only commiserate the neo-classic on his failure to mark that this is art, not rusticity, and as we said, it is the hallmark of modern workmanship. To resist the tyranny of the perpetual curve in art — if we may so express it — is the object of much that is typical of the modern mood.

Milton was all art and device. Take the passage

V. 409, —

"and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch,
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn.

This is the sort of half-baked passage the eighteenth century didactic poets loved to imitate. But they had not the taste to note that the creeping monosyllables of the third time /
time help to carry off the heavy bulk of the diction of the last two lines.

Indeed it is Milton's incessant trickery, his vast artifice which estranges some people. It was the artifice imitated by Keats which finally smothered his Hyperion. And this excess of artifice is seen in the minutest things — in the elaborate, but scarcely that deliberate system of alliteration for example. He has himself well described his art in the lines referring to the dance of the planets — (V. 622.)

"mazes intricate, Eccentric, interwoven, yet regular Then most, when most irregular they seem; And in their motions harmony divine So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear Listens delighted.

How elaborate his system of alliteration becomes may be seen from a famous passage quoted by Dr. Courthope.

And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide, By Knights of Logres or of Lyones Lancelot, or Pelleas or Pellenore

He does not of course measure the intervals between his repeated liquids, labials and dentals. Probably his art here was quite undeliberate.

The old formal and mechanical habit of alliteration so deeply embedded in English poetry, its earliest and most stubbornly rooted device, has at last been turned to high poetical uses by an application of the principle of aesthetics suggested in Milton's own words — "yet regular, Then when most irregular."

Milton devised new and spacious patterns for English verse, all designed on this principle of regularity within an appearance of almost wild irregularity. The neo-classic critics could only see the wildness, they could not see the unity / + See W. Evans' recently published Alliteration by Latin, in which he shows that there is a definite system of alliteration, and that there is a curious wildlight to apply, among all other (and uneven) letters of Milton's language. A poet who can realize the classical meadow.
unity behind.

Few readers nowadays object to such rusticity as may appear in the use of words like, supper, dinner, caterers, etc., even when the word is used in a mythological connection.

The sun, that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimental recompense
in humid exhalation, and at even
Sups with the ocean.

Surely the familiar word 'sup' saves this passage from mere verbosity. Any Elizabethan would have used it.

Mr. Gatty in his book on the literary remains of George Wyndham quotes a great many passages to display this excellent rusticity in Shakespeare. Like Mr. Wyndham he believes that the supreme study of Shakespeare is a study of his phrase. An instance of how Shakespeare can use the most trying words poetically is afforded by the word "shove", the word which as was noted, Milton used in Lycidas.

"And shove away the worthy hidden guest."

Other instances of the fine mingling of rusticity and classicism may be given. A passage like the following gives a clue to that didactic matter-of-factness which offends us in the eighteenth century Miltonists.

"Into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and eased the putting-off
These troublesome 'disguises' which we wear, etc.

"Yet for a dance they seem'd
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps
For joy of offer'd peace; but I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.

Shades of Leigh Hunt! But we have already suggested that the source of the prosaism and vulgarity of the nineteenth century Cockney school, might be looked for in our older poets, especially Spenser and Milton, as well as in Ben Jonson.
The word "perhaps" which Milton uses several times is a very difficult word even for our audacious moderns to use. At the beginning of a clause it is tolerable, not later. cf. X. 342-3 - "this had been perhaps thy capital seat."

So the prose "no doubt" could seemingly only be used by the comic muse.

Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt.

and the still more difficult "if possible."

"I may, if possible, thy pardon find." S. A. 771.

It was precisely for such conversational tags that Hunt's Story of Rimini has attained a bad eminence.

On the other hand we welcome colloquialisms like

"to the harp they sung Soft amorous ditties and in dance came on." X. 584.

Milton is fond of such verbs - putting off, came on, etc., and the modern taste justifies the habit. Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie in the Lecture already referred to enlarges on the excellent uses of such phrases as take in, take off, do under, and even the vulgar do in - "the head of figure in such phrases - is of the utmost value to poetry." A glance at the Shakespeare glossary will show how the great poet exploited them.

Or take the epithets domestic, usual, unusual, etc. -

So spake domestic Adam in his care And matrimonial love

We feel that these banal words are here used without loss of poetic dignity. They had not then by incessant use rubbed off all their 'potential.' And this is true of a great part of Milton's language. We must try to recollect the history of his words and their true 'potential' when Milton used /
used them, and before the journalists had wrought their wicked will on them.

Or take the family of words expressive of violence or excess, e.g. terrific, dreadful, tremendous, enormous, etc. a family which the discreet modern as a rule shuns.

VII. 497 — "with brazen eyes
And hairy main terrific
X. 848 — "with black air
Accompanied, with damp and dreadful gloom
or the sublime close of the epic.

XII. — With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Anybody knows that the poet was able to use these words greatly just because they had not been rubbed to pieces by much handling. Still it is interesting to note that some moderns aware that such fine words should not be lost to poetry, attempt to use them, not very successfully perhaps, cf. Keats "enormous bliss," and the truly ridiculous "untremendous."

These words have never any chance of lying fallow as prime poetical words must at times.

It was remarked that Davenant's Gondibert is remarkable for the modernity of its phrase, and for the prolific use of modern, but — to us — unpoeitic words — epithets like usual, unusual, mutual, politic, domestic, private, etc. — in short the language of political rather than poetic writing.

The same is true of Milton. Such words are mutual (our mutual help, And mutual love lv. 725-6); unanimous (This said unanimous lv. 736); domestic, human (that may lift Human imagination to such height vl. 292); commodiously (To pass commodiously this life x. 1082); complicated (thick-swarming now, with complicated monsters, head and tail x. 521-2): metropolis; plebeian (in show plebeian angel militant x. 442); ambiguous (ambiguous between sea and land, The riverhorse and scaly crocodile vl. 472); globose, (then formed the moon, globose vl. 356-7).

But /
But these few out of hundreds of similar words that the old-fashioned modern would hesitate to use, are seen to be, in their context, poetically used. We feel the faint surprise, that such a word should be there, but immediately we perceive its extreme felicity.

Again, just as Shakespeare in his tiresome effort in some plays to do all the business of drama in blank verse, runs to an elliptic sort of shorthand speech in his haste to get done with the detailed and essentially unpoetic matter, so Milton urged on by that didactic impulse which more than caprice is the eternal enemy of art, and which was in the next age to take almost complete possession of the poetic stage, gives us such stuff as:

Flowers, and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding; whence the soul
Reason receives; and reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive; discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours;
Differing but in degree, of kind the same. V.482-90

Which reminds us of the tiresome passages on the nature of Government in Troilus and Cressida.

There is a fair amount of such abstract stuff in Paradise Lost. Usually such passages are studied with clumsy latinisms. It is pointed out that such a passage as
liike that in book VII (320-3). "forth crept
The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit;
is the true model of the eighteenth century blank verse
didactics. But it is only a wisp of verse in a long
passage of singular beauty, breaking away immediately after
these lines into -

last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gowned
Their blossoms;

which no eighteenth century poet could have written. Pure
eighteenth /
eighteenth century also is the passage in the 25th Book.

Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author, rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and all that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmure, warbling tune his praise.

An apostrophe which became the model of a fine shade of 18th Century Eclogue.

The diction of neo-classic landscape poetry is thus seen to be borrowed from Milton.

Like Shakespeare also he delighted in excess and reiteration. This is the English quality. Most native artists revel in circumstances. They "paint the streaks of the tulip", and they keep up words endlessly. Words in themselves are a delight to eye and ear. Keats' advice to Shelley - "load every rift with ore" is true to the native genius.

Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced Standards and gonfalons, twixt van and rear Stream in the air, and for distinction serve Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees; Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love Recorded eminent.

and so on to the great speech of the Father

"Hear all ye Angels, progeny of light
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers
Hear my decree"

So again (X. 460) the Stygian throng listens to their chief
"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,"
but this is plainly a reflection of that love of glory we marked as a prime Renaissance quality.

It is useless to dismiss this as belonging to the childhood of art. It is primitive, no doubt, a sort of incantation /
Incantation in which spacious names are repeated impressively. It is in all early epic. But then are we not told by our aestheticians today that poetry, like all art, is a call back to the primitive? To hear Milton roll forth with religious awe and unctious the great names (v. 659.)

"He of the first, If not the first archangel, great in power, In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught, With envy against the Son of God, that day Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd Messiah, King uncinted, could not bear is somehow good for the soul after the meagre diet provided by our moderns.

The ritual of names has always impressed itself on the vulgar and the primitive. This royal procession of words and sanctioned names overwhelms the mind. Perhaps there is too much of it in Milton. It is curious that the iconoclast, who made Kings and ceremonial a mockery, should in his poetry have thus reconsecrated them. His mind had its sensational side, which ran to a pageantry in art which the republican in him sternly reprobated. The artist at odds with the politician or religious ascetic is a frequent and often amusing sight. It was well for Walt Whitman, a later iconoclast to repudiate ceremonial shams and feudal trumpery, because he did so in his art. Milton the most truly Renaissance of English poets had his art nourished on precisely those elements in the past which are at odds with the ultra-modern spirit and work his own puritanism. His supreme gift of imposing speech never deserts him. Virgil perhaps most closely resembles him here, but there is not the constant strain of nobility in the Latin poet. He is not however, a mere master of sound. He is not
not a Swinburne. If we glance at any considerable passage in *Paradise Lost*, we note the Dante-like sense of vision and the particularity on which great masters of vision insist. Seeing a thing intensely, they will draw your attention to seemingly trivial things. Swinburne lacked this gift. He did not minutely observe. At times he hardly saw at all, while his great contemporary, Tennyson saw too much.

Rudimentary as are the ideas required for the reading of *Paradise Lost*—apart from the mere academic learning necessary to understand the allusions and which may be put under the head of "jargon"—there is still a well defined body of matter, so well defined as to admit of the quaint prefatory summary at the beginning of each book.

Dryden in his preface to his version of the *Aeneid*, tells us that he vainly sought in Milton for what he terms "turns of speech," or "a certain dance of words," as it was called. Virgil is of course, a master of this device of ringing the changes on certain significant words, but not more so than Milton. Dryden—of course, does not refer to that serious punning which Addison censured in Milton, but to the return on certain words or phrases, as in

Happiness in his power left free to will
Left his own free will, his will though free
Yet mutable.

This example is of the tasteless order, and recalls the unhappy attempts of the Elizabethans when they copied the devices of the rhetoric books. Virgil is not of course, faultless—he can be grandioso and learnedly futile, but he does not err so grossly.

But the supreme happiness of—
"though fallen on evil days
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues"

takes us quite out of the range of the conceited "hunting of "words." Dryden's remark is characteristic. We know how /
how ambitious certain English poets have been of using this device artfully. Keats was enamoured of it, but he does not bring it off well in *Hyperion*. Arnold uses it excessively in *Sohrab and Rustum*, sometimes tolerably, but we are surprised that such a critic of restraint should lend that work with so many patent devices. In parts it is like a college exercise. But its merit as a poem enables it to stand a good deal of wooden artifice. Tennyson as usual is successful in his use of the device of repetition.

Much of Milton's magic consists in the apt imitation not only of sound, but of motion and of the emotions, a form of imitation which Johnson condemned in his essay on Cowley, and again in the Pope essay. Needless to say it is part of the art system of Virgil, whom Dryden in *Annus Mirabilis* declared to be his master. This device tends truly in certain "silver" poets to be something of a display piece to astound the reader with the poet's dexterity. In Tennyson it is very marked and indeed often very successful, but still with an air of display. Something of the same kind may also be said of Milton, but such superb examples of verbal imitation occur to the reader that criticism is silenced. Johnson's objections are of course, those of a mere literalist, though he argues with some cleverness as where he insists that Pope's display line—

"Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain.  
Flies o'er th' unbending corn and skims the main."

does not suggest swiftness, *th' unbending* suggesting rather laboured motion.

11.875. Then in the key-hole turns  
Th' intricate lock and every bolt and bar  
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease  
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound  
Th' infernal doors and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut  
Exceded her power. +
This is finely wrought. Even Johnson should have admired it without cavil, for it is an imitation of sound chiefly. But the whole passage devoted to Satan's journey upward from Hell is a superb example of what Johnson calls representation in poetry. The great passage beginning.

11.570. Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, On bold adventure to discover wide That dismal world, if any clime perhaps Might yield them easier habitation, bend Four ways their flying march, along the banks Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge Into the burning lake their baleful streams; -

is a proud summit of universal art, and its happiness lies not least in the subtle accommodation of sound to sense. Modern poetry of course spurns the duller theories of Johnson, who wished to rationalise poetry to the point where it becomes logic rather than poetry. The modern poet aims at such queer effects in this representative kind, that even Milton's glorious imitations of sound and motion seem obvious and laboured. So they are, but no modern can boast of having imposed more strange offices on words than has Milton. If poetic genius is to be seen most in the magic of words, what modern will have a place above him? "Squadrons and gross "bands" - the phrase conveys something of the effect of Albrecht Dürer's work, the sombre troops of sin and shame, as does that terrible closing line

XII - 642. "all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

Spenser did not discover, but he exploited the art of combining the Latin adjective (generally and dissyllable) with the native noun (generally and monosyllable). It was suggested that Shakespeare learned something from him here, and that Shakespeare might not have been so immediately facetious if Spenser had not so excellently coursed the language /
language for him before. But Milton carries the art of such combinations beyond Spenser. So far did he carry it, that some recognise in this device the peculiar germ of eighteenth century poetic diction, rather than any other.

Much has been said, sometimes by way of censure, of the dense syntax of Paradise Lost, and of its inveterate habit of inversion, and the stiffness resulting from its classical conciseness of phrase. Clearly the English tongue is unfavourable to the latter. As to the syntactical density, it should be noted that the denser passages occur in the earlier books, and that in general as the epic proceeds, and as we pass to Paradise Regained, we are aware of less laboured art. Milton seems to have been humbled by misfortune, public and private, and this may be reflected in his style. The progressive movement towards simplicity affects his language and syntax. The one becomes more English in word and idiom, even varying as we saw, towards meanness, and the other becomes far less periodic and structural. But the tendency towards classical continuity and abrupt ellipse remains to the end, and is even suggested in Samson Agonistes. One may detect an almost religious simplicity in the closing books; echoes of the grand simplicity of the Hebrew scripture appear more frequent. In the Xth Book there is more actual quotation from the Bible than anywhere else.

X 372. Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won what thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gain'd with odds what war hath lost, etc.

This simplicity, which we trace to Bible influence, is close to what Arnold meant by the Grand sublime and it of course, eschews the mere trickery of rhetoric with which the earlier / +

+ The converse is true of the later English in verse books of which are most licentious in phraseology and style, a certainlessness of style.
earlier books are strewn. We still have in these later books remnants of the grandiose diction, quite as frequent use of crabbed ellipse, and a fair amount still of classical idiom and of course, a quite arbitrary word-order. But the whole pitch is lower. This is not a sign of the flagging wing, It is a spiritual change. There is no drop in inspiration, only in the means of conveyance. The mood is definitely more sad: man's failure and Time's oblivion are written over the later books. Some of the speeches here might have come out of Samson Agonistes, so literal and direct, so un-rhetorical the effect, so unexceptionable the diction and syntax. But the poet loses nothing of his essential gift.

Take the passage in the great Xth Book, where Adam suggests the kindling of a fire to warm their limbs numbed by the first approach of cold.

X. 1069.  
Here in the last four lines is a brief return to the rustic language of the early poems, while in the first four we have the eighteenth century style confessed. 'Matter sere foment' is an extreme example of language which is not English.

While as we say, the word-order becomes somewhat more normal in the later books, harsh ellipse is even more observable and a curious staccato utterance becomes almost customary. If the reader will look at the beginning of the Xth Book, he will /
will see how the poet tends to reject the gorgeous harmonies of the earlier books. After the preliminary elocutionary flourish, the verse is broken up into short spasmodic phrases. Even the speeches show this quality. Full stops and semi-colons multiply and there is a general slowing down of effort, shown in the technique generally. The colours of rhetoric are fewer and less flaming, the utterance poorer every way what with the staccato rhythm, the meaner diction and looser syntax. This for a stretch of nearly 400 lines. Then comes the great vision of the world where Milton takes up Virgil's challenge and sounds for the last time as noble a piece of verse oratory as exists anywhere. This great passage rises to a splendid height in the description of the "fair atheists" in the tents of sin. In this long and brilliant passage, the diction is almost normal, far more normal than we would find in a modern poet. Here one finds only two phrases 'lustful appetite' and 'volant touch' which are not quite ordinary. And what a language Milton can wield when he does discard the grandiose! Here is the language of Comus only more matured. In this sombre, but magnificent picture of ruin, we faintly recognise the models of the religious poetry of his youth, Sylvester and Fletcher, but with a world difference, and with all the silly ornaments of diction and imagery laid aside. Note especially the passage describing the coming Flood —

Xl - 742 — "and now the thickened sky

Like a dark ceiling stood; etc. etc.

Thickens c.f. Macbeth "Light thickens and the crow
Makes wing to the rocky wood"

Ceiling is a 'conceited word much used by the Jacobean, especially Sylvester for the sky. It is like 'blanket of the dark' of MacBeth, to which Johnson objected. The Jacobean
Jacobeans would use the homeliest imagery for the heavens. There is just a touch of Sylvester in the ceiling. It is a comparison which Johnson would have regarded as degrading, though Shelley habitually inverts his imagery in like fashion and our modern euphuists carry the practice to eccentricity.

There is something of Arnold’s art in the conclusion to the great book XI. 840.

He look’d, and saw the ark hull on the flood, Which now abated; for the clouds were fled, Driven by a keen north-wind, that, blowing dry, wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed; And the clear sun on his wide watery glass Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew, As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole With soft foot towards the deep.

The close of Arnold’s *Sohrab and Rustum* is very like this, a halting circumstantial speech with a feeling of large expectancy over all, and an almost complete reticence on native modes of expression.

In *Paradise Regained* the process of the rejection of rhetoric completes itself. The limits of the tongue are carefully observed, the syntax is simple, and the verse paragraph has shrunk to normal dimensions, the complexion of the speech is very close to prose. It therefore contains whole batches of verse which the eighteenth century would call mean.

11. 28 Plain fishermen (no greater men them call) Close in a cottage low together got.

Occasionally the old wood revives, the old classic names roll forth with the old grace and splendour and all the powerful attributes of his genius are displayed. So the great /
great passage describing the fair ladies -

distant more
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn
And ladies of th' Hesperides.

Dr. Courthope took this passage with the ensuing lines as an
instance of Milton's incredible artistry. But for the
most part Paradise Regained dwells in the flats and Milton
seems deliberately to cast about for as low a level of speech
as poetry can suffer.

A carpenter thy father known himself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home
Lost in a desert here, and hunger-bit.

The arrangement here is of course extremely artful, and we note
with interest that the one device the poet never relinquished,
indeed the one device he came to rely on for the necessary
elevation above prose level, was the artful arrangement. Ten
son in his English Idylls, Enoch Arden especially, falls
back on this sole device too. It seems as if the poet
has said, I will use the lowest language, the least colourable
imagery, the most prosaic metrical movement, eschewing rhyme
and alliteration, but I must reserve the right to arrange
the parts of sentences artfully, which means, considering
the success of these poems, that for the true artist, this
device is enough. The rhythm often sinks into a lax sort
of prose -

But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter and enslave
Peaceful natives.

Like Shakespeare in a well-known sonnet Milton exclaims
against glossing rhetoric. He here turns against the Gods
of his youthful idolatry.

Remove their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek.

and proclaims the truer beauty of Sion's songs. This
passage /
passage may give the clue to Milton's new technique. Hebraism is conquering his bright Hellenism. But in Samson Agonistes - not without countenance from St. Paul however - the two principles are still at issue. The manner of this drama is classical, the subject and a good deal of the language and imagery are Biblical. The grand 'made' language of Paradise Lost is here utterly rejected. We have returned to the language of Comus often homely, often bitter. Occasionally we have a Shakespearean touch

> "into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softnen'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece.

This fine work reaches its climax in Delilah's speech

> "Yet hear me Samson etc." where rhetoric again fitfully asserts itself. But on the whole the drama is a subdued close to his work. He who started as an incomparable imitator in the idyllic and religious strains, then in the Paradise Lost achieves the 'top of eloquence' relaxes in old age into an almost quietist style. The lava stream of Paradise Lost we see cooling in the later books of that epic. Samson Agonistes has touches every now and then of the old devices, but with never a return to the fabricated language of Paradise Lost.

But down to the last the native quality of excess, the desperate love of words, continues.

> Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts
Exasperate, exulcerate and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage.

Paul himself thought it not unworthy of him to insert a verse of Euripides in 1 Cor. XV.33.
Also we see in the drama the gradual usurpation of prose ordonnance over poetic. Take Delilah's speech already referred to -

Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour To lessen or extenuate my offence, But that on the other side, if it be weigh'd By itself, with aggravations not surcharged, Or else with just allowance counterpoised, I may, if possible, thy pardon find The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.

Write this as prose and it proves to be mere argumentation not poetry. The prosaic phrases are in keeping. Milton no doubt imagines he was imitating the severe Greek classical drama, and so he was, but somehow the effect is not the same.

There is here also a good deal of repetitious playing on words - Milton seems never to have tired of this childishness. Enamoured to the last of the language and ceremonial of chivalry, his pulse beats with unwanted vigour in the drama when challenge rings out, and the talk is of -

thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon Vant-brass and greaves and gauntlet.

Patience ("more oft the exercise of saints") no doubt the blind old man exercised after the Restoration, but his memory harked back to daughty deeds of old. He was no "tame villatic fowl" -

O how comely it is, and how reviving To the spirits of just men long opprest When God into the hands of their deliverers Puts invincible might

It is impossible to read this great personal poem without emotion.

To sum up - all studies of Milton's language must be imperfect. We have not attempted to do more than glance at a few headings for treatment. We arrive at these conclusions -

1. That though his vocabulary is smaller than Shakespeare's,
it gives the effect of almost as great amplitude. His subjects hardly invited the tremendous range of language that Shakespeare's did.

2. Like all great artists he has for artistic ends a striking force of certain words.

3. These words, especially his epithets, are either grandiose and voluptuous, or strike with crude vigour.

4. He uses the underworld of words not indeed with Shakespearean ease and plenty, but with something approaching it, and on occasion with a certain solemn majesty.

5. His phraseological methods are Shakespearean in the love of excess and rounded contours, verging on the grandiose.

6. He is a capital instance of the use of a fabricated speech. The earlier books of *Paradise Lost* show this at its height. In the minor works there is little of it, and it dies down in the later.

7. As a Lord of Language, he stands second to Shakespeare alone. He affects both forms of the grand or sublime - the rhetorical grand and what we might call the Dantesque - so observable is the simple grand in that poet's work. In both he succeeds beyond any English writer, Shakespeare himself not excepted.
When one thinks in general of poetic diction, it is the eighteenth Century variety of which occurs to the mind. All discussions as to the nature of the language poets use, or ought to use, seem to focus themselves on the practice and theory of this age. But there is nothing really new in eighteenth Century poetic diction. Many a "splendid" passage of Latin poetry is full of it. The Roman genius being in the arts intensely imitative, and so inferior to the Greek, loved to amplify its muse by decoration which is often tawdry. Their diction in this mood was exactly what we mean by poetic diction, that is, it was a generalised language with a good deal of the tumid in it, and ran to stock forms of epithet. The greater Latin poets, of course, avoid being tawdry or too conventional, but even Virgil admits a fair amount of that invariable and generalised decorative language, and it must be remembered that the Latin tongue can carry a great deal more of this sort of language without swelling into rustian than the English can. A good example of how a great English poet renders the generalised strokes of a Latin writer is afforded by comparing Statius' description in the Thebaid of the 'infortune of Marte' with Chaucer's expansion of it. An example of the difficulty Chaucer experienced in trying to heighten the rude English to the dignity of Latin is given by his rendering of Statius' line -

Et vacui currus, protritaque curribus ora -

viz., The carter over-riden with his carte Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Statius' /
Statius' six lines (Thebaid VII - 48-53) run -

Caecumque nefas, Iraeque rubentes
Exsanquesque metus, occultisque ensibus actant
Insidiae, geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum
Innumeris strepit aula minis tristissima Virtus
Stat medio, laetusque Furor, vulituque oruento
Mars armata sedet.

This generalised picture is expanded by Chaucer into some seventeen lines, which are singularly interesting, as shewing the different method of the English genius with its insistence on detail. Adjectives and participles like laetus and rubentes are expanded into clauses. In his translation of the Vulgate, Wiclif did not as a rule do this, but Purvey in his revision of Wiclif followed Chaucer's way here - and it is the English way.

Chaucer's version runs -

Theisbaugh I first the darke imagininge
Of felonye, and al the compassing;
The cruel ire reed as any glede; -_ираeque
The pykepura, and eek the pale dredo; -_rubentеs
The smyler with the knyf under the oloke;
The shepne brenning with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;
The open werre with woundses al bi-bledde;
Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp manaca;
Al ful of chirking wap that sore place.
The sleere of himself yet saugh I ther
His herte-blood hath bathed al his beer;
The nayle y-driven in the shode a-night;
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping upright
Amidse of the temple sat meschaunce
With disconfort and sorry countenaunce
Yet saugh I woodnesse, laughing in his rage =

Armed complaint, etc.

Virgil's well-known description of Aetna has been held up as an example of very tumid stuff, not unlike what we might expect from a mildly excited neo-classic poet.

Right down from Chaucer's time we have this dictional element /
element present in our poetry, and in some proportion it will always be present in poetry, except among poets of Browning's or Walt Whitman's extremely individualistic stamp. And this is because the natural man when confronted with a scene or situation which awakens his dormant poetical emotions, as a matter of fact uses the artificial strain of language though he is ordinarily a little ashamed of it. Generalised and stock language is easier than particularised language, and if anyone takes the trouble to listen to the remarks of the ordinary tourist when brought face to face with some great place of nature's showwork, he will be in no doubt that in drawing so copiously on this strain of language, the eighteenth Century was, paradoxically, using the language which ordinary men as a matter of fact, do use when in a state of poetical excitement. Only the cultured artist can find the particular and adequate words for such occasions. The ordinary man, half-ashamed of himself, uses the time-battered speech-tokens which have always done service, and which in the mass we call poetic diction. In this respect Wordsworth's premises in his Lyricall Ballads Preface and Postscript are simply not true. His conclusions for good art, may or may not be true. But while this really primitive art-speech is present in our poetry from the earliest times even in the Ballad, it was at the Renaissance that the speech-molds began to be choked with it. There is a fair amount /
amount of it in Spenser, though to do him justice, he uses his rich language with something of the painter's skill with his colours - that is, he is at least a romantic poet, who felt the intoxication of words. It is however among the Jacobean religious and ethical poets of the school of Spenser, that we note the less pitiful appearance of the true eighteenth Century poetic language. The pastoralists and topographical poets also of that age - Drayton, Browne of Tavistock, etc., show the steady growth of this conventionalised type of diction. Then in certain passages in Milton, who was nourished on these poets as well as on the classics, we see it erected into a definite scheme of language.

We have already quoted such passages from Milton to show these remarkable appearances of "poetic diction." In many /
many cases it amounts to no more than the sort of swelling
stuff we get in a poet like Lucian or even in Virgil.
Again, it is the very language of the neo-classic didactic
poets, of Thomson, Cowper, Granger, etc. When he uses
a phrase like "matter sere foment", which to the ordinary
Englishman is a foreign language, or "grizzled hair
implicit" we feel that we have come on a new mode of
phraseology. It has to be remembered, however, that in
Milton's time, especially during his youth, English was
actually importing an enormous amount of classical expres-
sion, and it was not at all clear what expressions,
especially what abstract expressions, were likely to be
found permanently adaptable. In what sense, and on what
terms, words like implicit or simple were to be admitted
could only be settled later on. A large amount of
classical descriptive language, which we now find impossible
in Paradise Lost, would not appear so hopeless to Milton's
experimenting age. Those words which appear impossible
to us had as good a chance of final acceptance as others
which got into the language. Attrite, adust, impregri;
horific, myrrhine, patrific - the list given in Masson's
Essay on Milton's Versification seems to answer that
question of Coleridge's with which this book starts.
There is no means of knowing beforehand when a word is
assimilable. Marston's rejected words in the Poetaaster
had as good a chance as Milton's had, and many a fine
coinage we find in the latter which posterity has not
honoured by use. Words like gymnus, immedicable,
imparadised; nocent, nulled, remediless, propense, terrane,
vol/sant, etc., may certainly be used by any poet of to-day
but they are not in general use. There is no very good
reason/
reason why they should not be. Chance seems to determine a great deal in this as in most matters.

These words have no inherent bar against naturalisation. But poetic diction is no mere matter of classical language. In a sense the nature of the tongue whether classical or English is irrelevant—"finny drove" and "fleecy care" are English and yet very much poetical diction. In Milton's case and that of his 18th-Century disciples, we have tended to confuse mere eccentric use of Latin novelties with the peculiar nature of poetic diction, and for this reason. The essence of poetic diction is not, as some think, the novelty of a highflown language. It lies in the constant attempt at generalisation. This word occupies the very foremost place in 18th Century aesthetics. Whether we read Addison on Milton or Johnson on Pope, or Mason or Sir Joshua Reynolds on Art, or any of the other tedious essays on the beautiful in that aesthetising age, we find this principle of generalisation placed always in the first place, along with the classical virtue of lucidity. To subdue the phenomena of the world to system is the avowed object. Local peculiarities of dialect and costume are to be suppressed. The streaks of the tulip are to be ignored. The lovely face in the painting is to be nobody's face but composite loveliness. It does not much matter then whether the phrase is Latin or English so long as it has this general character and helps to disseminate the comfortable notion that we have all nature under lock and key. But it so happens that the Latin tongue is rich in phrase conveying this sense of generalised observation will, as a rule, give just what we seek in a subsidiary way in the classical epithet and generalized. Hence the union of classical epithet and observation will, as a rule, give just what
we want. Spenser and Milton had understood well how to combine the two-syllabled Latin word with the English monosyllable, and Shakespeare learned from Spenser. Sometimes the character of neo-classic poetic diction seems to be best expressed by saying that they never call a spade a spade and they prefer periphrasis to direct statement. As to the latter, we may note that the great Victorians, Tennyson and Swinburne, in their imitations of archaic speech seem also to prefer circumlocution. It is, in other words, no special mark of the neo-classics. But still they do shun the direct word because they like to refer even the simplest thing to its class, and that involves a generalisation. They seem to have thought that particular things are rather low, and only by throwing over them a veil of generality can this quality be exorcised. Parnell rather grotesquely talks of the gravestones as "all the solemn heaps of fate" which might be tolerable in Latin but not in a Teutonic tongue. So instead of saying (in The Hermit) "they passed the time in pleasant talk" he will say "And talk of various kind deceived the road".

Such language becomes ludicrous, and is properly used only in mockheroic. The result is that the works of those poets who constantly use it have the appearance of mockheroic. Granger's Sugarcane is perhaps better read as a mockheroic poem like Philip's Casket than as a serious work. Mrs Barbauld writing in 1810 (Introduction to Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination, page 4) half admires the ingenuity with which these didactic writers avoid using realistic language. "We are delighted to find with how much dexterity the artist of verse can avoid a technical term, how neatly he can turn an uncouth word and with how much grace embellish a scientific idea. Who does not admire the infinite art with which Dr Darwin has described the
the machine of Sir Richard Arkwright? Even the loathsomeness of disease and the dry maxims of medical knowledge have been decorated with the charms of poetry." Writers refer to Armstrong's "gelid cistern" (for a bath) as the supreme instance of poetic diction, and so perhaps indicate as the essence of that code of speech the grid of the adjective. But to our mind "solemn heaps of fate" and "finny drive" are more exemplary, because although the former, like the latter, evades the direct word, the latter is good English and gives that sense of generalization which we maintain to be the essence of 18th Century poetic diction, and not the tasteless Latinisms with which writers bestrewed their page.

A brief discoursus on the neo-classic theory of language may not be out of place here. The neo-classic experiment was short-lived and yet wholly worth while. Beginning in an attack on the uncouthness of the Elizabethans, those "unbuttoned fellows" of the dawn, it set itself up as a censor of language. About this time it became a stock question: When did our tongue come to its height? Some said it was at its best in the days of Hooker, but these were rather laughed at. Even Sir Walter Scott smiled at the notion that any age but that of Addison could be said to be the golden era of our literary tongue. Johnson praises Dryden as the father of modern literary speech, just as Pope claimed Homer as the father of poetic diction, and Dryden hands the bouquet to Waller, because Waller first got rid of the language of wit, and in its place put flowing yet concise and epigrammatic English, neither too low nor too high, in a word the language Horace would certainly have approved. It all grew out of the eccentric practice of the previous age. We to-day can see and worship the excess of power/
power with which the great metaphysicals wielded the tongue. We relish their figured quaintness, their use of pregnant epithet, their thrift and directness, and we rejoice even while we admit the violence of their imagery, because we ourselves are caught in a wave of what for a better term we might call neo-Catholic reaction. But the men of the Restoration were tired of symbolical vagueness and mystery—in a word, of Religion. They wanted to blaze a way through the forest of doubt by the aid of reason and to immerse themselves in Trade and Politics. For this end a defined and shadowless language was a prime necessity. A sign of the times is to be found in Hobbes' Letter to D'Avenant printed with the latter's Gondibert. Here is philosophy urging a new kind of language on letters. He naturally lays the chief stress on clearness. His aesthetic is to modern ideas sheer nonsense, an early symptom of the approaching degradation of the idea of poetry. He lays the emphasis on knowledge which all the moderns since Keats repudiate.

"That which giveth a poem the true and natural colour consisteth in two things which are, to know well, that is to have images of nature in the memory distinct and clear; and to know much. A sign of the first is perspicuity, property, and decency, which delight.

In their poetry they took care to put Reason low enough, but the fact of their reasoning out the tangled scheme of Being, raised it high. Even Blackmore's pious attack on all the sceptical 'isms' is, in parts of the Creation, a fine vindication of Reason, and in certain places where he expounds the philosophy of Descartes, he gives us plainer, more acid dialectic than we find even in Dryden or Pope.
delight all sorts of men either by instructing the ignorant, or soothing the learned in their knowledge. A sign of the latter is novelty of expression and pleaseth by excitation of the mind, for novelty causeth admiration and admiration curiosity, which is a delightful knowledge."

But this element of strangeness is not to consist of words of "magnific sound" or "terms to charm the weak and pose the wise" - no, that is the road to chaos. "To this palpable darkness, I may add the ambitious obscurity of expressing more than is perfectly conceived or perfect conception in fewer words than it requires; which expressions, though they have the honour to be called strong lines, are indeed no better than riddles and not only to the reader, but also (after a little time) to the writer himself dark and troublesome." Thus we approach the age of reason and lucidity. It is curious to note that the Romantic age started from the same desire for plainness. People still make a sort of mystification of what Wordsworth really meant by his writings on the true language of poetry. And there is no doubt that he desired to see a poetry like Crabbe's employing a direct and simple speech, - plain words used in their natural order, and with little more than their dictionary meaning. But this was what the Restoration crusaders plead for too. We know that just as neo-classic poetry starting from a theory of /A and we will not emerge from it - theoretically at least - till Joseph Warton blows that blast in the Preface to his book of Odes in 1746. Warton deplores the starvation diet the Imagination has been put on in the last age. The passage is quoted in Dr. Courthope's History of English Poetry, Vol.V. p. 378.
of plainness, developed into the most artificial of modes, so romantic poetry from the same reaction towards bareness and simplicity developed into the most formidable and splendid experimentation in language the world has seen. The Restoration writers make much of the language question. Not Wordsworth's age, not our own age, has been more interested in the problem of language than the Restoration was. It was not merely Dryden. Cowley was before him. He was one of those intriguing persons who wanted to see the language question sifted and settled for all time. In a letter to Wycherley 1665, he ascribes the disorders in the tongue to "victories, plantations, frontiers, staple of commerce, pedantry of schools, affectation of travellers, translations, fancy and style of Court, vernility and mincing of citizens, pulpits, political remonstrances, theatres, shops," etc. He does not mention the Press. Perhaps "political remonstrances" covers that. Roger L'Estrange was then pouring forth his rasping governmental sheets. No other news sheet was allowed to appear, but an underworld of surreptitious "political remonstrances" existed, chiefly presided over by dissenters and old republicans. There is no doubt these widespread activities helped to change the face of the literary tongue, not only by themselves but by forcing the scholars and preachers on the established side to leave their studies and address the mob, in understandable English. These "remonstrances" were generally the work of obscure and unlearned men - tradesmen often. Only occasionally did a Marvell, or a Halifax, an Eachard, or a Shaftesbury descend to the world of the secret press. Let the reader peruse a few of these news-sheets and "remonstrances" /
"remonstrances", and if he is a connoisseur in the good homely English of which The Pilgrim's Progress is the most illustrious example, he will admit that a new world is opening up for the literary vehicle - a new and vital moment of contact is established between the literary language and that of the streets.

We rejoice in all that confusion which distressed Cowley. But in truth the moment had come to lower the sluices against the flood of incoming words and phrases. The Pleiade nearly a century before had called for the raising of the sluices, for the enlargement of vocabulary from all sources, trade, professions, old words, classical coinages, etc. That process had gone far enough, and Cowley's remedies for the resulting disorder are an authoritative grammar, spelling reform, and a lexicon for

(1) All pure English words;
(2) Derivatives;
(3) Symbolisms;
(4) Moxon's collection of technical words;
(5) A full catalogue of exotics "ut civitate dementium", "since without restraining this "verborum licentiam" it will in time quite disguise the language".

As for technical terms introduced by physicians and philosophers, euphony is the test for citizenship, and Oxford words - as in Cleveland's poems - are to be avoided.

Cowley's most interesting suggestion is the making of a Florilegium or collection for poets' use of the most quaint and courtly expressions - a new and improved Gradus ad Parnassum. Further "since there is a manifest rotatio and circling of words which go in and out like the mode of fashion - books would be consulted for the reduction of some of the old laid-aside words and expressions had formerly in deliciis, for our language is in some places sterile and barren by reason of this depopulation. For example, we have no words to express the French clinquant, naïveté, ennui, bizarre, concert, chicaneries, emotion, defer, effort, débouché, etc.

"Let us therefore make as many of these do homage as are like to prove good citizens."

Bishop Sprat of Rochester in a well-known passage (introductory to his History/
History of the Royal Society) gives a sketching view of the old language till it began to raise itself about the time of Henry VIII—presumably after Seyt and Surrey helped to discipline it. Then the barbarous sects, like the Blatant Beast of the Faerie Queen, broke in. "In the wars themselves (which is a time wherein all languages use, if ever, to increase by extraordinary degrees), the language was inundated by fantastical terms and outlandish phrases which several writers and translators in the great hurry brought in and made free as they pleased."

The Bishop admits however that the tongue was enlarged by many sound and necessary forms and idioms which it before wanted. The reader will note that he repeats Cowley's observation. Evidently these ideas were common property among the wits of the Royal Society, who had in view the founding of an Academy on the French model. "With such an institution," says Sprat, English would quickly arrive at as much versimilitude as it is capable to receive and at the greatest smoothness which its derivation from the rough human will allow it."

All Sprat's influence is thrown on the side of plain speech. On other grounds this might well be. The Church has now to come down to the marketplace to defend itself against seditious preachments and "political re-monstrances" and readers of 17th Century polemics are aware how excellently the Church divines acquitted themselves in this task. In the next generation Swift takes the same view of the effect of sectarian strife on the language. Burnet, and later in the next age, "Tacitus" Gordon, blamed rather the levity of the Court. At that time (1660-70) "when cant grew diverting," the Court wits were enlisted on the side of ribald mockery of the sects. We to-day can understand this, for though we have no Court to blame, we are aware of a widespread degradation of the language of society as a result partly of war, partly of social unrest. Cant grows diverting. Our younger poets revel in the new abuse. The excellent South wrote to the same effect. He had been impressed by men's enslavement to words, to party cries in the Civil War period. This was a common thought in the Restoration age. Charles I lost his throne and head and the established state and Church toppled down through
through the skilful use by the other side of words and formulas. Therefore we must define and define to avoid this enslavement. And to this end plain and concise expressions will most help. Away with the cloudy and poetic rhetoric of the last age of preachers, of Jeremy Taylor and the rest with his "This have I seen - or." St. Paul is quoted by the good Bishop in support of plainness, and in short to meet the dissenters on their own ground, we must eschew imaginative and literary writing. Prose in Taylor's and Browne's time had come very near to poetry. Taylor has been called the prose Shakespeare. Now we want nothing so much as that preachers will forsake poetry and become grave men, bearing a solemn message.

Cowley and Sprat wrote before the deluge of cant translation had fully set in, - a deluge which really threatened to sweep away the landmarks of civilised speech. Such is the language of Dryden's Plutarch (he had probably no hand in it, merely lent it his name), which Mr George Wyndham, however, preferred to a modern scholarly version. L'Estrange's, Echard's and Ogilvy's translations are of incredible vulgarity. Only, L'Estrange's 

To complete our evidence from the Bishop's bench, Atterbury's oft-quoted preface to his edition of Waller (1690) carried us further down the stream. Waller says, Atterbury was "the first that showed us our tongue and numbers and beauty in it. . . . The tongue came into his hands like a rough diamond; he polished it first, and to that degree that all artists since him have admired the workmanship without pretending to mend it. . . . He undoubtedly stands first in the list of refiners. . . . Before his time men rime indeed, and that was all; as for the harmony of measure and that dance of words which good ears are so much pleased with, they knew nothing of it. Their poetry was then made up almost entirely of monosyllables which, when they come together in any clusters, are certainly the most harsh untimable things in the world. If any man doubt this, let him read ten lines of Donne." Mr Waller removed all these faults and brought in more polysyllables."
As a matter of fact the modern reader is sometimes at a loss to understand Waller's excessive fame. A poem like his \textit{Panegyric} to my Lord Protector 1654, does not seem to us such an advance in purity and directness of expression as Dryden and the rest seem to indicate. It reminds us at every tryn of the latter's own poem to the Lord Protector. It has the same tendency to hyperbole and the same indulgency in the jejune, unpoetical language of statecraft and politics, and the same slatternly familiarity. It equally rejects the language of the imagination, and descends on a jerky sort of colloquial writing which rejects all harmony as we understand it.

\begin{quote}
\textit{The Sea's our own, and now all nations greet, With bending sails, each vessel of our fleet. For Power extends as far as winds can blow Or swelling sails upon the Globe may go.}
\end{quote}

Perhaps this is what these critics have in view when they praise this poet for his services to the English tongue. He led the way in the process of denuding and staling the poetic tongue. His later poem \textit{On St. James Park}, as lately \textit{improv'd} by His Majesty, however, overlaid though it is with mythological deities and graces, is far nearer the true neo-classic manner, and to Waller must be given the credit of establishing that manner. But here is the style and dictionary English poetry was to employ for at least two generations. The Park is described:

\begin{quote}
All with a border of rich fruit-trees crowned Whose loaded branches hide the lofty mound Such various ways the spacious alleys lead My doubtful muse knows not which path to tread.
\end{quote}

Dryden trod very closely on the steps of Waller. He seems to copy him at each stage of his development towards the true neo-classic. Hence his tributes.

\begin{quote}
\textit{The ladies angling in the Christal lake Feast on the waters with the prey they take.}
\end{quote}
Naturally they could not appreciate "rhyme's sturdy cripple," nor could we expect it of them. Here, the reader will note, is the emergence of a new theory of art, which we should be prepared to greet sympathetically now that the fury for romantic disorder has somewhat abated. The unprejudiced reader will admit that Waller has a fluency and sense of nice phrase unknown to 'T'avenant and Cowley. Of the latter Dr Johnson's verdict is much to the same effect."

"He seems not to have known that words being arbitrary must owe their power to association, and have the influence and that only which custom has given them. . . . the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy if they are conveyed in words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debase by vulgar mouths and contaminated by inelegant affectations."+

The great critic adds -

"The diction being the vehicle of thought first presents itself to the intellectual eye, and if the first appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often sought."

If we understand the Doctor aright, he means that, apart from atmosphere, the mere appearance of certain words and phrases is an instant bar to the pleasure which poetry should convey. But Johnson's sturdy Anglicanism refuses to countenance an Academy. In his Preface to his Juvenal, Dryden had supported this scheme.

"We have no English prosodia," he says, "not so much as a tolerable dictionary or a grammar, so that our language is in a manner barbarous; and what Government will encourage any one or more who are capable of refining it, I know not, but nothing under a public expense can go through with it."

Melancholy words to all who have supported Government or national endowment of Art or the Theatre! The English do not change. Note that this very Preface is not free of that slovenly slang idiom against which the proposed Academy was to declare war, and against which Dryden had inveighed in his denunciation of the elder poets. e.g. They (the previous translators) have gone too close, or I can make a shift to find a meaning, or I said only from

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Of course, this sort of thing is greatly admired to-day, so urgent is the reaction from leader-writers' English. Morris, more than any man, set the fashion of this admiration. His Virgil is full of scabrous and mean phrase, but how expressive such phrase can be!

It is curious to note how superior we are now to the attitude of the Wallers and ROChesters. We are so bemused by the siren-strains of our Victorian archaists and pre-Raphaelites that many of us cannot see the simple truth that for their day and hour these men were right. The debris of the great wit language had simply to be put out of sight. Its day was over and it was, despite modern devotees, always a questionable form of poetic art. In the poets of genius, its tricks were tolerable. In inferiors, detestable.

Any reader of D'Avenant's Gondicart for example - though this poet claimed to be a reformer and to put away the childish things of the wit school - will see how absolutely essential a new poetic technique was at that moment. Another will note with wonder how Milton, in the age of Waller and Dryden, soars quite above the noise of the little reformers of his age. But Milton, despite his classicism, is a late Elizabethan, using the tongue in full energy and disdaining to use only the polished part of it. And he is, except in his juvenile things, remarkably free of wit language and imagery. Further, he was above the desire for mere elegance. But for ordinary mortals, elegance was then necessary. A period of reconstruction had set in - reconstruction of Trade, politics, religion, science, in fact of every branch of national activity. In this hurly-burly Milton was quite out of place. Cleanness and method are the first principles of Reconstruction. For this and an unclouded use of language is essential. We must know the meaning of words and their quality. The dictionary must be a court of reference. We cannot afford any more Elizabethan cloudiness, shot through though it be with the ineffable rays of genius. The age of genius in that generous sense is over. We must come to terms with our art and acquire an aesthetic. Hence the groping about for analogies from painting and the plastic arts, which characterises the neo-classic age. Hence Dryden's translation of Du Fresnoy's Essay on Painting - hence numerous blank verse poems on Beauty, Landscape,
The Garden, etc., which rather weary us to-day. It may be a pity for the poet to divest his genius to discussing aesthetics, but in any age when the nature of the beautiful becomes the object of fashionable inquiry, it is difficult for one so sensitive as the poet is to current ideas to avoid the subject. To effect a superficial unification of the arts now appears to us a false way, and certainly to draw out confusing analogies to the portentous length of some of these 18th Century blank verse essays, is very wrongheaded.

The resemblance of words to colours has of course been a commonplace comparison as far back as the arts became self-conscious. Ut pictura poesia. The technical language of rhetoric everywhere suggests the analogy. - colours of rhetoric, flowers of poesy, Caxton's fair French terms and words enamelled. Such analogy could not escape the human mind in its dawning consciousness of beauty. Horace indeed in his Epistle to the Pines dissociates the arts of painting and of poetry, sharply ridiculing those poets who "paint the mead", much as Lessing later on disapproves the poets who, following the vogue of Thomson's Seasons, devoted themselves to landscape poetry. But the analogy of colours to words is so obvious to all that we are surprised at such an early repudiation as in La Fontaine.

Les mots et les couleurs ne sont choses pareilles
Ni les yeux ne sont les oreilles.
Lessing did little more in his Laocoon than develop the idea of this couplet, and affirm that to suggest not to describe is the office of the poet. It is curious that the school of nature poets actually justified themselves by quoting the opening words of Horace's Epistle ut pictura poesia, though that document contains the studied rebuke referred to.

Now the language of Waller and Dryden and of Pope outside Windsoer Forest has little to do with this false identification of the art methods of Poetry and Painting. The early and great neo-classics are not properly chargeable with excess in the direction of painting the mead with enamelled terms. The language of Waller is both smooth and manly, is utterly English, and does not make use of any conventional jargons though the mannered tendencies of 18th Century poetry are certainly present in his work. In other words Waller deserves/
serves the praise bestowed on him, or at least we can see why it was bestowed. Dryden is of course a careless workman; but the things he is known by are couched in vigorous English, which does not disdain even cant words, though the process of exclusion of those parts of the language which he censured in the Elizabethans is at work.

But it cannot be said - if regard be had to Dryden's mature work - that the aristocratic process has yet gone beyond the syllabus set forth for us in his own Defence of the Epilogue. Dryden's genius was too manly to desert the colloquial and set up the standard of Elegance. As between the language of Pelissier Laii and that of Antony and Cleopatra, there is of course a wide gulf. But it is not in the superior colloquial character of the latter.

The language is far less tropical, less emotional, its range vastly more contracted and more abstract, but it is not a higher level of language. Or does the reader of the great portraits in Absalom and Achitophel feel for a moment that the native idiom is neglected or that it suffers from a fastidious rejection of the lower elements of speech on the one hand, or a paucity of the more eloquent elements on the other? The reader knows that the two elements are admirably poised in this work, and as the glove fits the hand, so the language of this satire fits the subject. But the subject is limited and perhaps even unpoetical. Doubtless, if passion, as excluded, and only lip-curling sarcasms or vigorous discourse allowed, one great part of the poetic tongue will atrophy. And this is the true charge against Dryden's school. It is in his contracting the field of passion, not in his language, that he is to be censured. We say nothing of the fustian of his drama. He himself has indicated the sources of that spasmodic rhetoric in his youthful admiration for the Bury St Edmunds of Chapman and others.

So with Pope. The Windsor Forest, which he later seemed to repudiate, as compacted of the objectionable poetic language which has come to be regarded as typical 18th Century, although we saw it is really found in strains in every age, even in Paradise Lost. Only, in this age it is more incessantly poured forth. But of Pope's characteristic work, we are all agreed that such limitations in the full use of the poetic tongue as it displays /

\[ \text{\textit{as 'elegance' came to be understood in the 18th Century.}} \]
displays are due to the limitations imposed by the subject and treatment. With the exclusion of high passion, there is no occasion for the higher reaches of poetic language. And let us hope that no one will ever complain that the Epistle to Arbuthnot is not adequate to its task. If there is any fault, it is that the diction is too colloquial, too cunningly English.

As has been said, these early and true neo-classic writers do not go beyond the promise implied in Dryden's Defence of the Epilogue. This document ought to be familiar to every student. It was one of the occasions for speaking out. Piqued by the attention still being given in the Restoration age to the Elizabethan dramatists, Dryden had in the Epilogue to the Conquest of Granada rather meanly suggested that their success had been due to the fact that they spoke to a barbarous age, which ignored the solecisms of speech and gesture which cram their page. The Defence to the Epilogue justifies this charge. The writer was both right and wrong. Pope in his Epistle to Augustus puts the matter right.

But let them own, that greater faults than we
They had, and greater virtues, I'll agree.

The age Dryden wrote for would not tolerate a great many of the things he lived from the Elizabethans. The process of selection had proceeded too far for that. True, the taste of his age was in many things a degraded one as compared with the Elizabethan. But whilst wrong in the main point, his citations prove his immediate thesis.

Languages, like other organisms, have their periods of binding and unbinding of selection and gathering in, - the English language perhaps more than others, because of its composite nature. The Elizabethan was an age of immense acquisition. The spoils of three tongues, not to mention the discovery of various native jargons, had "stretched its leathern coat, almost to bursting". Dryden came in the meagre time when rejection was the obvious need of the hour. He did his work faithfully, but he did not rob the tongue of any great quantity of quick words or virile phrase. On the contrary, his "energy divine" bespeaks his fair dealing with the language. What he did attempt,

"But I am fail'd to polish or refine
And rather Redivius seem'd effectual than.

The same kind of thing, I say, shows us nothing but

"But I am fail'd to polish or refine
And rather Redivius seem'd effectual than.

This quotation has been made for the purpose of impressing the mind with the necessity of examples, as it appears to me,

"But I am fail'd to polish or refine
And rather Redivius seem'd effectual than.

The same kind of thing, I say, shows us nothing but
attempt and what his syllabus promised was to dismiss a great mass of frankly obscure and boorish phrase masquerading as English idiom; and to pay greater attention to the niceties of syntactic law and to the due and proper placing of prepositions and the small change of language with the disposing of which the Elizabethans found a good deal of trouble. He preserved the true English idiom. We must add that he retained a good deal of the too colloquial idiom against which in the case of the Elizabethans he had been railing. - And this increasingly as he became affected (no man was easier affected) by the rising tide of vulgarity outside with which L'Estrange's name is chiefly associated. His Virgil is as much impregnated with low phrasing and contains as much dilapidated phraseology as the Elizabethans he had been abusing.

Having touched on Dryden's early and middle manner, it may be permitted us to refer to what we may call the last phase. The so-called Fables 1697 are an astonishing cast-back towards the romantic manner. Nothing is more pleasing in Dryden's character than this power of returning on himself which he here displays for the last time. Without going the length of some critics who would have it that The Fables influenced Keats in his full romantic manner, we may admit that the poet has here undone what he had so laboriously built up in his mature years. He has loosened the heroic couplet, not indeed as much as Keats did later in Lamia, but still so considerably as to make us forget the neo-classic couplet for whole blocks /
blocks of lines, and he is, as his romantic theme demands, descriptive rather than epigrammatic and logical. His diction is in places decidedly romantic. Here for example is a passage from Sigismonde and Guiscardo:

Near the proud palace of Salerno stood
A mount of rough ascent, and thick with wood

The passage made by many a winding way
Reached even the room in which the tyrant lay,
Fit for his purpose; on a lower floor
He lodged, whose issue was an iron door,
From whence by stairs descending to the ground,
In the blind grot a safe retreat he found.
Its outlet ended in a brake o'er grown
With brambles, choked by time, and now unknown.
A rift there was, which from the mountains height
Conveyed a glimmering and malignant light.

It will be conceded that here we have something nearly approaching the romantic manner—the utterance broken by deep and irregularly placed pauses, the marked enjambement, and above all, the coloured diction. It matters not that malignant light is a reminiscence of Virgil's sub luce maligna (Aeneid VI, 270). The whole effect is not in doubt. If we had evidence that Keats ever read The Fables, we would readily admit the influence of such verse on his style. The Fables had little effect on the style of their day. The style was not forgotten however. Swift's Baucis and Philemon has something of it and Parnell's Hermit, not to speak of Pope's Eloise to Abelard. Ovid's continued popularity kept this imaginative kind of composition alive, but not much more than alive. The Neo-classic virus had gone too far for that. Only after it has somewhat spent itself in the next generation will there be a chance for romantic art. But if they had not come just too soon, the /
the Fables might have turned English poetry towards a more
traditional form of romance than Gray or Collins had any
notion of.

It may seem strange that a school which placed so
much emphasis on clearness should have provided not perhaps
so many examples of obscurity as the despised Metaphysicals,
but a fair number too. Dryden's couplet

The dead shall live, the living die
And music shall untune the sky

can be cited along with numerous passages from Pope,
Parnell, Gray and Johnson to prove that there are various
ways of becoming obscure. But it is in his early
poetry, when he is in the transition between two arts,
that of the metaphysicals and that of the neo-classics,
that this quality best shows itself.

There are no better instances of what Hobbes had
in mind those "strong lines which are indeed no better
than riddles" than are found in these early works of
Dryden. The obscurity in Astraea Redux is heightened
by the ambition of classical concinnity as, for example,
is many a passage in In Memoriam.

The Heroical Stanzas and Astraea Redux are
instructive examples of enigma.

Ode to St. Cecilia's Day

E.G.: And Piso to adopted empire brought - a species
of violent Hyppallage, of which Dryden was fond.
or "And now Time's whiter series is begun"

Cf. Tennyson, In Memoriam - a whiter sun (good
fortune)

For examples of classical use of words in A.M. see p.
When such heroic virtue Heaven sets out
The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;
Because it drains them, when it comes about
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

which is exquisitely metaphysical in the bad sense.

crabbed

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade.

The lines on General Monk display all the metaphysical delight in anatomy
and are crudely obscure in expression.

Even of Dryden's truly neo-classic work, Johnson is right in saying—
be delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle." There was in Dryden something of the ambitious groping after the sublime—only he hardly ever touched it.

But the Annus Mirabilis is a challenge to the critics who complained of the grovelling language of the Verses to the Duchess of York on her husband's victory— as well they might. There is hardly an English poem, of any note, which shows more dense obscurity or grosser conceit and hyperbole than does Annus Mirabilis. It is a proverb for conceited affectation and harsh ellipses. The classic instances of absurdity in this poem are those describing the destruction of the Dutch ship laden with spice ("and some by aromatick winters die") and the passage on the putting out of the Fire by rain. (Ver. 281)

Dryden is still in the bond of iniquity, therefore, as late as 1657. His conversion to the correct style and clear phrasing is the more surprising.

His candour of repentance is Dryden's great charm. Having overthrown the elitism and "Darlings of my Youth" (a late youth be it observed) he veered round to the opposite side. In the Dedication to Theocritus, he says

"Ma (Virgil) is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit and gross hyperboles."

He tells us that the line

"Then,
"When Lao-tzu died, I was already slain"

25

T too bold, Ovid might have used it, not Virgil. And yet in Annus

Miscilia he claimed Virgil as his master and brought the language "as near

to Virgil) as the idiom of the two languages would admit of". To do so,

however, meant intolerable violence to the English tongue. Milton could

carry it off, not Dryden. Tennyson might have learned from Dryden's failure

here. However, we may note that it was long held a desirable practice to

align classical constructions with native. In his essay on Milton, Addison

tells foul of the colloquialisms of the Paradise Lost, but he seems to think

that this blemish was mitigated by the very frequent classicisms of which he

gives examples. And, as we shall see, Tennyson used the same device to gain

elevation for the pedestrian style of his Idylls.

The ambition of being not witty but concise, led the neo-classics into

any a cryptic passage - Hobbes' "perfect conception in fewer words than it

requires". The neo-classic idea of the couplet was to make it contain a

complete thought - not of course that there should be no connection in idea

between the foregoing and the following couplet, but that there should be

a wandering on from couplet to couplet. This was long held to be the true

theory of the couplet. The Blackwood reviewer of Endymion made it the basis

of his attack on that work that the meaning did meander from couplet to

couplet. Now, right or wrong, this theory often leads to an enigmatic

style. The thought must be crushed into two lines. Hence such frequent

couplets as we find in, for example, Parnell's rather pleasing Hermit

Yet still the kindness, from a thirst of praise

Prov'd the vain flourish of expensive ease.

or Bread of the coarsest sort, with eager wine

Each hardly granted, served them both to dine.

Their love of inversion caused much obscurity. So Gray's Elegy

Their lot forsook; nor circumscribed alone

Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined.

not too obscure, but neither does it run clear.

"Hear the shrine of luxury and pride

With incense kindled at the muse's flame"

do not perhaps justify Goldsmith's charge of obscurity. In Gray's case
The main cause of obscurity is a kind of cloudy allusiveness which is often annoying. Doubtless much of it is external obscurity due to defect on the part of the reader's learning. It is none the less irritating, because it raises the question: What degree of learning may you assume on the part of your reader?

But Dryden, Parnell, Gray and Johnson, are chargeable with much of obscurity arising from pomposity and defect in expression.

A passage from The Vanity of Human Wishes, for example, quoted by Dr Court-

Less envy seize thee? Crush the upbraiding joy
Increase his riches and his peace destroy.

This power has praise that virtue scarce can warm
Till fame supplies the universal charm.

Not just more thinking out than the reader can afford.

Reasoning in verse perhaps necessitates the locking of a separate thought in each couplet, but the desire to say things in concise form, and the habit of inversion inevitably lead to obscurity. Numerous examples might be given from Pope's didactic verse - not his satiric where slipshod grammar and too violent ellipse often lead to the quagmire.

But in known images of life, I guess
The labour greater as the indulgence less.

Nor suffers Horace more in wrong translations
By wits, than critics in as wrong quotations.

So go further and say that any random couplet from the Moral Essays will as likely as not be at least difficult.

E.g. To written wisdom, as another's less;
Maxims are drawn from notions, those from guess.

These Essays oscillate curiously between the utterly clear and the enigmatic. The philosophical poet is in constant danger of the obscurity arising from the ambiguous use of terms like "wit", "nature", "good", etc. Ordinary philosophy

+ Even Gustavus, (as something an obvious law, he,) well knew: [Travels] [No. 11. The moral of the story.

"Glas" bright loud of mark a social care
Fueled with charity, when all the world can please

One who, with blessing, from his kind, his own, his kind.

"Collective man" is a

...
his kind of poetry also suffers from the use of an abstract language - words like degree, relation, organ, rational, universal, system, cause, nature, physical, moral, etc. But it is only fair to Pope to say that he often avoids this language, and in proving that whatever is, is right, in exploring the theory of the Ruling Passion, he often breaks away into passages of nervous and concrete English. In the Moral Essays he contrives by a wealth of homely illustration to keep the poem from sinking into mere abstraction. On the whole we must admire the way in which he does this. The Moral Essays deserve their fame.

The 18th Century aesthetic was, as we think, inadequate, if not quite false. It regarded art solely from the point of view of ornament. This view conditioned its conception of language. Words are ornaments, and the greater number of the larger handsome sort you can accommodate in your line the better. There is a passage in Dryden's Preface to his Virgil which illustrates this. He apologises for his poor efforts to reproduce the splendour of the Virgilian line. The Latin poet had a longer and more varied line and so could use at least two of the decorative words in which the classical tongues are so rich. The English translator found it hard, apart from the sterile monosyllabic character of English, to get in one. There is, of course, some truth in his complaint. After all, there is a magnificence in poetry of a certain type, and blocks of marble, not rubble, are required for it. Morris ignored this in his Virgil, with pathetic results. Matthew Arnold very soundly states the position here in his Essay on Translating Homer. Newman's Homer was not indeed written in the terrible (but vastly interesting) language which Morris fabricated, but it was after the quaint style of Chapman's English. Arnold rightly insists that an embellished and courtly work like the Aeneid cannot be properly rendered in a language of fanatic uncouthness. Forever that may be, the complaint generally urged against Pope's Homer is that it is too full of a false splendour of phrase. This is the translation which is supposed to have finally stamped the character of English poetic fiction for nearly a century. It was said that here is the mint and treasury of that mass of conventional expression which glitters monotonously in

\[\text{Johnson commented:} \text{"A} \text{His Virgil is abstract and striking. A} \text{Places Pope les forces to give it last polish."} \]
typical 18th Century verse. The false splendid style existed before Pope, but he exercised it so variously in this work that succeeding poets had only to dig in his pages.

The reader should carefully read Pope's Preface to his Homer. It is an authoritative exposition of the neo-classic aesthetic by one who had some right to declare it. It is too long to quote here, but the central idea is that referred to above, that poetry is a matter of ornament, that words are to be treated as a chief means to embellishment, and that epithets above all are the mainstay of the epic poet. Now epic poetry, despite Arnold's cry of Action, Action, is largely descriptive poetry, and so by the accident of Pope's translating the Iliad, we are led to lay an altogether exaggerated stress on epithet. Imitators marked the place given to epithet in Pope's work and very shortly the poetry of the age ran all to epithet. This tendency was reinforced by the appearance of Thomson's Seasons and by the un-felt enthusiasm for Milton's epic, and by the didactic tendency of the age. Didactic and descriptive poetry (and as we say epic runs naturally to description) rest largely on the adjective. The dictionary was ransacked for the appropriate adjective, and if its dress was Latin, so much the better.

One of the conclusions come to by Lessing in his Laokoon is that in description the poet should limit himself to one epithet, just as on the other hand the painter or sculptor should suggest the moment before and the moment after the situation he selects for his scene or pose. Why? Because the poet's medium is time, the sequence of word following word, the painter's is space. But just as the good painter will suggest motion or action, so the good poet may not stay to describe, but may give a flying glance at his object and this will be conveyed in one epithet. This will convey a broad touch of description, the essential nature or general appearance of the object. Needless to say this writes down Lessing as a neo-classic, though an enlightened one. He will have nothing to do with the romantic artist's ocean and delaying survey of particulars - one general epithet must do the work. To give more than a single epithet would be to imitate the plastic arts, and so ruin the conception. It is a pretty theory, and there is no doubt/
doubt the vast amount of descriptive and didactic work in this century -
how small comparatively is the satiric and vers de société element lent
itself to the abuse of epithet. The romantics naturally went further still.
Pope also in the Preface referred to, is bitten by the poet-painter analogy.
He asks where are we to draw the line in the matter of particularity, so as
not to descend to the vulgar detail or to trifling. "In this matter
painting is to be consulted."

Pope’s Iliad is then the "forge and working-house" of poetic diction.
From the vast debris of Milton’s epic, poets carted away great masses of
"magnic sound". The main difference between Milton’s and Pope’s use of
epithet - as of language generally - is that in the case of the former the
words are often new-minted and they are architecturally disposed. The
Popeian epithet is often gaudy, but it is as a rule normal English and it
occurs - in the Iliad - with monotonous regularity. It is generally
dissyllabic and very often is placed before a monosyllable. Further the
combination balances a corresponding pair in the same line. The effect
is wooden. Nor are there any of the devices of placing which lend variety
and irregularity to Milton’s work, and which Thomson copied in his Seasons
and Gray in his odes.

Gray’s Elegy is sometimes cited as a good example of this excessive
use of epithet and - more important - of the monotonous, balanced, placing
of it. Goldsmith forgetful of his own Edwin and Angelina, censured Gray
for this fault. The first line of his own Traveller consists of epithets -
Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.

It has often been pointed out that several verses of the Elegy can be made
dissyllabic by simply cutting out a dissyllabic adjective in each line, as -
The call of incense breathing morn
The swallow twittering from the shed
The cock’s shrill clarion, or the morn
No more shall rouse them from their bed.

e.g. "a train, of Clement children dear"
"loose numbers wildly sweet"

"e.g. "a train, of Clement children dear""
"loose numbers wildly sweet"
Can it be contended, one asks, that a form of art which we can thus mechanically withdraw certain elements without fatal detriment to the prosodic whole is a good art? From the other side, if we insert an epithet into each line of an octosyllabic verse, shall we produce a really worthy decasyllabic verse? A great part of Pope's Homer seems to be of this nature. You can withdraw an epithet regularly and so reduce blocks of verse to the octosyllabic base. The Homer indeed is a very uneven work. It is not difficult to distinguish the nervous hand of Pope from the flaccid work of his assistants. It is not true that the language is all of one grandiose cast. On the contrary—and Pope in his Preface has anticipated criticism from this side—there are whole blocks of monosyllabic English. In places there is little trace of obvious neo-classic 'turns.' In the earlier parts of the work, Pope displays the best part of the English tongue, and it is rare to find him /

**Not Pope but Garth of Dispensary fame deserves the credit or discredit of using epithets in the balanced manner described.** Professor Saintsbury says that in Garth we have the precise modish both as regards prosody and diction of the full-blown Augustan style. There are many parts of the Dispensary however of which this cannot be said and at least as regards the epithets.

**Cowper (Letter to L. Hesketh 15 Dec. 1785) attacks Pope's version "Homer is on occasions that call for such a style, the easiest and most familiar of all writers; a circumstance that seems to have escaped Pope entirely." Not altogether! On the other hand Goldsmith will not blame Pope for deviating in some instances from the simplicity of Homer — Essays XVI.**
making paltry coinages or making dubious shortcuts. He himself expressly draws our attention to
this. He seeks to appease those critics who will
cry out on the unambitious native character of the
diction. Epic he says, is different from lyric, and must
descent to the use of lowly phrase to distin-
guish the language of gods and of men. Homer does so.
Clear, plain, natural words, he pleads, are the greatest
beauty in those more domestic passages — in short,
Pope ought to have approved the 'mean' passages in
Milton, for he sets out to defend them in his own Homer.

Again, "continued swelling of language ... is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone
which the players have learned from it and which is
not speaking but vociferating."

Like Shakespeare in his sonnets, Pope inveighs
against "that painted and poetical diction" which the
dramatists perpetually use. He warns us not to
expect from him the same pomp of verse and diction as
is in the original.

Dionysius of Halifarnassus had long ago said
the same things of Homer — "The incidents themselves
are the simple and insignificant occurrences of every-
day life, but they are admirably described. ... The
words charm /
charm and bewitch the ear. . . . And yet they are the humblest and most
ordinary words imaginable, such as might be used by a farmer, or a fisherman,
or an artisan, or anybody else who is careless about elegant speech." [3]

Housman is trying to show that it is word-order rather than words themselves
which give aesthetic pleasure.

It is one thing to read Pope's Preface, another to read the translation.
Still it might be claimed that the strictures applied to his Homer do not
fairly apply to the earlier parts which most discover Pope's own workmanship.
In these earlier books epithet is not thrown about in lush fashion. The
vocabulary is wide and various, while in the later books and in the Odyssey
it is intolerably meagre and reiterated. The weariness of the hack is all
over it. The translator of Homeric epic is in great difficulty, because
he is for ever toiling up the same hill, - eternal conflict and personal
process, combats and ceremonial and games, - how is he to get fresh relays
of words to describe such things? As Dryden said of his Virgil, "I have
found it very painful to vary phrases when the same sense returns upon me.
Words are not so easily coined as money . . . Virgil called upon me in
every line for some new words."

Such a confession may betray the poverty of his aesthetic. It is the
aesthetic of his age. "Poetry requires ornament; and it is not to be had
from our old Teutonic monosyllables." Dryden's Virgil will not in many
respects bear comparison with Pope's Iliad. Pope was right in declaring
that Dryden was indebted to Chapman. The Aenid looks backwards and displays
any of the barbarities and meanesses of the prevailing type of Restoration
verse. How he came to pass such a performance under his name - he who so
early as Annus Mirabilis declared his enthusiastic discipleship to Virgil
would be a mystery, if we did not remember his notorious laxity and that he
did most things for belly's sake.

That Pope was ambitious of settling the forms of English poetic diction
as indicated by his Preface - such a remark as that Homer was "the father of
poetic/
postic diction, the first that taught the language of gods to men." He
might not say with Gray that the language of poetry is never the ordinary
language of men, but he would say that epic speech is the utterance of the
gods. Epithets, he tells us, are of vast service and "the right use of
these is often the only expedient to render the narrative poetical".
he remembers old Puttenham's warning against constant use of epithet.

In the Postscript to the Odyssey Pope excuses the Miltonisms he else-
where condemns in Philip's Cýder, one of the works which helped on the
Miltonic craze. Naturally Pope's common sense would condemn that desperate
heresy. His views on his art were too central, too near to nature we would
say, if we were not afraid of that word, to allow of such excess as the false
neo-classics were about to commit. His Odyssey, however, has a certain
amount of it. His excuse is that that work treats in a very plain way with
matter which is hardly poetical, and to heighten this matter, the poet has
recourse to the grandiose phraseology of Paradise Lost. - precisely the excuse
for the dreadfully Miltonised language of the 16th Century didactic poets.
Regretfully we have still a Johnson left to deal faithfully with that unhappy
craze.

We regard Pope as, on the whole, a faithful trustee of the faith of neo-
classicism, of true not sham neo-classicism; and that doctrine, so far as
it relates to language, may be summed up as being not averse to a dash of
the antique if clearness and the prevailing modern feeling are not endangered,
so anxious to observe all the modulated strains of language, to differentiate
styles of diction according to the occasion and the character of the speaker,
so as to recognise the grand or sublime with its flotilla of great and swelling
words as one great manner, but mercilessly to condemn undue swelling, and
so as to fall foul of poets who will not use a moderate and simple diction for
the simpler offices of life in poetry.

Pope's Art of Sinking again stresses the warning against tumid language.
It is strange that this age of Pope's, which to most people suggests every
degree of humility and false rhetoric, is in its really great practitioners
and critics, incessantly calling out against those very things. The con-
clusion has arisen through our failure to recognise that there is a true as
well.
well as a sham neo-classic, just as there is a true and a sham Gothic, and that the true neo-classic is as true a mode of artistic presentation, as reasonably and as deeply founded on nature, as the art of Claude and Boucher to which indeed it has obvious affinity. When the school-books cease to give at the neo-classics, the essentially nervous, colloquial natural styles of Pope, Prior, Swift and Goldsmith will be seen for what they are. It is the eighteenth century Miltonists, the Philips, Grangers and Dyers, who have done the mischief by being false to the neo-classic ideal, as is seen in the judgments of the great arbiter Johnson.

By common consent the most dexterous practitioners of the pert familiar style are Prior and Swift. The latter, though he can hardly claim to be a poet in the true sense, so resolutely did he eschew fancy after his early and frozen attempts at Pindarics, has a certain force of vulgar phrase, a nettete that not even Pope could match. His octosyllabic line forced such economy of word on him, especially as he almost invariably locks the sense up in the couplet. Happily we are able to compare him with Pope in that satire of Horace's in which they collaborated (With of Second Book). Needless to say Swift hardly gives us the spirit of the original. The crabbed line and excessively homely phrase give a pertness, which is far from the Latin poet's colloquial but also dignified manner.

I've often wish'd I had a clear
For life, six hundred pounds a year
A handsome house to lodge a Friend
A river at my garden's end,
A terrace-walk, and half a rood
Of land, set out to plant a wood
Well, now I have all this and more
I ask not to increase my store;
But /
But here a grievance seems to lie,
All this is mine, but till I die
I can't but think 'twould sound more clever,
To me and to my Heirs for ever
If I never got or lost a groat
By any trick or any fault.

Pope it must be admitted, very skilfully apes the Dean's manner in the part of the imitation which is his.

O charming noons! and nights divine!
Or when I sup, or when I dine
My friends above, my folks below
Chatting and laughing all a-row
The beans and bacon set before 'em
The grace-cup serv'd with all decorum
Each willing to be pleas'd and please
And even the very dogs at ease!
Here no man prates of idle things
How this or that Italian sings
A neighbours madness, or his spouses
Or what's in either of the houses.

But this is not Pope's native manner. He is more truly Horatian. The element of extravagance or ribaldry, which Prior and Swift derived from Butler, is not for him. But he can use the witty language of gentlemen at their ease as no one has ever used it since, and he equals Swift in that happy knack of inlaying conversational sallies with the narrative. In his use of this colloquial strain, he can be terrible. Sometimes his resentment - as in the famous attack on Lord Harvey in the Epistle to Arbuthnot -

Let Sporus tremble - / what? that thing of silk
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flay the bug with gilded wings
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings
screams at us, and so defeats its malignant purpose.
For Pope's rage nothing can serve but the strongest biting /
biting language and this the despised English monosyllables supply. But when the fit of rage is over and he ascends to the moralising strain, he will adopt the typical diction of the Augustans.

O friend! May each domestic bliss be thine! Be no unpleasing melancholy mine; 
Me, let the tender office long engage
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!

These beautiful lines are in striking contrast to the rest of the Arbuthnot satire, and as they are in the generalising eighteenth century manner, seem to prove that in the hands of a master even that manner and diction can be employed to noble ends.

It is astonishing to find the colloquial manner so ripe in Pope's earliest things. The Essay on Criticism is full of remembered phrase, and few sayings have a chance of becoming proverbial which are not couched in clear and telling words. The fault of the Essay apart from its defective design, lies in the ambiguity of certain technical words, and in obscurity arising from the cause indicated by Hobbes in his Letter Prefatory to Davenants Gondibert—the ambition of "perfect conception in fewer words than it requires". But the language is throughout the language of good conversation—"neat and customary". The Windsor Forest it is true, is dressed in the time-battered painted diction, which is in no way distinguishable from its use by the ordinary rhyming crew in all ages. Here are the invariable epithets in their unvarying places—as a rule the /
the epithet dissyllabic and the substantive a monosyllable.

With slaughtering guns (the unwearied) fowler roves
When frosts have whitened all the (naked) groves;
Where doves in flocks (the leafless) treesershade
And (lonely) woodcocks haunt the watery glade.

As the words bracketed show, we can reduce such verse to octosyllabics without injury to the prosody. But the manner was early abandoned by Pope and he returned to it only when fatigue and necessity drove him to it again in his version of Homer. Swift tells us in one of his pieces that he often wrote in verse because he found it easier to do so than in prose. We may feel the truth of this. It must have become fatally easy for him to string together in epistolary style the screeds of verse which fill up his ample volume. But we are bound to say he does not weary us, and that is probably because the manner of his verse interposes nothing between the reader and his ironic genius. In other words there are as low as possible of the transporting and disturbing qualities which almost invariably accompany verse. Conversation measured off into octosyllabic lengths and rhyming is an accurate enough description of it. He attempts the fuller decasyllabic line with reluctance, but he can carry into it the full colloquial style he is accustomed to as in the Verse he contributed to Steele's Tatler called the City Shower —

To shop in crowds the daggled females fly
Pretend /
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy. The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroach Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach The tuck'd up sempstress walks with hasty strides While streams run round her oil'd umbrella's sides.

Steele recommends these verses to his readers as introducing a new style, what he calls Local Poetry, of which he approves. We could not quarrel with any critic who decided that not Pope and not Swift but Prior was the pre-eminent artist in the familiar style. Johnson who could not appreciate this style has some slighting remarks on Prior's language. He is more perverse than usual in his strictures under this head. Believing as he did with Gray, that each true poet is indebted to his predecessors for the accumulated beauties of poetic diction, and that if the poet is happy he will add to the inherited store, he could only regard with aversion such poverty of traditional poetic diction as he found in Prior. Hence the judgment - "As he borrowed no elegance of language from his predecessors, none has he bequeathed."

He also tells us surprisingly that nothing comes happily and casually to Prior. "All is the result of labour."

We can only remark that Johnson is true to neo-classic canons even in such wrongheaded judgments. The modern judgment is expressed by Cowper who, despite his deprecatory phrase "Dear Mat. Prior's easy jingle" has contrived to say the right things of Prior and his language as he has of almost all the people he talks of in his Letters. Cowper asks if the doctor is not aware that the familiar way of writing is the most difficult of /

of all, and Cowper, a master of both kinds, had the right to an opinion on the matter. His judgment on Pope's Homer, at a time when an unbiased judgment of that work was difficult, is quite modern in its tone. "Pope never entered into the spirit of Homer" he says. The tinselled imagery is not Homer's, the gilded diction is not Homer's. But he gives Pope too little allowance for the taste of his day. He might have noted Pope's half apology for running counter to that taste in following Homer where Homer is natural and colloquial. That he often does so in the early books is true, although the modern reader is borne down by the accumulated mass of verbal ornament.

Cowper himself as is well known is a master of both kinds, the familiar and the affected. He affords as many terrible examples of the latter as any Augustan poet. His Professor of Error and Conversations are however bright examples of the colloquial ease and wit he admired in Prior. But we note that he has difficulty in avoiding the learned manner. Whereas Prior and Swift can run on gaily in pert monosyllabic verse, Cowper stops to moralise and this demands heavier ordnance. Hence none of his poems, save Gilpin, and the other purely humorous ones, can be cited as pure examples of the witty colloquial manner. In truth his enthusiasm for Prior and

Sheep are "fleecy tenants"; tea - "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates"; snow - "the fleecy shower"; pipe - "the short tube that fumes beneath his nose"; tobacco - "fragrant charge" and "pungent nose-refreshing weed"; smoke - "trailing cloud"; fowls - "feathered tribes domestic".

The Conversations oscillates between the two styles.

See Cowper's Letter to Lady Hesketh Dec. 15th 1785.
and his emphasis on the difficulty of writing in the familiar manner are evidence of his own difficulty of continuing in that style for any length of time. We need hardly say that his John Gilpin is one of the happiest efforts in the familiar vein. But Cowper is also a master of the middle kind of language, that sort of language of which Tennyson's Ulysses is an example, neither too traditional or learned, nor too familiar. Cowper's Yardley Oak is written in that grave central English which never grows antiquated and is always

(3) They, as a rule, frowned on the use of

compounds — hence partly Johnson's dislike of Gray and

Pope. In his biad he of course to admit those

in imitation of Horace, but sparingly.

(4) Archaism beyond a mere dash of the ancient

and dialect words. This kind of language offended their

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the true literary medium and none other. Hence, Cowper's

reference to Burke's words as "wishing through a dark

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(5) Technical and trade issues. Walpole's

Shikewear was later held up as a happy miracle because it

deserted the neo-classic canons here and did not the

very language of the age. But the basic spirit of this

work is still neo-classical. As Wordsworth said "The poet's

diction."

Johnson's attitude is well-known. Walpole recorded

his objection to the Schoolmistress — "though I dislike the

imitation of our old English pronunciation yet

on this point, perhaps, the antiquity of the mode

produces a very ludicrous effect in the modern

language."

Jena.
To sum up the things the genuine neo-classic is opposed to, they are:

1. Particularity in describing the object - involving a "low" language.

2. The swelling language of epic being used on trivial occasions - the crime of the didactic poets. As Johnson said of Granger's Sugar-Cane "What muse indeed could give a receipt for a comport of weeds, mould, dung, and stale, or a lively description of the symptoms and cure of the jaws and preserve his elegance or purity?"

3. They, as a rule, frowned on the use of compounds - hence partly Johnson's dislike of Gray and Collins. Pope in his Iliad had of course to admit these in imitation of Homer, but sparingly.

4. Archaism beyond a mere dash of the antique, and dialect words. This kind of language offended their main principle that the refined language of the day is the true literary medium and none other. Hence Cowper's reference to Burns' genius as "shining through a dark lantern."

5. Technical and trade terms. Falconer's Shipwreck was later held up as a happy miracle because it deserted the neo-classic canon here and did use the very language of the sea. But the basic speech of this work is gilt neo-classic. As Dowden said "The poet's diction /

Johnson's attitude is well-known. Goldsmith remarks on Shenstone's Schoolmistress - "though I dislike the imitations of our old English poets in general, yet on this minute subject, the antiquity of the style produces a very ludicrous solemnity." This lesson, however, Shenstone learned at a workhouse across the river in Deptford as a comic work, and hence the entirely mistaken notion of Johnson's trade in "old style."
diction is the artificial diction of eighteenth Century verse, handled with none of that exquisite art shewn by some cultured writers of the time. And into the midst of the commonplace poetic vocabulary bounces suddenly a rattling row of nautical terms suitable only for the marine dictionary. Phoebus and Olie must lend a hand to brail up the mizzen, or belay the topping-lift."

Byron, whose own shipwreck in Don Juan is full of sea terms, says of Falconer's work "These very terms by his application, make the strength and reality of his poem."

Pope, as we have seen subscribes to these tenets of the creed, perhaps not very understandingly. His views on philosophy, ethics and aesthetics were not strongly fixed. He was one of these people who can brilliantly advocate a case without entering into it deeply.

The question of using technical terms opens up a great vista of debate. After using the "dialect of the dockyard" in his Annus Mirabilis, Dryden turned round and in the Preface to the Aeneid he approved Virgil's avoidance of such language. Johnson gave the unexpected verdict, "It is a general rule in poetry that all appropriated terms of wit should be sunk in general expressions" (Life of Dryden.) Nothing is more amusing than the efforts of the eighteenth Century didactic poets to avoid the crude language of trade and the field. They do not always do so however. Philips in his Cyder does not often creditably avoid them; but Granger takes them in his weary stride. It is important to note that a great deal of
of the execrable phraseology of poetic diction is due to avoidance of these industrial and field terms. They would describe industrial operations with gusto, but not in industrial terms. As we have seen Mrs. Barbauld — and she speaks for the age — regarded this ingenious avoidance of the true term as the mark of the true poet. Armstrong will talk of gelid cistern for cold path; Cowper of "the tube that fumes beneath his nose" for pipe; Dyer of the "sharpened instrument" for shears. Thomson, however, does not mind saying "and what the sounding shears Addison of course, lays his gently censorious hand on Milton's use of technical terms — architectural terms like cornice, frieze, architrave. He might have added the favourite Jacobean "ceiling."

Byron ought to have opposed the habit, since for the moment he was sailing in the Pope galley. But he perhaps did not clearly understand the implications of his championship of Pope, and there the matter rests, for the modern doctrine is that no word can be barred out. Time and place alone determine the rightness of a word. The machine and the laboratory now govern us. Our poets in the last age had to determine anew the boundaries of the realms of gold. Was poetry to stand aside from the master interests of the age, which were scientific, and become a mere cloistered art mumbling over the flyblown phylacteries of the past. Kipling answered in things like Romance and McAndrew's Hymn, just as Turner had answered for painting in his powerful painting Steam, Rain and Speed, "Romance bought up the 9.15", is the sufficient answer. /
answer. Kipling is the master of those poets who boldly take over the language of machinery as in McAndrew's Hymn. Tennyson had quite admirably incorporated a good deal of scientific jargon into his work—really difficult geological words—amygdaloid and trachyte, plesiosaurous, etc. He is not perhaps so fortunate when, in the In Memoriam, he alludes to astronomical and other scientific facts. He tends then to be very obscure. This arises from his particularity and the resolve (in these places) not to use the technical language. Elsewhere he uses freely the jargon of "astronomy and geology, terrible muses". Wordsworth detested the geologist and botanist who "the substance classes by some barbarous name and hurries on". But Tennyson is not afraid of any scientific language. "Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names of shale, hornblende, rag and trap and tuff, amygdaloid and trachyte." The art of mingling homely and scientific names is of course, especially his. Thus he illustrated for his age "electric, chemic laws and all the rest." Nor perhaps he is so happy in introducing words like magnetic, semivital, aeonian, etc. But he has shown us that the thing can be done.

Thus time has dealt finally with one of the neo-classic tenets.

In our own day technical language has been boldly indulged in by many poets and seemingly without objection taken. In his cunning poem The Journey, Mr. Harold Monro does not indeed use difficult technical words. He uses just the words known to the ordinary man, piston, station, ticket, tunnel, curve, loop, rail, points, signal, and /
and as for the engine which is the hero of the piece, it is now the wild engine, now dear gentle monster, now great blue engine, etc. -

At that last moment the unwary mindForgetsthe solemn tick of station-time;That muddy lane the feet must climb-The bridge - the ticket - signal down -Train just emerging beyond the town;The great blue engine panting as it takesThe final curve, and grinding on its brakesUp to the platform-edge -- -- The trainGathers, and grips, and takes the rails againMoves to the shining open land, and soonBegins to tittle-tattle a tame tatoon

It is useless to dismiss this art as photographic - that epithet has lost too much of its censorious bite. The principle of selection is not at all lost sight of in such verse.

Mr. Masefield is as technical as poor Falconer, in his Dauber. He is everywhere fond of displaying technical knowledge of seamanship and sport. In Right Royal his inside knowledge of racing matters and terminology is as intimate as it is somehow entertaining. It affords him many a chance of shrewdest description in passages which challenge Shakespeare's noble pictures of animal life in his "first-fruits" and in the dramas. Technical also we may call the jargon of the stables and the race-course -

He was placed, bad third, in the Blowbury Cup And second at Ten with Kingston up He sulked at Folkestone, he funk at Speen He baulked at the ditch at Hampton Green Indeed Right Royal is an interesting and clever study in jargon, No language could descend lower without breaking into blasphemy. It is reminiscent of the various outbreaks /
outbreaks of "money-catching" dialect from Nashe to Borrow. It is undoubtedly successfully attempted. What Johnson would have thought of it we can judge from his distaste of "lowness", his dislike for "Harry Fielden" for display of that quality, and for the language of Shakespeare in Macbeth.

It remains for us now to say something of the curious linguistic art of Gray and Collins and of the quite different school of didactic poets. They are all heretics to neo-classic theory, but in different ways.
A note On Grays View of the Language proper to Poetry.

It is well-known that Gray categorically distinguished between the language of poetry and that of prose. The language of poetry is never the language of the age, was his verdict, "except among the French, whose verse, where the thought does not support it, differs in nothing from prose." He adds, "Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself, to which almost every one that has written has added something." That is as clear a statement as we could have on the subject.

But this does not interest us so much as does his dealing with the vexed question of language in general. He says in the same letter: "Our language not being a settled thing like the French), has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible." Examples of such words are given, all from Dryden, mostly from his FABLES, which we should remark; and the list is extremely interesting as showing how desiccated the poetical tongue had been, when such words as purple, sa-

Museful mopeings, trim of lov., beverage, ith knap,
and knarres deformed, boon, disarray, wayward,
furbished, foiled dodder doaks, disherited,
smouldering flames, ruthless of laws, crones,
"It was not for nothing" says Matthew Arnold "that Gray came just when the 'English ear'" to quote Johnson again "had been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers and the diction of poetry, had grown more splendid! Of the intellectualities, ingenuities, personifications, of the movement and diction of Dryden and Pope, Gray caught something, caught too much."

Unlight Clough who, in his essay on Restoration prose (Prose Remains) inclines to allow Johnson's claim for Dryden, Arnold has a very poor opinion of 'splendid diction.' It means to him false diction, and putting side by side Goldsmith's line

"No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale."

and Shakespeare's

"In cradle of the rude imperious surge,"

he asks us to look on this picture and on that.

So a quotation from Pindar effectually disposes of one from Dryden's poem on the death of Mrs. Anne Killigrew. The poetical language of our eighteenth century in general is the language of men composing without their eye on the object, as Wordsworth excellently said of Dryden; language merely recalling the object, as the common language of prose does, and then dressing it out with a certain smartness and brilliancy for the fancy and understanding, this is called 'splendid diction.' As Arnold! Comparing him with his contemporaries, Arnold allows Gray's claim to "extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous and musical" diction. Gray's view of his art is well worth studying for he was a thoroughly conscious artist. In the matter of

+ Goldsmith was enamored of this word, which he rendered phlegmatic. See his Estrangoir. "Gracious he was, and phlegmatic with admir'd ease," "The sound of soft phlegmatic is a song." Art of.Receive Heick
of language he was aware that Addison and Rowe and the modern dramatists fell far short of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans generally, in truth of language. West's praise of Racine, that he used 'the language of the times and act of the purest sort' met with the sharp avowal that the language of the age is never the language of poetry, which indeed is hardly a true neo-classic judgment, though Addison had said something to the same effect, — "A poet should take particular care to guard himself against idiomatic ways of speaking." Still we hope we have already shown that the true dogma is that expressed in the work of Pope and his school and the repeated judgments of Dr. Johnson, viz: — that, Ben Jonson's language, pure, neat and customary, is more to the true poet's liking.

Gray's words — the date is 1742 — are:

"The language of prose is never the language of poetry; except among the French whose verse, where the thought and image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost every one that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivations; nay, sometimes words of their own derivation. Shakespeare and Milton have been great creators this way; and no more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom everybody reckons a great master of our poetical tongue — full of museful mopings, unlike the trim of love, a pleasant beverage, a roundelay of love, stood silent in his mood, with knots and knarres deformed. But they are /
are infinite — and our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity has not rendered them unintelligible. In truth Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties —— "Every word in him is a picture." This is a manifesto of some importance. The phrases cited as novel are interesting for they show how much our own literary vocabulary has been exercised since Gray's day, when such expressions could be regarded as out of the way. It is noteworthy also that all these examples are taken from the Fables in which Dryden turned back towards the romantics. They are the sort of phrases Keats was to use later. Addison's observations on the subject, to be found in the Spectator No. 285, is even more uncompromising. "The judgment of a poet very much discovers itself in shunning the common roads of expression without falling into such ways of speech as may seem stiff and unnatural." As we have seen it was left to Pope to plead the cause of homely speech and this is the Postscript to that very work (the Odyssey) which is supposed to have stereotyped the false phraseology! We must conclude that the eighteenth century had not quite made up its mind on the subject.

It is curious to compare the passages cited from Shakespeare by Gray and Arnold respectively to prove the same point — Shakespeare's infinite superiority over eighteenth century writers. Gray quotes the rather conceited lines

"But I that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass"

and /
and defies his fellows to produce the like. Arnold, as we saw, cited from Shakespeare a really fine line. This proves once more the hopelessness of trying to reconcile the tastes of different ages.

The point to note is that Gray is enamoured of the tropical freedom and objectivity of Shakespeare's language, and quite aware that the poetry of his own day had become polite to the point of insipidity. Johnson, needless to say, took up West's position that the selected language of the age is the poet's speech. He paid no such generous tribute to Shakespeare's language as Gray does. He praises the language of his comedy indeed, because it is his cue to represent him as a comic artist who strayed into tragedy. He censures the diction employed in the tragedies. Mr. Courthope sums up the position — "They (Goldsmith and Johnson) hated anything in the shape of revivalism, because to them it savoured of affectation which they held, and justly, to be the deadliest of artistic sins. For the same reason they disapproved of the form of poetic diction adopted by Collins and Gray, holding with the Attic writers, Horace and Castiglione that the true basis of metrical composition was the colloquial idiom of living society refined by literary practice." This is true, but after all the outcry against poetic diction from Wordsworth and Arnold and the rest, is there not some truth in Hazlitt's remark (Spirit of the Age 1825.) — "A great outcry has prevailed for some time past against poetic diction and affected conceits, and to a certain degree we go along with it, but this must not prevent us from feeling the thrill of pleasure when we see beauty /
"beauty linked to beauty like kindred flame to flame or
from applauding the voluptuous fancy that raises and adorns
the fairy fabric of thought that nature has begun."

We must always be on our guard against the
ascetics and rationalists in the arts. Goldsmith deserves
more attention as a neo-classic critic. His ideas are very
much the same as Johnson's. He cannot bear the confused
welter of metaphor in many of Shakespeare's admired passages —
the Hamlet soliloquy for example, and he of course regards

"ay, there's the rub" as vulgar. It is quite
true the soliloquy will not bear analysis by the strict
grammarians. Like Dryden he could not overlook the excess
of metaphor in Shakespeare. Like Addison and like Gray, he
holds that poetry has a language of its own. He says "If
poetry exists independent of versification, it will naturally
be asked, how then is it to be distinguished?"

Undoubtedly by its own peculiar expression; it has a language
of its own which speaks so feelingly to the heart and so
pleasingly to the imagination, that its meaning cannot possibly
be misunderstood by any person of delicate sensations. It
is a species of painting with words." He sums up the allure-
ment of verse thus—"Tropes consist of a certain happy choice
and arrangement of words, by which ideas are artfully dis-
closed in a great variety of attitudes; of epithets, and
compound epithets; of sounds collected in order to echo the
sense conveyed; of apostrophes; and above all, the enchant-
ing use of the prosopopeia which is a kind of magic, by
which the poet gives life and motion to every inanimate part
of Nature." His list of "words and epithets wonderfully
suited to the sense they imply" shows that he is in the
darkest neo-classic night — cooing turtle, the sighing reed,
the warbling rivulet, the gliding stream, the whispering
breeze, the howling blast, etc.

What
What of Gray's own performance? Johnson cen-
sured him for the use of certain expressions like "gales —

redolent of joy and youth," "Idalia's velvet-green",
"buxom health" etc., and of course he detested the excessive
personification of Gray and Collins, which reappears in
lovely form in Keats' 'Ode to Autumn,' and other things,
and in Coleridge's early poetry, though Coleridge rather
pooh-poohed that poetry. Gray undoubtedly went near to
verbal extravagance and obscurity or as Johnson would say
'harsnness'.

"Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly
Thy joys no glittering female meets.

- Ode to Spring.

It is useless to expect quarter from Johnson
when such faults, the result of ambition, stand confessed.
Nor need we assume that Johnson is as usual the crabbed
literalist. We may demur to his remark that the first
stanza of the Progress of Poetry is meaningless. Romantic
poets since have taught us to be content with a modicum of
meaning. The reflection of much of Gray's verse is & may all a be
his or herestment had to the style, i.e. as it were, expressing a form of
Periphrastic and allegorical language overloads
Gray's work. The description of the boyish sports in
the Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College is a perfect
example of neo-classic art in the strictest sense.

"Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margin green
The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave,
With pliant arm, thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed,
To chase the rolling circle's speed
Or urge the flying ball?

The neo-classic poet condescending to boys and their
sports, a neo-classic poet who has declared that the
language of poetry is never the language of ordinary life,
is a curious spectacle! The proof that Gray’s theory of poetic language is much nearer to the common idea of poetry than Wordsworth’s, lies in the immense and continued popularity of such verse. As has already been said, the ordinary man when poetically inclined, will turn to Gray’s type of language, not Wordsworth’s, to mark the difference of his excited from his ordinary mood. It is only to people who habitually think poetry, that this difference of mood does not require to be strongly marked by a violent change or exaltation of language. This exaltation of diction is the ordinary man’s chief means of marking the difference of his ordinary from his poetic mood.

The passage quoted is to some a compendium of all the neo-classic vices. There is hardly a significant word which is used as it is commonly - manent, enthral, progeny, urge. It is a caricature of this mode of art, almost a reductio ad absurdum, and yet this verse has its permanent place in the memories of all Englishmen.

In the matter of Latin neologisms, Gray is innocent. He is utterly free from the muddy stains of Thomson’s diction and of his school. He is fond of the classical derivative, has indeed a chosen band of favourites, social, jocund, genial, influence, vernal, ethereal, animate, etc. and he loves to retain as much of the meaning of the original as possible, in words like provoke, genial, animated, urge, molest, but he does not coin words. He is a connoisseur, not an innovator.

His connoisseurship extends also to old “laid-aside” words. These he probably took from Milton, grisly, mate, crew, uncouth, hauberk, antic, friclo, wonted. He can claim to have revived some elements of the Miltonic tongue, that sprightlier /
sprightlier element we noted in Milton's minor poems and especially the songs in Comus. Milton had probably got this language from poets like Ben Jonson whose masques are full of it.

With antic sport and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frolicking light in frolick mesure;
Now pursuing, now retreating
Now in circling troops they meet
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.

Who does not recognise here the language of the lyrics in Comus? It is the language of the elegant masque of Pastoral. But his archaisms are very timid after all. Collins was bolder. A word like "repairs" in —

"Tomorrow he repairs the golden flood"
is almost certainly Milton's word "anon repairs his drooping head."

Phrases like "the warm precincts of the cheerful day" or "the busy housewife ply her evening care", or "their murmuring labours ply", phrases in which Gray abounds, have a peculiarly artificial air, but they ought not to have irritated Johnson. The lexicographer who boasted that he had only coined some four or five terms, ought to have allowed Gray some praise on that score too. / Wherein is Gray most recognisably of his age? In the use of a certain restricted vocabulary, which is presumably the language he refers to when he says that every considerable poet has added to it, and so elevated the literary tongue above the ordinary. The reader will excuse a bare list of words which illustrate this matter. We have — rustic and rural, genial, social, jocund, pastoral.

Grove, glebe, shade, lawn, mead, green;

nodding groves, verdant dales, vernal year,

prospect /
prospect, view, scene, landscape, warbled lay, zephyrs. The epithets—smiling, laughing, cheerful, whispering, murmuring, glittering, mazy, labouring, verdant, tuneful, tasteful, azure, purple, vernal, ample, sullen, solemn, gradual, bright.

Merely to run over such a list recalls Gray's poetry. Then there is a range of abstract words—
fancy, influence, current, transport,—and there are the somewhat antique words—
margent, hoary, buxom, uncouth.

But Gray in conformity with his principles is careful to be very superficial in the antique vein. Collins is much more caring.

It seems incredible, but in this brief list we have the body of words with which Gray does his chief brushwork. When we recall the immensely wider and more direct and subtle Nature vocabulary of a Tennyson, we see how thin this highly wrought muse of Gray's is. Collins has a more body. It also happens to have far more art in the modern sense.

Goldsmith in censuring Gray's language for its imitation of "the seeming obscurity, the sudden transition, and the hazardous epithet of his mighty master (Pindar)" continues "all which though evidently intended for beauties will probably be regarded as blemishes by the majority of readers. In short they are in some measure a representation of what Pindar now appears to be, though perhaps not what he appeared to the state of Greece when they rivalled each other in his applause and when Pan himself was often seen dancing to his melody." Goldsmith was capable of illumination. He also as we noted, censured the great Elegy for its excess of epithet, though his own Edwin and Angelina is open to the same censure. We today have supped so full of horrors that no epithet is too hazardous for us. Still
we can see how Gray's audacities would shock his age.

"Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood"

requires a slight comment to make it clear. But

"Their lot forbade; nor circumstance alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined"

is really obscure. So -

"Heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the Muses' flame"

is ambitious and irritating.

But what is particularly hazardous in Gray's epithets? He talks of sceptred care, evening prey, grim repose, madding crowd, stubborn glebe, gorgon terrors, screaming horror, from terrific, many-twinkling feet, and indeed his compounds are a kind the true neo-classic deplored. In nothing does Gray more clearly point to the romantics than in his reviving the habit of compounding, which since Milton's time had been out of fashion. To the true neo-classic, there was violence in such word formations as blood-topt head', ivy-mantled tower, awe-commanding face, long-drawn aisle, long-expecting flowers, etc. In short Goldsmith is at the centre of true neo-classic art. Attic in his prose, he is scrupulously moderate in his use of gilded diction in his verse. Dr. Courthope indeed professes to find only one clear instance of gradus epithet in the Traveller, viz. limning life too fine. In the Deserted Village, "Happy to see the mantling bliss go round", what of "smiling Spring"? We must remember that the gradus epithet is only one of several features of Poetic diction. The general cast of the diction of the Deserted Village is unmistakably eighteenth century, but Dr. Courthope may well claim that it is excellent and often realistic English, and as remote from the frigid splendour of Gray's /
Gray's language as _can be_. In Goldsmith the language runs clear and unforced. There is no attempt to wring from words novel or atmospheric effect. In Gray we do see a connoisseur-like playing with word values.

In all these respects Collins is even more of a portent. He is the one eighteenth century poet, except Blake, who still arouses romantic emotion, and who, in fact was fitted, and still is fitted, to become a model for the romantic artist. We must regard him — as Swinburne did — as Gray's master in lyric. True romance is at last to be breathed from exquisite classical life, and we look to find language used in a correspondingly vital way. We are not disappointed. Of course there is a thick coating of contemporary language. In some respects as we shall show, he is even more hidebound than some others, but when we alight on verse like this, we know that the windows of the heavens are at last open.

The Gael, 'tis held of antique story,  
Saw Britain linked to his own adverse strand  
No sea between nor cliff sublime and hoary,  
He passed with unstir feet thro' all the land,  
To the blown Baltic then, they say,  
The wild waves found another way  
Where Orca howls, his wolfish mountains rounding  
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise.

Here are epithets which Keats might have used. For these things, as Mr. Drinkwater says, it is impossible to place Collins, and certainly we must not place him with his contemporaries. But the important thing to note is the appearance of a new diction, or we should rather say the old and beautiful language of Milton's lyrics revived. It may affront neo-classic taste but it is premonitory of Shelley.

_Beyond you braided clouds that lie  
Paving the light-embroidered sky  
Amidst the bright-pavillioned plain  
The beauteous model still remains._

_Beauteous model is unfortunate, but otherwise this is the very language of Shelley — here are the favourite words of_
that bright lyrist.

Or take the Ode to Evening which Swinburne likened to the art of Corot.

"O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts
With bare ethereal wave born; his wavy bed.

Again the language which Shelley in some moods delighted in. As has been said, he goes further than Grey in the direction of the antique. Here are sheen, uncouth, wont, blithe, yon, lorn, dun, (Johnson's bête noire), beck, "at to-fall" crew, etc.

Small wonder that Goldsmith and Johnson did not like this stuff. Their faces were set rigidly against Personification and the antique, and any violent tricks of style. They were like the classic writers on Rhetoric in their timidity and fear of the violent and the vague.

Then also in the number of adjective formations in ye, Collins anticipates Keats, as he also followed the older poets. We today hardly like these formations. They seem cheap. - sheeny gold, gleamy pageant, viny crown etc. A verse of the great Ode itself is disfigured thus -

"For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circket -

and worse -

"Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath.

Goldsmith has something of this in the Deserted Village, but not much.

The importance of Grey and Collins in our present study is that they took in a fresh draught of poetic language at a time when poetry badly needed it, and that they took it chiefly from Milton's early poetry, not as did the /
the eighteenth century blank verse poets from the later epic language. Despite these promising aspects of his language, the basis of Collins' diction is the false neo-classic. His phrases sprinkled everywhere confess their age, - Hoary pile, religious wood, form celestial, laughing train, dewy wings, varied landscape, blooming year, genial meads, etc.

The unit of language is not the word but the phrase. Indeed some would say that the unit of all poetry is the combination of adjective and substantive. It can hardly escape notice that the combination of the disyllabic adjective and monosyllabic (saxon) noun is the phraseological basis of neo-classic poetry. Spenser first (Surrey a little too) introduced these happy combinations in droves. But there are certain words having the immediate stamp of the eighteenth century aesthetic. In Collins we find the most frequent examples of their use.

It would not be difficult to give an inclusive list of such authentic neo-classic words - we may note a few of them - theme, swain, genial, social, cordial, care, gradual, vocal, various.

In the Introductory lines to The Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands addressed to Home of Douglas tragedy fame, we have a really perfect specimen of neo-classic verse.

Go not unmindful of that cordial youth Whom, long endeared, thou leav'st by Lavant's side; Together let us wish him lasting truth And joy untainted with his destined bride.

Go not regardless, while these numbers boast, Thy short-lived bliss, forget my social name; But think far off how, on the southern coast I met thy friendship with an equal flame; Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, whose every vale Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand; To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail; Thou needn't but take thy pencil to thy hand And paint what all believe, who own thy genial land.
The writer of a note in the *English Parnassus* (p. 728) claims for Collins that "His style is quite unmarred by the pseudo-poetic diction which calls trundling a hoop and playing football -

"To chase the rolling circles' speed
Or urge the clying ball"

His epithets are neither otiose nor rhetorical, but subdued in colouring, accurate, and imaginative - note "with shiney gold," "in gleamy pageant."

The accuracy of these epithets may pass. But does anyone approve of them? If false poetic diction is limited to the sort of instances given from Gray, we may say that Collins is quite free of it. But the passage quoted above is full of the peculiarly rhetorical neo-classic diction, and as a matter of fact Collins, considering his small bulk has a fair amount of the language we regard as unreal. It is true, in the Ode referred to, he at once drops the rhetorical manner after the dedicatory verses to Home, and by skilfully introducing references to the Hebrides and Thule and St. Kilda plays skilfully on the romantic notes. Thomson, it is pointed out, had done this before him, both in finely romantic passage in the *Seasons* and in the *Castle of Indolence*. The romantic quality of the

Or, where the Northern Ocean in vast whirls
Boils round the naked *Melancholy isles*
Of farthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides.

The stanza in the C90.1 -

"As when a shepherd of the Hebrid Isles
Placed far amid the melancholy main," etc.

is rather spoiled by a descent to the old mythology -

"The whilst in ocean Phoebus dips his wain."

Note the recurrence of the epithets 'naked,' *melancholy isles*; naked hill, *melancholy main*.
the words Hebrides, Thule, Atlantic surge is no doubt due to the accumulated associations of these words from Roman times when they stood for the furthest verge of the Empire, and the feelings of wonder excited by them. Mona and the western isles are names of like potency, which the romantic poets from the Wartons onward liked to exploit.

It is interesting to note how certain words are used /

As in poets like Claudian in his Panegyrics. Petrarch's eager questions about Ultima Thule put to Richard de Bury whom he met at Avignon in 1340, will be remembered. Wordsworth's Verses on Macpherson's Ossian best express the spirit of the turbulent northern ocean, where he talks —

Of old gray stone and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave

and yet Wordsworth was to make some very contemptuous observations on the treatment of nature in Ossian. A false art can evidently move a true poet to fine utterance!
used by the early romantics, by Keats for example. Take the beautiful word **gradual**. Collins uses it finely in the *Ode to Evening* in that beautiful verse —

And hamlets brown and dim-discovered spires
And hears their simple bell and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The **gradual** dusky veil.

Keats uses it exquisitely in describing the wave that "bursts **gradual**." So Parnell in *The Hermit*.

"And wings, whose colours glitter'd in the day
Wide at its back their **gradual** plumes display.

Tennyson makes fine use of it.

But take the word "**cordial**". Keats was enamoured of Collins's muse and tries to imitate him, but sometimes not very happily. He talks of the **cordial** dram. Unfortunately 'dram' is beyond hope of redemption. **\(\text{Dr}^\)". The word 'care' is **seepred** care, and "The busy housewife plies her evening **care**." But the word is everywhere in eighteenth century poetry.

"Various as ether is the pastoral **care**" sings Dyer who never passes the word by. In fifty lines of *The Fleece* he uses it five times. The word **various** also is greatly overworked.

There are other well worn words in Collins and Gray which deserve notice. Some of these have been noted already in connection with Gray's diction. There are the words 'sullen' and 'solemn'. Collins uses these quite often.

"The beetle winds
His small but sullen horn."

In a parallel passage in *Lycidas* Milton uses **sulky**.

"What time the gadfly winds her **sulky** horn."

Like **\(\text{sultry}\)**
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue
Dun night has veiled the solemn view
And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes.

But thou, lorn stream whose sullen tide
No sedge-crowned sisters now attend.
"Low sullen sounds his grief beguiled."

Then there is the whole family of scenic words - prospect, scene, view, landscape, lawn, mead, etc.

Echoes of Milton's phrase are frequent in Collins - Ode to Simplicity and Ode to Liberty notably - but always of the early Milton. Keats in turn echoes Collins, who is almost the earliest eighteenth century poet to press new meanings out of words in the romantic manner.

High on some cliff to heaven up-piled
Of rude access, of prospect wild
Where, tangled round, the jealous steep
Strange shades o'erbrow, the valleys deep
And holy genii guard the rock
Strange shades o'erbrow, the valleys deep

Ode on the Poetical Character.
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock
While on its rich ambitious head
An Eden, like his own, lies spread
I view that oak, the fancied shades among,
By which as Milton lay, his evening ear
From many a cloud that dropped ethereal dew
Nigh sphered in heaven, its native strains could hear.

Such language affronts every canon of neo-classic art. It is the language of romantic art, and Johnson's censure was from his neo-classic point of view thoroughly sound. Further, it has been suggested that we are to look to Collins' personifications (which also teased Johnson!) for the beginnings of the manner of writing which is called pre-Raphaelite. Touches are here and /
and there doubtless which point the way –

On Death of Col Ross

Variation I.37-42.

But lo, where sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare
Impatient freedom lies
Her matted tresses madly spread
To every sod which wraps the dead
She turns to her joyless eyes.

But we would not insist on the definitely pre-Raphaelite character of these personifications. It is enough to claim that Collins is the first poet of his age to import genuine romantic feeling into words, and the study of Milton's early poetry was perhaps the main influence here. Johnson was profoundly true to his own principles in condemning the language of this poet, since he had already condemned the language of his great model.

so – With eyes upraised, as one inspired
Pale melancholy sat retired
And from her wild sequestred seat
In notes by distance made more sweet
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul.

Like Gray, Collins uses a very restricted part of the vocabulary. These poets breathe a very thin air.

Goldsmith interferingly advised Gray to study the people — giving the authority of Isocrates. Goldsmith like Fielding was all for the low — using that term in its eighteenth century sense. Those few high notes exquisitely delivered by Gray and Collins sounded thin and solitary in his ears. They no doubt did something — did /
did much – to widen the prospects of English poetry by way of reaction, but the Muse would have died of inanition and sequestration from the world of men, if it had produced many poets of their cold type. Goldsmith like Johnson loved the world of men, and his language, pure as it generally is, shows it. Collins' Odes came out shortly after Joseph Warton's Odes appeared in Dodsley's Miscellany 1746. The vein of language and sentiment in Warton's inferior Ode to Fancy is similar to that of Collins Odes, but there is a wide difference in accomplishment. Il Penseroso is the classic model for those gently melancholy writers of Odes who swarmed in the mid-century. It was Joseph Warton who in 1746 reminded poets that the heart had more claim on the poet, the warm heart of humanity, than writers of the past age had allowed. The language of the heart in this false or premature dawn of the Romantic Revival, meant most musical and most melancholy lucubration or reverie on time-mouldering walls and midnight bells. Although work of the Wartons (both Joseph and Tom) falls far below that of Collins, it is extraordinary how their Odes echo and re-echo the language of Grays' and Collins' Odes. Here are all the bright phraseological counters, which were to do service in the Ode species for half a century. Thomas Warton's muse especially attracted to itself the whole Praetorian Guard (to use Thomson's phrase which Francis Thomson applied to the language of the early romantics) of romantic pseudo-romantic phraseology. His very wide reading in the elder bards no doubt helped him here.

That / In the Enthusiast published with the Odes 1746, but said to have been written in 1740. The introduction to the Odes attacks the didactic method of poetising and upholds Invention and Imagination.
But he used the language rather senselessly—certainly without much art. In a sense it is true to say that this special language had been exhausted by inept persons before romance proper was fairly started on its great way. After reading widely among the Wartons and Mason's of the day, the candid critic will hold up his hands and wonder if this supposed language of the heart, is a whit less wearying than the *gradus* language of the purblind neo-classics.

But to this adventurous discovery belongs another distinction. Without a doubt he hit upon Scott's metre and language in his *King Arthur's Grave*. Witness the following lines—

Illumining the vaulted roof
A thousand torches flamed aloof
The storied tapestry was hung
With minstrelsy the rafters rung
Of harp, that with reflected light
From the 'proud' gallery glittered bright
With gifted bands, a revel throng
(From distant *Mona* nurse of song)
To crown the banquet's solemn close
Themes of British glory chose
And to the strings of various chime
Attempered thus the fabled rhyme.

There is nothing of this in Gray and Collins, whose art is of a higher strain, eschewing the more obvious phraseology of romance. Dr. Courthope in his penetrating analysis of these two poets, notes the wide divergence of their arts. Gray is more for the balance and accumulation of sonorous epithet which we associate with the genius of Latin poetry. Collins for the more daring and occasional flashes of phrase. They /

They have both been charged with obscurity, and here Collins is really culpable. The Ode to Simplicity is often obscure not by reason of scholarly allusions, but through mere slovenliness. Collins was a little like Keats in the hit-or-miss method he often adopts. We know how the latter poet will often meander round a meaning—a large idea—and end by giving us a series of enigmatic phrases. Gray was too precise for that, but Collins had many examples of the vice. On the other hand we are grateful to him for his thrift and the delicate poise of his words. Romance in its early phase was to mean unmeasured indulgence in words. Collins is classical enough to paint cleanly and to impose rigour on himself. It is a great pity that he lapses into a vagueness of wording, which has nothing to do with the sublime, and that his epithets are often so poor. For example in the Ode to Simplicity, which is full of Miltonic echoes, we are told—

No more, in hall or bower
The passions own thy power
Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean.

For thou hast left her shrine
Her olive more, nor vine
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

and in the Ode on Popular Superstitions we have

There, Shakespeare's self, with every garland crowned
Flew to those fairy climes his fancy sheen!
In musing hour
The drowned swain is thus described:

His fear-shook limbs have lost their youthly force
such a passage as

"To monarcs dear, some hundred miles astray
Oft have they seen fate give the fatal blow."

is both obscure and slovenly.

There is a common notion that the eighteenth century on the whole barred out external nature. There is no age, not even the Victorian, which talks about it so much. Their talk may not please us, but it is endless. The poets of the age are obsessed with the notion of painting nature. Mr. T. H. Ward says of Whitehead's

The Enthusiast -- "It epitomises the debate -- it is a perennial debate, but the eighteenth Century took one side and we take another -- between nature and society" and quotes the lines --

"O' bards, that call to bank and glen
Ye bid me go to nature to be healed
And lo! a purer fount is here revealed
Thy lady--nature dwells in hearts of men."

It is rather doubtful which side the eighteenth century took in the debate; it was certainly not unanimous, and the lines quoted represent a re-action against the prevalent worship of nature, and prove, if proof were needed, how much the feeling for Nature enters into the consciousness of this age. Nothing indeed urged on the movement towards a new poetic diction so much as the necessity of getting a language adequate for the new Nature poetry.

It was felt by the best neo-classics that the stereotyped language would not do.

So Charles Churchill, following Pope, describes his muse in his rather low way (Prophecy of Famine) --

Who cannot follow where trim Fancy leads
By "prattling streams' o'er "flower-empurpled"mead
Who /
Who often but without success have prayed.
For ept alliteration, strum aid —

Who would but cannot with a master's skill
Coin fine new epithets, which mean no ill."

God! Pope had similarly satirised the prevailing nature
fashion.

Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze'
In the next line it 'whispers through the trees'
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep'
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with sleep.

A very large part of the century's poetry is
devoted to nature — the providential aspects of nature, on
which poets can moralise. Nature in Thomson's *Seasons* was
not an object of rapture and devotion, but of cold Theistic
contemplation.

Here contemplation points the road
Through Nature's charms to Nature's God!
says Whitehead in *The Enthusiast*.

It has been noted that there are stages in the
growth of romantic nature worship from the common strain
which Pope and Churchill ridicule — but which is perennial —
and which Pope himself used when in *Windsor Forest* he still
"wandered in Fancy's maze". In the early stages it was
'Fancy' always, and to this stage belongs the meagre thread-
bare vocabulary already referred to — lawns, meads, greens,
azure, zephyrs, etc. Gray's line "To meet the sun upon the
upland lawn" is good enough. Possibly he had Milton's line
in mind "Together both the high and low lawns appeared"
But compare Dyer's lines in "Grongar Hill" —

Gaudy as the opening dawn
Lies a long and level lawn.

or Smart — "Beauteous the moon fall on the lawn or
Whitehead — "beside a greenwood shade
Which clothed a lawn's aspiring head.

It /
It is a beautiful word and its meaning was not so contracted as it has since become. It is used with 'green' a great deal, e.g. in the Deser ted Village.

"Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose" and

"Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn" +
Meadows, meads, glebes, greens, groves, are, as we saw, equally in evidence. Nature is referred to as 'painted' or 'deckt' or 'enamelled' or 'gilt', and the land is generally 'smiling'.

Such was the meagre language of this make-believe art. Constrained joviality in talking of nature becomes de rigueur.

Thus Gray - "To scatter plenty on a smiling land"

"Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day"

'Jocund morn', +

"The laughing flowers that round them blow"

As for the sounds or motions of nature such old tried favourites as - whisper, warble, purling, blow, bloom, murmur, are judged sufficient, and were so till the nineteenth century romantics, and especially the great Victorians, so enriched their view of nature that every stray unthought-of particle of the English tongue was pressed into service to make a colourable imitation. It was demonstrated then that the despised rubble of the language was as potent for this use as the grandiose part of it.

As the century progressed a real knowledge of and love of wide prospects, generally cultivated, but with an evergrowing love of the melancholy waste, appears. Gray's letters, except for a false stumble here and there, have a good deal of the worship of savage nature in the Salvator Rosa manner. See for example his description of the Lakes, and note that after an incursion into the truly grand, he relapses into talk about 'smiling plenty and happy poverty.'

The appetite for wildness and grandeur grows especially when fed / + In Trevellie was more of a desolateness of language than of Deser ted Village. Indeed one book I contain's view of Gilbert's Decorative Drawing, for example, in the same style as an English landscape on the subject of the mountain range. When light vegetation bends & roses bloom, Whence sweet July's morn floweth / What was loved the first bloom fall? And more abandoned thou art?
fed on the taste for ruins. This taste appears markedly in Shenstone, and will one day develop into the profound romantic melancholy that breathes in Childe Harold. All this prepares for the voyage pittoresque of the true romantics. Even in Shenstone, artificial as he is, we note that this new form of sentimentalism begins to demand a new diction. The breath of mystery and of pensive reverie at the same time passes over the land of poesy, and enforces an enlargement of the poetic vocabulary. Who now does not know Lady Winchelsea's Nocturnal Reverie praised by Wordsworth as the only poem - excepting a passage or two in Windsor Forest - between Paradise Lost and The Seasons that contains a single new image of external nature?" Mr. Gosse says justly of the poet "She lights upon the right epithet and employs it with precision and gives a brilliant turn, even to a triviality, by some bright and natural touch." And this is in an age which was, though thoroughly naturalistic, prone to conventional description on the one hand, or sheer ugliness on the other. "The poetry of ruins" said the late Professor Dowden "was not reserved for the romantic second half of the century. It is Dyer who describes -

"the spacious plain
Of Sarum spread like ocean's boundless round
Where solitary Stonehenge gray with moss
Ruin of ages nods."

The same pleasurable melancholy breathes in Lady Winchelsea's poem. One may believe that this sentimentalism passing, as it did, in the later years of the century through a rather sickly phase, did as much to enforce the enlargement of the poetic vocabulary as the new spirit of naturalistic observation.

Most people know the "nature" passage in Gray's letters.
letters. It is sublime and romantic nature he writes of, and he gives a calculable example of romantic writing. It is true we can discover the neo-classic in his asides. On 13th October 1739 he writes to his mother of the Grand Chartreuse. "It is six miles to the top, the road runs winding up it; on one hand, is the rock, with woods of pine trees hanging overhead; on the other, a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld."

From this period we date the outbreak of the epidemical fury of nature worship from which we still suffer, and which has been exploited by every tourist agency in the world. So Carlyle—Sartor Resartus—after a gorgeous nature passage, after the style of that quoted from Gray—turns on himself thus—"Sometime before Small-pox was extirpated" says the Professor "there came a new malady of the spiritual sort in Europe, I mean the epidemic, now endemical of view-hunting. Poets of old date being privileged with senses, had also enjoyed external nature; but chiefly as we enjoy the crystal cup which holds good or bad liquor for us, that is to say in silence, or with slight incidental commentary. Never, as I compute, till after the sorrows of Werter, was there men found who would say, 'Come, let us make a description!'" Carlyle had not read Gray's letters and other things too.

The words 'survey' and 'view', 'prospect' and 'scene' were sadly overworked.

So /
So Gray — "Of Windsor's heights the expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey."

But the words are the veriest hackneys in neo-classic poetry. Akenside, perhaps best of all, illustrates the sense of wide-extended landscape —

"Who that from Alpine heights his labouring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon to survey
 Nile's or Ganges' rolling his bright wave
Through mountains, plains, through empires
Black with shade.

And continents of sand, will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet."

We must not hope yet for the rare and surprising word, such as Tennyson delights us with, in Nature pieces

as - "The landscape winked through the heat

or

"Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice

Though Thomson comes very near to it as when he talks of
the 'melancholy main' or 'the wallflower stain'd."

Akenside like Thomson was a Scot. But we must not claim for him much. The new interest in remote territories, the new interest in the beat which people like Sir William Jones encouraged, and the new taste for scenes of desolation, and for the 'majestic form' of nature and the 'pride of the daring' all these in triumphing over the tepid commonplaces of well ordered 'smiling' nature, gradually demanded a wider range of words. In other words a new aesthetic was in the birthpangs, and a new diction is the first requisite of the change.

But during the flat middle years of the century
the sense of wide-extended prospect did not develop much of a vocabulary, because it was the result of cosmopolitan feeling, of intellectualism, not of real interest in Nature. Hence the meagre nature-vocabulary still sufficed. Needless to say the modern poet scrupulously avoids these conventional words.
words, -scene, landscape, prospect, etc. They seem to interpose a barrier between the object and the poet who desires to identify himself immediately with nature, not pose towards it as a sort of cicerone.

If anyone wishes to gauge the difference between a tolerable nature language (albeit still conventional) and the intolerable Miltonic manner, let him study - they are worth it - Dyer's Grongar Hill and his later Fleece. Grongar Hill has always been justly praised for the same reasons as Lady Winchelsea's Nocturnal Reverie, because here language is used reasonably and aesthetically to convey the poet's natural - and slightly melancholy - delight in a beautiful prospect. It is a conventional language of course, as compared with later freedoms on the part of nineteenth century naturalistic poets, but some poets can be effective while observing the conventions.

But in the interval between Grongar Hill and The Fleece, Dyer has assimilated the bad elements of the diction of the Seasons. The universal admiration for that work is responsible for an age of deplorable poetry, whose language will always be held up to execration. The reader will note that despite conventional frills, Grongar Hill is written in a pure language - predominantly native, and full of that quiet ease in which the Jacobeans are supreme. Had English poetry developed thus after 1726 we had been spared a great deal of the worst didactic kind. Even the Task and the Excursion might have taken a less laboured and more harmonious turn. In Dyer's Fleece we see the folly working in every vein, and contesting it with the earlier ingenuous language of Grongar Hill.

"Sprinkle my little croft with daisy flowers."

or

"When the new-dropt lamb
Tottering with weakness by his mother's side
Feels the fresh world around

leave /
is a distinctly naive touch. But in a line from The Fleece like

"Various as ether is the pastoral care"

we have all the congregated evils of eighteenth century false poetic diction.

Tumid phraseology and classical turns which are somehow unnatural, crowd the page and one is able to mark the fatal influence of the great vogue of the Reason. Johnson and Goldsmith, the keepers of the neo-classic door failed to impress the detestation which they ought to have felt towards the new style of the didactic and nature poets. By all the canons of their school, they ought to have slammed the door on this monstrous form of speech, with its clumsy artifice and stupid inventions, from which their own verse is wonderfully immune. They were decided enough in their censure of the aesthetic language of Milton and Gray and Collins. True, Johnson does, in the case of the luckless Granger of Sugar-Cane fame, deliver a stunning verdict, but it is rather against the subjects, these writers adopted than their language. His judgment on Philip's Cyder refers rather to the metre than the diction. He demands that the merits of the Pearmain should be sung in heroic couplets. But the diction of Cyder is not so bad. But we have a right to expect from the true neo-classics a more exemplary punishment of these pretenders. The didactic poets had and still have their partisans however. Of the didactic poets Young and Alenside we need say little. But that little must dissociate them from the school of Thomson in this that they at least accept the English vocabulary as they find it. They do not indulge in cumbersome /
cumbrous coinages. But they generally overload their expression in a manner far more wearying to the modern reader than do even Thomson or Cowper. Young might have been different, for his early satires, which anticipated Pope's, are sharp enough, and not unduly weighted with verbiage. In the interim however, he fell under the spell of the philosophic manner which the Seasons did much to popularise, and that meant words, words, and more words. Even in the "Night Thoughts" however, we come across patches of what his contemporaries regarded as vulgar expression, and which remind us of his early satirical period - "the same old slabber'd tale", "peruse the person'd "page" &c. We rather welcome such lowness, amid a carnival of pompous phrasing. Like Davies and Dryden and Pope, he is a reasoner in verse, but is in our view inferior even to Blackmore. He rants and expatiates and then nothing will content him but the greatest words -

Great future! glorious patron of the past,  
And present! when shall I thy shrine adore?  
From Natures Continent, immensely wide  
Immensely blest, this little isle of life,  
This dark, incarcerating colony  
Divides us. Happy Day! that breaks our chain  
That manumits, it calls from exile home,  
That leads to nature's great metropolis.

We might be reading one of the spacious Elizabethans, and yet Johnson praises him. Johnson could not resist piety. Like most pompous writers, he frequently falls into bathos, and then his language is pedestrian enough. On the whole he is perhaps the worst of the line of philosophical reasoners in verse. Akenside is a little better. 

Note: - Mitford in his edition (Preface XXXIX)
He has some notion of poetic language and sometimes we are reminded of Milton.

Eternal youth
O'er all her form its glowing honours breathed;
And smiles eternal from her candid eyes
Flowed like the dewy lustre of the morn
Effusive trembling on the placid waves
--- full diffus'd
Her yellow mantle floated in the breeze;
And in her hand she waved a living branch
Rich with immortal fruits.

The rich classical manner is not yet forgotten, we feel, but alas, we are soon back in our native flats! Akenside cannot keep it up, though he does so longer than we expect. He will not be 'vulgar' or 'low' like Young, and as we say, he does sometimes recollect the true accent of the grand poetical speech. He made a mark in his day, and perhaps he deserved to do so. He is fond of the compound epithet and other Miltonian delights, but rejects coinages and is often content with a simpler language. In Akenside we see the great neo-classic school verging towards abstract thought, and discarding a great deal of the mere embellishment of rhetorical speech. We are reminded of the similar decay of the Elizabethan school of drama, after Shakespeare. There too speech became measured and monotonned in comparison with the 'brave translunary' language of the true Elizabethans. Quietism in speech, not only in vocabulary, but in all the elements of speech, syntax, imagery, etc., pervades the work of Massinger and Ford. So now, in poets like Akenside we note the casting aside of the decayed finery of neo-classic diction, but yet hardly a glimmer of the new language which is to take its place. For that we must look to the writers not of
of didactic poems but of Odes. Pages of this poet more than faintly remind us of the Wordsworth of the Excursion.

Armstrong is held to be an extreme example of the neo-classic grandiose, often one thinks, on the strength of that awful phraseological specimen quoted by Professor Saintsbury — gelid cistern (cold bath). As a matter of fact he is rather pure — he should perhaps be classed with Akenside, as a revolter against a too turbid diction. His own remarks in his prose Sketches or Essays prove that he had very definite and conservative views on the subject.

"The best language," he says, "is strong and expressive without stiffness or exaggeration; short and concise, without being either obscure, or ambiguous; and easy flowing and disengaged, without one undetermined or superfluous word."

Again, "It is the easiest thing in the world to coin new words. The most ignorant of the mobility do it every day, and are laughed at for it. Horace gave, it is said, but two, and Virgil one new word to the Latin tongue."

He serves up for us, in humorous fashion, a list of modern encroachments which ought not to be allowed:

Encroach or encroachment — inculcate, purpose, betwixt, methinks, froward, vouchsafe.

"From which rugged road, I wonder, did this swerve deviate into the English language?" But this subject-matter!

In the name of everything that is disgusting and detestable what is it?

Gilfillan, who quotes the above passage in full, asks what Armstrong would have thought of our nineteenth-century speech, of Carlyle's "fountain, oceans, flame-pictures, star-galaxies, and bushy-whiskered, yet fire-radiant Tantalus-Ixions! But we are once more back in the purgation scene of Ben Jonson's Poetaster." And truly /
truly, save when he is more than usually technical, Armstrong does not fall very far below these precepts in his Art of Preserving Health. He is generally rather hydroptic, it is true, and one wishes he had not talked of gelid cistern, prolixer dreams, and pleuritic springs. An air of burlesque necessarily pervades his work. But Johnson was of the opinion that long poems in the Miltonic manner could not be successful without the usual elements of grandiose speech. Still, Armstrong is far from being the worst of the Didactics. He is far from what Isaac D'Israeli called the "artificial magic of poetical diction", which Erasmus Darwin, much to Mrs Barbauld's and his own, admiration, "carried to the highest perfection."

It was made a complaint by Ruskin that in Scotch song, the sun always sets over Ben Achree or some other 'aguish' hill. May we not say that this was the peculiar grace of Scottish poetry? Even in the eighteenth century when English poets were surveying mankind from China to Peru, the northern muse was local and particular. Hence those vivid Hebridean touches in Thomson, and hence the well marked local features of Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd. As the Scottish genius refused to be cosmopolitan - save when it used the English tongue in imitation of English themes - so its descriptive vocabulary was vivid and formed clearly with the eye on the /

And still more of "Those, clumsy heroes, those fat-headed gods"

Well enough marked to enable us to decide the unique locality.
the object. It may have had not a little to do with the revived sincerity of English poetry. Ramsay was fairly well known in the South, and Wordsworth knew and praised Ferguson as well as Burns. Cowper knew and admired Burns' work.

But perhaps Crabbe is still "Nature's sternest painter, yet the best." Browning in Childe Roland and elsewhere has painted Desolation with more power, but the great passage at the beginning of the Village - lines 63 - 80 - "Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er" will always remain a landmark in English landscape poetry. Here are all the common weeds with their common names, and a descriptive language employed, which is direct enough, though always liable to descend to the old modes of phraseology. As Crabbe proceeded he showed a progressive tendency to reject even the abundant vestiges of the artificial speech which appear in the Village, and so he commanded himself to Wordsworth's favour, and without doubt influenced the great poet in the direction of plainness. This is especially true of his Tales. A Tale like Peter Grimes comes very near to some of Wordsworth's similar efforts -

Thus by himself compelled to live each day To wait for certain hours the tide's delay; At the same time the same dull views to see,

There is one line of a peculiarly neo-classic cast -

There, thistles stretch their prickly arms afar And to the ragged infant threaten war.
The bounding marsh-land, and the blighted tree
The water-only, when the tides were high
When low, the mud half-covered and half-dry;
The sunburnt tar that blisters on the planks
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks.

It is not a beautiful world! Nature no longer smiles.
But we are finally rid of the pestilence of neo-classic
verbiage. No one can now complain that epithet is
overworked, or that an artificial or invariable form
of epithet is employed. And indeed Crabbe, not to be
out of the movement, started by the Preface and Postscript
to the Lyrical Ballads, hints in the Preface to the Tales
at his aim to strip words of their associated meanings,
and use them with their bare dictionary meanings. Small
wonder Wordsworth approved of his work!

To conclude this chapter on typical eighteenth
century poetic speech, it is good to remember
than anything that has been, may be, probably will
be again. Nothing is finally driven out of man's
artistic economy. In our own day we seem to run round
the various tastes of the various ages in an afternoon.
Now we are primitive, now metaphysical, now Browningesque.
It is little use talking about learning lessons.
Art criticism does not teach lessons in that sense.
It helps to create taste, but it
cannot /
cannot hound any particular taste out of vogue for long. In that sense the writers on poetics do not seem to be able to help the poets much. Perhaps they do so more than one thinks. Perhaps the poets do read what the critics say, and perpend. But there is no cult, be it never so furious; it assailed in one age that may not revive in another.

There is almost perfect unanimity of censure, for example, on the style of speech we have been considering. No one troubles to defend it today. A century of indignant reaction against cumbrous latinisation and stereotyped epithet might assure us that style has no chance of revival in our day. And yet our poet Laureate, so sophisticated on all points of technique, can be charged and justly charged by a London journalist with using this very style of language.

Mr. James Douglas in an article in the Daily News entitled The Obvious Epithet says -

"I have made an anthology of primitive epithets from the Laureate's Lyrics. The most useful theme for a poetic neophyte is of course, the Spring. It will save him a lot of trouble to know that Spring is radiant when she is not eternal. Other aspects of nature ought to be dealt with in the same way. Winds should always be called 'zephyr,' clouds should be 'fleecy,' banks should invariably be 'mossy' or 'verdant.' The Thames must be described as the 'silver Thames' - - - - - - - - - A gale must always be angry. The moon must always be blanched. The ocean must always be 'sad.' Swans must be 'proud.' Grass must be 'dewy.' A lover must be 'expectant.' So jocund Spring, flowery banks, 'wondrous joy' and divinest joy are both permissible."

"If you desire" continues this writer, "to be very bold, you may speak of the tyrannous wind. Do not forget to allude to the silver mist, as well as to the silver Thames and /
and on no account neglect to bring in a reference to the 'sylvan court' of the birds. There are many other good useful phrases that any young poetaster ought to learn by heart; as he studies the lyrics of the Laureate. Chiseled phrases such as 'golden-tinted leaves', 'shining shield', 'mournful strains', 'plaintive woe', and 'wizard eyes' are very useful. Then there is the melancholy sea - branches are mournful, as a rule and valleys are fruitful, and 'green' is glaucous. I can recommend glaucous-green to all word-painters."

After Mr. Brett-Young's claim for Dr. Bridges as the poet who, on the whole, tends like Browning to abandon epithet - as indeed he is sparing of its use, especially in his later work and in the dramas - it comes as a surprise that he can be classed with the poets of our most jaded century. And though the critic quoted is a little jaundiced, the actual examples he has there collected - some however not very damaging - are conclusive. It seems as if in excess of aversion from the prevailing hunt for strangeness of epithet, epithets glaucous-green, Dr. Bridges has reverted somewhat to the gradus epithet where he has not discarded the epithet altogether. Such are the strange revolutions of things! And the fact that Mr. Douglas was the author of the article on James P. Bailey and his Festus in Chambers' Encyclopaedia of English Literature does not invalidate his criticisms here. His list is his criticism. One of his jibes goes quite 'home.' He says - 'Another good Miltonic epithet is the word 'dear'. It ought always to be stuck upon the word occasion.' Do not plagiarise. Do not write 'sad occasion dear'. Say with austere brevity 'dear occasion' and you will be Miltonic'.

Let /
Let us remember that Meredith, the most distinctive of poets in his early verse used the same battered but eternal poets' language and that without stint, and our case is made out that this so called classical or neo-classical language is really the natural, primitive, eternal, poetic speech of the ordinary man when moved poetically. and that movements towards 'simplicity' are the work of excessively cultured people who don't care to use the dialect of common people. The notion of a people near the soil living in a state of high simplicity, speaking sternly when in a state of artistic excitement is an illusion. The ideal suggested is really an aristocratic one, not democratic or tribal.

This is no plea for a wholesale return to that language on the part of our poets. Modern poets no longer speak to popular audiences. Indeed this is their danger. They speak to each other. They review each other's poems. Since Tennyson's time there has been no poet with wide appeal to the people save Kipling and perhaps Masefield, and the cultured taste shuns the speech methods of the middleclass. It rather relishes the proletarian growls from underneath. But it will have nothing to do with the professional or money-making classes, and so it wanders uneasily about looking for a public which it does not in its heart loathe and despise. When it finds that public and once more appeals to a nation-wide nation-wide audience, and not to jaded little cults, it will have found a new poetic speech. For nothing is made so clear by our study as this, that each new movement in aesthetic, brings a change of poetic language.
Sometimes the change is delayed, and poets having new inspiration, new aesthetic, still cling to the old versification and diction. Crabbe is a case in point. Not only his social ideas, which would not matter so much, but his aesthetic is essentially new. His seascapes for example and the new realism he introduced into his squalid pictures, of seaboard life imply certainly a change of aesthetic. But there is no essential corresponding change of technique. He still clings to the neoclassic manner, though his technique ought to be as new as that of our own Mr. Masefield with whom he has the most obvious affinity. Falconer whose Shipwreck was greatly praised in his own day and later by Byron on account of its frank use of sea terms, is no better. He mingle his sea terms with the worn out phraseology and prosody and introduces the usual mythological matter.
CHAPTER VIII. - The Early Romantics.

It has been made clear that poets either in their theory or their practice (the twain are often far apart) incline to one of two sides. Some honour the vernacular, and believe that Antaeus-like they draw their best strength from popular contacts. Poets’ language then comes straight from the heart of the people. This view though not exclusively modern - even the ancients sometimes approved it - has been truly realised since the era of the French Revolution. Mr. Abercrombie already quoted says: "The magnificences and surprises of diction have their best chance of proving their mettle, when they are immersed in and infected with the nameless indefinable electricity of common speech." He adds the very modern advice "For this choose phrases and idioms of common speech even where they seem to challenge grammar."

The French Revolution started the worship of the august being Man, whose noble contours Wordsworth first saw starkly out-lined against the mountain crests. This creature has dwindled in our own day into the Average Man or the Plain Man. But he is still the object of servile worship + and his speech or jargon is held in great respect by our Kiplings and Chestertons and others. Wordsworth started the worship of Man, rustic and noble. Walt Whitman continued it in Dithyrambic style. The reaction against the eighteenth century man of society, against Elegance, which we saw began in Fielding and Goldsmith, with their propensity to buffoonery and low company, has carried everything /

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* See Sir Viscount Bryce’s History of Democracy, vol. 1. Scotland. And for a Tory rejoinder see Chas. Whibley, in Blackwood’s Magazine, June 1911. "Browning Without Method." Mr. Arnold Bennett makes him a hero of all his books, but he does not seem to respect him. He has nothing of his Chesterton’s mystical adoration of a ‘plain man’.
everything before it. So that today a young poet would rather talk a low jargon than be 'correct'. The poet must not disdain to use the august Being's express language even if the Being is only Bottom the weaver after all. Caliban worshipped Prospero for his speech. Prospero now worships Caliban. Theseus and his gentles are no longer the object of interest. It is Nick Bottom and his fellows who give us the authentic thrill, and of course all that is as it should be. In the eighteenth century people took sides in this quarrel. Horace Walpole is perhaps the stiffest figure on the one side, Fielding on the other, the 'low' side. Twice in those wise and diverting prefatorial excursions in *Tom Jones*, he animadverts on the people for whom every touch of true life is 'low'. Johnson attacked him on this score. Boswell - "You will allow, sir, that he (Harry Fielden) draws very natural pictures of human life?" Johnson - "Why, sir, it is of very low life." Walpole censures Goldsmith's "She stoops to Conquer" for the same reason, its grossness of dialogue, etc., "What disgusts me most is that though the characters are very low and aim at low humour, not one of them says a sentence that is natural or marks any character at all." With Goldsmith indeed we note the arrival of the new rallying cries - popular sympathies, language of the heart, joys and sorrows of the poor. It is an easy step to the dismal romanticians. Gray he found fault with because he did not follow the advice of Socrates - Study the People. The other view, the old-fashioned one, is that poetry /
poetry is an art, and the mastery of its technique a matter of long and painful apprenticeship. The difficulty with poetry is that it is neither pure art nor pure thought, but is compounded of both. The proportions in which they are blended to some extent determines the sort of art. In his little book *De Vulgari Eloquio*, Dante remarks that prose writers get their language from the poets and not vice versa. In other words popular contacts are not the means to fine poetry. The poet is the Lawgiver; he is Lord of Language. This view is curiously corroborated by the precedence in time which poetry has over prose in most tongues. Our own prose developed late, and with every sign of uncouthness and savagery, long after poetry had grown comparatively civil. We are not so sure however when it comes to the actual matter of borrowing, whether the poets have been more indebted to the prose writers or vice versa. The argument is of interest because we assume that prose is on the whole nearer popular & contact than poetry. The Shakespearean age of poetry was profoundly influenced - not altogether for its good - by the prose cults of Euphuism and Arcadianism. The Victorians drew copiously on old phrase which they found in the romancers. Browne and Burton gave much rich phrase to the earlier romantics. A modern poet Mr. Watson, complains that when he draws on the language of the old chroniclers, the brilliant theft is not even noticed. On the whole the earlier romantics are more influenced by the elder poets, the later from Tennyson to our own day by the unsunned riches embedded in the old prose writers. But in either case the true vernacular had very little to do with the matter. Both movements are literary and imitative, and therefore leagues away from the modern school which does explore actual and exploit the language of the people even in defiance of grammar.
To take the case of two moderns, Mr. Yeats and Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, and speaking for the moment of their theories only. Mr. Abercrombie in the Lecture or Pamphlet already referred to, seems to write himself down pure Wordsworthian. He talks, as we have seen, with such conviction about the real language of man. As a matter of fact, and as his own work reveals, he is at the opposite pole from Wordsworth. The latter to our mind, not only in his famous pronouncement on poetic diction, but consistently through-out his aesthetic, deliberately belittles the principle of selection on which classic and neo-classic and indeed all art is built up. It is true he uses the word selection, but not, with conviction. His writings prove how weak he was here, but he is weak on principle. Words are to have no priority over other words, any more than elements of a landscape are to be exalted at the expense of other elements.

In the Prelude, Wordsworth attacks just as Walt Whitman does later all the prescribed formulæs of middle-class culture. He attacks artfulness and satire. — those

Book XII. Unworthily, disliking here, and there
Liking; by rules of mimic art transferred
To things above all art; but more, — for this
Although a strong infection of the age,
Was never much my habit — giving way
To a comparison of scene with scene
Bent overmuch on superficial things
Pampering myself with meagre novelties.

I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock
Still craving combinations of new form
New pleasure, under empire for the sight.

and so he is led up to a grand attack on Education and the talking world.

There are who think that strong affection, love
Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
A gift, to use a term which they would use,
Of vulgar nature; its growth requires
Retirement, leisure, language purified
By /
By manners studied and elaborate
That whose feels such passion in its strength
Must live within the very light and air
Of courteous usages refined by art

We are misled by "men adroit in speech" and neglect the
"shy and unpractised in the strife of phrase". But of the
latter it may be said —

There is the language of the heavens, the power
The thought, the usage, and the silent joy
Words are but under-agents in their souls.

Now Mr. Abercrombie's idea of Word-potential, of words
and phrases coming in and going out, getting worn out by use
and lying fallow till they recover, is essentially the artist's
doctrine of words, and it is not Wordsworth's. But Mr. Aber-
crombie does recognise that the people's speech is the repository
of poet's speech, that the potential accumulated in words is the
result of their jostling in the market-place.

Mr. Yeats is difficult to place. Sometimes as a
word artist he seems identifiable with the school of
Mallarme and Verlaine, sometimes — perhaps normally — he is in
the line of Rossetti, a pre-Raphaelite, and an archaist. Only
he will not say it is archaistic, Elizabethan speech he employs.

He will announce the theory that this old and beautiful speech
has remained among the people of Ireland from of old, and that he
is therefore no mere archaist like Swinburne when he employs it.

Mr. George Moore in his Ave gives notes of a conversa-
tion with Mr. Yeats which may be more trustworthy (they are
not less malicious) than Drummond's conversations with Ben Johnson.
Anyhow they illustrate Yeats' notions of poets' language, and they
indicate the desirability of what are called 'made' languages.
Each competent artist will 'make' his own language and a poet
of any power and versatility will have at command several
"languages."

Mr./
Mr. Moore says -

Ave p. 55 Morris had made one (poetic 'language') to suit his stories and I learnt that one might be sought for and found among the Sligo peasants, only it would take years to discover it, and then he (Yeats) would be too old to use it.

Moore - "You don't mean the brogue, the ugliest dialect in the world?"

Yeats - "No dialect is ugly, the bypaths are all beautiful.

It is the broad road of the journalist that is ugly."

Mr. Moore continues - I said that very soon there would not be enough grammar left in England for literature. English was becoming a lean language; then after deploring the loss of 'thee' and 'thou' (as impossible in verse as in prose) "Nor could he sympathise with me when I spoke of the lost subjunctive, and I understood him to be of the opinion that a language might lose all its grammar and still remain a vehicle for literature, the literary artist always finding material for his art in the country."

"Like a landscape painter" I answered him; "but we are losing our verbs; we no longer ascend and descend, we go up and we go down; birds still alight whereas human beings get out and get in."

Yeats answered that even in Shakespeare's time people were beginning to talk of the decline of language. "No language" he said "was ever so grammatical as Latin, yet the language died, perhaps from excess of grammar. It is with idiom and not with grammar that the literary artist should concern himself, and stroking his thin yellow hands slowly, he looked into the fire regretting he had no gift to learn living speech from those who knew it - the peasants. It was only from them we
we could learn to write, their speech being living speech, flowing out of the habits of their lives, "struck out of life itself", he said, and I listened to him telling of a volume of folklore collected by him in Sligo; a welcome change truly is such after reading the "Times".

Other passages from the same diverting source:—

Moore suggests, "Language wears out like a coat, and just as a man has to change his coat when it becomes threadbare, a nation has to change its language if it is to produce a new literature. There could be no doubt of this. Italy had changed its language; whereas Greece had not changed hers, and there was no literature in Greece, and there could be none until the modern language had separated itself sufficiently from the ancient."

One has to go back through many generations of English poetry to find writers thus interested in the language which is the medium of their art. We may note that Mr. Moore's suggestion that a nation has to change its language before a new literature is possible is the reverse way of saying what has already been stated of the eighteenth century romantics, that a new aesthetic involves a change of poetic speech, though as we saw at the close of the last chapter the change of speech may be delayed. In the same way after the new romantic speech had run its career, it began in turn to harden into what Francis Thompson likened to a sort of old Praetorian guard of words. These in turn must be disbanded, including all that purple-plumed language which Shelley nobly employed. Otherwise the tyranny of modes of speech asserts itself and new enterprise becomes difficult, so powerful are word-associations.

We shall note also the opinion of these two arguably

...
grew word masters that idiom is the measure of a language's possibilities of artistic expression. Mr. Moore of course demurs a little to this and wishes to insist more on grammar (an old crotchet of his). One supposes that the matter may resolve itself this way--that for the dreamy art Yeats had in mind, untroubled by intellectual notions ("Literature i dying of ideas" he says elsewhere) grammar, which is concrete logic is not so necessary whereas idioms have the force almost of auto-suggestion. But for the art of a great drama like the Elizabethan which cannot avoid ideas, the discipline of grammar is necessary. And of course for all the more business-like offices of life, grammar is necessary while idiom can very well be dispensed with,- at least the highly coloured idiom Yeats has in view. Idiom of that kind is living poetry, and we can understand the poet's eagerness to draw on it. Note also how the poet talks of this language as if it were the business of a lifetime to acquire it. We may be sure that Wordsworth had nothing of this in his mind, when he talked of the language of peasants. He certainly reproduces nothing of it.

But the passage is interesting as showing the conviction these writers have of the differing modes and strata of language in English. Each poet 'makes' his own language. This comes near confirming Gray's view that every considerable poet adds to the poetic language. Only he seems to have viewed this language as a sort of snowball gathering weight as it goes on, and in the end diverging at all points from the living speech. Yeats' idea is of course the opposite.

One /
One wonders if this curiosity on the part of writers as to their medium is a good or a bad sign. We are somewhat reassured when we scan the great critical places in the world's literature. Dante wrote a book on the language of poetry. Ben Jonson and Milton wrote grammars and the Discoveries of the former is bright with happy thoughts (culled largely from the later Latins) on the subject. Dryden's Prefaces are largely devoted to considerations of language, and then there are Gray, Johnson, Wordsworth and a host of others down to our own day. Yes, it is a healthy sign when the workman examines his tools. However, there are contrary views. The Irish writer, John Eglinton takes such pre-occupation with language to be a sign of dwindling genius. Taken in conjunction with the deliberate seeking out of old myths and peasant speech, this pre-occupation may warn us that in John Eglinton's words "we have reached the stage 'when the poetic and mythopoeic faculty deserted the dis-illusioned Greeks' and when in consequence 'they began to speculate on the nature of poetry.' Further 'when the moderns perceiving a certain void in their lives, have begun to ask for an ideal poetic art springing directly out of modern life, it has been found necessary to investigate the origin and nature of poetry.'

The positions assigned to Mr. Yeats in the above alleged conversation are quite intelligible. They are supported by his remarks in Samhain and elsewhere. He evidently places more emphasis on wordcraft than most poets, in fact he seems to encourage the view that poetry lies ready made in the living speech of innocent land-dwellers. This may /
may be one more illusion about Arcadia. But he supported the view to the extent of persuading Synge to sojourn in the Arran Islands for the sole purpose of getting up that warm speech which he declared was beyond his own powers. It is easy to laugh with Mr. Moore at the idea of Synge, late of Montmartre, eavesdropping from the rafters on peasant folk. We may think the quest very much on all fours with that hideous hunt for old furniture, pewter pots and chimney pieces which shows our art people in such a grotesque light. It is, some will say, all a part of the perennial tribute of sated civilisation to Arcadia and as in Spenser's pastoral episode in the Faerie Queen, there is a suggestion of ill-breeding in the interloping emissary of civilisation.

To return for a moment to the seeming opposition of idiom and grammar. A language which dispenses with grammar was said to be the less capable of orderly thought. We have very little grammar left in English, if by grammar we mean inflections, and yet we boast that English is capable not indeed of the logical precision of French, but of any required degree of exactness.

But a tongue need not be grammarless, though it is not like the classical tongues elaborately inflected. Inflections are, up to a point, a safeguard against the speedy dissolution of a tongue. When Sidney called English grammarless, he had in mind the classical tongues with their invariable, and often ponderous inflections, and their consequent ability to vary the position of words indefinitely. When the neo-classic poets tried to imitate these inversions they fell into bad obscurity. But as Mr. Jespersen in his suggests, the latter tendency of modern tongues /
tongues is to drop inflections. Modern English is here in advance of German. Indeed a highly organised system of inflections is a sign of primitiveness, and one wonders how the Latin maintained itself intact in this respect. A tongue which involves us in such a senseless formula as Harum bonarum puellarum and worse indulges in the very fee-
fo-fum of speech. It may be that, in English, idioms to a certain extent are a substitute for grammar. The hard lines which grammar gives to a language are indispensable to anything above the amoebic stage of thought. Idioms are picturesque approximations to thought - paths blazed in the woods of Tarmain. A tongue rich in idioms gives proof of a people's richly stored experience of a long settled community. Idioms however tend to give way before 'education'. Cultural modes of expression tend to drive out ancestral traits of language, which persist only among the more primitive land-dwellers. A sense of great loss assails us when we read a single page of seventeenth century prose, and that even of what is called classical prose, Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying for example or any of Donne's sermons. Here are the swelling classical periods, the rich but often homely imagery, the Shakes-
pearean phrase, but all is linked together by infinite ties of homely associations, too homely for our taste sometimes, and these associations are maintained by English idioms. And in a non-classical writer like Fuller or L'Estrange, we are simply amazed at the network of shrewd vernacular idiom struck immediately out of life. It is not all idiom of course. As often it is mere simile. And as was pointed out earlier, a good deal of what looks like genuine idiom is simply crude expression having no roots /
roots in the language.

The main idea held fanatically by some of the neo-classics was calculated to root out this jungle of primitive expression and replace it not indeed by grammar and accident - these they rather further discouraged as being archaic, - but by careful syntax. As before, we absolutely except the work of the eighteenth century satirists and colloquial writers from this judgment. They are admirably idiomatic, though their idioms are not of course of the poetical sort demanded by Mr. Yeats.

The early romantics both in prose and poetry, laboured to bring back to the tongue poetical and forceful words 'long had in delictis'. It was however the 'pre-Raphaelite' poets who saw how much more subtly effective it was to revive the dead state of grammar and syntax than merely to sprinkle a few obsolete words over their page after the manner of the opening canto of Childe Harold, and the Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

But taking a wider view, we note that the first flush of romantic writing is marked by extreme insensitive-nness to word-values and a fine contempt of grammar. This must not be applied too harshly to Keats who of course displays a fine sensitiveness though he makes innumerable errors of taste in his experimenting with words. And it does not apply to Shelley at all. Nor can we say that Coleridge and Wordsworth are careless of grammar or lacking in word-sense. But for the commoner rout of romantics ranging from Southey to Byron, there is no word for the in carelessness and sensitiveness in which their characteristic work is involved. Scott and Byron are of course proverbs of
of carelessness and insensitiveness. In their poetry we are constantly being 'let down' by some appalling commonplace, some outworn rag of speech, or melodramatic flourish, or gross solecism. As for the minors, Southey, Campbell, Moore, with their Oriental romances, nothing can equal the tawdriness and poetical rigmarole we are invited to hearken to by these minstrels. Lalla Rookh is positively the most ill-conditioned piece of writing of the age with the possible exception of Hunt's Story of Rimini produced the year before (1816). Indeed we might well take the five years of romantic poetry before Shelley began to write as the most lax and - so far as fineness of texture is concerned - ill-conditioned in our tongue. Such is the view of a great contemporary. De Quincey in his essay on Rhetoric and again in his essay on Style declares that the poets of his day - the great day of Scott, Byron, Campbell, Moore, Southey, - seemed to have deserted grammar altogether. He wishes to protect and restore the pure idioms of the tongue which were in danger of being replaced by a 'Latinised and artificial phraseology.' He says "Writers felt that already, in this one act of preference shown to the artificial vocabulary, they had done enough to establish a differential character of regular composition, and on that consideration thought themselves entitled to neglect the combination of their words into sentences or periods." Non-idiomatic English was his bugbear and the journalists were the enemy. The language of life and the language of books were contrasted. "The idiom of our language, the mother tongue, survives only among women and children." In the essay on Rhetoric he says "With the single /
single exception of William Wordsworth who has paid an
honourable attention to the purity and accuracy of his
English, we believe that there is not one celebrated author
of this day who has written two pages consecutively without
some flagrant impropriety in the grammar (such as the
eternal confusion of the preterite with the past participle,
confusion of verbs transitive with intransitive, etc.) or
some violation more or less of the vernacular idiom."

It is piquant to find that the precious English
he seeks for, that is idiomatic, colloquial English, is to
be found in the correspondence of spinster ladies of good
family! They are untouched by academic frigidity. They
have been bred up in gentlemanly families where good English
is habitually spoken. Only they are liable to copy the
boorish idiom of Nurse Bridget as well as their gentlemanly
fathers and brothers.

It is rather upsetting to be told that the early
romantics were insensitive on the point of language. Have
we not been told that Romantic art plays with the exquisite
hues and harmonies of words and extracts from them the most
subtle flavours? This is true of mature romantic art, but
our romantic era emerged only gradually out of various
morbid conditions, galloped out of sickly sentimentality into
strutting heroics, and downright vulgarity, relapsing from
one fit of bad taste into another until Shelley’s lamp
arose over the waters.

An exception to these censures has been made in the case of Coleridge. But he too offend in the two or
three...
three works by which he is best known. It is instructive to compare the first edition of the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* with the second. The poet has in the latter moderated both the archaism and the ghoulishness of the original. Perhaps Wordsworth influenced him here. The silly Chattertonian archaism has largely gone - *clombe*, *sterte*, *Pheere* (*fere* - companion) etc. disappear. The revisions of a poet and critic like Coleridge are always interesting. In the later versions of "*Christabel*" he altered little, but those alterations - some of them - are curious. Be it confessed that there are passages in this admired work which look like poetic rigmarole with all the romantic bathos and obviousness of epithet which the Lockharts and Milmans and Giffords loved to flagellate.

Sometimes one wonders how a work so full of puerilities can be quoted with such fervour. Take the passage -

"The lady wiped her moist cold brow
And faintly said, 'tis over now"

which certainly is an improvement on the original last line  -  "And faintly said 'I'm better now'"
or

"o weary lady Geraldine
I pray you drink this cordial wine
It is a wine of virtuous powers
My mother made it of wild flowers"

which again is better than the old lines -

"Nay, drink it up, I pray you do
Believe me it will comfort you."

Here is the very thing we ridicule in Hunt and sometimes in Keats - that conversational stuff in a serious setting which results in bathos (as here), or vulgarity, as in Hunt. But besides that, the whole passage is like Walter Scott at his worst. It is rigmarole! We would not insist with some /  Perhaps we So will give th. 18th Cent. romanti enough exist here.

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Perhaps, we can find a possible resonant counterpart to Coleridge's writing -

"Down the steep bank let's ride
To help him if he asks it.
But when she bid him bear, arise
'It is my life, my lord,' he says
And shrinks to a second away."

---

Tom Wright's *Ancient Graces* contain such lines. The romantic manner it does not a poem -
some that every line (not to speak of every phrase or clause) of a poem should be in itself quotable. The unit of poetical expression may be something more extended than the phrase or line. With romantics like Coleridge (in part) the unit of expression must be extended to the paragraph and that is true of the whole early romantic school. They are quotable only in blocks. Or take the passage from Christabel - 11 634 - 648.

Within the Baron’s heart and brain  
If thoughts like thee had any share,  
They only swelled his rage and pain  
And did but work confusion there.  
His heart was o’er with pain and rage  
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,  
Dishonoured thus in his old age;  
Dishonoured by his only child  
And all his hospitality  
To the insulted daughter of his friend  
By more than woman’s jealousy  
Brought to this disgraceful end.  
He rolled his eye with stern regard.  

"What miserable stuff" the casual reader may be tempted to say! What "turns of speech" or "dance of words" as the neoclassic writers would say! And are there not lines here deserving of the wooden spoon? And yet the reader knows that Coleridge is one of the early and greatest masters of vowelled melody. As Professor Grierson, Macneil and Dixon say: "Into the Palace of Art towards which Collins was struggling, Coleridge enters and behind him follow Keats and Tennyson, Rossetti and Morris." We may admit that where Coleridge uses phrases like her eyes so blue, he is imitating what he imagines to be the simplicity of the ballad. And there are many passages where the witchery of words is felt by every reader. The chamber into which Christabel is led is perhaps the earliest anticipation of the intenser decorative manner of the pre-Raphaelites.

The moon shines dim in the open air  
and  

The English Parnassus 11. 735
And not a sunbeam enters here
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain;
For a lady's chamber meet.
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet
The silver lamp burns dead and dim
But Christabel the lamp will trim
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright
And left it swinging to and fro
While Geraldine in wretched plight
Sank down upon the floor below.

Here are exploited those words which became the darlings
of the pre-Raphaelite poets, low, dim, cold, and here
are those perhaps too frequent "turns" of words or artful
repetitions of phrase which, in the previously quoted passage,
were a little ridiculous. We will have to wait till
Keats gives us the Eve of St. Mark for a like kind of art.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is such a tour de force, and its qualities so well understood, that we need
not do more than ask the question, why such lines as those
quoted below immediately achieve their object. Coleridge
contrives with a minimum of words, and these very ordinary
ones, to give us as happy an experience of what Professor
Wm. Lyon Phelps calls a "spinal chill" as any passage in
literature does.

The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup
My life-blood seemed to trip
The stars were dim, and thick the night
The steersman's face by the lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

How is it, we ask, that such verse, so affected in a sense,
so unartful with its naive inversions and 'dids' and 'clombs'
and that hideous "as at a cup" never fails of its effect?
Part of the secret lies no doubt in the use of those potent
little /
l little monosyllables underlined. Rossetti uses them in the same way in The Blessed Damoel, perhaps the most authentic piece of pre-Raphaelite writing we have. Compare the magical monosyllabic lines—

The wild winds blew,
The white foam flew
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

But to attempt to discover the technical sources—or to explain them in a satisfactory way—of such effects of genius is foolishness. Suffice it to say that the poet gets his main effect from unconsidered snappy little words which involve us in clusters of emphatic consonants—up, cup, think, did, drip, tip, dip. The teeth are as it were clenched, and the poet for the moment waives aside mere vowelled melody, of which at another time he is such a master, as in Kubla Khan.

Coleridge then may claim to be the first of the modern poets to discover the inner secrets of word-craft—the first to show how the melody of vowel-music might be varied, and so made more poignant, by the rudeness and curtness of monosyllabic English. The Ancient Mariner is a marvellous instance of the coloured effects of low words—

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

and of the extreme effect of mere strangeness of word

I looked upon the rotting sea

The cold sweat melted from their limbs
Nor rot nor reek did they

and Note also the naive effects got from the word up

looked sideways up, The moving moon went up the sky

And nowhere did abide;
Softly she was going up
And a star or two beside.

and Morris' Defence of Guenevere p.
and lastly of the effect of words like *slid* (That slid into my soul), *gush’d* (used several times, e.g. 'A spring of love gushed from my heart) and of the constant use of *did* and *do*.

In a word Coleridge gains his verbal effects by denying all the things that Dryden had pleaded for in the *Defence of the Epilogue*. We have come full circle again. But Coleridge was a miraculous exception to the Baevian host of early romantics, and must be regarded as the precursor of the later school of pre-Raphaelite, than one with the Southeys, Moores and Campbells.

If the reader wishes to measure the degree of this early romantic foolishness, and this is the measure of justification for the Blackwood and Quarterly Reviewers, let him read but a page of Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, then pass to *Gertrude of Wyoming*, and taking *Lalla Rookh* and *The Cladur* by the way, finish up with the incomparable *Story of Rimini*. One hesitates to call them artists in words at all! And first of Scott! The proof that this lawlessness and insensitiveness is due in part to the kind of poetry these men were writing is made out pretty well by Scott's own case. His lyrics are of course almost Shakespearian. They rank very high even in this form of poetry which is England's boast, and his *Introductions to Marmion*, especially the *First* are positively great verse in the neo-classic manner. They are really predominantly neo-classic — and are of the kind to delight Dr. Courthope — the spirit of nationalism and lofty patriotism was surely never displayed to better purpose, and the language is not lax, not romantic commonplace! It is fine nervous English, irradiated here and there by flashes of high romantic phrasing.

Now pass to a page of the romance proper. What a change is here! Now we are in the country of slipshod syntax and stumbling grammar and tawdry epithet. Perhaps it will be said /
said that Scott even in his romantic fervour is really still neo-classic in diction. This is largely true. Even his early Ballads are full of obvious neo-classic phrase. So are the romances. This merely substantiates what has already been said of Crabbe, that an old manner may persist in spite of a new aesthetic outlook. But how commonplace it all is! What insensitiveness! Bravely it gallops forward to its appointed close. Here are high spirits and gallant family pride, but no pride of 'curious' workmanship. How different from contemporary Landor with his boast "The name is graven on the workmanship!" Take a passage from Rokeby -

(V.111)

Now through the woods' dark mazes past
The opening lawn he reach'd at last
Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled
That frown'd of old around its head;
The battlement, the turrets gray
Seem'd half-abandon'd to decay
On barbican and keep of stone
Stern Time the foreman's work had done.
Where banners the invader braved
The harebell now and wallflower waved.

It is easy now to smile at this daubing, the constant and puerile inversions, the weak epithets and monotonous hurry of the piece, but it gives the throb and the showy diction of romance which the ordinary uncultured person, the average man will always respond to. Scott was a sort of poetical journalist. He turned out reams of such stuff before breakfast. His phraseology repeats itself in blocks - trembling drawbridge, turrets grey, grim portcullis, latticed oriels, grated casement, prancing steeds, blithesome cheer, etc., in short the brave old customary language of the high heart.

Due perhaps to some extent to the example of Percy who did not hesitate to touch up his ancient Ballads in a manner and degree which would now be regarded as shameful.

We have already suggested that in his King Arthur Green Thomas Warton anticipated the romantic language of Scott, etc.

* We have already suggested that in his King Arthur Green Thomas Warton anticipated the romantic language of Scott, etc.
heart. Vestiges of this language appear in the old natural romances and very decidedly in Chaucer in moments of excitement.

This is a common enough notion that, great master of language as he was, Chaucer came too early to display the ardent or languorous language of the true romantic poet. His epithets, it is true, are as a rule poor and trite. But one can instance many passages which show that the tricks (to use a convenient word) of romantic art were quite at his command. Look at the Death of Arcite in the Knightes Tale - 11. 2685-9.

"when the hezte felte death
Dusked his eyen two, and fallyed breath,
But on his lady yet caste he his ye
His laste word was 'mercy, Emelye.'"

or 2696-9

"For he was yet in memorie and alive
And always crying after Emelye"

or that line which is charged with romantic force

"His voys was as a trumpet"

Here is an echo of Swinburne.

2423-34

"And eek the dore, clatereden full faste,
Of which Arcite som-what him agaste

- - - - -

and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe
And with that soon he herde a murmuring,
Ful Rowe and dim, that sayde thus 'Victoria,'
whilst the description of the combat might do honour to Walter Scott.

"Tho' were the gates shut, and cryed was loute;
Do now your devolr, yonge knighetes proudes;
Now ringen trompes loute and clarion
Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke
He felthe through the herte-spoon the prikke
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte

But /

He uses this word three times in the piece eg; 2358 - the arms in the case
"Of the goddess clateren faste and ringe"
But enough has been said to show what the observing student of Chaucer always knew, that the eternal language of battle and romance is used by him just as it is by Sir Walter Scott in his battlepieces, where falchions flash, and shafts shiver on the shield and arms clatter, and the voices of the Captains thunder like trumpets. We suggest further that that subtler language of romance which Keats and the pre-Raphaelite poets, Rossetti and Morris and Swinburne, intensified and revived rather than discovered, is not beyond Chaucer in rare moments; as that passage alone perhaps proves.

Full low and dim

We have referred to the fine Introductory Cantos of Marmion. It would be unfair to Scott to pretend that his work is entirely of the slap-dash romantic order. That species of panegyric verse which was at its height in the time of Addison and of which Addison's Campaign and Prior's Carmen Saeулare are respectable examples, is altogether overtopped by the glowing verse of the first Marmion Introduction. This composition shows what Scott could do when ardent conviction inspired his pen. Here is the fine passage on Pitt quoted by Lord Rosebery on the Death of Gladstone. -

Hadst thou but lived, though stripp'd of power
A watchman on the lonely tower
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land
When fraud or danger were at hand
By thee as by the beacon-light
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke
The trumpet's silver voice is still
The warder silent on the hill.

Then we have the sombre lines

Oh, /
Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey
With Pallinure's unaltered mood
Firm at his dangerous post he stood.

The mingling of clear romantic imagery in this verse, imagery which makes the borderlands stand out starkly against the national destiny, the mingling of this with a language which is never very far from the best language of the eighteenth century poets, is very striking, and happily we have a good deal of this in Scott. And whilst it is possible to quote whole pages of mere rant and fustian of romantic speech, there are numerous passages of a generous enough poetry for those who are not so delicate-stomached as to spurn at every obvious epithet, or laugh at the time-honoured jargon of robust romantic poetry of the ballad sort.

The same censure of laxness and commonplace will be passed on William Morris. It really comes to this, that there is a type of poetry which does not pretend to incredible polish and finesse, or even to high inspiration. Morris would say that poetry is simply the workman singing at the loom, and we can’t expect ravishing verse in such circumstances. We understand that Morris’s lack of polish is due to his conception of what poetry is meant to be. Perhaps the same charitable cloak may cover Scott’s shortcomings too. For was not Sir Walter a minstrel imitating the rude melodies of his clan? Perhaps we would be right to say that there are two main strands of romantic art. Scott and Morris may well stand for the one, Keats and Rossetti for the other. The first owes its vital breath to the inspiration of ballad literature, and is chiefly interested in telling a story, sometimes rather breathlessly, and /
and is always in too great a hurry to pick any but the most obvious flowers by the way. We include Morris here although, as a pre-Raphaelite, he was fond of conventional and rich decorations. Yeats, it will be remembered, that Morris 'made' a language for himself. This however is more observable in his translations, and his epic work - Sigurd the Volsung - and a terrible language it can be! Scott, we say, contented himself in the main with a language whose basis was eighteenth century poetic expression. Both however, write with a certain carelessness of language, partly due to the hurry of the story. They bolt their speech. There are obvious affinities between the two men, both busy men of affairs and both of a generous carelessness of temper, and a genius which is on a puzzlingly low level of inspiration.

The other strain of romantic work, that associated with Keats, and Rossetti, is absorbed in word values and verbal magic. They are the poets who 'put green'

\[ \text{His early work is of course in the express pre-Raphaelite manner -} \]

See through my long throat how the words go up
In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand
The shadows lie like wine within a cup
Of marvellously colour'd gold; yeashow
This little wind is rising, look you up
And wonder how the light is falling so
Within my moving tresses

Curious how the poets of this school are fond of the ugly word up - of the Coleridge passage que\(\text{\textasciitilde} \) the

Keats.
Green' into poetic language as someone said of Rousseau and the French tongue. They are the greater artists of course, and they strive to get values out of words, which it is almost beyond words to conjure up. Remember the list of words headed "stunning words for poetry" found in Rossetti's papers.

Now the early romantic poets who display like Scott an abysmal lack of word-sensitiveness and grammar are all of the first class-storytellers, and their tales are mostly exotic-oriental or Hindu.

Take a passage from Southey's *Curse of Kehama*:

**Book I.11**

"Vainly ye blessed twinklers of the night
Your feeble beams ye shed
Quenched in the unnatural light which might out-starren

Even the broad eye of Day;
And thou from thy celestial way
Fourest O moon, an ineffectual ray!
For lo, ten thousand torches flame and flare
Upon the midnight air
Blotting the lights of heaven
With one portentous glare
Behold /

Whilst the passage quoted is not untypical of the *Curse of Kehama*, it must in justice be said that the later Roderick, although hardly 'the first poem of the time' as Byron generously said, is written in a truer and quieter language which sometimes recalls Arnold's style in *Sohrab and Rustum*. In the earlier *Thalaba* we descry just a touch of the pre-Raphaelite word artistry which is so marked in Keats' *Eve of St. Mark*. -

for a brother's eye
Were her long fingers tinged
As when she trimmed the lamp
And through the veins and delicate skin
The light shone rosy
Behold the fragrant smoke in many a fold Ascending, floats along the fiery sky And hangeth visible on high A dark and waving canopy.

And so on -

Campbell in his long poem, is equally destitute of art, the diction is commonplace beyond belief, and has not a little of that mawkishness which was now about to invade English poetry and become a chief blemish in young Keats.

Lalla Rookh appeared in 1817 and the fact that it passed through several editions in that year shows that public taste was at low ebb. Leigh Hunt's Story of Rimini was published the year before and seems to have set the vogue in this familiar, rather vulgar, sentimental style. We have already discussed the appearance of the Bernesque style in English poetry. There is something beyond Berni in Hunt and his School - a cheaper vein of sentiment, a diction now dropping into hideous conversational tags, now revoltingly luscious and bad.

"'Twas a fair scene - a land more bright Never did mortal eye behold! Who could have thought, that saw this night Those valleys and their fruits of gold Basking in Heaven's serenest light; - Those groups of lovely date-trees bending Languidly their leaf-crown'd heads Like youthfull maides, when sleep descending Warns them to their silken beds."

Lovely date-trees, glorious black eyes, eyes so blue, such is the power of epithet till Keats introduced true romantic epithet. /
epithet. But the climax of this missishness (to use an excellent word of Professor Saintsbury's)

And how felt he the wretch'd man
Reclining there ————? 

From the Story of Rimini the monstrous offspring of Leigh Hunt and Italian Story, we need cite only a line or two. The front of Hunt's offence is that he has chosen the most tragic and exquisitely told love story in Dante to degrade with his vulgar familiarities.

"May I come in?" said he: — it made her start, — That smiling voice; — she colour'd,pressed her heart
A moment, as for breath, and then with free
And usual tone said, — "O, yes, — certainly."

This is the very stamp of the so-called Cockney school— its missishness. Professor Saintsbury instances from Keats the use of 'very' — He will speak
And tell thee that my prayer is very weak
or (the second line of I stood tiptoe.)

"The air was cooling and so very still."

"When I read about the 'Swart planet in the universe of weeds'" says Professor Saintsbury, "I bethink me of Ancient Pistol — not as I would. And the opening of the Third Book (of Endymion) for twenty lines at least resembles nothing so much as the result of the combination of some wooden spoon among the University wits of the late sixteenth century with the most spasmodic of spasmodics in the mid-nineteenth." Let nobody imagine that the Story of Rimini is destitute of merit. A poet is here confessed, a poet worth twenty Moores or Campbells if these poets had not other and high claims in the ode and lyric sort.

And twixt the wood and flowery walks, half-way
And form'd of both, the loveliest portion lay
A spot, that struck you like enchanted ground
It was a shallow dell, set in a mound
Of sloping orchards, — fig and almond trees
Cherry and pine, with some few cypresses
Down by whose roots, descending darkly still
(You saw it not, but heard), there gushed a rill
Whose low sweet talking seem'd as if it said
Something eternal to that happy shade.

A curious medley of inferior taste and not inferior poetry.
But why should Hunt be denied all beneficial influence on Keats? Why merely held up to opprobrium?

O'er the door was carv'd a sacrifice
By girls and shepherds brought, with reverent eyes
Of sylvan drinks and foods, simple and sweet
And goats with struggling horns and planted feet
And round about, ran, on a line with this
In like relief, a world of pagan bliss.

Anyone knows that here is the original of some good passages in Keats, even down to the inevitable prosaic flaw underlined.

Hunt's views on poetry are fully laid bare in his *Imagination and Poetry 1814*. It must be said that jaunty and pragmatic as he is over the matter, he has a quite modern aesthetic. One is forced to think that the elder race of critics have done him an injury. He was a true though occasionally vulgar son of song, and he had clear views as to how poetry might be rescued from the still clanking irons of eighteenth century theory.

We spoke of *The Giaour 1813* because it best illustrates Byron's kinship with these early and slapdash romantics. The language is largely neo-classic. Despite his romantic vein had all his life sympathies and affinities with the satirical school of Pope, and also with the method and manner of *Windsor Forest*.

*Fair clime, where every season smiles*
*Benignant o'er those blessed isles,*
*Which, seen from far Colonne's height*
*Make glad the heart that hails the sight*
*And lend to loneliness delight.*

*There mildly dimpling, ocean's cheek*
*Reflects the tints of many a peak*
*Cought by the laughing tides that lave*
*These Edens of the eastern wave;*
*And if at times a transient breeze*
*Break the blue crystal of the seas*
*Or sweep one blossom from the trees*
*How welcome is each gentle air*
*That wakes and wafts the odours there!*

*For there - the Rose o'er crag or vale*
*Sultana of the Nightingale,*

The /
The maid for whom the melody
His thousand songs are heard
on high

Blooms blushing to her lover's tale.

This is pure Tom Moore, the phraseology, the
commonest stuff of the false romantics, and the whole
treatment inferior. There is not much to choose
between Byron's early romantic stuff, his Giaour and
Corsairs and Southey's terrible Curse of Kehama. These
years 1813-17 are however extremely interesting to the
student because he sees in them English poetry in a
strange passing fashion, outwardly of wild attire, and
much dishevelled, but inwardly common-place and in fact
vulgar to the core. Look at the Siege of Corinth,
written mostly in the year of Waterloo, when Leigh Hunt
was busy over the Story of Rimini and Moore was meditating
his Lalla Rookh, and when Scott had just published
his poem on the great battle itself. They are all
of one style of slatternly workmanship, and if one may
be allowed a heterodox opinion, the best of them or
at least the one which displays a truer vein of poetry
is the most ridiculed, the Story of Rimini.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one

As the wolves that headlong go
On the stately buffalo

Thus against the wall they went
Thus the first were backward bent

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain.
Such is the work which caused such palpitation in London drawing rooms! It all reads like a child's attempt at versifying. Surely many a nursery has furnished better verse. It is amazing that Byron in the very year of Rimini (1816) was able to follow this up with The Prisoner of Chillon a poem of grave and sustained beauty, where the best part of our tongue is used with colloquial ease and art, and indeed with something of Dante's power over sombre language. The same is true of the Lament of Tasso, Mazeppa and Dante's Prophecy.

It was in Don Juan of course that his true genius shone forth. The suggestion of caricature in the early romantic poem is suddenly realised in the amazing art of our greatest comic poem. It almost seems as if Byron had been guilty of himself all the time he wrote in the romantic vein, and saving himself up for a supreme outburst of spleen directed against that vein. Not that the old manner with its crudities is dead. No, it survives in many a passage, but it seems now applied with far greater art. True, even in a sublime-ly rhetorical poem inset like 'The Isles of Greece', the penchant for the commonplace and the prosaic can still deface a line or verse.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations: all were his;
He counted them at break of day
And when the sun set, where were they?

Or

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine
Our virgins dance beneath the shade-
I see their glorious black eyes shine
But gazing on each glowing maid
My own the burning tear-drop lavés
To think such breasts must suckle slaves
Or in the narrative itself we will constantly find even the grave beauty of the verse cheapened by a careless passage or cheap epithet

And then a slave bethought her of a harp
The harper came, and tuned his instrument
At the first note, irregular and sharp
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent
Then to the wall she turn'd, as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow, through her heart re-sent

And he began a long low island-song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

It is well not to be too fastidious, otherwise we render ourselves incapable of enjoying the common fare of mankind. If such blemishes as are noted above send the reader away from Byron in disgust, he may be sure that his stomach is too queasy. For anyone who is not aware that the colloquial speech is being used to its limit of grave and beautiful expression in these serious stanzas is insensitive indeed.

As for the prevailing mock element of Don Juan has anything in our poetry quite equalled it? Has the shrewdest vernacular ever been put to more risible uses? We have suggested that the poet's apprenticeship to the slapdash romantic school helped to make him the greatest master of the Bernesque style who ever lived. Is it possible to believe that he wrote his Giaours and Corsairs without accumulating a store of fierce reaction against the strutting heroics of that style? English Bards and Scotch Reviewers at the outset of his career proves the contrary. Further the curious space of commonplace and vulgarity in serious romantic poetry which we have noticed, served his purpose well when, with easy art, he turned to the Bernesque manner. It was not a far step from
the serious stuff of Hunt and Moore or even Southey to the exquisite mockery of Don Juan. Just a little more indulgence in the vulgar, and the trick is done.

It was in Beppo that Byron first discovered a poetic language which suited his mocking genius. Beppo is not a burlesque. William Tennant, the Scotch schoolmaster who first approximated to the style of the Italian Pulci, and Hookham Frere whose mock-heroic *Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work* intended to comprise the most interesting particulars relating to King Arthur and his Round Table 1817-18, were the immediate precursors of Beppo. Byron rather uses the style to express his daring wit and vigorous personality. But as has been said the marvellous success of this style is not a little due to the fact that contemporary serious poetry hovered so near the abyss of ridicule, and it may be that Byron would have found his way to it independently of the example of Frere. His 'horror of poetry' had been nourished on the wretched pseudo-romantic stuff fashionable when he was a young man, and his own performances in that vein though they brought him fame, must have caused him some shamefacedness. Never did style fall so timely into the hands of a master than did this style now.

If an explanation of the insensitiveness of these romantics to the beauty of phrase, it may be found partly (in Coleridge and Scott, and perhaps Byron) in the fact that they supposed themselves to be rude minstrels imitating a style of poetry in vogue long before correctness or beauty of or continuity of phrase were thought of. They had liberated themselves from the neo-classic style, which did, at its best, insist on the scanning of every phrase. Further they wrote largely in galloping octosyllabics. The octosyllabic /
octosyllabic line is, except in the hands of a master like Milton, too short for supreme verbal effect.

When we turn to that other 'tadpole of the Lakes' John Keats, we feel as Johnson in a famous passage felt on approaching the sacred soil of Iona. We feel that something new and great is about to happen to English poetry, and that it can never be quite the same again. This may seem the language of idolatry and not 'on this side' either. But really Keats' influence has so worked into the texture of English poetry and the English imagination that it is hard to speak of him without idolatry.

There is nothing of eighteenth century sciolism in Keats. On the contrary from him we date the modern repudiation of wisdom, of the cultures and sciences in poetry and in modern art generally. It was not for nothing that Matthew Arnold felt himself repelled by the genius of this poet. Arnold stood for the cultural intellectual view of poetry, though of course he was too great a critic and poet not to insist on the concreteness and emotionalism of art. Many a man since has deplored the fact that Keats more than any single author helped to effect a radical change in the direction of English poetry. The new direction is towards sensationalism, and towards the utilisation of methods borrowed from the other arts. Doubtless Coleridge did something here too. New musical values, a hint of something we might call orchestration, are strongly suggested by Coleridge's characteristic work. His exploitation of mystery and magic impelled him to force words to their maximum of strangeness and suggestiveness, and their full sensational value. In the Preface to his Tales from
the Hall 1806, Crabbe protests against the new use of words. He is all for the bare and literal or dictionary meaning. Doubtless he felt in the search for strange and suggestive phraseology, he would be left far behind. Therefore he ranges himself with the school of Wordsworth. In many ways in his cold realism, in his natural description, and in his rejection of that cheerfulness, which as Johnson said, would always keep creeping in, he is of the new age. But his technique is definitely neo-classic, and neo-classicism demanded plain meanings for words.

Keats on the other hand is the dream-artist whose work seems to corroborate the view that romantic art aims at inducing a state of hypnosis. He is Nietzsche's Apollonian poet who escapes the misery of the real world by resolving its harsh appearances into tolerable dream-shapes. In this respect he resembles Spenser, only, in Spenser's case 'the two-handed engine at the door' was a disturbing element. Keats was not troubled by parian energies, but occasionally we hear muffled echoes of the real and painful world from this 'shadow upon the skirts of human nature dwelling lone.' How is it that these echoes of the real world strike us as almost in bad taste - the reference to the avaricious brothers in Isabella with their red-rulled ledger.

"Closed in and vineyarded from beggar spies" and the suggestion in the opening lines of the second part of Lamia that love in a cottage leads to hate. We have bargained with the poet to keep the room fast-shuttered against the garish light of day, and he just here and there lets a chink of light appear. So in the Isabella, that passage describing the means by which the brothers obtained their...
With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt
In torched mines, and noisy factories
And many once proud-quivered loins did melt
In blood from stinging whip — with hollow eye
Many all day in dazzling river stood
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

(Isabella XIV.)

This is rather revolting in a romantic setting. Note also
the false archaism swelt and the hideous—bd form, torched,
and the impossible compound proud-quivered. Doubtless
parallels in Elizabethan diction can be found in plenty,
which perhaps leads a critic like Professor Saintsbury to
an undue lenity when he says of the Quarterly reviewer —
"He could not stomach the diction; his objections to it
being partly well-founded, but much more largely based on
ignorance of the real history and principles of English."

Mr. Buxton Forman saw in the following passage (XV) —

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath
And went all naked to the hungry shark
For them his ears gush'd blood, etc.

an echo of a passage in Dryden's Annus Mirabilis. But we
cannot find that Keats took anything from Dryden except
perhaps something of the tone and phrasing of the Fables.

Such a curtained art as Keats demands the most
extraordinary dealing with words. The poet is playing on
our sensory nerves and any ruffling of temper through mala-
droit language will "abuse the curtained sleeper". It must
be said that despite a hundred errors of taste, Keats
contrives to bemuse us to the point of ecstasy. The open
way to Nirvana is here and the potent spells of words are
the glowworm signposts.

At the same time the maturing Keats showed signs
of something greater or at least different. He had imbibed from *Paradise Lost* a love of the heroic. His letters show him stretching forth towards epical greatness, the gigantesque. It was Cowden Clarke who "show'd me that epic was of all the king - Round, vast and spanning all like Saturn's ring Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke.

The conflict between illusion and epical grandeur appears in his last great work, the Hyperion. Not that the two are incompatible, but Keats' strain of illusion would militate against the energy and detail which after all are necessary to the conduct of an epic. In Endymion he had lost himself in the world of dreams, because of the leaden movement of the action. In Isabella, Boccaccio's well-told tale is teased out unconsciously by decorative indulgences. What of Hyperion? Does his leaning towards statuesque grouping, rather than towards a dynamic cast of art, hopelessly delay such action as we are permitted to behold here? The poem opens in most opiate strain. Leaden slumber charms down our eyelids. But would we be justified in saying that this heavy-footed action ruins the poem? Keats himself definitely ascribed its failure (in the sense that it was unfinished) to the language employed. "There were too many Miltonic inversions." By inversions he means departure from the ordinary word-order; of the stock neo-classic inversion for rhyme's sake, he shows little. The syntax is not specially Miltonic, and is so only in patches and rarely reaches true Miltonic density. The rhythm is as slow as rhythm can be, as if measuring with too ponderous a beat some truly cyclopean theme. The labour of imitation however lies chiefly in attempted Miltonic "turns" and epic /
epic idioms, and in the balance and poise of words, and the
weighting of the lines in which the distributed pause plays
such a great part. The vocabulary while displaying here
and there Keats' fabricating humour (the humour of most
creative poets) is only in small patches Miltonic. And
yet Hyperion is on the face of it a Miltonic imitation, and
how much nearer the original than the didactic imitations of
the previous age! Now it is as if Milton's grand music had
been heard for the first time.

It is not yet quite free from the mawkishness which
disturbs the beauty of Endymion and the early things, but it
is freer in the great first part from those offensive word
and phrase formations which are such a blot on these works.
Keats was clearly learning fast. The imitation of his
favourite Paradise Lost, harmful in one sense, was helping
to clarify taste. He probably would never have settled
down to the speech of his day. That was the one medium
he would not use although he says piously "English ought to
be kept up". No poet more convincingly supports Gray's
idea of poetic diction. A truly great word-master in
process of self-educating, he presents to those who honour
his genius the assurance that, had he lived, he would have
found, perhaps made, that language which he so ardently sought.

Milton was precisely the poet whose language Words-
wort ought to have condemned because it is not only a
startling example of a 'made' language, but it has so power-
fully influenced succeeding generations. He does not censure
him, but reserves his reproach for that pale copy of Milton,
Thomas Gray. Wordsworth indeed never understood that a
more /
more deadly soporific to the Muse is the abstract current language of philosophy." More deadly than any "made" language, so long as it is sensuous, can be. Erasmus Darwin could have taught him this. He himself illustrates how deeply the Miltonic cult has eaten into the language — how any poet may attain a colourable imitation of the style for a little. For example, Wordsworth slips into it every now and again, as in the Invocation to the first book of the Recluse.

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard — In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such, Descend to earth, or dwell in highest heaven.

Jehovah — with his thunder, and the choir Of shouting angels, and th' empyreal thrones — I pass them unalarmed. Not chaos, not The darkest pit, of lowest Erebus Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scoop'd out By help of dreams — can breed such fear and awe and so he passes on very finely to the fierce confederate storm Of sorrow barricaded evermore Within the walls of cities.

This is by way of Invocation. We are pleased to see the author of the Lyrical Ballads Preface and Postscript descending to the grand manner. But none of them can keep it up.

It was the search for an epic tongue "the large utterance of the early gods" which baffled Keats throughout his too short career. Endymion is a failure in this sense, bright as the poem is in other ways. This is what is meant by saying that Keats had the sense of the heroic, of glory, as high-pitched as Milton himself. He could not rest content with his wonderful Odes and descriptive fresco work.
work in Lamià or Isabella. The heroic impulse urged him on to epic. This was the 'vast idea' of Sleep and Poetry "the end and aim of poetry". As Sir Francis Palgrave said, he had "the inspiration and the magnanimity of the great age of our Muses;" more than any, he is the true Elizabethan." But to discover an epic language that would truly correspond to his genius, was evidently beyond him for the moment. And the epic is the kind which invites most to fabrication of tongues.

Apart from his compounds and wonderful epithets by which the poet hoped to rescue poetry from the deplorably obvious epithets of the early romantics, we should note here the insistence on the adverb in Keats' work. Often they are like the epithets, strange looking things. A writer who has elsewhere written admirably on Keats' epithets remarks that "Adverbs are much less common and much less important in English poetry than adjectives — — — — Adverbs, as instruments of abstraction and analysis, are more at home in prose than in poetry." This is quite true of poetry before Keats. Not so/after. Keats will go out of his way to form a weird adverb like angrily, or greyly, or drowningly — which are bad enough. And Browning, like the angular and accurate poet he is, sometimes positively prefers the adverb, uncouth as it is, to the adjective.

As for Endymion, it is not at all Miltonic. Its beauty has been clouded by a good deal of intolerable phrase.

Mr. D. W. Rannie's Article "Keats' Epithets" English Association Publication Vol. III. The quotation is from his Elements of Style' p. 116-117.
The English language is rather badly used by the poet here. It departs so much from ordinary speech that we may regard it as a "made" language. So much is this the case that one must reluctantly support the censure of the bludgeoning article in Blackwood and the milder, (but contemptuously brief) review in the Quarterly. So far only however as diction is concerned. We have already alluded to this subject, and will only say here that in our view these reviews are thoroughly wrong-headed in their criticism of the prosody of Endymion, but not so muddled in their view of the diction. No critical person could allow the language of this poem to pass without remark, especially as it was the language of an untried person. It is thoroughly bad. For example he strains the Elizabethan liberty of using certain words as nouns and verbs or adjectives at will, and uses the most eccentric adverbs -

"And so the dawmed light in pomp receive a hazy light
Spread grely eastward.

His quick gone love
'Mong shepherds gone in eld
What misery most drowningly doth sing
After a thousand mazes overgone.

The poem is full of such blemishes. Isabella has a little of it too, but the Eve of St. Agnes is free of it. Possibly the reason for this is that here Keats first discovers the full potency of the diction that for short we might call Pre-Raphaelite, that is words of curious vertù are unearthed and used with magic skill. Words like Paynim, ave, wassaillers, alarum, amulet, eremite, affrayed, gules, missal, etc.

Palgrave said of the liberties taken in Endymion - "He copied much no doubt, from our elder poets; but he also invents with the /
the freedom which is one of the prerogatives of all poetry, and of all language in a vital condition." This is generous, but one doubts. The Quarterly indeed is not without praise for Keats.

We regard the prosodic system of Endymion, not unnatural and certainly a welcome breakaway from the cast-iron system of the neo-classic couplet, restoring to English verse the liberties it enjoyed in the Elizabethan period. But it is different with language. We cannot allow that a poet has the right to make such widespread changes in the tongue without some compelling reason. It seems to us that Milton had such reason for his own transformation of the tongue. "The language sunk under him." Will anyone contend that the petty changes wrought in the language in Endymion are warranted by any artistic aim?

We have already alluded to Keats' numerous lapses from good taste, especially in Endymion. He was always at his worst in transitions. There he often indulged in rather conceited reflections on social attitudes and often the result is slightly offensive. Look for example at the opening to Book III of Endymion to which Saintsbury allots the wooden spoon of English verse, and the second part of Lamia. At the same time we must not forget the undoubted beauty of Endymion. It is chargeable with all sorts of fault as narrative and as poetry, but it is a well of poetic delight. In Hyperion he is less given up to decoration, though there is plenty of that. The art-motif has changed. His own confession "Milton's verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English must be kept up," is evidence that he knew well
what he was doing, and that such artful epic language was bound to do violence to the tongue. Palgrave cites as the reason for its failure the mythological subject. It is "too late a day" for such matter. But this is not Keats' reason nor do we believe that the mythological subject would have been a fatal bar. Perhaps a truer reason - apart from the very trying style - was that Keats was not by temperament capable of interest in the knowledges and these as we have noted make up a good deal of the old epic. It is difficult to fill up a long poem with sensation however lovely. The epic poet had better balance action and sensation with cultural or instructional interests. This element will of course, demand his best powers to render it poetical. It will be remembered that it was here that Milton had most frequent recourse to a grotesquely Latinised tongue. His didactic vein demanded a novel language and this language was later taken over and made more grotesque by the eighteenth century didactics. Keats of course, did not use that language. His vocabulary in Endymion and Hyperion at least, sound English. But the constant trickery of rhetorical syntax irked him, while the subject grew cold, and Hyperion remained a magnificent torse. The first book is one of the high upland lawns of English poetry. Fatigue makes itself felt in the second. In the third there is hardly an effort to conceal it. The bow of Ulysses is beyond his powers. The great language so magnificently adequate in the first book, becomes strained and tawdry in the third and his old lapses in taste even begin to reappear. The vernacular is avenged. The Fall
of Hyperion is the Fall of John Keats. As an example of this decline of taste —

Surely I have traced

The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper passed
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before
And their eternal calm, and all that face
Or have I dreamed?

The poem tails off most miserably in the old slovenly

would-be poetic language of Endymion, and but for a phrase

here and there reminiscent of Milton, —

Where was he, when the Giant of the sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers

or

For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes.

or

Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellious

Majesties, sovran voices, agonies

Creations and destroyings, all at once

Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,

the poet absolutely abandons the great language. The dense

syntax, classical ellipses and "turns", inversions, and

all the like are gone. One can "trace the steady decline
to the point where the dejected poet threw aside his pen.

We can imagine Byron with his "horror of poetry" crying out

for Pope's colloquial strain after this.

However we note that Keats in this poem has

avoided a mere imitation of the Miltonic vocabulary and

is far more subtle than his predecessors in attempting a

fac simile of Milton's style. He displays even in this

avowedly Miltonic poem far less of the Miltonic word than

Shelley who is, pace Sir Francis Palgrave, a truer Elizabethan

than ever Keats was.

To return for a moment to Keats' curious use of the

adverb. The writer already referred to says —

"Adverbs for the most part express abstraction and subtle

refinement, while the best poetic style is predominantly

concrete /
concrete and simple. Given a noun, a definite object, poetry can exert its imaginative powers to find the proper epithets for it; but to go further and expect it to characterise the action or suffering expressed by verbs may be to set poetry to a task of doubtful dignity, in which failure is likely." - (D. W. Rennie "Elements of Style" p. 116.)

But it was just this nicety, this measuring of degrees of sensation, in which romantic art in Victorian times specialised. Keats may have suggested the exaggerated use of rare adverbs to them. Browning we have already referred to as one who almost preferred the adverb. Tennyson also has many examples of its rare use, eg:

Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her; where is the fault?
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

Swinburne as we shall find later is also proficient in the adverb used with arresting force. It is indeed one of the minor discoveries of the romantics, and Keats sets the fashion as he does in so many things.

Shelley's language is in certain elements far enough from the ordinary speech. Despite the modest protest in the Preface to The Revolt of Islam, he is a true romantic in this, that he relies as much on the subtle excitement of words used out of their ordinary sense, as on his daring and inverted imagery or his intoxicating rhythms. He was censured in his own age and later for his never-ending torrent of vague diction. Firm outline his art did not, as a rule aspire to, and he would not revise. He is like those modern painters who affirm that /
that colour is outline enough. Hence he offended the
taste of an age which had not outlived its neo-classic preju-
dices in favour of accurate draughtsmanship. En revanche
we today find Keats' indolent-seeming indulgence in the
"pleasant smotherings" of Imagination rather tiresome.
Shelley does not merely or basely luxuriate in pleasant
imaginings. When he is vague and torrential, he is so because
of his gropings after the sublime, which has always been
accepted from Longinus' time downwards as a good plea in
extenuation of the Miltonic vague. Like Milton too he
is almost wearisomely addicted to a special group of words,
the primal vocabulary of the Earth spirit (to use the title
of one of A.E.'s books) of Fire, Air, spirit and the
Empyrean. Professor Masson, we remember, drew up a long
list of such words used by Milton, and we note that they
are much the same as those used excessively by Shelley. -
mostly quite common words. But he is also addicted to
another Miltonic class of words - the splendid classicisms
which give Prometheus Unbound the appearance of a fabricated
tongue. This work is not like Keats' Hyperion - the
imitative cast of its great language is very remarkable and
the poem is able to carry off this language successfully.
Shelley had more aptitude than Keats for living in the
higher altitude of great phrase, because he could live
more apart from his kind, and is indeed the desus of Bacon's
whereas the grand "made" language
really chilled Keats' ardent but earthloving genius. Keats
certainly lived nearer humanity and in a grosser atmos-
phere. The Hampstead poet is at all times nearer
Hogarth and Constable, and loved the common English joys.
He is very earthy with all his romantic yearnings. 

had little life in the spirit. Shelley was less genial and social, more demoniac. Keats' Hyperion had no great ethos to support the grand language. Prometheus Unbound, drawn from the same mythological source as Hyperion was as magnificently supported by its ethos as is Paradise Lost and not being on the great scale of that work, does not rest its wing in long cultural 'disquisitions' or descriptions, as the formal epic tends to do. Shelley cared little for the grand historical sweeps which sum up the learning and chivalry of twenty ages. The life of the spirit in the intense region in which he dwelt apart, is one and eternal, aeonian and does not descend to little local cultures. Hence those wide lacunae in his poetry - he shows no appreciation of the middle ages or of the Renaissance, though his art in the poem we are considering is decidedly of Renaissance inspiration. The success of Prometheus Unbound bears out what we have been saying, and what even Johnson dimly recognised, that given the lofty inspiration, the poet may mould the tongue as he pleases, and that, in fact for the true grand, a fabricated language is almost necessary. There is the simple grand of which Dante is a great master, which seeks the very simplest language. But its uses are rather dramatic than epic. Longinus' famous example from Genesis God said 'Let there be Light' and Light was is a good example. The student of Dante will remember frequent use of this form of the sublime (he is not wanting in the other sort which consists of massive fragments of speech) with its "barenness as of the mountain-top", and we /
we agree that its effects in genuine cases are at least as

\[ \text{great as the Miltonic grand, which sometimes betrayed the} \]

poet into the grandiosities, as in that line quoted by Hazlitt -

"the elephant

To make them sport, heaved his proboscis lithe"

In Prometheus Unbound Shelley strains mightily at the great

language of the Elizathans. His modes, are more representative than Keats' are in Hyperion, where Milton is the sole presiding deity. Shelley is more eclectic, but even in him Shakespeare and Milton dominate the scene. There is however a family of words which mark Shelley's own manner and to which we referred in the chapter on Gray - words like lucent, glooms, plumes, pave, translucent, pavillion, sphere, azure, dome, etc., and all the family of words denoting intricacy and interwinding, e.g. - implicated, inwoven, braided, etc. He is also given, like the Elizabethans, to excessive compounding, not always successfully. He seems in this to be running up another little sail to catch every breath of wind that plays around words.

Again, unlike Keats (and this is why we say he was more eclectic) he takes tribute of a meaner group of useful old words, thwart, athwart, hoar, grudge, thaw (thaw-cloven) gnarr, (the meaning is doubtful), horny ( - eyes, e.g. Tennyson's horny flodiol, the Latin corniger fluvius) ounces (hooded ounces), raven, frore, crawl (he is very fond of this word - e.g. crawling glaciers, crawling hours, etc.) pied, etc.

In short he is the first romantic who is fully alive to the value of not merely le mot sonore, but of that underwood of rough silvan language which is so remarkable in Shakespeare's pastoral pieces, in Fletcher, and in Milton's
Milton's **Comus**. It is however in the aforesaid compounds that he appears to best advantage. The habit of compounding had been frowned on by the straiter neo-classics, but it asserted itself in Gray and Collins. It burst forth in all its luxuriance in the minor-keyed, and rather sickly school of sentimentalists in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Hayley, Miss Seward, the simpering Della Cruscans, the race of poets Coleridge had in mind when he compared them to their disadvantage with the metaphysicals. On that occasion the great critic remarked that while the latter expressed the deepest things in the simplest language, the poets of his boyhood expressed their native nonsense in the highflew' jargon. In their compounds especially they show forth their poverty of soul.

Shelley recalled the art of compounding to its Shakesperian quality. Swinburne later carried it to all lengths. The compound in the best Elizabethans has the effect of a thunderbolt, "thought-executing fire," and Shelley too found it an excellent means of "discharging the mind's collected lightning."

Used much by writers who have no lightning to discharge, it is a puerile habit. Keats used it for pictorial effect and as a short-cut to description—But a line like that in the second book of **Hyperion**

"Now tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted, wroth"

shows to the life the manner of Swinburne's compounding. The Hyperion has a fair number of such combinations, often successful, as in the well-known lines—

"Those green-robed senators of mighty woods
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars"

Not so successfully in

"O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools."

As to the great fabricated language of **Prometheus Unbound**, Shelley's /
Shelley's refining genius saw to it that such fabrications should be beautiful. Hardly a page of the poem is destitute of examples of this like — interlunar sea, implicated orbits, irremediable plague, adamantine charms, semivital worms, glaucous caverns, labyrinthine soul, daedal cups, unpavillioned sky, etc, and then he has all the aromatic and charmed names that Milton also loved.

Prometheus saw and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranthe, fadeless bloom
That they might hide with them and rainbow wings
The shape of death.

Who does not recognise here a far, more traditional voice (the tradition of our elder and famous poets) than is heard in Keats lovely verse. Not that Keats did not use the device of names with fair success as in the Eve of St. Agnes —

Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon

and in Hyperion are several creditable imitations of Milton, But it is not the masterhand that appears. Shelley's genius was in one respect not unlike Wordsworth's — he had a tendency towards the abstract language of philosophy.

So had Browning, especially in his age, so had the early Tennyson. —

"till, wrecked in convulsion
Alternating, attractions and repulsions
Thine went astray and that was rent in twain."

But he seems to be able to play with abstractions as if they were persons, and so to save these passages from being unpoetical. Indeed this was Shelley's peculiar power. He could vivify abstract and unreal things. His Platonism was so intense that the things of the mind were often less shadowy than actual substances.

Keats /
Keats we say, despairingly abandoned, not the vocabulary, but the rhetorical inversions of Hyperion. Shelley was always an artful poet, and had no notion as Wordsworth perhaps and Walt Whitman certainly had, of rejecting the skilful variation of syntax from the simpler were to the dense and implicated constructions which Milton's favourite sport, and which dazzled the youthful eyes of the author of Hyperion. Still less had Shelley any idea of abandoning the higher scales of language, on the contrary he added to the grand style. But the blank verse of Prometheus Unbound shows a return from the super-classicism of Milton to the plainer (though often breathless enough) rhetoric of the Elizabethans. Needless to say this involves a number of devices, but it is a more normal and native poetic manner and not all compact of rhetorical device as is Paradise Lost, and the earlier parts of Hyperion.

Let it not be imagined that Shelley had only one language, one style. As Yeats, we noted, demands that the great poet shall have several 'languages' at command. The Letter to Maria Gisborne and the Julian and Maddalo show admirable mastery of the vernacular style. Here one may imagine richly displayed that colloquial and idiomatic English for which De Quincey evinced such zealous regard. It is doubtful if any poem in the middle manner shows a more robust dealing with words and idioms than do these works written in a sort of some pedestris. In a whimsical footnote, Professor Saintsbury suggests that if complete isolation of the germ of poetry is possible, it would be found in a case like Shelley. The critic in talking of Shelley's
Shelley's prosody remarks that he is the immediate master of all forms. He passes through no noviciate. So is it with his language. Whether he is using the grand orchestrated diction of *Prometheus Unbound* or the sermo pedestris of these two poems, or the grim humourous realism of the *Witch ofAtlas*, he declares himself a master right away. The same can be said of Milton, less certainly of Tennyson, but of few others. There is almost nothing to regret in his use of language except perhaps that obsession for a group of reiterated words which fascinated him; or perhaps a certain torrential excess to which Ruskin and others took exception. They regarded this excess as little better than chaos. Ruskin like Byron worshipped at the shrine of Pope, and demanded clear contours.

In the *Witch of Atlas*, there are lurid lights truly, for of all Shelley's works, it teems most with the evidences of fantastic power in imagery and language. It is a study in the grotesque. But it discovers no affection. Its vocabulary and phraseology truly can be likened to tropical vegetation, but affectation is far away. It is Shakespearian in this sense. Through pressure of an abundant genius it makes the greatest call on all the possibilities of the tongue, but the syntax is lucid and normal. It is with all its fancy a masculine work, and is an answer to those unfortunates who still imagine that Shelley's is a womanish genius.

The *Cenci* is of course simply Elizabethan. It would be difficult to say whether it combines more of Fletcher's fluency or Ford's deeply emotional simplicity. It certainly does not imitate the earlier and greater Elizabethans.
Elizabethans. Someone has said that when the modern poet imitates Elizabethan tragedy, it is in the style of Ford rather than Ford's masters. This is true of Shelley's "Cenci," not of his "Prometheus Unbound." For a mythological subject the Shakespearian style with a strain of Miltonism is best; for a realistic drama of blood, the later Elizabethan manner. At least so Shelley found it. It is doubtful again if English poetry can boast a poem where the equipoise of literary and colloquial elements is better preserved than in "Cenci." Having talked of his immediate mastery of several style of diction, we have to admit that the youthful Alastor, has bad patches which display here the influence of the wordier Wordsworth, with his prosaisms and abstract phraseology, and there the mawkishness of the della Cruscans.

The powerful Sensitive Plant has all the stops out. Here are the great imitative language of Prometheus Unbound, the shrewd language of niggard nature in which English is so rich, and which Browning used with such excess of power, in poems like Childe Roland, and lastly his own favourite ideal cast t of language to which we have referred several times, The poet exhibits more of obscurity than he can ordinarily be charged with, not unlike the imaginative obscurity of Meredith's "Winds of Fireman.

This brief analysis may serve to show that Prometheus Unbound is the only one of Shelley's works which departs so consistently from normal speech as to merit the name of a "made speech," made partly by Shelley, but in far greater part by the elder poets. It is the language Gray has in mind when he says that each considerable poet adds something to it. We have had occasion to note how several masters of the poet's craft have progressed from the voluptuous style to a certain bareness and literality. Shelley does so. The Cenci, restrained in speech succeeds Prometheus Unbound, and the Triumph...
Triumph of Life, his last and in some respects greatest work, is comparatively bare of ornament — comparative for this tropical genius. It is perhaps natural in a poet who is verging on the Manichaean view of life, to drop a great many of the ‘masks’ of speech, and to write in simpler vein. The poem is, of course, a very difficult one. Mysticism can be conveyed in the simplest words. The austere temper in which the poem is written, is well reflected in his often monosyllabic English. Not that he does not rise occasionally on the old pinion. But the diction and style are prevalently modest, and, for Shelley, economical.

The sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conquerors — but as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame
Fled back like eagles to their native noon.

Difficult to surmise what direction Shelley’s art would have taken after this poem. The technique was like Shakespeare’s and Milton’s directly affected by the mood of the moment. If like Goethe he had mastered the scorn of life so manifest in this poem, he might have flowered out anew into torrid opulence.

To conclude, Shelley does not, like Keats, roll words ‘upon the palate fine’. He is less of an epicurean, because of his divine mission. He was a political preacher and had something to say to his generation. The mere out pressing of strange and voluptuous values/ of words, did not so much interest him. Besides he has more inherited mastery over the poetic tongue, he is better versed in the tradition of English and Classical poetics. His art is more of the centre. He has not therefore had quite the influence of Keats. He understood far better how to use the lower range of language effectively, as he could more constantly, and, (save for the first part of Hyperion,) at
at higher level, use the grand poetic tongue. While he could not equal the poignancy and vision of the language of Keats' Odes, and could not fully utilise the alluring associations which hover round words in the manner of Keats at his greatest, he is a lofty master of imaginative speech, and avoids in thorough-bred fashion almost all that mawkishness and deplorable amateurishness which mars so much of Keats' work.

Our conclusions in regard to Shelley and Keats are — that Shelley is surer, less experimental and less capricious in his use of the traditional language of poetry. His taste is surer and he very rarely 'lets us down', and he is a master not only of the higher language, the high urbane selective language which Dante demands for the higher offices of poetry, but also of the lower serio-comic familiar vein. Keats can do nothing in this vein and errs deplorably when he indulges it. On the other hand he is the more sensuous, more exotic genius and if his phraseological experiments are as often a miss as a hit, the general character of his language is richer, more honeysladen and perfumed, and whilst he is occasionally obscure as a result of his hit-or-miss method, and of romantic vagueness, he does not bewilder us as Shelley often does by a shower of words which leave the faintest impression on the mind. Nor does he lose himself in philosophical conceptions which are for the ordinary reader imperfectly worked out. He is not at all transcedental. His trouble with words was not Shelley's. But the claim we have made for Shelley, that he more surely than Keats revived the high
high selective language of ideal poetry at a moment when English poetry was in danger of sinking under a load of tawdry pseudo-romantic jargon ought to stand. He was, it is true, always under the tyranny of his sounding vocabulary, ridiculously so in his early _Allanator_, but even in his later works like _The Triumph of Life_ always capable of intoxication of great words of august association. In this he resembled Francis Thompson and others. It is difficult to isolate the respective 'influences' of these two poets over the early Tennyson and Browning. But no one doubts the potency of these influences. We must leave the discussion to the next chapter.
CHAPTER IX.

When Ruskin wrote to the "Times" his famous letters which turned the tide in favour of "the Pre-Raphaelite painters" in May 1851, he warned them that if their art narrowed itself to mere imitation of mediaeval work, he for one would have nothing to do with them. In the same way and despite his love of Scott, he attacked the mouldy antiquarianism of the Waverley Novels. There seemed to be a danger of the movement developing too strongly on the antiquarian side, but looking back we see that the Brotherhood on the whole was inspired by principles, ethical in the first instance as well as artistic, which Ruskin with all his crotchets approved. Reverence for natural fact which did not however interfere with their joy in a sort of Keatsian richness, capacity for taking pains in the smallest details, and withal a certain spiritual, almost virginal outlook, these are the outstanding features of their work at its best. There were confusions and secessions. Lady Millais is no doubt right in pointing out in the Life of her husband, that Rossetti was never at heart one of the group. His genius ran more to emotional impressionism, and he was not capable of the fundamental labour which was as necessary as the spiritual quality. He cut himself loose from that connection in the course of a year or two, and in poetry became the father of a line, which stretches down to our own day and includes notable members of the Irish School, Mr. Yeats chief among them. For certain reasons we might include Francis Thompson in the school although the metaphysical strain is even more pronounced in that uncertain genius. Among present day disciples we might mention the little known work of Mrs. Annand Taylor. One is tempted to think that not even the master himself, hardly even Thompson has/

Poems by Rachel Annand Taylor 1904.
has used the sacred words of old romance and its lingering half lights with more admired skill. A poem like Sarras for example is a fine example of the qualities and methods of the school.

Sarras (p. 23 of the Poems):

Far in the town of Sarras
Red-rose the gloamings fall
For in the heart of wonder
Flames the Sangreal.

The gleaming fowles ring her
Haut dreams her turrets are.
She riseth o'er the desert
Like the great magian star

Through the o'er-castled portals
The knights ride out and in
Their tired sweet heads all drooping
The pray away their sin.

Upon the carve causeway
Pass damozels in vair
And samite dropped with flamelets
Crowned on their ashen hair.

This is pure enough and by no means a reducitio ad absurdum of the pre-Raphaelite manner. We may judge how much that manner relies on the sweet and hidden force of words. An age to come will regard it as a very sickly mood ("tired sweet heads"). It is far too narrow a cult to pass the quod semper et ubique test, but we are not yet too far gone in reaction against it, to admire the adroit and spiritual "fingering" (to use Prof. Saintsbury's word) of the piece.

Those critics who are impatient of talk about the schools and who roundly declare that the only schools are the good and the bad will have difficulty in disposing of the pre-Raphaelites. There has hardly been a better marked style of poetical art. At times it leans decidedly to the morbid. Morris's King Arthur's Tomb is almost the perfect type of this class of poems. We have Dr. Johnson's considered verdict on the metaphysical poets. Would we could have it on the pre-Raphaelites! Only a very specially prepared /
prepared age—say one in three centuries—could tolerate such a poem as *King Arthur’s Tomb*. Not that it is cited as a crowning mercy of pre-Raphaelite art, but it is certainly representative. What a kissing, or "longing for kisses" of "pale or red lips" is here! What a brushing of hair ('now heavy swinging hair') now merely on the face, now on the rushes on the floor. What a weeping and clenching of teeth (ladies' teeth) and tolling of convent bells and what a scarlet blushing for sin and non-blasphemous appeal to Christ.†

Whether we take Rossetti and Morris at the beginning of the school or Mrs. Taylor at the close—if we may now hope for the close—we note throughout a certain harping on elemental things and words, which are steeped in symbolic values. The created world narrows down to a dozen or so images and the mind of men to a few stereotyped emotions. The cross and the chapel, the bell and the cup; the sword and lance and horse, the mediaeval cell or chamber with rushes on the floor, the turrets of the little town, the musical instruments, viol, harp, and citole, the dress materials, samite and vair. All the rest is women's body, hair, fingers, breast, feet.

Morris's early pre-Raphaelite poems are interesting vagaries—interesting because they exaggerate to grotesqueness, the peculiarities of the school in diction and sentiments. In Tennyson's similar efforts we note a marked softening down of those eccentricities. Horses are /

"Moreover Christ, I cannot bear that hell" says Guinevere confidentially, after she has asked "dost thou reck

That I am beautiful Lord, even as you
And your dear mother?"

What room for mockery is here, and yet the pre-Raphaelites have been let down very gently.
are not called destriers and there is not so much tragic weeping, angry flushing, waxing pale and clenching teeth, and human fingers and hair are not so sensuously displayed. Sir Galahad is thoroughly pre-Raphaelite, but it has purged itself of the violence which disfigures Morris's efforts. The Lady of Shalott is the masterpiece of the school. A study of the earlier and later versions of this poem is a liberal education in taste. Here are the reverence for natural fact, for the minuter evidences of nature, which was the groundwork of the school of Holman Hunt and Millais.

By the margin, willow-veil'd
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot

and there is that constant effort after onomatopoeic effect, which is not perhaps very happily displayed in the last line quoted - skimming is not very good. Where Morris gives us a stagey picture of mediaeval life and passion, Tennyson gives us the actual world with the magic added - a more subtle magic than the Morris had at this period any idea of; And here we should notice the general nature of the changes which Tennyson effected in the poems which appeared in the 1832 volume and re-appeared in much altered guise in the 1842 volume. Tennyson's favourite adage, his son tells us, is that the poet is known by his self-limitation. The changes in the 1842 poems bear this out. As a reviewer said of the time - "The Lady of Shalott for instance, is stripped of all her finery; her pearl garland, her velvet bed, her royal apparel and her 'blinding diamond bright' are all gone; and certainly in the simple white robe which she now wears, her beauty shows to much greater advantage."

The change wrought here and elsewhere is all in the direction of modifying those features to which, in a broad sense, we may refer as pre-Raphaelite. Ruskin might have been pleased for ten / Speeding in the Edinburgh Review quoted in the Memoir of Tennyson by his son.
ten years later he has a savage outburst against the luxuriant
dress and toilet of the lady in Collins's picture.
The lines in the original version ran:

"A cloud-white crown of pearl she dight
All raimented in showy white
That loosely flew (her zone in sight
Clasped with one blinding diamond bright)
Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,
Though the equally eastwind keenly
Blew, with folded arms serenely
By the water stood the queenly
Lady of Shalott.

The peculiarly pre-Raphaelite quality of the poem comes out
in the minute description of the jewelled caparisons of the
knight's horse and his own armour and coal-black-curls.
But it is done something after the manner of Chaucer — that
is so far as the actual circumstance is concerned — and with
no tendency to the morbid. It is recognisably pre-Raphaelite
painting, but in a frank and comparatively natural manner,
and with no uneasy searching out of 'stunning words for poetry'
or words of vertu.

Mrs. Annand Taylor with her almost uncanny instinct
for such words — it is not just to say that her art is all
compounded of the toying with words of antiquarian or mystic
import — came too late to re-capture the public ear for the
forlorn school. She has well described the raptures of the
art. —

O beauty of great colour, great desires
Great throes of music, clangour of great spires,
Mystical marvel of great verse, great dream
Of carven faces, and O thou supreme
Beauty of perfect love, the perfect art, —
Ye do consume with ecstasy mine heart.

The age of ecstasy was beginning to wane when she started
writing. With all her skill in the kind, how morbid she can
be /

Poems 1904 - An Art-lover to Christ. In this
poem she rejects Christ in favour of art "Rather
than live with Thee, with these I die." An inter-
esting renewal of the conclusion of the Palace of
Art.
be is shewn in a fine poem like *A Beautiful Woman to her Lover*, and here we see the qualities of the school pushed to their extreme and also curiously blended with touches of the metaphysicals. The beautiful woman talks of the man's dear hands and delicate, and of her own long fine fingers and of her 'sunless and expressive hair', which is a development from Morris's frank 'red heavy-swinging hair.' She has the usual reference to musical instruments, virginals, violin ('while violin on violin laments') lute and viol, and of course the 'Pothecary wares, amber, nard, and albanum'. And passionate myrrh! Nevertheless it is a fine poem. If such instinct for and preoccupation with an ancient cult and its decayed but beautiful language is a sign of perverted talents then the art of the later pre-Raphaelites is thoroughly perverted. But we must remember that only a singer here and there like Mrs. Taylor dwells and abides in this cult. The greater poets, Morris, Tennyson, Swinburne adopt in youth the express pre-Raphaelite style, and then coming into a style of their own, either abandon the hectic manner or toning it down, in some way absorb what is pleasing in it into their own manner. The one thing we do not doubt is that this strange style most vitally affected the language of the great Victorians, — now in the direction of a certain quaint or virginal freshness, now of mere strangeness and virtuosity.

Rossetti left among his papers a list of words headed "stunning words for poetry." To exploit these words of immemorial fragrance or mystery is one of the ideas of the school. Francis Thompson exploits the impressive ceremonial of the Catholic Church, its august words are arranged in phalanx. /

His own description of the pre-Raphaelite manner quoted by Prof. Elton (Survey of English Poetry 1832-1860, vol 11 p. 236) is adequate

He affirmed that there was no collaboration of style however, only of sambraderia.
7.

The attack on our senses is tremendous, until by frequent reading, the classical reader begins to weary of the display, and asks if poetry has no other office than to dazzle our eyes and minds with words of splendid or awful import. Then in certain places the verse descends to musical jingle. the ordinary reader, certainly of the more masculine sort, is bound to react against this formidable word system, but it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the spell and the mystery wrought on us, even if daylight dissipates something of the charm. Never have the sheer beauty and mystery of words been more feelingly displayed. The austere critic, whether from the classical side or the naturalistic will condemn. The school which wishes to identify poetry with Art and to regard words as pigments will be more pleased by such a ravishing display of word artistry. The ordinary catholic reader will feel as if he had wandered into an exquisite curiosity shop. He is surrounded by articles of vertu. He may indeed think it is connoisseurship run mad, as in the poem quoted from Mrs. Taylor's works, where the strangest words stare at us from every corner. But as was said, he will not be ungrateful for the momentary pleasure though he will also be rather relieved to step into daylight once more. For this can never be the poetry of common experience. It is a little distraught. Words are not the servants but the masters of the Muse. We can no longer talk as Tennyson did of Lords of Language, but rather of the Thralls of Language.

So much is contained in that brief heading "Stunning words for Poetry."

Take for example Francis Thompson's The Mistress of Vision -

There was never moon
Save the white sufficing woman;
Like the most heavenly - human -
Like the unseen, form of sound,
Sensed invisibly in tune -
With a sun-derived stole
Did inauroele
All /
All her lovely body round,
Lovely her luid body with that light was interstrewn.

The sun which lit that garden wholly,
Low and vibrant visible
Temper'd glory woke,
And it seemed solely
Like a silver thurible
Solemnly swung, slowly
Fuming clouds of golden fire for a cloud of incense-smoke.

But woe's me, and woe's me
For the hearts of her eyes!
In my visions fearfully
They are ever shewn to be
As fringed pools, whereof each lies
Pallid-dark beneath the skies
Of a night that is
But one blear necropolis
And her eyes a little tremble in the wind of her own sighs.

Thompson is a master of language who had drunk copiously at Elizabethan and Jacobean fountains. Whatever protest we raise against his never-ending cascades of strange and strangely used words, we must admit that he is free of the language of the older poets when they are at their best. It is not enough to say that his words master him as much as he them. It is not decisive to point out that he is entirely imitative in his large effects - that Crashaw for example, speaks through many of his most brilliant word displays as in his great Ode after Easter.

Hark to the jubilâte of the bird
For them that found the dying way to life:
And they have heard
And quicken to the great precursive word,
Green spray showers lightly down the cascade of the larch.

Raise up your eyes, 0 raise your eyes a broad!
No more shall you sit sole and vidual
Searching, in servile pall
Upon the hieratic night the star-seal'd sense of all.

We suggest that this ought to be judged as if Crashaw and his fellows had never existed. Since words themselves used /
used rhythmically have undoubtedly a certain intoxication apart from their meaning, many readers will rejoice in Thompson's wonderful dance of words, and as, like the poetess referred to above, he is a true connoisseur and rarely 'lets us down' and is obviously wholly and sincerely possessed by the strange religious emotions he celebrates, we are compelled to give him a place with the early masters of the tongue. It is not that he imitates merely, their use of strange and sovereign language. He is a master also of that quaint native speech for which they, and especially Herrick are remarkable.

Let even the slug-abed snail upon the thorn
Put forth a conscious horn,
I that no part have in the time's bragg'd way
And its loud bruit.

And he has caught that Elizabethan habit of using a low and domestic language and imagery when describing the heavens or the gods.

the wind-becom'd chambers of the air
See they be garnished fair
When he talks of the 'beaten yolk of stars' we feel he is more domestic and ludicrous than the Elizabethans!

Fortunately the Elizabethan and Caroline styles will bear reviving. The sticklers for speech which shall be 'neat, plain and customary' must allow that these periodic revivals of a really fine and free stage of language do help to fertilise the soil of poetry. Thompson is in this sense a prince of revivalists.

It has been suggested that the earliest anticipation of the pre-Raphaelite movement in English poetry may be traced to Collins' personifications. The picture /

See the English Parnassus p. 743. The picture of Fear for example (Ode to Fear) has a touch of it "I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye
Like thee I start; like thee disordered fly," &c.

and, more marked, of melancholy in The Passions,

But the touches are a little doubtful.
picture of the chamber in *Christabel* -

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain
For a lady's chamber meet;
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.

is certainly pre-Raphaelite, and Keats' early things contain certain indications of the manner as in that passage already quoted from the *Eve of St. Mark*:

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For which I muse the lance points slantingly
Athwart the morning air; some lady sweet
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet
From the worn top of some old battlement
Hails it with tears;

which has something of the distinctive pre-Raphaelite manner of such ripe-to-t rotten verse as this -

Her tired feet look'd cold and thin
Her lips were twitch'd, and wretched tears,
Some, as she lay, roll'd past her ears
Some fell from off her quivering chin
Her long throat, stretch'd to its full length
Rose up and fell right brokenly;
As though the unhappy heart was nigh
Striving to break with all its strength.

In this chapter we are to glance briefly at the work of the Victorians. In a curious way their work, taking a broad view of it, is at the same time imitative and nobly original. Tennyson looked to right and left of him, to the classics on the one hand, and to the middle ages on the other for a milieu and a method for his art. He also took his own contemporary England and produced pleasing narrative poems on something like the lines laid down by Wordsworth in *Michael* and *Dore* and *Resolution and Independence*, and afterwards trod - with a difference - by Mr. Masefield in things like *The Daffodil Fields*.
The difference one thinks, is not all /

*quoted in The English Barnassus - notes p. 743.*
all in favour of the Georgian poet, whether we have regard to the art of producing natural conversation or those sudden lights of beauty which illustrate the poem. But leaving aside his English idylls and other contemporary poems, it may be said that whether he chooses the middle-ages or the classics for a milieu, Tennyson is bent on projecting the fermenting ideas of his own age into the past. This is not true of all the classical poems, of the Lucretius for example, but is broadly true. So that before we dub him archaist or imitative poet, we must be careful to define the sense in which he is so. He is not a medievalist in tone and feeling any more than Shakespeare is a Roman in his Roman plays. He had not the mental agility, he was far too bound up in a kind of noble egoism, to realise the mentality of the middleages. Such indeed is the charge against his Idylls. They are not medieval at all. Swinburne wrote his Arthurian poems to correct the Victorian emotional stiffness and moral rectitude, of the Idylls. He is however more of an archaist in his skilfully woven language, which shows an extraordinary mingling of classical and obsolete English elements. But of that anon.

Not even Browning, the most individual genius of them all, escapes altogether the blight or blessing of archaism. It is true he sloughs off the affectation after Sordello. The reception that work met with seems to have worked towards his literary salvation. Mrs. Orr in her valuable Handbook to Browning tells the story of how the poet changed almost overnight from a diffuse, rambling, and somewhat archaic style, to the elliptical and rugged style.
style we recognise as his and his alone. We mark and like the change in Wordsworth's, Ruskin's and Tolstoy's conversion from rhetoric to simplicity, from art to literalism. In these cases it is a matter of ethical change in the artist. An impulse, puritan in its origin, drove those Nineteenth Century artists away from the finery of art to a naked simplicity. Life was far them more than art. "Unto this Last" is not devoid of art, but as compared with Modern Painters is bare as a mountain top. In Browning this seems hardly the case at first sight. Simplicity seems hardly the word we would apply to his mature style. But he so hacks his way through, so imperiously bends words to his strong purpose, and turns away so contemptuously from the mere grace of word and gesture; he is so vehemently bent on getting to grips at once with his matter, caring nothing meanwhile for style in the ordinary sense, that we may perhaps enrol him among the puritans of art. A devoted admirer like the late Mr. Stopford Brook considered that Browning was one of the poets who by his treatment of words confound the limits of poetry and painting. It was not however in order to give the effects of other arts, but because the stubborn matter of his thought had to be clothed somehow, and words must be wrenched out of their customary form and treatment to serve this purpose. Immediacy seems to us the keynote of Browning's art so far as words are concerned. From the difficult thought to the tortured expression was one step. His early work especially Pauline is marked by a certain relaxed and imitative phraseology, not unlike Tennyson's boyish Confessions of a Sensitive Mind and Timbuctoo. Even in Pauline however, the poet's true idiosyncrasy appears under /
under the indolent finery of the day, borrowed mostly from Keats. Here are the love of eccentric sound, the multi-
tudinous syllabllants, and dentals, — in a word, race of critic
or Marshmell. On the other hand the Mature Tennyson was
proud to remember that he had noted the absence
of syllabllants in his early work. Still the notion
that Browning was "instantly original in Nature as in
other things" is hardly correct. It is indeed curious
to notice Keats and Browning at strife in Pauline.

Thou wast as a star to men!
As one should worship long a sacred spring
Scarce worth a moth's flitting which long
grassess cross
And one small tree embowers droopingly.

He gives just ahint here and there of that sensuous
familiarity which is in the eyes of many a chief blemish
in Keats.

And her neck looks like marble misted o'er
With love breath
and which is indeed one of the marks of Pre-Raphaelite
poetry. Again we notice the use of words like grin,
gape, and sneer, which one hesitates to use much in con-
versation, but which the early Victorians after the Hunt-
Keats school used freely — a marked blemish in Maud and
other earlier things of Tennyson.

Something of that Elizabethan quality which
Browning discovered for himself — and this before our
'virile' moderns discovered it — a sort of ghoulish extra-
vagance in imagery and word appears —

Nothing but sky appears —

Blue sunning air, where a great cloud floats laden
With light like a dead whale that white birds peck.

We noted something of this in Shelley and Coleridge. This
is ' /
is just a premonitory touch. We know how far our Sargents and Bottomleys, not to mention the great author of "The Dynasts" have carried their ghoulish or 'virile' fancies. In Browning's case this note probably was not, as with some of the moderns, due to mere imitation of Elizabethan 'virility.'

Paracelsus owes less and less—hardly anything—to Keats and Shelley. Rather it displays the ambitious verbosity of the spasmodic poets. Large tracts of it are not poetry. It is in the line of the eighteenth century didactics. Much of it accordingly reminds us of Wordsworth whose influence on Browning at the time was rather marked.

One tyrant all—
Absorbing aim fills up the interstice
One vast unbroken chain of thought, kept up
Through a career apparently adverse
To its existence.

Wonderful that Browning was able so soon to shake off both Keatsian luxuriousness and Wordsworthian philosophic verbosity!

Sordello first fully reveals the poet that was to be. It first shows Browning's hunger for a certain exotic vocabulary. His contempt for tradition is great. Wordsworth had at the age of 28, advocated the use of a lower level of diction. But this did not mean in Wordsworth's case the putting forth of the whole powers of the language. Rather it seemed to limit the poet to a respectable diction of the lower level. The holding up of Daniel to admiration seems to point to this. But now in Sordello words crowd the page that had not been free of serious poetry—Don Juan of course keeps open house—since Elizabethan times. —snuffs, filthiest gloom, that blotchy bosom, knack, dunce, sands that bung our throats," etc. /
throats," etc.

We may conclude that it is not Wordsworth but Browning who leads our age back to the true freedom of the English language as it was enjoyed in the days of Shakespeare.

He still maintains a thread of connection with the traditionalists in the archaic shent, writthen lands, rathe (-ripe), cressets, a signiory firm-rooted unestranged, corpine, argentine, dispread, blent utterly with thee, burthens, broidered, empery, the gentler crew, which the student recognises as the small change of early romantic poetry. Here also are touches of Keatsian tastelessness in words, tiptoe, nested, a-swarm, bevy, rarities, etc. The phrase "wide Lombardy a-tiptoe to begin" is typical. There are other Keatsian formations — abstract plurals like "bland approvals", with novelties in, e.g., a new revelmen, and impossible superlatives like "ravish-ingest lady", "a distinctest consciousness."

If the reader will turn to line he will find a medley of three styles. First, the passage beginning "They would belong To what they worship -------

and ending

---------- foiled of its radiant chance"

is in the manner of Shelley when that poet imitated the Miltonic grand style.

Then the passage (line ) —

"The castle too seemed empty: far and wide Might he disport ----------

with the dreadful finish —

all his clue

To the world's business and embroiled ado is unmistakable Keats, while sandwiched between is the authentic Browning. —

"Witness a Greek or two from the abyss That stray through Florence — town with studious air Calming the chisel for that Pisan pair! If Nicolo should carve a Christus yet! While /
While at Sienna is Guidone set
Forehead on hand; a painful birth must be
Matured ere Saint Eufemia's sacristy
Or transept, gather fruits of one great gaze
At the moon! Look you! The same orange haze
The same blue stripe round that

Nevertheless the Sordello warns us of the advent of a new
style in English poetry. Its manifold obscurities, we
are told by Mrs. Orr, are due to Miss Caroline Fox's
remark to John Sterling / "Doth Mr. Browning not know ----
Eager to amend, the young poet becomes enigmatic.
Clever persons however maintain that Sordello is not obscure.
Whatever may have been the effect of the poem on his art,
the Browning style had to come even if Sordello had never
been written.

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been written.

It is not usual to connect the names of Browning
and Swinburne, but in the curious word-flowering of
Sordello we have more than a hint of the later poet's
dealing with words. We note for example -

(1) The use of superlatives like "each delicatetest limb."
(2) The use of the -er suffix with a sort of
nascent force - Dante pacer of the shore,
Shelley is suntreader, etc.
(3) The -let suffix used on all occasions - c.f.
Swinburne's vine-chapleted with Browning's
fresh-chapleted, and wondrous winglets.
(4) The use of the dis- prefix, - dissheathes,
dispread, etc. This of course is found
in the Elizabethans.
(5) Use of strange compounds
rather-ripe, rotten-rich, cloud-girt,
bitter-sweetling.
(6) Use of the past participle in "ate", saturate,
desiccate with age, etc.

Swinburne of course, carries all these novelties to a
beautiful extreme, where Browning is not so much bent on
aesthetic effect as verbal force. But when people lift
up /
up their hands at the manner in which the younger poet resus-
pitated the moribund powers of the tongue, we must invite
the reader to seek in the first fifty lines of Sordellò for
earlier a similar/attempt. The crabbed awkwardness of the con-
structions reminding us of Ben Jonson, and the ugliness of the
verbal novelties - so different from Swinburne's use of them -
need not mislead us. The one poet sought power, the other
harmony, but they both feel constrained to burst the bonds of
modern speech. In Sordellò the conflict between form and
matter loudly declares itself. In other poets it is there
of course, but we do not see so much of the painful struggle.
There are many gratuitously bad and ungracious lines. It is
to be feared that Browning often blustered to show his
strength. But there are more numerous instances of the
ture Browning -

"lashless eyes
Inveterately tear-marked"
or better -
"care-bit erased
Broken-up beauties."
or (almost Shakespearian) -
"Each camel chains a sick and frothy chap"

Still with all its novelties, Keatsian and other, in the
Sordellò 1840, we see the Browning-to-be as in a glass darkly.
We have no space to follow in detail his great career as an
artist in words, and must limit ourselves to a few strongly-
marked poems.

In Caliban upon Satebos, that process censured by
Mr. Stopford Brooke of using words as a painter uses colour
reaches its maturity. No poem better illustrates the
sunken riches of the English vocabulary. A seemingly ugly
language is bent by the artist's will into the semblance of
beauty. Fresh from the Tempest, Browning devises a whole
series /
series of new compounds after the fashion of that great work. -
wave-top, eft-things, green-dense, dim-delicious, fire-eye,
rock-top, toe-webs, "yon otter sleek-wet, black, lithe as a
leech" Caliban is supposed to babble out a semi-brutish, semi-
poetical language.

The Caliban of Shakespeare speaks some beautiful
natural poetry. His language is not at all circumscribed.
Shakespeare was not extremely concerned to make his language and
his psychology congruent. By filling the mouth of his mon-
ster with beautiful words, Shakespeare has perhaps mitigated
the offensiveness of the creature. On the other hand Browning
fills his mouth with the most angular flint-stones in the
lower reaches of the tongue. Expressiveness has triumphed
over facile beauty. - "Froth rises bladdery", "nip me off
the horns of grigs." All the diction of nipping, pinching,
kicking, trickling, etc. is here.

"But steals the nut from underneath my thumb
And when I threat, bites stoutly in defence
Spareth an urchin, that contrariwise
Curls up into a ball, pretending death."

Browning's Caliban has all the observation a creature close
to nature might be supposed to have, and he has the words to
express it, in dramatic monologue which no such creature could
have indulged.

"Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That flouts and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge
(eye,
By moonlight, and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into the oakwarts for a worm.

None can fail to appreciate the beautiful vowel music of this -
a thing not so rare in our poet as some imagine. Mr. Arthur
Symons says - "In Caliban we have the pure grotesque, an
essentially noble variety of art, admitting of the utmost
refinement /
refinement of craft." Caliban is noble. It is an essay in "difficult beauty" of a kind, familiar enough to us. Poets rather like Sargent and Bottomley who seek in nature primitive passion than beauty have followed in Browning's steps, and sometimes strike out lines which not only suggest extreme ugliness or the grotesque, but which are at first sight, incomprehensible. A poet like Mr. Charles Doughty who seems absurdly archaic in his speech, is on second view, seen to be not unlike Browning in the way he wrests words, archaic or comad words, out of all recognition to normal English speech — with its floods of incomprehensible phrase! See his strange epic *Mansoul/*"Immane tyned ranks" —

Browning as a realist has thought out the sort of language which for Caliban might be supposed least unreal, allowing for the fact that the real Caliban could probably only express himself by grunts and squeals. His compounds, we note are mostly non-poetical, being merely noun added to noun. The rhythms are also thought out. If the poet finds himself slipping into a tolerably smooth vein, the next line is a shocking cacaphony. In his Letter to Maria Gisborne, Shelley sometimes slips the collar of the *sermo pedestrís* he has adopted and for half a dozen lines soars to his native level. Browning has a harder task, to keep the monologue at a painful and yet expressive level of speech. Shakespeare, we saw has no thought of congruity. Those critics who like the late Mr. Stopford Brooke have a passion for moderation ought to consider that immoderation is the element of an art like Browning's. One might as usefully implore a Gargoyle to moderate its grin as tell a Browning to be normal. In *Sordello* and the earlier things Browning had paid court to various lines of poetic tradition. Perhaps the neglect of these works made him resolve to be henceforth utterly himself.
From that point onwards he becomes stubbornly individualistic.

That love of painting desolation in nature and failure in life, which became a passion with him and gradually displaced his early preference for spring scenery and deep woodland dell, naturally encouraged his use of the lower parts of speech. It has been suggested that in this respect Browning is a reversion to type — that in Caliban and Childe Roland, we are retracing our steps to the desolate, brooding, curse-bound scenery of Beowulf. It is rather an amusing suggestion that the Renaissance or the Ignorance as Morris called it, introduced us to the smiling aspects of nature, and seduced us from the true native type of nature painting with its deep and melancholy strain of thought. We hardly need to go back to Beowulf however. The Elizabethans and some of the Jacobean observed something of the same hard dealing with nature. Their mythopoetic genius made them use and maltreat nature quite as grotesquely as Browning does. Crashaw for example in his Glorious Epiphany —

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for this day did rise
So oft with blubbered eyes.
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and

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Sordidly shifting hands with shades and night.
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Shelley often, especially in the third part of the Sensitive, Plant evokes the same powerful fancies of blighted nature; he often gives rein to this ghoulish fancy after the manner of the Elizabethans and of our very modern young poets. He does so even in the ideal connections of the Pastoral Elegy — in Adonises. No doubt Browning learned something from here. The very mature Dramatis Personae is full of it — nature is here bent and writhing, a demoniac thing, a remarkable accompaniment to the human passions displayed in the poems.

"This /
This house of four rooms, that field red and rough
Though it yield there
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a blade or a bent
I leaned on the turf
I looked at the rock
Left dry by the surf
For the turf, to call it grass were to mock
Dead to the roots, so deep was done
The work of the summer sun.

Hunger-bitten nature had been tolerably described by Crabbe,
and malignant nature by Shelley, but hardly with such green-
malignant colouring as in that astonishing piece in the Dram-
atic Lyrics: By the Fireside, where a classical landscape,
a cross between a Poussin and Salvator Rosa is suddenly dash-
ed by the incorrigible grotesque.

XII.

That crimson the creepers leaf across
Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,
O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss
And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped
Elf-needled mat of moss.

The last line with its reluctant syllables being dragged
into place shows how Browning depends on the harshest conso-
ants rather than on vowel-music (though he is not defective
in that) for his effects in the grotesque.

The effect on the diction is of course very marked.

XIII.

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged
Last evening — nay, in today's first dew
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged
Where a freak fawn-coloured flaky crew
Of toadstools peep indulged.

At first reading this hardly seems English at all.

Capital words, these words which call for visualisation,
are massed together. The mind tires and longs for the in-
dulgence of explanatory prepositions and conjunctions.

Such language justifies Professor Herford's remark that
Browning is the poet of chinks and crannies and broken edges —
he is the poet of the creaking door.

But the most ambitious attempt in desolation is

Childe /
Childe Roland. Language indeed can hardly be used more absolutely in the manner of the plastic arts.

What war did they wage
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank Soil to a flash? toads in a poisoned tank etc.

The poem is a wonderful study of earth 'desperate and done with', and of course its spiritual meaning shines clear. a nightmare defied
It is the nightmare of the soul—squelched by interior strength.

XXVI. Now blotches rankling, coloured gay and grim
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came a palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death und dies while it recoils.

This is a gargoule. Poetry here approaches the art of a Rodin. Squat, brutish words are of more avail in this work than the elegant. Browning might reverse Dryden's demand for more of the latter. He looks round for those parts of the language which are ugly to deformity. Surely a very remarkable change in aesthetic, this? The associations which words carry are not of much importance in this kind of art. It is the bodily form of these verba macerata, jejuna, strigosa, all the words which the Renaissance people reject from Dante (he however allowed some of the hirsuta) to Ben Jonson, that count in this art which treats words as plastic. Only he will not alter the customary forms of words, as Shakespeare does, to achieve this end. For he wishes as hard a material as possible, and the poet who reduces the tongue to a fluid state cannot achieve hardness. He has to his hand such a store of stunted or onomatopoeic words, words so near to the murmurings and hissings of nature, that trifling with the established forms of words is unnecessary.

So much has been written of Tennyson as a great Lord of Language (the character in which he preferred to present himself) /
himself) that anything but the briefest summary would be out of place here. If education in taste is desirable surely the study of this great artist's evolution is the best means to that end. An artist who rewrote so much and in almost every instance with improvement is almost a portent. His errors in taste— they were many and were not the things he cared to correct—are no less instructive than his triumphs in phrasing. Perhaps as a poet he gave too easy response to the thought-stimulus of his day. With all his learning and thought, his culture is now seen to be much narrower and more pedantic than Arnold's or Swinburne's. It rejected too much. His temperament was too puritanic and insular—the hebraic element as Arnold would say, was a little trying to the bright Hellenic side. His Palace of Art might be a sort of illustration of what Arnold deplores in Culture and Anarchy. The deep English conviction that the pursuit of beauty or art without the ever-recurrent clang of duty oppresses us somewhat. We are reminded too often of Spenser's knight asleep in the false one's arms, his shield foully thrown aside. Tennyson is morally with Spenser, his beautiful art is somewhat at odds with his insistent puritanism. Palgrave in the preface to the Golden Treasury talks of Tennyson's "almost infallible good taste." He was referring of course, to his taste in choosing or rejecting poems. The phrase could not truly describe Tennyson the artist. No poet of such absolute pre-eminence has so constantly stumbled into offence of various kind. If Morris shocks us—some would not allow this—by his affectation of savagery in his translation of Virgil, we feel that the love of fault is done in obedience to his generous /the middleages. The barbarity of his language in translating the most /"
most civil of poets is excusable quaintness. But Tennyson often shows a narrow and modern ugly side, an intolerance and fuller display of what Mr. Arnold Bennet regards as the Englishman's greatest failing - the habit of indulging in moral indignation. It is possible to be indignant and poetical as Milton's "Avenge, O Lord" proves, but as we saw even Milton, is not always dignified in his resentment. Indignation so easily slips into abuse or the facile sneer. It is to be feared that Tennyson was a great offender here. Also in certain works, notably the In Memoriam he shows a perverse obliquity of style and phrase which betrays a false streak in his artistic conscience. It has aesthetically the same source as the eighteenth century failure in directness, but is much more subtle and therefore more liable to obscurity. This is seen even in those English Idylls which are otherwise so unpretentious, so Wordsworthian almost. "Another hand crept too across his trade" is an ambitious way of saying that Enoch Arden suffered from a rival.

"Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt Her finger"

is similarly awkward, all the more so considering the low monotone of the poem as a whole. Some readers will not object to these too artful expressions, any more than to anacoluthon such an example of artful as "Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs" or such Miltonic "dance of words" as "she heard
Heard and not heard him."

Poetry must have some elevation they will say, and perhaps they are right.

Again there is an aggressive Anglicanism and brutal insularity about his outlook on life, which betrays him /
him often into what is nothing less than bad taste. There is of course, bad taste in life and bad taste in letters and some may argue that a bad attitude on any public or private question need not involve any error of taste on the part of the poet. The close of the Princess for example, with its offensive references to France's Revolutions—

"No graver than a schoolboy's baring out"
and

"A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman,-----------------

This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart."

is not only bad politics, but bad literary form, even allowing for the pedestrian style of that excellent work. Sometimes it is a matter of the spirit, sometimes /appears as something inept in the phraseology. For example the Merlin and Vivien seems rather tasteless in forcing the modern code of morals in an old legend. Vivien is simply a modern flirt and the whole thing is rather absurd. The introduction of the word prurient in the following passage is no less disastrous than the modern "jawing" of which it is part—

"and Love
Should have some rest and pleasure in himself
Not ever be too curious for a boon
Too prurient for a proof against the grain
Of him ye say ye love.

But the Idylls are full of such ineptitudes. Vivien is not a nice woman, but the poet should not have allowed Merlin to ask

"But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more?"

Nor do we admire him when he talks of "the paach'd filth that floods the middle street." Tennyson was a victim of his own scorn, and his art suffered for it in numerous little ways.
ways. We even get a hint of Leigh Hunt's failure in taste sometimes.

The late Mr. Churton Collins was not too severe on the Idylls of the King. 'The simple prose of Malory and Lady Charlotte Guest (her English version of Mabinogion 1838 being the raw material of Geraint and Enid) often undergoes in Tennyson's rendering precisely the same sort of transformation as the simple prose of St. John's Gospel undergoes at the hands of Nonnus.' Mr. Collins rightly identified certain peculiarities of Tennyson's language with the features 'Characteristic of all literatures in their decadence and severely commented on by Longinus.' On the other hand the gentler critic will insist rather on the likeness to Virgil. Dryden's old praise of the Virgil he tried - so unsuccessfully - to imitate still stands. 'His verse is everywhere sounding the very thing in your ears whose sense it bears; yet the numbers are perpetually varied to increase the delight of the reader. So that the same sounds are never repeated twice together.' One might add to this last clause, "except for artistic reasons." In Tennyson the same sounds are perpetually returning on themselves, and that is part of his art. Dryden might have detailed some of the devices which secure this happy result - the splendid onomatopoeic effects, the slight and very occasional archaic tinge, the use of "all the rhetorician's bag of tricks - hypallage, paronomasia, oxymoron, etc., and the peculiar pride the word-artist takes in epithet with its 'local surprise effects' often unintelligible until the secret has been carefully pointed out." This is scholar's poetry, and yet Tennyson has a wide following. This following consists largely of people who are/
to miss all these effects of connoisseurship, thus proving that the great Victorian had a life in him apart from all the specious tricks of art.

Tennyson was not very good at joining widely different ages together. It requires a special sympathy and tact to bring the nineteenth century and Middle Ages together. Morris could do it, but when Tennyson started to project his modern ideas into the past he displayed some gaucherie. Morte d'Arthur is great, but we are not sure that the prologue and epilogue are happy. The former, with its lumberly account of the poet's having bumped himself on the ice in making figures of eight seems to point to that defect of taste which pursues this consummate artist through all his career. He had evidently been impressed by Wordsworth's doctrines on the language of poetry, and every now and then breaks into rather awkward verse as in this prologue. The Princess has a good deal of such stuff too. We expect a studiously level of speech in the English Idylls, but it sometimes trails too much on the ground, and again it is heightened by such tasteless artificiality as is seen in the passages already quoted from Enoch Arden.

We submit that Tennyson's temper as an artist was not well poised. Given a certain style he was a very great artist. In a medley of styles he was apt to go either to extreme rusticity or to tasteless intricacy. Such seems to be the modern verdict, and it is not likely we should abate our admiration for the supreme artist in Tennyson, when he was happy in his style. It seems now to be generally conceded that he was especially happy in the classical pieces. There is a noble gravity of feeling and style.
style in Ulysses, Tithonus, Lucretius, Deone, and the Lotus-Eaters, are rather different in tone, both noble works however. They have more of local atmosphere and landscape than those mentioned above. The English language will never, one might say, be seen to better advantage than in it Ulysses. Although there are strict classical phrases it is nobly English in vocabulary and syntax.

This we cannot say of the Idylls. The tricking out of the pedestrian Muse with extreme artifice shows that Tennyson never understood the spirit of medieval art and life.

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part
Half suffocated in the hoary fell
And many-wintered fleece of throat and chin
And Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood
And hearing 'harlot' muttered twice or thrice
Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood
Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome sight
How from her rosy lips of life and love
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death!
White was her cheek; sharp breaths of anger
puff'd
Her fairy nostril out.

We may compare this with Christabel and Lamia for a similar situation, but Tennyson's treatment is not happy. It takes us back to the good old days when Disraeli was referring to Victoria as the Fairy. The Last Tournament rises to more impassioned heights than the pedestrian jogtrot (one does not complain of that however - it has its beauty) of the best.

The subject forced him. He could not tell the loves of Tristan and Iseult without passion. Often indeed he uses the splendid art, and even at times suggests Dante. But again the beautiful imagery is often incongruously applied

(He) "let the drunkard, as he stretched from horse
To strike him, overbalancing his bulk
Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave
Heard in the dead night along that table-shore
Drops flat, and after the great waters break
Whitening for half a league and thin themselves
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud

We feel that the drunkard is hardly worth such a figure and such /
such peerless harmony of phrase. But art in decay thinks more of the ornament than the material. So to say that Iseult -

or (He) Belted his body with her white embrace
had let one finger lightly touch
The warm white apple of her throat

seems to show that the less worthy Keats is still directing the poet's pen.

It is an ungrateful task to notice blemishes in such splendid work. He clearly thinks more of imagery than of the passion of the lovers. At any moment he is liable to mar a fine passage by affected periphrasis like

And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
Pass under white-

Classical constructions mingle with vicious periphrasis in the same passage.

(He) Found Enid with the corner of his eye
And knew her sitting sad and solitary

c.f. Debating his command of silence given
Who love to vex him eating

Worse still in the conceited style -

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume
Brushing his instep, bowed the all-amorous earl.

Equally perverse

But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain.

The In Memoriam is a storehouse of such expressions

Many of them are marked by a curious pre-Raphaelite exactitude of observation, which is too didactic to warm the imagination.

"Old mirth & merriment had been a bit of a

sacrilegious in his nature." Imogen said. (In Memoriam, S. G. J.)
The pre- Raphaelites to which he himself leaned to Polo;

is not part proof against the same charge.

* see n. 5 p. 5
imagination. Fancy is here certainly not bred in the heart. The anatomical explanation of "God shut the door-ways of his head" does not interest us. Absurd and ghoulish conceits like

"I take the grasses of the grave
And make them pipes whereon to blow"

warn us that art has for the moment run its course.
Even Donne's obscure conceits do not as a rule mystify us more than

"the kneeling hamlet takes
The chalice of the grapes of God."

Mr. Churton Collins has instanced a great many of these blemishes in his edition of Maud, In Memoriam and The Princess.

The dense obscurity of In Memoriam is largely due to this vice of affected expression, and not as Brownings was to the leaping thought and dramatic energy. Compression of phrase is in magnetic mockeries, waste confusion, glorious insufficiencies (where glorious has the classical meaning of 'boastful') etc., added to the mystical thought, makes the work a dense forest. Milton has something of this and Shakespeare in the sonnets of course. His frequent use of words in their original classical sense is no new thing in English poetry. Dryden's Annus Mira-abilis has many examples, some of which were quoted in an earlier chapter.

It is easy to point out Tennyson's blemishes. The best compliment we can pay to him is to say that it is quite unnecessary to point out his teeming felicities.
Apart from words and turns of phrase how did he give archaic colour /
colour to his work. Chiefly by a studied looseness of expression. The syntax is very loose, as it is in Arnold's 
Sohrab and Rustum. And — and; so — so predominate, 
but not to monotony. It is so in fifteenth century prose, 
in Malory and Caxton. He avoids altogether however their 
anacoluthon even (as Milton uses it) as a figure of speech, 
and he does not imitate their difficulties with correlatives 
and subordinate particles. In the Idylls a great deal of 
prosaic speech is introduced, phrases like "as it were" 
appear every now and then. In this he is like Spenser, when 
Spenser is in doldrums, as he so often is. The frequent 
classical idiom help to balance such rusticities. 

Clearly the poet is poised between two styles — 
the cultivated which he cannot altogether give up and the 
supposed simplicity and even boorishness of medieval writing. 
Many people like the amalgam of styles. There is too an 
element of 'faked' expression, of pretended vertu in — 

"my husband's brother had my son 
Thrall'd in his earth, and hath starved him 
dead."

or 

"rich in emblem of the work 
Of ancient kings, who did their days in stone 
Spenser of course, indulged this practice. Biblical phrase 
is frequent 

"for thou art not who 
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art."

Swinburne used this type of Bible phrase with effect. 

The earliest Idyll — Gareth and Lynette shows most 
attempt at the archaic, but though the diction is highly 
coloured with old words like thrall'd, knave, wreak, shrew, 
broach-turner, scullion, cate, hardly half-a-dozen are words 
actually out of use. The poet uses the oldest parts of 

+ He achieved the simply artful way I write. "I simply draw 
with simple thoughts in simple language, we most difficult 
with most difficult. The poor deales which long before Cooper had 
and now is here to Johnson dark in mind, and
the native language, but not archaic words, and these are mingled with the words of high poetical intent which Keats and Shelley revived.

And in the stream beneath him shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly
The gay pavilion and the naked feet
His arm, the rosy garment, and the star.

This blending of different types of words, is more pleasing than that of rustic and classical idiom. But more of the archaic effect is attained by use of the old suffixes -eth, est, en, etc; the extensive use (as in Swinburne) of the comparative and superlative suffixed, and of the preposition 'of' as a maid of all work. Then there is much play with the verbal suffix -ing, as also with the subjunctive. In short Tennyson was before Swinburne in the attempt to revivify the old grammar. The Bible no less than the old Romances is the model of this speech. As Mr. Yeats says in (Samhain 1902) - "One must found good literature on a living speech. English men of letters found themselves upon the English Bible where religion gets its living speech. Blake, as I remember, copied it out twice. Byron read it for the sake of style."

In the English Idylls the language is beautifully free and liquid without these touches of antiquity. There are however, many examples of circumlocution in the phrases. The Two Voices skilfully avoids philosophical abstract language. It is just saved for poetry by the concreteness of the imagery, and it is comparatively free from the phraseological affectatives which mar the In Memoriam. Reference has been made to the alterations Tennyson /
Tennyson made in the 1842 volume of those poems which had appeared in the 1832 volume. The changes are for the most part made in obedience to that stern admonition of self-limitation. They are often rather like those made by Coleridge in the revised version of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" - that is they are generally in the direction of greater simplicity, the discarding of the obsolete and of a good deal of overloading in imagery and diction. It is indeed an interesting study, but we have space here for the fewest instances -

In the old version of The Lady of Shalott, the penultimate stanza read

A pale, pale corpse she floated by
Dead into towered Camelot
Knight and burgher, lord and dame
To the planked wharfage came
Below the stern they read her name
"The Lady of Shalott."

Now it reads -

Under tower and balcony
By garden-wall and gallery
A gleaming shape she floated by
Dead-pale between the houses high
Silent into Camelot
Out upon the wharfs they came
Knight and burgher, lord and dame
And round the prow they read her name
"The Lady of Shalott."

The new version avoids repetition of corpse and dead, the otiose pale pale, and the Elizabethan license (which Keats would have taken) of planked wharfage. Immensely impressed as he was by Keats' greatness, Tennyson seems to have gradually avoided his licentious word-system.

He also tended to avoid the sensuous warmth of Keats' verse. For example, the old lines in Mariana in the South -

She moved her lips, she prayed alone
She praying, disarrayed and warm
From slumber, deep her wavy form
In the dark-lustrous mirror shone
And in the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.

Again /
Again the poet of 1842 keeps strict watch on his diction and will not allow himself the Keatsian indulgence in compounds which is found in the 1832 volume. The early version of Oenone for example is crammed with words like glenriver, steepdown, tendrilwine, cedarshadowy, snowy-columned. These occurring, in six lines. They all go in the later version. Oenone's neck formerly "all marblewhite and marblecold" is now simply a neck without epithet.

The revised passage beginning "Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft" is of much interest when compared with the ambitious language of 1832 -

"the goldensanded morn
Rosehued the scornful hills" becomes
"Far-up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow."

Lower down he excises more sternly a posy of Keatsian words -

the Olympian goddesses
Naked they came to the smoothswarded bower
Lustrous with lilyflower, violet-eyed
Both white and blue with lotetree-fruit thickset
Shadowed with singing pine."

All the wealth of verbiage and of the merely pretty goes.

In the ten years between 1832 and 1842, Tennyson has renounced the Keatsian diction, and so made it impossible for illnatured people to grudge him his fame on the score of language. He also renounced undue sensuous warmth and he deepens the moral feeling of his work. In all these ways he repairs the blunders of the youthful Keats. In a sense he may be said to carry forward Keats' work to a glorious consummation.

Regret is sometimes expressed that Tennyson did not give us a version of the Iliad. The brief specimen he has given us, prove that his would have been the best of our half dozen versions. He was better employed in his original work. But if the reader will compare his translation of the closing/
closing lines of Book VIII with Chapman's or Way's or Pope's version he will no doubt decide for Tennyson's. In the first place his blank verse is a noble measure free and varied, in the second he had discovered a true diction, avoiding equally Chapman's uncouth words and Pope's flattering generalities. Nor does he lean to the archaic as he does, only here and there he has a suggestion of the archaic in the preterite forms brake and spake. Compare one passage in the four versions:

Swinburne, violent in all things, carried the archaising tendency to its limit. As Browning's poetry at its most characteristic, suggests the plastic arts, so Swinburne's suggests music. The notion of idealess symphonies in poetry now appears fully stated. The aim of the new poetry, or as Mr. Babbit pedantically puts it, to exploit the sensorium at the expense of the cerebellum. This is the direction in which romantic art moves. We note the tendency first very clearly in Coleridge, the strong suggestion of musical effect. But Coleridge had a sanity denied to Swinburne and his followers. For example in the matter of compounds, in which Swinburne runs to such fanatical excess, we find the mature Coleridge warning the young poets of his day against this spacious means to grace. His early poetry in the volume of 1797 is full of a certain turgidity of diction "cumbrous splendour which we wish away," to use Johnson's words, and above all flashy compounds. In the second /
second edition which followed the next year the poet admits that the poems were "rightly charged with a profusion of double epithets and a general turgidness" and adds that he has "pruned the double epithets with no sparing hand". He seems to have been chiefly under the spell of Gray's manner when he wrote these early things.

But Swinburne elevates compounding into an art, and so rich and various are the results in this sort that one hesitates to condemn even on the authority of a Coleridge. If purely musical effects are to be sought, no doubt the liberty of double epithet had better be preserved.

In the earlier Victorian the archaising tendency though widespread is rather artless, stuck on with a trowel. Swinburne fully explored the possibilities of language in the direction of revivification, and as we may raised the manner to an art. The lyric note has never been struck more plamently than in lines like these from Tristram of Lyonesse -

Yea, as warm night refreshens the sere blood
In storm-struck petal or in sun-struck bud
With tender hours and tempering dew to cure
The hunger and the thirst of day's distemper
And ravin of the dry discolouring hours
Hath he not bid relume their flameless flowers
With summer fire and heat of lamping song
And bid short-lived things, long dead, live long.

The reader will remark that the spirit of Shelley seems to preside over verse such as this. There are his favourite words, relume, flameless, lamping, and the compounds. These lines are from the ecstatic chant in praise of love in the Prelude to Tristram and are on a higher-plane of emotion and diction than the poem itself— but the strange /

Tennyson follows his example in the revisions of his 1842 publication.
strange elements of speech, the borrowed and re-fashioned words and constructions are in both. At the time when Tennyson, Swinburne and Morris were writing, it appeared to their contemporaries that they were very distinct in their technique. It appears to us now that they were not so very different from each other. That is natural enough. We in the same undistinguishing mood bundle together the eighteenth century bards who in their day were proud to be distinct from each other, so with the seventeenth century metaphysicals. As an age recedes, it is the solid basis of agreement in manner and technique which strikes the reader, not the little things which once gave a proud distinction to one poet over another. There have been times when poets like painters were proud to enter themselves as of this school or that. This was a Chaucerian, and that "sealed of the tribe of Ben", or this other of the Pleiade fraternity. But in modern times the spirit of collective discipleship is not so marked in England. It is true there are signs of the revival of the spirit of enthusiastic discipleship. The pre-Raphaelite poets as well as painters encouraged the idea. Morris sings movingly of his debt to Chaucer as if he were a fifteenth century Chaucerian or a Spenser. A modern like Mr. Charles Doughty in his epic Mansoul writes in the same spirit of Spenser "my lodestar". There is something very engaging in this. There is not so much danger of over-stressing a really weak individuality when discipleship is so affectionately avowed. It is a pretty and grateful exhibition, but it is so decidedly unmodern as to be suspect of mere quaintness. The painters have always been more gregarious.
gregarious. Their talk is of this school and that, this master and that other. Nevertheless in the retrospect it is seen that poetry, is also of the schools, and very few rise above the limitations of the schools. Shakespeare is decidedly of a school; in his poems indeed he is of an extremely affected school, and he plays about with every sign of enjoyment in a most artificial element.

So with the poets of the pre-Raphaelite era. This by no means signifies that there are not marked differences of method and genius. It simply means that time has now properly focussed these poets, and they appear to us less as individual peaks and more as spurs and outlying features of a great chain. In other words the technical and emotional elements of their separate muses are much the same. They can be treated as a school. An analysis of Swinburne's methods, for example, will give the range of the school. Closer criticism will reveal the all-important differences.

We may prophecy that there will never be a greater connoisseur in the colouring matter of poetry than Swinburne. To use his own epithet he is par excellence the "subtle-coloured" poet. He had the amplest range of European literature and selected freely every poetical device, metrical and phraseological which appealed to him in past schools. He also displayed sheer invention, though it is difficult at this time of day to invent anything. In the passage quoted above it is, so far as phrase goes, Shelley whom he copies. We have seen that Shelley was fascinated by the language of colour or rather of light and radiance - that certain words had for him almost a hypnotic effect, words like plume, lamp, flame, radiance, paven, pavilion /
pavilion, woven, and indeed all the family of words suggesting weaving and interweaving or patterning of any sort. He exploited almost unduly words formed by the suffix -less and the prefix -un. And then there are his brilliant compounds. In all these respects the Prelude to Tristram suggest Shelley. But in the Poem itself, we at once perceive notes which are not in Shelley. This from the First part, the Sailing of the Swallow:

And as a bird is taken to man's breast
The sweet-souled land, where sorrow sweetest sings
Is wrapt round with them as with hands and wings
And taken to the sea's heart as a flower.

There in the luck and light of his good hour
Came to the King's Court like a noteless man
Tristram, and while some half a season ran
Above before him harping in his hall;
And taught sweet craft of new things musical
To the dear maiden mouth and innocent hands
That for his sake are famous in all lands
Yet was not love between them, for their fate
Lay wrapt in its appointed hour at wait
And had no flower to show yet, and no sting

That yearning of subtle people for simplicity which is not simple, and which is so often either mere simpless or affectation /
affectation is everywhere seen in these lines. It is not in Shelley. It was destined to become almost the prevailing note of a great school, and indeed under this fad or fancy it has coloured our artistic lives down to the present day. It is to be distinguished from the honest simplicity of Wordsworth, which has no aesthetic intent behind it, but rather an ethical, namely, the speaking honestly and without artifice, the thought that is in the heart. No, there is a world of difference between the simplicity which Mr. Mackail marks as a prevailing note in Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites generally and the country-bred simplicity of Wordsworth, and the one could never have been bred out of the other. Swinburne achieves only that affectation of simplicity which we find in the prose of Mr. Maurice Hewlitt — a mannered simplicity, While Ruskin and Tolstoy, like Wordsworth before them, went through what amounted to a spiritual conversion, which turned them towards a religious simplicity of word and phrase with humble intent to be understood by all men, and with something of the image-breaker's hatred of art, Swinburne was always vain of his learned audience, and never at any time felt impelled to stoop to the multitude. Nevertheless he is very artful in his simulation of medieval simplicity, and knows exactly at the same time when to avoid medieval prosaism and garrulity. We need not trouble here with the view that he is all a harmony of beautiful sounds without meaning. We cannot judge between the zealots of the various schools. But no one is likely to deny that he was a great master of words, even if his word-weaving is no more than beautiful sound, and even if he is rather the servant than the master of his words and images.

In /
It is easy to smile at these laboured theses with their vast cunning in categories. There is something in the English temper which will always be repelled even in its most serious scholarship, by such peeping and botanising in the field of poetry. Nevertheless much can be learned from a close and even statistical study of the language of our great poets.

The conclusion from the studies referred to would seem to be, then, that the great poet will alter the tongue without scruple, change the whole face of it in fact, to gain the desired effect. In Chaucer's day the language was proceeding slowly out of a state of bilingualism and Chaucer and Langland took a good deal more advantage of this fact than their contemporaries. They exploited its bilingual character to give the greatest variety to their language. Spenser is the classic case among the elder poets of deliberate and capricious and often ignorant remoulding of the poetic tongue. By his efforts, English poetic speech was established. Shakespeare so masterfully played with the tongue in its colloquial, technical, and higher poetical aspects that all the Keys to Shakespeare and Shakespeare - Grammatiks seem inadequate to explain exhaustively his dealing with words.

When we add to the long list of notorious word-makers, poets who would do anything to avoid the customary form of words (not customary idiom, that is a different matter) Milton, Keats, Tennyson, to some extent in his archaisms and compounds, Swinburne and Morris notoriously, Francis Thompson and Charles Doughty, it appears that the more considerable /
considerable poets are all on the side of change. No other tongue, least of all the classical tongues, which of course are opposed to such wholesale liberties, shows anything like the inordinate passion for change and relapse that the English does, and the fact is, no doubt, partly due to the balancing feats that English has had to perform. If we look round for a period during which the tongue was more or less settled we may fix on the Augustan age. The school of Pope - Goldsmith - Johnson does honestly attempt to be classical and un-English in this that it observes the limits of the language both as respects words and idioms. Today of course it would not be difficult to find poets who with a wider orbit of language do the same thing.

We can well understand why Johnson and Goldsmith disliked the school of Gray and Collins. Those writers who wrote so well in the classical vein were destroying the neo-classic compact in regard to the stability of the tongue. It was symptomatic that Gray imitated Pindar who gave him an excuse for dark and swelling language. We have already quoted Goldsmith's censure of this ambitious language.

To turn now to Swinburne, we note his hundreds of adverbial and adjectival formations in wise, like, fashion, ward, etc. Tennyson also is strong in these and indeed almost everything linguistically curious in Swinburne will be found in the older poet. Pretty formations they often are, flower-fashions, houndlike, vinewise, etc. "To flightward they go as the feastward". Many a gleaming line in this poet owes its charm to such words. Then there is a mass of old forms in 'a', used also by Tennyson and Browning but more temperately - afoam, asmoulder, aspurt, etc. This rather irritates the modern /
modern reader, as does all that archaic debris - anow, alway, sometime, kin (for akin) etc. It seems to the reader a pure 'fake' to get poetic 'potential' out of the omission or addition of a customary 's' as in alway, and sometime.

Swinburne's art as a word-smith reveals itself most notably in his compounds. In Keats's novelties here we imagine that the short-cut is the thing aimed at as much as the romantic suggestiveness. In Swinburne the sound seems to be the chief thing, though a good deal of nonsense has been written on this head. He had power of vision as well as a beautiful ear. No doubt the late Mr. Edward Thomas and Mr. Drinkwater are right in pointing out how often mere sound runs away with him and Mr. Woodbury is of course right when he says that Swinburne's language expressed the rollings and the glidings of the sea so as hardly to call for a meaning. But in such daring compounds as -

\begin{verbatim}
Milk-budded myrtles
Love-locks vinechapleted
Spring-flowered ways
Flower-feasted mouth etc.
\end{verbatim}

and in his numerous compounds of words denoting material objects like iron, milk, rose, silk, etc. Swinburne seems to prove his love of concrete, eye-satisfying images.

The word coloured is used a good deal as a partner in these compounds -

\begin{verbatim}
Ashen-coloured palm
Snow-coloured hands
rose-leaf coloured shells
\end{verbatim}

and there are a number of very pretty compounds like subtle-coloured hair; tender-coloured hair, where the effect is not to vision at all. April-hearted, sullen-souled, "the sanguine-sandalled priests", "broom-bosomed witches", "whirlwind /
"whirlwind-footed bridegroom," seem to go as far in this direction as we can desire. Like Tennyson he exploits the comparative and superlative suffixes even in his compounds "sweeter-tuned the clamorous years" - "A trumpet stormier-sounded" which has the excuse of Shakespeare's "earthlier happy". But livelier lovellhead is a poor jingle and "deathlier airs" and "the moon grows queenlier" seems foolishness.

All these liberties are no doubt, to be found in the elder poets but never before in such serried array. The abnormal is often effective, but it must not become the normal. In Browning's Sordello curiously are found a great many of Swinburne's novelties. We noted how Tennyson keeps a sort of balance between rusticity and classicism by the mingling of classical idiom with the homeliest English. Swinburne is as effective as Tennyson in this trickery -

"only her low name
'
'Andrechoa' came thrice."
or
"With sudden feat that graze the gradual sea"
or
------------- sad with slow sense of time"

No poet except Shakespeare is more affecting in such small snatches as these examples afford. And yet he is not popularly quoted.

Tennyson we saw does not limit himself as he might have done with advantage to such simple classical devices as those noted above. He often becomes obscure in his effort to bring off a more elaborate classical "turn" or ellipse. The artist mind in him wanted to redeem the homeliness of the style which is almost Wordsworthian, and as he did not as a rule achieve elevation through /
through a heightened vocabulary (the archaic touches are of course, a sort of heightening), he found it in occasional classical constructions. In a poem like Tristram of Lyonesse - not the prelude to it however which is in the elevated style of diction - Swinburne found this elevation or transport which his art demanded in the musical arrangement of the short native words, in the recurrent use of novel forms of words and the cunning modelling of phrases on Biblical expressions which linger in the memory. Further he fully maintains the subjunctive mood. In this respect he observes Shakespeare's practice, it being one of his early discoveries that to restore the lost mood was a means to varied expression no less than to faint archaic colouring. Like Tennyson in the Idyls, he overworks the preposition 'of' and the verbal form in'-ing.' He differs from his contemporaries in this, that he is more systematic in his resuscitation of the old tongue with such grammar as English once possessed. He uses the prefixes and suffixes with what may be called nascent force, as if the language were in process of formation rather than long established. This he took to be the best means of giving freshness to English. Others since, notably Mr. Yeats keep up the complaint that the journalists and business men have drained the tongue of its colour and beauty, desiccated it. A critic like Professor W. L. Phelps denies this, does not in fact know what they mean by this plaint, and points to the vigorous and various English of our Gibsons and Masefields as proof that there is nothing in it. But these poets have gone to the great source of refreshment, the /
the popular tongue. Swinburne did not do this. He preferred as Mr. Yeats seems on the whole to do too, in spite of his talk about peasants' speech, to revivify an old stage of the literary tongue. Happily the literary language of the Elizabethan tongue was very near to the colloquial.

The revival of the subjunctive mood seems a small thing, but no doubt Mr. George Moore and the Irish writers generally are right in insisting on its importance. Its occasional use gives great effect, though often it appears too precious, as where Tennyson, who was alive to its importance, says (Coming of Arthur)

__________for saving I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under Heaven

__________But were I join'd with her
Then might we live together as one life
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on the dark-land to lighten it.

In the omission of the articles or their intrusion, and in his love of plurals and compound verbal expressions for simple verbs, Swinburne is genuinely Elizabethan. But in time these devices tire us out. Other minute archaic touches appear like "Then said this lady with her maiden mouth" or "Forth soon to Cornwall are these brethren gone". The same slight romantic touch is even found in Keats and in Dr. Bridges. So the use of 'some' and 'something'

Like a great fire on some great slip of land

or

Till on some writer's dawn of some dim year.

His use of double negatives is notable. There is also the Biblical use of the preposition -

"His heart Yearned on her."

or /
or he will use any but the customary preposition.

"Lips wherein he hath no power."

"Long held on pain"

Scriptural constructions like -

"And God saw the light, that it was good"

are used by Swinburne and Kipling a good deal, e.g.

"And we know thee how all men behold thee

"We know thy words that they live.

In such wise did the cunningest of virtuosos work! No touch of archaism is too minute for him. The archaic element in the early romantics is laid on with a trowel. In Swinburne its handling has become an art. He rediscovered the lost powers of the language. For lost they were and the mere reclamation of vocabulary which the earlier romantics attempted was of little account compared with his redemption of the actual processes of speech. To change the metaphor he caused English to breathe more deeply. Stil Ruskin's warning to the Pre-Raphaelites is worth recalling - "If their sympathies - - lead them into medievalism - - they will come to nothing."

Reclamation of this sort made by the lyric poet today, may be extended to the prose art and thence to current speech tomorrow. We recall again Dante's remarks in his booklet On Vulgar Eloquence that prose-writers get their language from poets and not vice versa. Mr Yeats would rather say that the opposite is true, though one suspects that a great part of his own fine language never issued from the peasant mouths of Galway. Rather we think we should alter the statement to read and vice versa.
But partisans are bitter on the subject. To quote from Mr. Moore once more "Very soon" said Moore "there would not be enough grammar left in England for literature. English is becoming a lean language." Mr. Moore goes on "Yeats it may be remembered could not sympathise with me when I spoke of the lost subjunctive and I understood him to be of the opinion that a language might lose all its grammar and still remain a vehicle for literature, the literary artist always finding material for his art in the country".

Again later - "It is without idiom and not with grammar the literary artist should concern himself."

Whether Swinburne and his fellows were labouring in vain to restore the old grammar, whether they would have been better advised to go down to the marketplace or the roadside for a revivified language is a moot point. Be it observed that with all their cunning in grammar and word, the Victorians do not get the true touch of Elizabethan idiom. There is a great deal of 'faking' in their idiom. They are certainly not Elizabethan, often not English at all. And in place of mediaeval directness and simplicity they prefer clumsy and affected circumlocutions. Their art moves by circumlocution. They will make three words grow where one grew before. Their influence on modern poetry in this respect is small though the school still languishes with writers like Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, and - a true virtuoso - Mr. Charles Doughty. These poets have tried to "keep up grammar" and to consolidate the ground won back by the great Victorians. But they are not of the main movement
which is rather towards excessive colloquialism. Wordsworth in fact seems to have in a manner triumphed. But we have our cunning word-artists; our Herbert French and Elroy Flecker and J. C. Squire, who do not bow to the popular manner, though they do not either follow the methods of Swinburne. Whether we are to include Morris among those who tried in Ruskin's phrase "to return to archaic art instead of archaic honesty" is also a moot point to be answered according to temperament. Ruskin said of the Pre-Raphaelites of whom Morris was one, "they know little of ancient paintings who suppose the works of these young artists resemble them." Can we say this also of Morris' poetry? May we say that the resemblances to mediaeval poetry are superficial, in spite of his formidable word- hoard? No one can doubt this who understands the relation in which Morris stands to Keats. There is another influence beside the Pre-Raphaelite colouring in the Defence of Guinevere and King Arthur's Tomb. It is the influence not of Tennyson but of Browning as Morris himself confessed. The staccato rhythms and phrase, the close rush of verse, all mark the influence of the Master. If Morris had kept to this inspiration and not meandered into the flowery meads of the Earthly Paradise, we might have had an inferior Browning. But instead we have the large recompense of the longest and sweetest romantic composition in the language after Chaucer's Triolus and Cressyde. No mediaeval poetry is so decorative, so rich as Morris' mature poetry. He sank deeper into mediaeval and Norse fanaticism in later life, and worked in the Sigurd the Volsung and the translation of Beowulf, with a language the
the like of which had never been heard before in England, or anywhere. At times it is extremely powerful and again extremely engaging as in the affecting passages of the Virgil. But in the Life and Death of Jason and in fact the whole Earthly Paradise he displays Keatsian richness and romantic colouring rather than mediaeval directness. True he knows none of the secrets of the intenser romantic manner. He covers much canvas but his detail is often perfunctory and he shows in fact the tendencies of the dauber rather than the breathless artist. His language is often uncouth as in Scotts' and Byrons', his epithets conventional and obvious. Nature had not given him the gift of mystery in language. He wrote too easily as he boyishly admitted where some friend said that Topsy was a great poet. It was as easy to him as working at his arts and crafts. Mr. Masefield in his Widow of the Byestreet is nearer the art of Chaucer both in his conduct of the story and the directness of his manner.

In his Life of William Morris, Mr. Mackail compares the Victorian era to that of the silver Latins, when writers turned away from the Grecism of the Augustan age and rejecting foreign elements, tried to force the poetic language back to the native simplicity of the age of Ennius. In this respect Morris rather than Tennyson was the spokesman of his age. He tried to divert English poetry of the pompous robes which were chiefly borrowed from the Renaissance. Though his art closely resembles that of Keats, he has less than most poets of his day of that traditional poets' language which Keats, opposing Wordsworth here, revived, and /
and which indeed was the rock on which Hyperion split.

Another poet across the Atlantic was fanatically tearing down the ornaments of the old poetic faith. But Walt Whitman's 'was a movement towards complete colloquialism, sansculottism indeed, a purge of the language which Wordsworth himself never contemplated. It was a movement towards anarchy by breaking up all the traditional patterns of art and poetical speech. It regarded all the elements of speech as equally beautiful, equally sacred as it did everything in nature. The old terms ugly and beautiful were in his aesthetic compounded and made one. Morris has nothing to do with this movement. On the contrary he was for emphasising the beauty and glory of fragrant old phrase.

If we regard Ruskin's impossible statement that "from Raphael's time to this day historical art has been in acknowledged decadence," as having a fragment of truth in it, the corresponding fact for poetry is that from the evil day on which the Italian critics, the Castelvetros and Vidas first imprisoned poetry in the shackles long before prepared for it by Horace and Quintilian, all the vices of conventional treatment and expression had united to depress the truly innocent and free spirit of poetry. Such was Morris' belief. He held for example that the Latins were inferior imitative poets and would not recommend their inclusion in Sir John Lubbock's Hundred Best Books. It is interesting to compare Ruskin's pontifical suggestions under this head with Morris' more modestly stated, but none the less violent preferences.

This movement of revulsion against the Renaissance was /
was of course, started by Blake, who first attacked the scholarly and intellectual view of literature and art. The Renaissance took art away from man and placed it in the study. Something of the same was said of Euripides, the first of Greek poets to abstract himself from the common affairs of man, and on this score attacked by Aristophanes.

Morris' sympathies ended abruptly with the Renaissance. Hence those vasta luminæ in his experience. A homeless wanderer in his own day, he sought spiritual sustenance in the ages before Art was invented as a special activity of man. He avoided of course, the eighteenth century, but equally the great Elizabethan age. Mr. Chesterton talks of Swinburne's "profane parody of the Old Testament," indicating thereby his subtle borrowings of phrase and rhythm from the Bible. But Morris the archaist, neglects even the Bible as a supreme source of impressive speech. Nor do we find many echoes of the Elizabethans or of the Jacobean in his phrase. Milton of course is barred out altogether. In short his phrases hardly ever - after the early Rossetti period - recall the decorative speech to be found in the long tradition of literary poetry. Unlike Rossetti and his followers, he avoids as a rule that specially romantic Anglo-Norman vocabulary, those "stunning words for poetry." He was too sincere an artist to use words for their mystery or high and immemorial associations. In his mature original poetry his vocabulary is not at all arresting. He prefers the ordinary range of good English words, with however no ostentations avoidance - such as we sometimes note in Dr.Bridge's poems - of the more /
more elevated words. He is not quoted because he avoids the purple phrase and had no art for precision or brilliancy of phrase. The flood of sweet words pours on our ears with grateful murmur. He avoids the purple phrase because his aesthetic tended to lower the high lights of art and to illuminate the whole canvas with equal intensity. As in painting he disliked the art which concentrates all its powers on some central point, so in poetry he regarded an equable flow of pleasant but not transporting speech as preferable to occasional brilliant phrasing. It is not likely that he could have been brilliant in any case. He was a story-teller first and foremost. In the Life and Death of Jason and the Earthly Paradise, the archaism is moderate in amount, and is displayed more in the simplicity and touch of vertu in the syntax, than in the diction. Clearness and pleasantness of utterance are there seen at their height. It is almost too easy, the constructions too simple. Later on in his Translations and the Sigurd he was seized with the ambition to alter the very essence of the language. One would have said that eccentricity can go no further had not Mr. Doughty written Mansoul. Defending the really formidable language of his Beowulf translation, he says that except for a few words, the words used in it, were such as he would not hesitate to use in an original poem of his own. On this Mr. Mackail remarks — He did not add, however, that their effect if slipped sparingly in amid his own pellucid construction and facile narrative method, would be very different from their habitual use in
a translation which must in any case, if it were faithful to the original, be often both harsh and obscure. In his desire to reproduce the early English manner, he allowed himself a harshness of construction and a strangeness of vocabulary, that in many places go near to making his version unintelligible. A poem which professes to be "modern and yet requires a glossary fails of one of its primary objects."

Apart from the wots and gottens, soothly, hoar, twain, sithence, knowers and a host of similar intelligible but in the mess, irritating old words and forms, what are the linguistic elements of Beowulf to which exception can be taken? There are first the crabbed inversions which are in the original truly, but which might be moderated in a modern version. Then there are the numerous strange looking compounds. These are not epithets usually, but after the fashion of Anglo-Saxon, substantives -

"That he his breast-swelling might nowise forbear its owning-lord.
Thy word-saying soothly the Lord of all wisdom
Hath sent into my mind.

And unto thine helping the spear-holt may bear
A man-staying mighty.

It is obvious that Morris carries the restoration process in language a few hundred years further back than Swinburne, and the result is rather painful. Here also we have Swinburne's insistence on -ing forms, and an attempt is made to capture the nascent vigour of the old suffixes and prefixes, before age long use had numbed them.

c.f. Of the love of thy mood, may yet more be an-earning or - The earls' a-back-faring, as erst he beheld them.

Such /
Along with the revival of precious forms of old English speech, there are many forms and idioms not at all genuine, mere mischievous circumlocutions which look like old idioms. The last effect these archaizers aim at least in phrase is directness. Browning of course finds new force in the old outworn particles. He uses the -er suffix denoting agency a good deal, and makes notable use of -ing forms (verbal noun) but with him the aim is always force and directness rather than mere curiosity. What he does he does in ignorance or neglect of the philological habit of the old language. The constant circumlocution which betrays the true archaist is far from him. Morris and Swinburne and Tennyson show that the vice of the periphrasis lurks in affected old English as much as in Johnsonian English. Anyone copying the poetic language of Anglo-Saxon literature, is imitating a highly, almost fantastically conventional speech, as far from spoken idiom as a language can well be. It has nothing in common with that of the old ballads which are certainly ruder and hurried in expression. Rossetti and Morris - in his early poetry - caught this style very well, though they ran elements into it which were too sophisticated, too artful, for a rude age. In proceeding from that early style to the refashioning of the language or the model of old English poetry, Morris was passing from one extreme of art to another. He does not seem to have been aware that the language of Beowulf is a highly conventional one.

Mr. John Drinkwater in his excellent book on Morris refuses to allow the word archaic to be used of his poetic speech. In Morris, he says in effect, the old language comes naturally, almost unbidden, and
with no suggestions of artifice. It is as natural to Morris as the language of Reason was to Pope. "The quality in mediaeval art that chiefly attracted him was its direct simplicity, and this quality he took up into his own work. Instead of using words for their cumulative poetic value, he threw poetry over words that had hitherto gone naked. Apart from a few of his early poems and the use that he makes of models from time to time in verse forms, there is scarcely any evidence in the manner of his work that he had ever read any of the poetry before him."

This critic is evidently limiting himself to the Jason and the Earthly Paradise. We have already admitted the easy and customary nature of the language in these poems. The level flow of good unremarkable English in them is to some readers a little monotonous. Its archaism is very subdued and hardly appears in the vocabulary at all. The most notable characteristic is the tendency to use certain common words over and over again, words like fair, sweet, gold, silver, etc. the condiments of a rather syrupy confection. Archaism is found, not in words so much as in phrases and idioms. But the tendency is not nearly so marked as it afterwards became. Still we may adapt Johnson's question "If Morris is not an archaist, where are we to look for one?"

As for the conventional small change of the archaist - eftsonez certes, I trow, etc. Mr. Drinkwater makes a special plea for Morris - that in them they well up as naturally as common speech. "The words in themselves are perfectly fit for use in poetry and the/
the discredit into which they have fallen is entirely due to inferior writers who have sought to make them in themselves substitutes for poetry."

All which simply means that if a poet can show sufficient naturalness in the use of old tags, he is not to be called archaist. Only the frauds and botchers like Chatterton and Spenser were to be called so. The blindness of affection!

As for the 'direct simplicity' of mediaeval art, certainly the Jason and the poems of the Earthly Paradise are direct and easy in language and construction. The translations are not at all direct and simple as we have seen. Nor need art always show direct simplicity. In certain modes we can relish the unhewn blocks of ancient language which bestrew the Sigurd and even, if we forget the original, the quaint but vivid jargon of the Aeneid, whose language is not at all used with direct simplicity, but rather after the manner of Browning, as plastic for modelling. Mr Drinkwater's view that Morris is uninterested in words as such and is only eager to arrive at his meaning with force and brevity, is surely a mistaken one. His cunning lies as much in the web of words he weaves as in his narrative and fine elegiac mood.

The Victorians opened up the ways, the moderns who have found no really new ways explore the bye-paths. Some like A.E. and the Irish poets for the most part follow the line of Shelley and Rossetti. Their language is not so transcendental, but in point of poetic vagueness and twilight effects has much in common /
common with that of the poet of glooms and shuddering plumes. Here and there is a hint of the same qualities as are seen in Gray and Collins. Pre-Raphaelite feeling and technique are everywhere visible especially in Yeats' characteristic work.

Take A. E. How his language gleams with such tone words as glimmering, shadowy, dim, trembling quiescence. We have dim twilight, radiant spheres, shadows dim, trembling dew, tremulous souls etc. and such compounds as

shadowy-petalled
star-misty
twilight-burnished hills
Starry fruitage
Thought-swept fields of light.

Like Shelley, but without Shelley's flame, A. E. tries to sing the daedal earth, and the result is a great deal of mystic and often wearisomely repeated language in which the words crystal, infinite, fiery, aether, ancient eternal, starry, glory, fantastic, and august words like cyclic, supernal, mystic, ancestral, with the eternally recurring colours, amethyst, sapphire, opal (aureole) diamond aureole, lunar and mystic radiance, chase each other through the maze of his dreams. This is Pre-Raphaelitism with a strong dash of mysticism added. He has in a less degree Francis Thompson's mania for novel and magnificent classical words. But he is not at all archaic, and is at no pains to reclaim old forms or lost grammar. Unlike Yeats, he puts no store by striking idioms whether collected like Tennyson's or Swinburne's from our old language or like Yeats' from the peasantry of today. He forms no clumsy comparatives or superlatives. He hardly uses the subjunctive. In short he is content with /
with the 'lean' English of his age which with the help of those impressive but vague words of the Shelley and Rossetti vocabulary is adequate for the minor appeal he makes. He is no euphuist. His art does not lie merely in words and a mosaic of strange expressions, though he has his preference for shadowy and splendid words. We have referred already to that seeking after mystery and richness in words as characteristic of the Keats-Rossetti school and pursued to undesirable lengths by poets like Mrs. Taylor Annand. This love of richness in colour and phrase was of course, inherent in the Pre-Raphaelite painters. They tried to write homely circumstances with richness of vestments and with religious fervour and mystery. Their extreme naturalism led them to paint pictures like Holman Hunt's Carpenter's Shop which is a real not makebelieve shop, and urged them to undertake the labour of travel for small effects of local landscape. It depended on the temperament of the artist which of these two tendencies, naturalism or opulence in treatment, should prevail. As we have seen and as Lady Millais remarked, Rossetti soon ranged himself with the latter, and his poetic disciples have gone his way; down to A.E. and Mrs. Annand. Ruskin disliked this side of their activities as much as their tendency to mediaevalism, wonderful purples and greens, the pomp of ritual, robes stiff with gems, aroused in him the uncompromising Protestant. "I am glad to see that Mr. Millais' lady in blue is heartily tired of her painted window and idolatrous toilet table" he wrote to the "Times" May 9th 1851.
it was this style, the handsome lady and the glorious blue with the tiredness thrown in which was to prevail—certainly among the poetic Pre-Raphaelites, and of these A.E., is typical and representative.

Far other is it with a poet like Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, who is in the directest descent from the great Victorians, who indeed carries their idiosyncrasies to immodest lengths. We are far away here from the quietism of A.E.'s verse. Every line stares you out of countenance, and makes a strong bid for your admiration, or at least astonishment. The contorted words or phrases, whip up a false excitement. Yet it is good in its way. There is something to reveal. It has little of that rather sickly mooning, quality, of A.E.'s verse, the mystic sounds' or 'phantom images' and 'valleys dim' which English poetry has never quite purged from its system since Gray and Collins and their feeble eighteenth Century imitators in a bad hour inoculated it.

We are making no attempt at a reasoned survey of the language of poetry. We can only indicate in the briefest way the main inherited tendencies of the schools. A word on the art of Dr. Bridges will not however be amiss here. Technical accomplishment seems so pronounced in this poet that the ordinary reader is inclined to think of him rather as a connoisseur and technician, than a full-blooded poet. His matter seems thin and his vision limited. Perhaps we should say he is like Patrice Marius, he has found how to reconcile the sweet thrall of the senses with the discipline of the spirit. In the process the senses seem to have got /
got the worst of it and yet the spirit is no lambent flame either.

Dr. Bridges is of course, a scholar in the modern sense, curiously intrigued by questions of metric and phraseology and pronunciation. So was the author of Christabel who excused his meagre output by pleading very curiosity about his metres - just the opposite of robust geniuses like Scott and Byron and Morris, who care not too much about these things. Dr. Bridges is a grammarian and shows a strained attempt after purity of word and grammar, an attempt to reclaim English grammar before it is hopelessly lost. But he is too modest to follow up Swinburne's attempt to cast the poetic speech back to the state it enjoyed in the age of Elizabeth or earlier. He makes notable play with the subjunctive. One hardly knows any poet who is more scrupulous on this head, so scrupulous as to suggest affectation. And he is equally careful to observe just sequence of tenses, and indeed all the minute points of grammar, which the early romantics notoriously flouted. The thees and thous and -eths which Mr. G. Moore mourned as defunct are all rather awkwardly inserted here. The -eth and other unstressed particles are demanded by Dr. Bridges theory of prosody, which, right, or wrong, is framed for a much earlier stage of the language, than the shorn condition of speech at which we moderns have arrived. The same is true of the -ing forms, which are much in evidence - witness the fine poem London Snow which in 37 lines contains 28 such forms. Swinburne we remember, stressed this form too. Take the stanza in London Snow (II.13) "Only /
Only life's common plod; still to repair
The body, and the thing which perisheth
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear
The grinding enginery of blood and breath,
Pains random darts, the heartless spade of Death
All is but grief, and heavily we call
On the last terror for the end of all.

Here is no lack of virtuosity in phrase. But how
explain that curious childish (rather than childlike)
note in the work of this expert poet, which so constantly
offends the ordinary reader. One might explain this
quality in his official productions as the result of a
poet's coldness towards a routine duty, but the same note
of simplesse is struck in many of his other works and
seems connected with the charge referred to on a previous
page, that his epithets are often conventional to the
point of stupidity. This is true however of only a
part of his works, and may be the result of reaction
against the feverish search for colour and strangeness
of epithet by his contemporaries. Does Dr. Bridges
say to himself - 'these others stand a-tiptoe for effect. No extravagan
is too much for them, so long as novelty
is attained. The hunt for expressiveness and realism
has driven them to avoid everything common, I will
affect the common, traditional epithet.' This some
people charitably call restraint, it is a sort of
poetical quietism, and will never make an appeal outside
the extremely cultured people who have lost the sense of
broad humanity in their zeal for form.

In Dr. Bridges as in Swinburne, several
poetic cultures meet. Now it is a wisp of the old
romance we meet, such as we might find in Keats, as -

"But now again were these fine lovers met

which /
which is fragrant of romance. In spite of what has been said of the prevailing commonness of his epithets (his later tendency is to dispense with them largely) he can often give us a quite Keatsian epithet, as when he talks of 'the pensioned stars' or 'thy soft unchristen'd smile.'

Again it is the influence of Walt Whitman that prevails. Dr. Bridges eclogues especially are full of a prosaic quality which somehow we find easier to pardon in the American poet because of his poetic creed, of sansculottism. But Bridges is in a peculiar sense the heir of all the ages - No one certainly has been better dowered in this respect.

Like Tennyson he uses the simplest English artfully, and his verse proves that no language is better fitted to describe the sea in its Northern moods than monosyllabic English. And like Tennyson he feels no incongruity in using a classical construction in a bucolic English setting. e.g. "Thus they in verse alternate sang the year" and in keeping with that simplesse referred to above, he will use the most childish inversions.

His taste is by no means impeccable. He seems a rather humourless man, which may explain such verse as this in the August eclogue

"A reaper with duty shoon and hat of straw
On the yellow field, his scythe in his armes drew.
Beneath the tall grey trees resting at noon
From sweet and swink with scythe and duty shoon.

In spite of such ludicrous writing he is a master of pretty country folk talk, but it is literary talk, the /
the traditional language of the English eclogue. His intimate knowledge of homely and obsolete literary English is often put to good use. But above all he is the connoisseur in old and rare words. How true it is of poets of craft rather than genius that their art consists largely in the delicate use of words rather than in the vigorous display of the passions.

BIV. 11. Sweet is the hidden drops that swell Their honey-throated chalising.

In IV.12. he talks of "a ribbald cuckoo" and in V.13 "The unheeded music twires."

Very characteristic of his art is the study of a windmill (one drops naturally into talking of these things as pictures) in Book IV.13. Here the naive and childish literalness is pleasing. There is a touch of Blake in it.

"I lean across the paddock pale And gaze upon the giddy mill
Its hurtling sails a mighty sweep Cut through the air; with rushing sound
Each strikes in fury down the steep Rattles and whirls in chase around
Beside his sacks the miller stands On high within the open door
A book and pencil in his hands His grist and meal he reckoneth o'er
His tireless merry slave the wind Is busy with his work today.

Here is the return to the childhood of art. Will the shade of Blake or of Wordsworth be more pleased by this triumph of their styles? It seems Blake rather than Wordsworth. There is of course art of a high kind in the piece. Much of this is imitative of the Jacobeans.

June's birth they greet, and when their bloom DislustreS, withering on his tomb The summer hath a shortening day; And steps slow to decay.

Mood,
Mood, metre, and the sudden use of a word like dislustre in midst of simple English are all suggestive of Jacobean art.

So — The delicate-rank'd golden corn
That never more shall rear its crown
And curtsey to the morn

and Their notes through all the jocund spring
Were mixed in merry musicking

or His golden gleams
On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows
Of high-grown hollyhocks.

or ——- How truly Jacobean this,

"With idle effort plundering one by one
The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

In a rough way the present race of singers - if such sombre artists deserve that name - is to the great Victorians what the Jacobean was to the Elizabethan. Figures and quaint grace many of them have, precious novelty, handsome words on a plain background, rare conceits, the things that waning passion seeks. If we class Dr. Bridges among the modern euphuists, it is no more than saying that he belongs to the age of Vaughan and Herrick rather than of Shakespeare and Marlows.

A. E. and Dr. Bridges seem distinct to us today, but they have so much in common that the next age if it thinks of them at all will regard them as of the same school. The Englishman is not at all mystical, and he has not A. E.'s desolating lyric note. But in technique they are very close, so close often that often the student would be hard put to it to decide the authorship of a piece /
piece like this.

"Let us leave our island woods grown dim and blue
O'er the waters creeping the pearl dust of the eve
Rides the silver of the long wave rippling through
The chill for the warm room let us leave

Rumour of the fierce-pulsed city far away
Breaks upon the peace that aureoles our rest
Steeped in stillness as of some primeval day
Hung drowsily over the waters breast.

Age in age is heaped about us as we hear
Cycles hurrying to and fro with giant tread
From the deep unto the deep; but do not fear
For the soul unhearing them is dead.

The sad minor note of a difficult age!